

Drive Summary



fourminutebooks.com/drive-summary

1-Sentence-Summary: *Drive explores what has motivated humans throughout history and explains how we shifted from mere survival to the carrot and stick approach that's still practiced today – and why it's outdated.*

Read in: 4 minutes

Favorite quote from the author:



In *Drive*, Daniel Pink, studied lawyer turned economist and government employee, takes us through the history of human motivation. Al Gore's former speechwriter explains how we've gone from being mostly intrinsically motivated (to survive) to jumping through hoops for carrots, while trying to avoid the sticks being dangled over our heads by bosses and employers.

Dan argues that it's time to go back, give workers autonomy, a purpose, and the freedom to master their craft, so we can go back to being as intrinsically motivated as we were as kids – an approach he calls motivation 3.0.

If you feel like you're chasing rewards, which somehow don't end up making you happier, these 3 lessons will give some insight into what it's really about:

1. The carrot and stick approach is dead.
2. Extrinsic motivation destroys intrinsic motivation.
3. Strive for the flow state in everything you do.

Want to find the motivation of your childhood again? I know I do, let's go!

Lesson 1: Both the carrot and the stick are dead – why extrinsic motivators don't work.

When the industrial age started, external rewards were all you needed to motivate workers. There was so much money to make, and such a great life to be lived, if only you had a little extra cash to pay for new conveniences, like TV, a radio, or pre-cooked dinners.

But as we're shifting from the industrial age to the information age, slapping on a bonus for fast delivery doesn't work any more – most people simply don't care.

Expenses to cover our basic needs, like rent and food, have never been cheaper, what we really value now is time. But that's not the only problem with external rewards and punishments.

If a car mechanic is promised a 50% salary bonus when he completes 200 repairs in 3 months, guess what he does? He tells more of his customers that their car needs repairs. The money becomes the driving force, and will lead him to do repairs where none are needed, and maybe even do a sloppy job, just to meet the quota. **Instead of leading to better and faster work, this creates dissatisfied customers and stressed workers.**

Even more intriguing, for tasks that require creative thinking, **adding financial incentives puts so much pressure on workers**, that they become incapable of performing the task. For example when given the task to fix a candle on the wall with a few tools, participants who were told to be given money for a fast solution performed a lot worse than those who weren't offered any money.

The more money is on the line, the worse it gets. Participants of a study tasked with hitting targets with tennis balls completely cracked under the pressure of potentially earning 5 months worth of pay.

Lesson 2: Over time, extrinsic rewards destroy our inner drive.

But wait a minute...aren't almost ALL jobs nowadays somewhat creative? Exactly! Of course this applies to developed countries more than to emerging ones, but eventually, we'll all end up with jobs that require us to only work with information, people and creatively solve problems.

Daniel Pink says that to succeed at this kind of work, what we really need is **intrinsic motivation**. You know, doing something for the sheer enjoyment of doing it. Either because we're passionate about it, have a ton of fun, or are just plain curious, like we were as kids.

I remember one day finding my baby sister propped up on the countertop, about to take her first sip – of the dishwashing soap. After wrestling it from her I couldn't help but notice how curious the green fluid looked, and couldn't blame her for trying.

But if you're like most adults, those days are long gone, because **you gradually lost your intrinsic motivation, as the world taught you to rely on extrinsic motivation over and over again.**

When kids are being asked to draw, once just to have fun, and once for a small reward, you tweak their reward system, and will find that the first group is happy to draw just for fun later as well, while the second refuses to draw without the incentive. We live in an “if-you-do-this-then-you-get-that” world, and it’s ruining our motivation.

Lesson 3: Find a way to get into the zone at work, and you’ll be a lot happier.

No wonder then, that 70% of Americans either hate or don’t feel fulfilled at their job. But what to do about it?

This is where motivation 3.0, as Dan calls it, comes in. **We must relight our inner desire to strive for perfection.** If we’re given a task that challenges our skills, without being overwhelming or boring, and are then allowed to autonomously work on it, we love to give our best.

Imagine playing a video game for hours, or noticing that time flies while you paint, read, or plan your honeymoon. This state is called flow, and while it can’t last forever, **it is important that you periodically end up in it while working.**

Keep that in mind while looking for the next job, talking to your boss about work, or figuring out the next task. Don’t settle for a boss who doesn’t understand this or a job who doesn’t require you to live up to your potential. Promise me that until you’re excited to go to work, because you can’t wait to perfect what you’re working on, you’ll keep looking.

Drive Review

In a short detour during writing this, I also watched Dan’s great TED talk about the subject. As I’m currently going through my own career finding process, motivation is becoming a huge question mark for me, and I want answers.

If you happen to work in a carrot and stick model, and find yourself not happy with where you are, then I highly recommend you give *Drive* or its summary on Blinkist a go.

[Read full summary on Blinkist](#)

[Get the book on Amazon](#)

[Learn more about the author](#)

What else can you learn from the blinks?

- The history of motivation 1.0 and motivation 2.0
- What Wikipedia can teach us about motivation 3.0
- When extrinsic incentives work

- Which goals can drive motivation, and which ones won't, based on following college graduates for decades
- How Google, Zappos and Whole Foods are changing the way we think about motivation at work
- Which steps managers can take to upgrade their business to motivation 3.0

Who would I recommend the Drive summary to?

The 29 year old young professional, who slowly starts to see his interest in company benefits, like a car, better insurance, and end-of-year bonuses decline, the 42 year old working mum with a passion for painting, who somehow can't work creatively anymore, since she started to sell her paintings, and anyone who struggles to find the time to work on something fun over the weekend.