

## Optimistic Parenting...

**“That’s it. We need to start a reward chart...”**

Those fateful words have probably been uttered billions of times over the years, by billions of parents. Parents who are at the end of their tether, have lost their sanity, and are now (possibly, based on my experience) reliant on Gin.

Kids can manage to push us parents to the very limit, to the point of no return. They know by a very early age which buttons to push to get their desired reaction from us and we are often left feeling helpless and confused as to what our next move should be.

One of the ways us parents aim to rectify unwanted behaviour in our children is to gaffer tape them to the wall...only joking (but I have seen someone do it in a photo). We also use reward charts to praise the good behaviour and to reprimand the unwanted behaviour. That’s the theory anyway...

Most reward charts work on the basis that if your child get’s a certain amount of ticks or stickers on their chart by the end of the week, they get a treat or a surprise. Only something small but enough to incentivise them (aka: Bribe them) into trying their best and changing their ways.

I’ve tried many a reward chart system in my time...and I’m yet to find one that my kids actually give a stuff about (and that I can remember to complete ☹️) I’ve tried small prizes, like £1 pocket money at the end of the week, to larger, more elaborate treats (which take a lot longer to achieve) such as

a day out somewhere. Nothing has worked.

I actually think my eldest kid is past the point of a reward chart at home and a simple "every action has a consequence" attitude works best with him. A bit like with me, for example, "if I drink this 3rd Gin and tonic and the toddler gets up at 5am, I'm going to be cursing myself all day tomorrow". My middle one, well, he's a law unto himself most days, but the taking away of a loved and cherished item (yes, probably the iPad...shame on me) often has the desired effect with him. As for the toddler...who knows with him. He's an enigma. He couldn't give a damn about a sticker or a pound coin. I could be tempted by a reward chart for myself though. If I reach the illusive bottom of the washing basket I get a weekend at a spa hotel on my own, now that could work....

Today, I asked my middle one to not do something 8, yes 8, times whilst we were out. As did his Nanny. He didn't listen to either of us. No amount of "oh dear, this means no sticker on your chart today" is going to stop him from behaving like this. Sh\*t has got real with this one at the moment and short of sending him to boarding school, or checking myself into The Priory (just for a bit of peace and quiet and to have someone cook for me really, I don't think I need the counselling...yet) I'm all out of ideas.

How about you? Have you used reward charts?

Did they work for you?

A stack of weathered wooden planks, some with blue paint, serves as the background. A semi-transparent grey rectangular box is centered over the middle of the image, containing white text. The text is arranged in five lines, all in a bold, uppercase, sans-serif font. The overall image has a rustic, textured appearance.

**YOU HAVE TO MARVEL AT  
THE ENTHUSIASM AND  
OPTIMISM OF A PARENT  
STARTING A NEW  
REWARD CHART...**

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