

## Don't Eat the Marshmallow

[https://www.ted.com/talks/joachim\\_de\\_posada\\_says\\_don\\_t\\_eat\\_the\\_marshallow\\_yet?language=zh-tw](https://www.ted.com/talks/joachim_de_posada_says_don_t_eat_the_marshallow_yet?language=zh-tw)

I'm here because I have a very important message: I think we have found the most important **factor**<sup>1</sup> for success. And it was found close to here, Stanford.

**Psychology professor**<sup>2</sup> took kids that were four years old and put them in a room all by themselves. And he would tell the child, a four-year-old kid, "Johnny, I am going to leave you here with a **marshmallow**<sup>3</sup> for 15 minutes. If, after I come back, this marshmallow is here, you will get another one. So you will have two." To tell a four-year-old kid to wait 15 minutes for something that they like, is equivalent to telling us, "We'll bring you coffee in two hours."

Exact equivalent. So what happened when the professor left the room? As soon as the door closed... two out of three ate the marshmallow. Five seconds, 10 seconds, 40 seconds, 50 seconds, two minutes, four minutes, eight minutes. Some lasted 14-and-a-half minutes.

Couldn't do it. Could not wait. What's interesting is that one out of three would look at the marshmallow and **go like this**<sup>4</sup> ... Would look at it. Put it back. They would walk around. They would play with their **skirts**<sup>5</sup> and pants<sup>6</sup>.

That child already, at four, understood the most important principle for success, which is the ability to **delay gratification**<sup>7</sup>.

**Self-discipline**<sup>8</sup>: the most important factor for success.

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<sup>1</sup> 因素

<sup>2</sup> 心理學教授

<sup>3</sup> 棉花糖

<sup>4</sup> 像這樣做

<sup>5</sup> 裙子

<sup>6</sup> 褲子

<sup>7</sup> 指個體為達成特定目標而願意克制衝動，放棄立即的滿足，以換得未來更大滿足的心理特質

<sup>8</sup> 自我紀律

15 years later, 14 or 15 years later, **follow-up study**.<sup>9</sup>

What did they find? They went to look for these kids who were now 18 and 19.

And they found that 100 percent of the children that had not eaten the marshmallow were successful. They had good grades. They were doing wonderful. They were happy. They had their plans. They had good relationships with the teachers, students.

They were doing fine. **A great percentage**<sup>10</sup> of the kids that ate the marshmallow, they were in trouble. They did not **make it to university**<sup>11</sup>. They had bad grades. Some of them **dropped out**<sup>12</sup>. A few were still there with bad grades. A few had good grades.

I had a question in my mind: Would **Hispanic**<sup>13</sup> kids react the same way as the American kids?

So I went to **Colombia**<sup>14</sup>. And I **reproduced the experiment**<sup>15</sup>. And it was very funny. I used four, five and six years old kids. And let me show you what happened.

(Spanish)

So what happened in Colombia? Hispanic kids, two out of three ate the marshmallow; one out of three did not. This little girl was interesting; she ate the **inside**<sup>16</sup> of the marshmallow.

In other words, she wanted us to think that she had not eaten it, so she would get two. But she ate it. So we know she'll be successful. But we have to **watch**<sup>17</sup> her. She should not **go into banking**<sup>18</sup>, for example, or

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<sup>9</sup> 追蹤研究

<sup>10</sup> 極大百分比

<sup>11</sup> 上了大學

<sup>12</sup> 退學

<sup>13</sup> 西班牙的、西班牙及其他說西班牙語國家的

<sup>14</sup> 哥倫比亞，說西班牙語的國家

<sup>15</sup> 重做了實驗

<sup>16</sup> 內部

<sup>17</sup> 盯著、小心

<sup>18</sup> 從事銀行業

work at a cash register<sup>19</sup>. But she will be successful.

And this applies for everything. Even in sales<sup>20</sup>.

The sales person that -- the customer says, "I want that." And the person says, "Okay, here you are." That person ate the marshmallow. If the sales person says, "Wait a second. Let me ask you a few questions to see if this is a good choice." Then you sell a lot more. So this has applications<sup>21</sup> in all walks of life<sup>22</sup>. I end with -- the Koreans did this. You know what? This is so good that we want a marshmallow book<sup>23</sup> for children.

We did one for children. And now it is all over Korea. They are teaching these kids exactly this principle<sup>24</sup>. And we need to learn that principle here in the States, because we have a big debt<sup>25</sup>. We are eating more marshmallows than we are producing.

Thank you so much.

### Comprehension questions

1. What's the main idea of this talk?
2. What's the speaker's important message?
3. Where did they do the experiment?
4. Who did the experiment?
5. What age kids were being experimented?
6. How did they do the experiment?
7. What would the kids who didn't eat the marshmallow get?
8. What happened when the professor left the room?
9. What happened to those who didn't eat it?
10. What's the difference between these two groups of children?
11. How did they do the follow-up study?
12. What happened to those who ate the marshmallow?
13. What did the professor do with Hispanic kids?
14. What was the result of the experiment on Hispanic kids?
15. What did the little girl in the video do?
16. Why did she do this?
17. What kinds of job are not suitable for this little girl?
18. What did the Koreans want?

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<sup>19</sup> 在收銀台工作

<sup>20</sup> 銷售業

<sup>21</sup> 適用，應用，運用

<sup>22</sup> 各行業

<sup>23</sup> 以忍著不吃棉花糖這原則寫的書

<sup>24</sup> 原則

<sup>25</sup> 債務

19. Did the professor do it?
20. Why does the professor think they need the principle here in the states?

**Discussion questions**

1. What is the most important lesson you learned from this video?
2. Can you give more examples of delaying gratification?
3. How can you apply this principle to your daily life?
4. Would you teach your children about this? Why or why not?