

ExchangeEveryDay

Compliment Character More than Actions

October 3, 2018

*"Children see magic because they look for it."
-Christopher Moore*

"Many parents believe it's important to compliment the behavior, not the child — that way, the child learns to repeat the behavior...But is that the right approach?" asks Adam Grant in a New York Times article.

Grant explains: "In a clever experiment, the researchers Joan E. Grusec and Erica Redler set out to investigate what happens when we commend generous behavior versus generous character. After 7- and 8-year-olds won marbles and donated some to poor children, the experimenter remarked, 'Gee, you shared quite a bit.'

The researchers randomly assigned the children to receive different types of praise. For some ...they praised the action: 'It was good that you gave some of your marbles to those poor children. Yes, that was a nice and helpful thing to do.' For others, they praised the character behind the action: 'I guess you're the kind of person who likes to help others whenever you can. Yes, you are a very nice and helpful person.'

A couple of weeks later, when faced with more opportunities to give and share, the children were much more generous after their character had been praised than after their actions had been. Praising their character helped them internalize it as part of their identities...I am a helpful person. This dovetails with research led by the psychologist Christopher J. Bryan, who finds that for moral behaviors, nouns work better than verbs. To get 3- to 6-year-olds to help with a task, rather than inviting them 'to help,' it was 22 to 29 percent more effective to encourage them to 'be a helper.'"

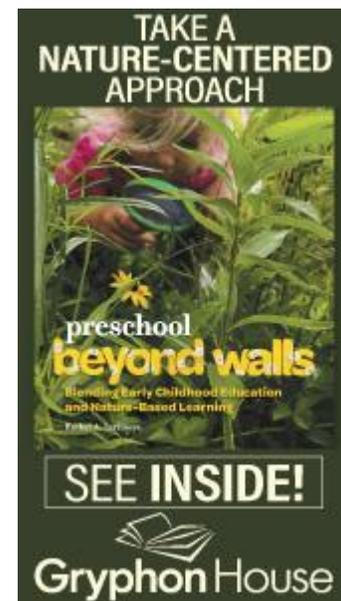
Source: "Raising a Moral Child," by Adam Grant, *The New York Times*, April 11, 2014

[Tell a friend about EED](#)

The Goodness of Rain

Developing an Ecological Identity in Young Children

"Reading The Goodness of Rain made my heart soar. With her beautiful descriptions of guiding young Dylan into seeing the



Dreaming of your own preschool?

You don't have to do it alone.
Use us to guide you!

Use best practices
Get a proven track record
Access on-call mentoring

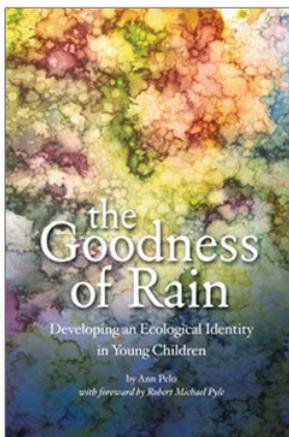
Contact us through our website
for a free consultation.
www.greystonehousefranchises.com

Greystone House
Montessori Franchises

IMAGINE THE POSSIBILITIES...

details of the natural world around her, Ann Pelo offers us a clear picture of how we can offer children a strong sense of place in their upbringing." – Margie Carter

Join author Ann Pelo on her year-long journey as she nurtures the ecological identity of a toddler and discovers for herself what it means to live in relationship with the natural world.



Order today and receive FREE shipping on this title.

Enter code "**Goodness**" when prompted.

Learn More and Purchase

*Offer valid through October 4, 2018 at 11:59 pm Pacific Time.
Offer applies budget shipping to USA only.
May not be combined with any other offer.*

ExchangeEveryDay is a free service of Exchange Magazine. View this article online at ChildCareExchange.com.

[Comment on this article](#)



[View printer friendly](#)

[Subscribe](#) or [Unsubscribe](#)