

# Train a Parent, Spare a Child

January 22, 2013

## *The New York Times:*

SOMEONE asked me recently what my New Year's resolution was as a parent. Without thinking, I said, "more creative bribing."

I find the issue of bribing children — or to be more precise, the giving of blunt, uncreative rewards for desired behavior ("If you just stop kicking that seat in front of you on the plane, I'll give you 10 minutes of iPad time"; "Clean your room this weekend, I'll give you 10 bucks"; "If you use good manners at Grandma's house, I'll let you have an extra brownie") — to be one of the more nagging challenges of being a parent.

On one hand, I've read a small library of articles that have laid out with undeniable persuasiveness evidence that giving children tangible rewards — from money to sweets to an extra hour before bedtime — not only doesn't work in the long term, it actually has a negative effect on them. As early as the 1960s, Edward Deci, then a psychology graduate student at Carnegie Mellon, showed that when external rewards are given, subjects "lose intrinsic interest for the activity."

Read the whole story: [\*The New York Times\*](#)