

Drive by Daniel H. Pink

The Book in Three Sentences

1. Much of what we know about motivation is wrong.
2. Tasks are either: (1) Algorithmic—you pretty much do the same thing over and over in a certain way, or (2) Heuristic—you

have to come up with something new every time because there are no set instructions to follow.

3. The carrot and stick approach to motivation is flawed.

The Five Big Ideas

1. Researchers have found that extrinsic rewards can be effective for algorithmic tasks—those that depend on following an existing formula to its logical conclusion. But for more right-brain undertakings—those that demand flexible problem-solving, inventiveness, or conceptual understanding—contingent rewards can be dangerous.
2. Goals that people set for themselves and that are

devoted to attaining mastery are usually healthy. But goals imposed by others can sometimes have dangerous side effects.

3. We have three innate psychological needs—competence, autonomy, and relatedness.
4. Research shows that the secret to high performance isn't our biological drive or our reward-and-punishment drive, but our third drive—our deep-seated desire to direct our own lives, to extend and expand our abilities, and to live a life of purpose.
5. The new approach to motivation has three essential elements: (1) Autonomy—the desire to direct our own lives; (2) Mastery—the urge to get

better and better at something that matters; and (3) Purpose—the yearning to do what we do in the service of something larger than ourselves.

Drive Summary

- “When money is used as an external reward for some activity, the subjects lose intrinsic interest for the activity.”—Edward Deci
- “When children didn’t expect a reward, receiving one had little impact on their intrinsic motivation. Only contingent rewards—if you do this, then you’ll get that—had the negative effect. Why? ‘If-then’ rewards require people to forfeit some of their autonomy.”

- “People use rewards expecting to gain the benefit of increasing another person’s motivation and behavior, but in so doing, they often incur the unintentional and hidden cost of undermining that person’s intrinsic motivation toward the activity.”—Jonmarshall Reeve
- “Rewards, by their very nature, narrow our focus. That’s helpful when there’s a clear path to a solution. They help us stare ahead and race faster. But “if-then” motivators are terrible for challenges like the candle problem. As this experiment shows, the rewards narrowed people’s focus and blinkered the wide view that

might have allowed them to see new uses for old objects.”

- “[Teresa] Amabile and others have found that extrinsic rewards can be effective for algorithmic tasks—those that depend on following an existing formula to its logical conclusion. But for more right-brain undertakings—those that demand flexible problem-solving, inventiveness, or conceptual understanding—contingent rewards can be dangerous.”
- “Instead of increasing the number of blood donors, offering to pay people decreased the number by nearly half.”
- “Goals that people set for

themselves and that are devoted to attaining mastery are usually healthy. But goals imposed by others—sales targets, quarterly returns, standardized test scores, and so on—can sometimes have dangerous side effects.”

- “Goals may cause systematic problems for organizations due to narrowed focus, unethical behavior, increased risk taking, decreased cooperation, and decreased intrinsic motivation. Use care when applying goals in your organization.”
- “Get people fired up with the prospect of rewards, and instead of making better decisions, as Motivation 2.0

hopes, they can actually make worse ones.”

The Seven Deadly Flaws of Carrots and Sticks

1. They can extinguish intrinsic motivation
 2. They can diminish performance
 3. They can crush creativity
 4. They can crowd out good behavior
 5. They can encourage cheating, shortcuts, and unethical behavior.
 6. They can become addictive
 7. They can foster short-term thinking
- “The Sawyer Effect: practices that can either turn play into work or turn work into play.”
 - “The essential requirement:

Any extrinsic reward should be unexpected and offered only after the task is complete.”

- “First, consider nontangible rewards.”
- “Praise and positive feedback are much less corrosive than cash and trophies.”
- “Second, provide useful information.”
- “Give people meaningful information about their work.”
- “In brief, for creative, right-brain, heuristic tasks, you’re on shaky ground offering ‘if-then’ rewards. You’re better off using ‘now that’ rewards. And you’re best off if your

‘now that’ rewards provide praise, feedback, and useful information.”

- “[Self-determination theory] argues that we have three innate psychological needs—competence, autonomy, and relatedness.”
- “Human beings have an innate inner drive to be autonomous, self-determined, and connected to one another. And when that drive is liberated, people achieve more and live richer lives.”
- “In the midst of play, many people enjoyed what Csikszentmihalyi called ‘autotelic experiences’—from the Greek auto (self) and telos (goal or purpose).

In an autotelic experience, the goal is self-fulfilling; the activity is its own reward.”

- “The highest, most satisfying experiences in people’s lives were when they were in flow.”
- “In flow, goals are clear. You have to reach the top of the mountain, hit the ball across the net, or mold the clay just right. Feedback is immediate. The mountaintop gets closer or farther, the ball sails in or out of bounds, the pot you’re throwing comes out smooth or uneven.”
- “Most important, in flow, the relationship between what a person had to do and what he could do was perfect. The

challenge wasn't too easy. Nor was it too difficult. It was a notch or two beyond his current abilities, which stretched the body and mind in a way that made the effort itself the most delicious reward. That balance produced a degree of focus and satisfaction that easily surpassed other, more quotidian, experiences.”

- “In flow, people lived so deeply in the moment, and felt so utterly in control, that their sense of time, place, and even self-melted away. They were autonomous, of course. But more than that, they were engaged. They were, as the poet W. H. Auden wrote, ‘forgetting themselves in a function.’”

- “The science shows that the secret to high performance isn’t our biological drive or our reward-and-punishment drive, but our third drive—our deep-seated desire to direct our own lives, to extend and expand our abilities, and to live a life of purpose.”
- “At the end of each day, ask yourself whether you were better today than you were yesterday.”
- “One of the best ways to know whether you’ve mastered something is to try to teach it.”
- The new approach to motivation has three essential elements: (1) Autonomy—the desire to

direct our own lives; (2)

Mastery—the urge to get

better and better at

something that matters; and

(3) Purpose—the yearning

to do what we do in the

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