

2015 Golden Goose Award: THE MARSHMALLOW TEST

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The Golden Goose Award:

Dr. Walter Mischel was once told he would be better off asking a candy company to fund research on his “marshmallow test,” rather than the National Institutes of Health (NIH). But fifty years on, the renowned psychologist’s federally funded research—in collaboration with his colleagues Drs. Philip Peake and Yuichi Shoda— has had enormous and unexpected impact on our understanding of human development, self-control, education, and the complexity of human behavior.

The origins of Dr. Mischel’s idea for systematically testing young children’s ability to delay gratification can be found in his early experiments on decision-making and stereotypes that he conducted as a graduate student living for a summer in Trinidad. These studies showed the importance of trust in the promise-maker as a pre-condition for a child’s willingness to wait or work for delayed rewards. He also watched how his own young daughters handled “willpower” issues at the dinner table. Those experiences drove him to want to understand how and when children develop self-control.

Read the whole story: [The Golden Goose Award](#)