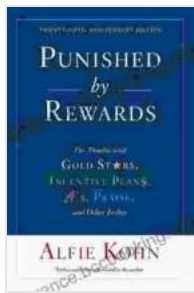


# The Trouble With Gold Stars Incentive Plans: Praise And Other Bribes

## Unveiling the Hidden Dangers of Extrinsic Rewards

In the realm of education and parenting, the allure of gold stars and other extrinsic rewards has long been prevalent as a means to motivate and encourage desired behaviors. However, increasing evidence reveals the hidden dangers lurking beneath this seemingly innocuous practice.



### Punished By Rewards: Twenty-Fifth Anniversary Edition: The Trouble with Gold Stars, Incentive Plans, A's, Praise, and Other Bribes by Alfie Kohn

★★★★☆ 4.5 out of 5

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Gold stars, praise, and other forms of extrinsic rewards may initially appear to yield short-term results, but in the long run, they can inadvertently undermine intrinsic motivation, the natural drive to engage in activities for their own inherent satisfaction and enjoyment.

## The Illusion of Motivation

Extrinsic rewards, such as gold stars or praise, create a false sense of accomplishment. When individuals receive external validation for their actions, they begin to rely on these rewards as a measure of their worth. This dependence on external approval can erode their internal locus of control and discourage them from pursuing activities that are not explicitly rewarded.

For instance, a child who is consistently praised for completing their homework may start to view academic pursuits as a means to earn praise rather than a path to knowledge and personal growth. This external validation can hinder the development of intrinsic motivation and limit the child's willingness to engage in learning for its own sake.

### **Undermining Intrinsic Motivation**

Intrinsic motivation is a powerful force that drives individuals to actively engage in activities that provide them with inherent satisfaction. When extrinsic rewards are introduced, they can inadvertently crowd out intrinsic motivation, diminishing the enjoyment and fulfillment that individuals derive from the activity itself.

Studies have shown that when people are rewarded for completing a task, their intrinsic motivation to perform that task decreases. This is because the extrinsic reward becomes the primary source of motivation, overshadowing the natural pleasure and satisfaction associated with the activity.

### **Creating Dependency and Conformity**

Gold stars incentive plans and praise can foster a culture of dependency and conformity. Individuals may become overly focused on earning rewards

and conforming to external expectations, rather than developing their own intrinsic values and interests.

Furthermore, extrinsic rewards can create a competitive environment, pitting individuals against each other in a race for recognition and validation. This can lead to feelings of inadequacy and discouragement, especially among those who may not meet the expected standards.

### **Alternative Approaches**

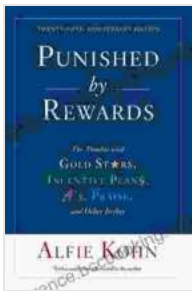
Instead of relying on extrinsic rewards, educators and parents should focus on fostering intrinsic motivation by creating engaging and meaningful experiences that spark curiosity, creativity, and a love of learning. This can be achieved through:

- **Providing autonomy:** Allowing individuals to have control over their own learning and decision-making.
- **Offering choice:** Giving individuals options to choose activities and tasks that align with their interests.
- **Creating a positive learning environment:** Fostering a safe and supportive atmosphere where mistakes are seen as opportunities for growth.
- **Encouraging reflection and self-evaluation:** Helping individuals develop the ability to assess their own progress and identify areas for improvement.

The allure of gold stars and other extrinsic rewards may be tempting, but it is essential to recognize their potential pitfalls. In the pursuit of fostering true engagement and growth, educators and parents should prioritize

intrinsic motivation by creating environments that nurture curiosity, creativity, and a lifelong love of learning.

By shifting away from gold stars and praise as motivators, we can empower individuals to discover their own intrinsic passions and develop the resilience and self-confidence necessary to thrive in an ever-changing world.



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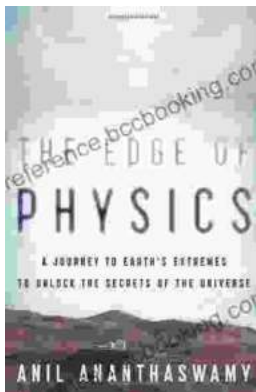
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