being a good person is to get rewards. It follows that when the rewards stop coming, the caring behavior may stop too:

> Children who come to believe that their prosocial behavior reflects values or dispositions in themselves have internal structures that can generate behavior across settings and without external pressures. By contrast, children who view their prosocial conduct as compliance with external authority will act prosocially only when they believe external pressures are present.[47]

They may, for example, come to act in accordance with Tom Lehrer's droll revision of the Boy Scouts' motto: "Be careful not to do / Your good deed when there's no one watching you."

Sure enough, the available research indicates that *children whose parents believe in using rewards to motivate them are less cooperative and generous than their peers*. One study found that grade school children whose mothers relied on tangible rewards were less likely than other children to care and share at home and were also less likely to be helpful in a laboratory experiment.[48] Another study found that four-year-olds who were frequently praised for prosocial acts were less likely over time to engage in them than children who did not receive verbal reinforcement.[49]

The problem, as we have seen in other contexts, is not with the item that is offered to children as a reward. There is nothing wrong with taking one's children out for pizza as a treat or throwing a popcorn party for one's class. There *is* something wrong, however, with making these things contingent on certain kinds of behavior: "Do this and you'll get that." The problem arises for the reasons outlined in chapters 4 and 5, which I'd like to revisit one last time, focusing on their application to the question of children's actions and values.*

First, rewards punish. It is no less controlling to offer goodies for a desired behavior than to threaten sanctions for its absence (or for the presence of an undesired behavior). A controlling paradigm does not help children to act responsibly. As Kamii has written, "Rewards do not make children any more autonomous than punishment. . . . [The child motivated by rewards is] governed by others just as much as the child who is 'good' only to avoid being punished."[50] What's more, the fact that rewards can be withheld or withdrawn for failure to act in a specified manner makes the whole experience seem punitive. Most of the reasoning and evidence reviewed in this chapter about the harms of punishment apply to rewards as well.

*The fourth reason offered in chapter 4 to explain the failure of rewards, their tendency to undermine risk-taking, is more relevant to creative performance than to behavior and values.

Second, rewards rupture relationships. They open up an enormous chasm between the parent and child, now defined as the rewarder and the rewarded. Children who try to please us by doing what we require so as to obtain what we are dangling in front of them are less likely to ask for help in thinking through problems, or to do anything else that might jeopardize their chances of getting what we are offering. There is a significant difference between developing a caring alliance of openness and trust with children and offering rewards to elicit certain behaviors. The former provides the foundation for helping children reach those long-term goals identified earlier. The latter makes this less likely.

Third, rewards ignore reasons. *Why* are children acting selfishly or disrespectfully or aggressively? There is no end to the possible explanations for a given problem. And there is no beginning to solving that problem until we have investigated those explanations. It can be awfully hard for parents to resist bribing or threatening, but either is a way of manipulating behavior without looking into what is really going on. No wonder both fail to bring about meaningful change.

Finally, rewards reduce the child's desire to act in a particular way. This phenomenon is not limited to a child's motivation to learn; it extends to behavioral issues, as the research on generosity makes painfully clear. Whenever someone has been led to think of herself as doing something in order to receive a reward, regardless of whether that something is multiplying numbers, making the bed, or helping a person in distress, the task being rewarded comes to seem less appealing in its own right.

Some acts simply aren't intrinsically interesting but are nevertheless valuable and important, such as various obligations one has to others in a community. Even here, rewarding a child for doing these things (or punishing him for not doing them) reduces the chance that he will come to accept responsibility, because, by virtue of being mechanisms of control, rewards make the child feel less responsible, period. The ultimate result is that extrinsic motivators not only fail to promote but actually undermine the commitment to good values we fervently want children to acquire.

Parents and teachers would do well to think about various styles of discipline, management, or socialization in terms of what questions children are encouraged to ask in each instance. A strategy that relies on punishment or consequences prompts a child to wonder, "What am I supposed to do, and what will happen to me if I don't do it?" A