

AUBREY C. DANIELS

Bringing Out the Best in PEOPLE

HOW TO APPLY THE
ASTONISHING POWER
OF POSITIVE
REINFORCEMENT

A New & Updated Edition of a Classic Bestseller!

Bringing Out the Best in People

Aubrey C. Daniels

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The classic bestseller on performance management is updated to reflect changes in today's working environment. When an employer needs to know how to gain maximum performance from employees, renowned behavioral psychologist--Aubrey Daniels is the man to consult. What has made Daniels the man with the answers? His ability to apply scientifically based behavioral stimuli to the workplace while making it fun at the same time. Now Daniels updates his ground-breaking book with the latest and best motivational methods, perfected at such companies as Xerox, 3M, and Kodak. All-new material shows how to: create effective recognition and rewards systems in line with today's employees want; Stimulate innovations and creativity in new and exciting ways; overcome problems associated with poorly educated workers; motivate young employees from the minute they join the workforce.

Bringing Out the Best in People Details

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From Reader Review Bringing Out the Best in People for online ebook

Valeria says

Very easy read and a great introduction to Performance Management and Organizational Behavior Management. Dr Daniels peppers the book with action items and real-life examples of the use of the science of behavior to enhance performance and quality of life in the workplace.

Barbro Kinnunen says

A book that gives you not just the words and thinking, but techniques and methods to apply in day to day life. About how you mirror things that happens around you and make you see your own impact on how others act and react. To work with the full scale from reinforcement to punishment and see the instant effects is so rewarding! Though you have to remember that it's all about a change in you.

Lenny says

Must read for any manager, new or old

Lukasz Nalepa says

This book gave me a headache. On one hand I still feel dissatisfied with the scientific approach to managing people presented mostly in the first half of the book, and on the other hand it seems that I agree with with a lot of conclusions suggestions presented in the second Half.

After reading about 1/3 of the book I was so repulsed that I immediately posted a review with one star. To be fair though I had to add another star after a while, and now it is a third time I do so. Lessons learned for me - never ever again post a review until you actually finish a book.

But as for the review itself.... I was biased a bit towards this book from the beginning. I knew that the presented approach is purely behavioral, and I disagree that that's all in terms of human relations and motivation. First part of the book deeply ensured me that this is the approach in this book indeed and because of that I would be very hesitant to recommend this book to anyone who deals on daily basis with the creative work. There are some specs of wisdom, there are some usefull tips, but i still have a feeling that this book was written to targer the different workforce that I have contact with. If you are running the cotton plantation, or a factory and you have to deal with repetitive, uninteresting tasks and/or uneducated workforce, you may find the approach presented in this book as useful. Or perhaps you are absolutely terrible at working with people - than you will find some progress here too. But in any other case... to it at your own "risk".

This book basically leaves the impression that it teaches you how to exploit people and how to treat them as

cattle or trained monkeys. This is in fact the problem with behavioral approach to human behavior at all (and that book depends on it heavily). Behavioral training is in my opinion good to develop and enforce habits... and not much beyond that. Behavioral approach in my opinion is not a viable way to treat people and their work on daily basis. Yes - it might work some time (or even often), but it is very hard to do it right, and in the end it requires constant attention and analysis of one's behavior. I wouldn't want to participate in such worker-manager relationship - not as a worker, nor as a manager.

This book was written originally in 1985, and heavily edited for the second and third edition and yet it completely ignores intrinsic motivation and self-determination theory that is being studied since 1970. Author deliberately puts other scientific and non-scientific approaches to the same basket, labeled "na-ah, some seasonal mambo-jumbo" right at the beginning of the book, and presenting "only mine work!" attitude. That self-righteous tone pisses me off in the first place, but the sole intent is bad as well. Intrinsic motivation is being studied from around 1971 and author had a lot of opportunities to incorporate that at least as some form of mention to correct that, since he also added additional chapters to next editions. He did not, and it is understandable, as it might render the entire concept presented in this book as wrong. Because of that I would at least recommend complementary study the Edward Deci experiments and what followed after (i.e. famous "Drive" written by Daniel H. Pink).

On the good side, there are some good hints, such as the fact, that positive reinforcements are better than negative, that not every one is motivated by the same things, and so on. They may drastically improve performance of a manager who does his job very poorly, but they are fairly common-sense (yes - I am using that term deliberately, exactly to counter the author's statements about common sense in the beginning of the book) to anyone who is interested in motivating people.

To be completely fair I need to add that some remarks here are very important. For once I could name the "reward the behavior not the results" attitude, and the notion that not all of us are incentivised in the same way, and if something is positive reinforcement for me, it does not necessarily mean that it will be to you. Also I completely agree with the notions about the annual performance review being used widely in the business today, and the overall criticism of what is happening in the HR nowadays.

In the end, I had to rate this book a stars. I disagree with the approach and philosophy used to get to the "dos" and "don'ts" in the book, but they are too important and too precise many times to ignore it.

But seriously, broaden your knowledge with the intrinsic motivation theory, after reading this book.

Jyotsna Batra says

Building a performance culture is never easy, be it in your team or your family (or just for yourself). This book explains on all 4 forms of reinforcement (positive, negative, punishment and extinction) and provides practical ways of using it. I absolutely loved the deep understanding of reinforcement which this book offered. It has never been clearer in my mind. And after gaining this understanding, you realize how these reinforcements have shaped you in your own life and start seeing it all around in interactions with other people. It is such an insightful book that it becomes a journey. At times it may seem like common sense, but I think this is the most exciting part about it. Reinforcement is so common sense that we ought to be doing it right all the time, but that's not how it is and we lose track of how we are impacting other people through it and vice versa. That's why I think it is a 'fundamental' read for everyone.

Lee Tyner says

Over Baked

I am a fan of Aubrey's Oops! book and decided to read this. Although it definitely has good information it's about 30% too long with unnecessary chapters and mightily redundant at times. Last, as a proofing note he should replace the overuse of "Because" with "Since" when opening a sentence or other declarative that isn't answering a question.

Kaitlynn says

Holy cow, this was a short book! There's no doubt that Aubrey Daniels is an accomplished and knowledgeable expert in behavior analysis/OBM. This book also demonstrates what a fine science communicator he is.

There are a few nit-picky places I disagree with, specifically stating that NCR can induce psychoses and stress, and that the 'Nintendo generation' are somehow altered from everyone else. For the first, it seems like his reasoning is more about indiscriminable contingencies than noncontingent ones, unless he's referring to superstitious behavior. Perhaps I am misunderstanding his point. For the second, I had to roll my eyes quite a bit. It isn't Millennials that are skewed by growing up with vidya games. It is everyone adjusting their behavior as new contingencies are introduced. Again, I don't think it was meant that way, but it came off more as "Kids these days want instant gratification because of video games" more than (what I feel is a more accurate and reasonable) "People's behaviors and expectations are changing with changes in technology." Boomers are not immune at all. Lastly, I know there's a lot of pushback against the use of reinforcement. Daniels addresses this, discussing what is and is not reinforcement and that it isn't bribing people with tangibles and monetary rewards. I would have liked to see a more thorough take-down of the objection based on "intrinsic motivation," as folks who espouse it often fail to see that reinforcement IS intrinsic motivation.

But again, those are nitpicks, and I don't think they are big enough ones to lose starts over. The book is written with passion and clarity, with great examples. For those not in behavior analysis, its a good introduction to the science of learning and how using that science is an improvement over the fads and fumbling methods so often used. For those already in the field, its a great model for how to speak during training, workshops, and dissemination.

Stephen Reed says

As someone who likes to take a scientific and analytical approach to everything that I do, Aubrey's way of breaking down behavioral management really resonated with me. Some of the book seems so simple and obviously, but it's actually not commonly applied in the workplace. Which is why this book(and others like it) are necessary for anyone managing people to read.

Even though it's nice to get some of the concepts hammered in, I will agree with other readers and say that it was slightly drawn out. I think the length is only justifiable when considering readers who are skeptical

about incorporating a scientific approach to performance management. But for someone like me who already agrees to the concept, I didn't find some of the chapters very enlightening or informative.

The theme of the book can be stated in just a few short lines. The only way to truly maximize performance is to tap into employee's discretionary effort. This extra effort can only be accessed by using often and immediate positive reinforcement.

I enjoyed reading this book and there was plenty of awesome nuggets of information that I will take with me as I move up the ladder and begin to manage people. If you are skeptical about behavioral science and want to learn more, I think that this book does a great job of making a clear cut argument for changing your mind.

Martha Gabler says

Excellent discussion of the many ways that positive reinforcement has been used in business settings to increase performance and create superior management teams. Most management change is based on giving instructions to "change," and does not include structured plans for providing the positive reinforcement necessary to create and sustain new behaviors.

Brent Dunn says

A lot of this seemed like common sense - of course you should reward people for doing well, everyone knows that, right? This book goes a little deeper, though, talking about how rewards motivate (or don't motivate) people. Some of his ideas go against a lot of what is commonly practiced in business. I've been trying out some of the principles in this book, and it has helped my team achieve success while greatly improving morale.

Malaga says

good people management type of book.

Robert Crow says

A fundamentally important book for learning about using positive practices, based on behavioral science, to improve learning and doing; particularly in work settings. A must read - and apply the lessons from it - for leaders in all settings.

Annmarie says

A must read if you supervise others.

Firas Alnaimi says

Very revealing book about motivating yourself and others.

Earl Grey Tea says

The Big Takeaway: Immediate certain positive feedback will reinforce the behaviors that a manager wants from their employees. Forget to encourage the desired activities and they will start to disappear. Employee of the Month is not a good motivator.

The author of this books does a good job of laying out the big picture of what techniques you can use to reinforce the behaviors you want to see from your employees. In the big picture it comes down to the following three factors in a manager's feedback:

- 1) Is it immediate or future?
- 2) Is it certain or uncertain?
- 3) Is it positive or negative?

From this list, if the feedback is immediate, certain, and positive, a manager has a greater chance of reinforcing the behavior they wish to see in the workplace. An end of year bonus is positive, but future and uncertain. The nice bump to the paycheck is always appreciated, but it there is no timely and direct connection to accomplishments of employee that year that management would like to see continued in the future. In contrast, a simple 'Good job' from management or colleagues when one sees the desired actions or results has a greater impact. However, this praise is not a one and done activity.

In addition to this, another item that stuck out to me was the Performance Matrix. My more analytical and objective mind gravitated towards this since it helps removes some of the subjectivity in end of quarter or year reviews. By listing out the type of activities and their quantity, an employee has a nice map of what they need to accomplish. Instead of leader or employee saying, "I feel that I *Exceeded Expectations* this quarter," both parties can clearly define the actions and behaviors needed receive a higher mark on the review.

Overall, the material in this book is high level and very broad. A bit more depth and detail in certain places could have been beneficial for internalizing this information. While there is a good presentation of material, I feel that many of these types of books are lacking in activities or exercise for the reader to help facilitate the application of this knowledge to their own personal situation.
