

Link to talk: https://www.ted.com/talks/dan_pink_the_puzzle_of_motivation?language=en

<p>Concept of functional fixedness</p>	<p>The Candle Problem by Karl Duncker (a behavioral science experiment)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Experimenter: Gives a box with a candle, thumbtacks, matches to subject and asks them to ensure that the candle is attached to the wall such that the wax does not drip onto the table. • Subject approach: Uses the box to hold the candle and uses the thumbtacks to affix the box on the wall. (Overcoming functional fixedness)
<p>Candle experiment with an incentivized approach</p>	<p>Prof at Princeton used 2 approaches, for this experiment, with his subjects.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Group 1: He told his subjects he was going to time them to establish norms, averages for how long it takes someone to solve this problem. (ii) Group 2: He offered his subjects a reward. He said if one was within the top 25% of the fastest times, they get \$5. If they are the fastest of all, they get \$20. • Results of the reward/incentivized approach: Took subjects 3.5 minutes longer on average. Dulls thinking and creativity. Contingent motivators: “if you do this, then you get that..” do not work for a lot of tasks or may end up doing harm.
<p>Experiment involving use of cognitive skills, with incentivized approach</p>	<p>Princeton experiment repeated again with candle, thumbtacks, and matches outside the box.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Group 2 performed very well because items were not in the box. The box was part of the items. When there is a clear problem with a clear destination to go to, people can solve it. • Rewards narrow our mind and focus and restricts our possibilities. • In jobs in the 21st century, the problems do not have 1 solution. Most of the times problems aren’t clear and if a solution exists then one needs to think way out of the box to come up with a solution. Therefore, the incentivized system does not work as well.
<p>Importance of Intrinsic Motivation</p>	<p>An economist conducted another incentivized experiment (with a small, medium, and large reward) with some MIT students where the students were given games that involved creativity, concentration, etc.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Results: When the task involved only mechanical skills, the reward/incentivized system worked. However, when the task involved rudimentary cognitive skills, the incentivized system did not work and larger rewards led to poorer performance.
	<p>The desire to do things because they matter, because we like it, because they’re important and because we feel like we are part of something big is what matters in jobs in the 21st century. This model of intrinsic motivation revolves are autonomy, purpose, and mastery.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Autonomy: Urge to direct our own lives • Mastery: Desire to get better and better at something that matters • Purpose: The yearning to do what we do in the service of something larger than ourselves

Summary: In the 21st century, jobs are more complex and financial rewards are not useful; in fact these financial rewards are detrimental and leads to poorer performance. After looking at 52 studies, The London School of Economics mentions “Financial incentives can lead to a negative impact on overall performance.” In the 21st century, intrinsic motivation (drive towards autonomy, purpose, and mastery) is what matters the most.