

# Compliments in the Classroom

## A Classroom Champions Educator Guide



A compliment can brighten someone's day. It also has the power to:

- Boost confidence and morale
- Increase motivation and resilience
- Improve self-esteem and positive thinking

While compliments are seen to have mostly positive effects, it can sometimes be hard on people- including your students to receive a compliment.

### Rejecting a compliment is common for many reasons including:

- Low self-esteem- If the student does not see themselves positively, they may struggle to believe the compliment is true.
- Discomfort with positive attention – for students used to hearing negative feedback, positive attention may be harder to handle.
- Fear of seeming arrogant – students may misinterpret them acknowledging a compliment as being full of themselves, selfish or self-centered
- Challenging perception – a student may respond negatively to a compliment to see if the compliment is genuine and you really mean it.

## Bring the power of compliments to your students

If you notice a student covering their face, becoming bashful, displaying anger or dismissing compliments when you give them, there are ways that you can help them to receive positive feedback.



### 1 Avoid GRAND compliments

Overgeneralizations and big declarations may not have the positive effect we want them to. For example, telling a student: "You are so smart!" makes it easy to debate or disagree with the statement. These grand compliments can also add pressure to the student to continue to perform at this level to continue to get similar compliments.

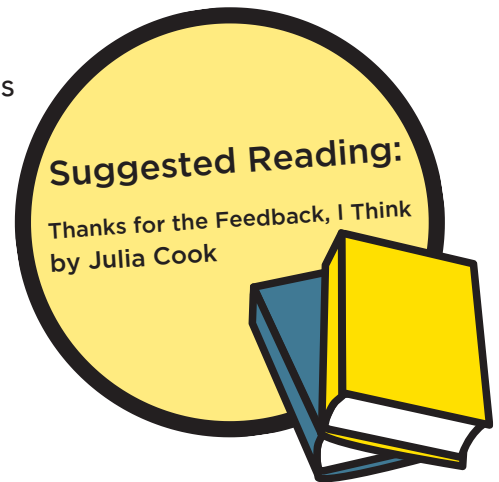
Instead, focus on the student's effort and specific action. For example. "You turned in all of your homework this week and I am impressed!"

## 2 Practice positive perception

Offer your class an opportunity to practice noticing the positives about themselves. Try a journaling activity where your students write three things that make them amazing and discuss with a group. Check out the *On Our Sleeves I Am Awesome Kindness Journal* for a template!

## 3 Praise in private

Giving positive feedback to students in a less public way can decrease the chance that they will protest. Try flashing them a thumbs up, giving them a smile or nod, or sharing your praise after class!



### When a student struggles to accept a compliment:

Catching these deflections and dismissals in the moment can be a small way to reassure your student that you mean your positive praise and help them to accept compliments in the future. Here are a few things you can do in the moment when the positive tries to turn into a negative:

- Try a reassuring statement like, "Well this is my opinion and I noticed you worked hard on your project!"
- Start a conversation about it. You can say, "It sounds like you are having a hard time seeing yourself in a positive way."
- Continue to give specific compliments to help expose your student to positive feedback and help them get used to them.

### Conversation Starters

● Share a moment when you were given a compliment.

How did that make you feel?

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● Why might it be hard for someone to accept a compliment?

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● How do you feel when you give someone a compliment?

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