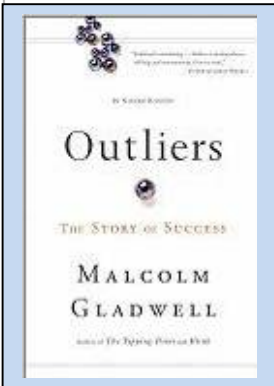


Outliers Malcolm Gladwell



Why read this book?

“The story of success is more complex – and a lot more interesting – than it initially appears...The lives of outliers – those people whose achievements fall outside normal experience – follow a peculiar and unexpected logic, and in making that logic plain Gladwell presents a fascinating and provocative blueprint for making the most of human potential. Outliers transforms the way we understand success” (inside flap)

Outliers also make us more aware of the undertows of culture as it relates to our education/effectiveness.

Key Quotes

“Success arises out of the steady accumulation of advantages: when and where you are born, what your parents did for a living, and what the circumstances of your upbringing were.” (P. 176)

“Practical intelligence – includes things like ‘knowing what to say to whom, knowing when to say it, and knowing how to say it for maximum effect.’” (P. 101)

“...No one – not rock stars, not professional athletes, not software billionaires, and not even geniuses – ever makes it alone.” (P. 115)

“Autonomy, complexity, and a connection between effort and reward – are, most people agree, the three qualities that work has to have if it is to be satisfying. It is not how much money we make that ultimately makes us happy between nine and five. It’s whether our work fulfills us.” (P. 149-150)

Most parents, one suspects, think that whatever disadvantage a younger child faces in kindergarten eventually goes away. BUT IT DOESN'T. The small initial advantage that the child born in the early part of the year has over the child born at the end of the year persists. It locks children into patterns of achievement and underachievement, encouragement and discouragement, that stretch on and on for years.” (P. 28)

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*Braeuler Consulting works with organizations to leverage Strategic Thinking and Execution Planning and we encompass many of the principles in these books into our **Four Decisions™** methodology and development of company's **One Page Strategic Plans**. Whatever system you decide to use, understand them fully, implement them slowly and completely and maintain the discipline and rhythm necessary to see concrete results. Employees tire of “Flavor of the Month” and thrive on organizational alignment, execution of plans and achievements that garner a sense of accomplishment.*

Part 1 – Opportunity – Stories of individual success

Outlier – noun

1. SOMETHING THAT IS SITUATED AWAY FROM OR CLASSED DIFFERENTLY FROM A MAIN OR RELATED BODY
2. A STATISTICAL OBSERVATION THAT IS MARKEDLY DIFFERENT IN VALUE FROM THE OTHERS OF THE SAMPLE (P. 3)

1882 exodus from Roseto Italy to Roseto Pennsylvania

Dr. Stewart Wolf investigated why there was no one under 55 who died of heart disease in Roseto, PA and the death rate was 30 to 35% lower than expected. People died of --- OLD AGE. WHY? This was a place that lay outside everyday experience, where the normal ruled did not apply. Roseto was an OUTLIER. (P. 7).

What determines the greats in Soccer, Hockey, and Football? The Matthew effect (Matthew 25:29)

Determine the eligibility date for the sports association and be born in the three months following that date! For Hockey that means being born in January, February or March. Relative age also is a strong predictor of success in school as the older kids are more advanced and get placed in advanced programs and as a result get more of those opportunities year after year. “Society prematurely writes off people as failures. We are too much in awe of those who succeed and far too dismissive of those who fail. And, most of all, we become much too passive. We overlook just how large a role we all play – and by “we” I mean society – in determining who makes it and who doesn’t.” (P. 32-33)

[The three advantages to consider are SELECTION, STREAMING, and DIFFERENTIATED EXPERIENCE]

[Greatness is often a combination of ability, opportunity, and utterly arbitrary advantage.]

The 10,000 – Hour Rule

- Amateur vs. good violinists = by age 20 the elite averaged 10,000 hours of practice vs. 4,000 hours.
- Amateur pianists vs. professional pianists = 2,000 hours vs. 10,000 hours
- The people at the top got there not from innate talent but from work – much, much harder work.
- And to get 10,000 hours takes about 10 years. And at early age this requires parents who encourage and support it and a lifestyle where you are not required to be working to make ends meet.
- The Beatles played together for 7 years before their American tour. They played a Hamburg strip club 6 days a week; then 106 nights for 5 + hours a night then 92 days the next trip. By the time they were ready to BURST on the scene they had performed live an estimated twelve hundred times.
- Bill Gates through a set of fortunate circumstances was able to work on programming nonstop for 7 consecutive years – IN 1968! He had access and opportunity [Dartmouth home of BASIC]
- Outliers a combination of extraordinary talent PLUS extraordinary opportunities.
- “The best time during the history of the United States for the poor boy ambitious for high business success to have been born was around the year 1835.” (P. 63 footnote)
- The ideal time to be born for the computer revolution was 1952 to 1958 (Bill Gates, Paul Allen, Steve Ballmer, Steve Jobs, Eric Schmidt, Bill Joy)

The trouble with geniuses

Lewis Terman’s ‘Termites’ – a group of genius children that ended up resembling the successes you would find if you put together a random group of children with similar backgrounds. In the end the distinguishing factor was family background.

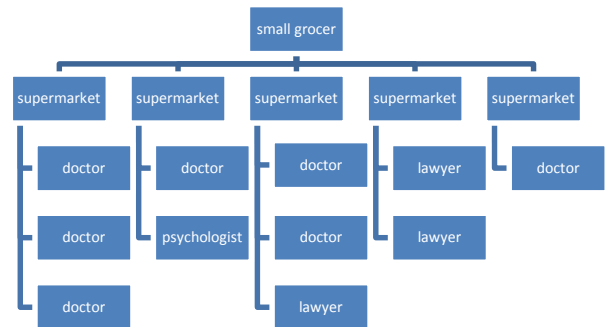
“The relationship between success and IQ works only up to a point. Once someone has reached an IQ of somewhere around 120, having additional IQ points doesn’t see to translate into any measurable real-world advantage.” (P. 79) (traits of personality and character then come into play.) Why Robert Oppenheimer (headed effort to develop nuclear bomb) changed the world, and Christopher Langan (IQ 195) never quite hit it big. [one key difference was PRACTICAL INTELLIGENCE - knowing what to say to whom, knowing when to say it, and knowing how to say it for maximum effect. (P. 101)]

Thresholds establish if you are “good enough” to participate and after that point there is little difference from an intelligence perspective. (See college entrance requirements section on pages 80-88)
IQ 130 vs. 90 – much better chance; 190 vs. 130 not as material. 130 is JUST GOOD ENOUGH.

The Three Lessons of Joe Flom

You will read his success story twice, first as a rags to riches story and then as a story to see where the outlier experienced the opportunities that made the difference, and it brings to light all the things learned so far to see the ‘rest of the story’ 😊.

1. The importance of being Jewish – scorned by the “white-shoe firms” Flom gained invaluable experience in hostile takeovers and litigation – things not touched by the elite firms so that when these became critical areas of the law, who had the expertise and reputation for this kind of work? “When the world changed he was ready. He didn’t triumph over adversity. Instead, what started out as adversity ended up being an opportunity.” (P. 128)
2. Demographic luck – The decade of the 30’s is what is called a “demographic trough”, a generation markedly smaller than both the one that preceded it and the one that followed (p. 134). There is great infrastructure and little **demand so treated better, wooed more**, smaller classes, greater opportunity. Opportunity was there for those WILLING TO WORK HARD.
3. The garment industry and meaningful work – growing up in homes where meaningful work was practiced. “If you work hard enough and assert yourself, and use your mind and imagination, you can shape the world to your desires.” (P. 151) “Jewish doctors and lawyers did not become professionals in spite of their humble origins they became professionals because of their humble origins.” (P. 153)



Part Two – Legacy

Group success (and failure)

Feuds: Howards and the Turners – Harlan Kentucky; Hatfield/McCoy – West Virginia; French/Eversole – Perry County, Kentucky; Martin/Tolliver – Rowan County, Kentucky. Gunfights, ambushes, attacks, death.

Feud – one family fighting another; Pattern – Lots of families fighting in identical little towns up and down the same mountain range.

Culture of Honor – a world where a man’s reputation is at the center of his livelihood and self-worth. (P.167)

Why this area? Because the original inhabitants settled overwhelmingly by immigrants from one of the world’s most ferocious cultures of honor. They were “Scotch-Irish”. (P. 167)

“Cultural legacies are powerful forces. They have deep roots and long lives. They persist, generation after generation, virtually intact, even as the economic and social and demographic conditions that spawned them have vanished, and they play such a role in directing attitudes and behavior that we cannot make sense of our world without them.”
(P. 175)

Cohen and Nisbett experiment on the culture of honor to measure precisely reaction to insults. There was clear proof that where you came from affected your reaction. Northerners had almost no effect. But if you came from the south you were itching for a fight. (P. 173)

Korean Air turned itself from worst to best only when it acknowledged the importance of its cultural legacy. (P. 182). Accidents generally involve consecutive human errors that in themselves are minor but in combination lead to disaster. “Combating mitigation has become one of the great crusades in commercial aviation in the past fifteen years.” (P. 197)

Geert Hofstede Dimensions – individualism-collectivism scale (1970’s) and Power Distance Index (PDI) – attitudes toward hierarchy. He distinguished cultures according to how much they expect individuals to look after themselves.

“Our ability to succeed at what we do is powerfully bound up with where we’re from, and being a good pilot and coming from a high-power distance culture is a difficult mix.” (P. 209)

David Greenburg from Delta took over flight operations for Korean Air.

1. Understanding of what it really means to be a good pilot
2. Evaluated the English language skills of pilots (English is the language of the aviation world)
3. Provided pilots an alternate identity to counter the roles dictated by cultural legacy
4. Did not fire people but gave them opportunity to transform their relationship to work

Math tests

Number naming systems in Western and Asian languages are constructed with significant differences enabling Asian children to learn to count much faster and American children are already a year behind by the age of five. (Example: we say three fifths; the Chinese say 'out of five parts, take three')

There is also the suggestion that being good at math may also be rooted in a group's culture. (P. 231) and it may have to do with rice paddies. A rice paddy is about the size of a hotel room. "Throughout history...the people who grow rice have always worked harder than almost any other kind of farmer." (P. 233) Compare peasants in 18th century Europe who worked maybe 1200 hours a year to the peasant in Southern China who worked 3000 hours a year. (But it rewards effort, it is complex work and it is autonomous.)

To be good at math you have to be good at concentrating and sitting still long enough and focus on completing a task. As an old Chinese proverb says "no one who can rise before dawn three hundred sixty days a year fails to make his family rich." (P. 249)

KIPP (Knowledge Is Power Program)

KIPP is a public Junior High School in New York City. Students are chosen by lottery. Their class size averages 35 students. 84% of the students are performing at or above their grade level in Math (vs. 16% for all middle school students in the South Bronx). "KIPP is an organization that has succeeded by taking the idea of cultural legacies seriously." (P. 252) School starts at 7:25 until 5:00 PM, Saturdays from 9:00 to 1:00 and in the summer from 8:00 to 2:00. They spend 50 – 60% more time learning than the traditional public school student.

19th century educational reforms was concerned with too much schooling resulting in eliminating Saturday classes, shortening the school day, lengthening vacations. Western agriculture leaves fields fallow, empty in winter, and slower pace in summer creating a legacy on learning patterns very different from Asian cultures. And then socioeconomics come into play. All levels learn well while in school. "Virtually all of the advantage that wealthy students have over poor students is the result of differences in the way privileged kids learn while they are NOT in school." (P. 258)

"The school year in the US is, on average, 180 days long. The South Korean school year is 220 days long. The Japanese school year is 243 days long." (P. 260)

Conclusions

"To build a better world we need to replace the patchwork of lucky breaks and arbitrary advantages that today determine success – the fortunate birth dates and the happy accidents of history – with a society that provides opportunities for all." (P. 268)

A key thought from the book is "PRACTICING: that is, purposefully and single-mindedly playing their instruments with the intent to get better" (p. 39). You need to get in your 10,000 hours with intentional practice.

Success:

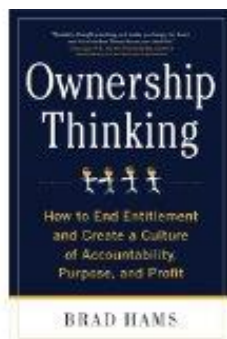
Intrinsic talent may be necessary, but it is not sufficient.

Success is a combination of factors, including culture, opportunity, “practical skills,” and plenty of hard, hard work that includes much intentional practice¹

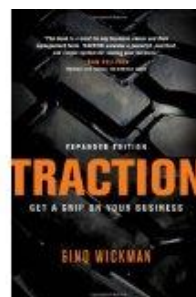
Actions to take from the book

- What is one thought that stirs you the most from the review of Outliers?
- What action does this thought drive me to do?
- By when?

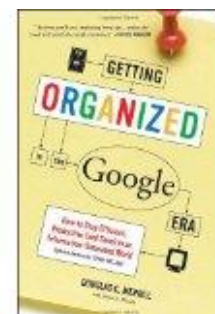
Friday August 28th



Friday September 25th



Friday October 16th



¹ Outliers summary by Randy Mayeux, Firstfridaybooksynopsis.com. P. 3