
The In-Depth Book Analysis of Outliers by Malcolm Gladwell

Gladwell opens Chapter Two by introducing the 10,000-Hour Rule: the matter of practicing a specific task for 20 hours a week for 10 years. During this chapter, he gives multiple examples of successful people who have completed the 10,000-Hour Rule. One very well-known person Gladwell used was Bill Gates. During highschool, Bill Gates discovered a new club about computers, and immediately he fell in-love. After he found the computer room, he practically lived there, so he tons of hours on the computers. Eventually his computer club lost funding so they had to shut down, but some buddies and him started going to the computer lab at the University of Washington in the evening. Later on, Gates found out about a company called ISI, and they needed someone to work on some software. With the combination of all the events in his life, he received more than enough hours to be successful with computers, all because he had multiple opportunities for extra practice. Towards the end of this chapter, Gladwell restates the idea of birthdays being a big factor to success, and how just like many others, Bill Gates was born during a time period that had many great opportunities.

Extension

Many believe that you practice once you're good at something, but that's not how it works. It's what you do that makes you good. For example, The Beatles are amazing at music because they were forced to adapt to play for hours on end, and they enjoyed it. Of course they had their ups and downs, but they liked playing their music. Now if they were told to craft chairs for hours and hated it, they most likely wouldn't become skillful crafters. The same thing goes for Bill Gates. Gates loved programming computers so he got his hours; however, if he were forced into athletics, he wouldn't have been able to enjoy computers and become who he is today.

Chapter Three

Summary

In Chapter Three, The Trouble with Geniuses, Part I, Malcolm Gladwell mainly discusses divergence and convergence tests and their importance. He starts this discussion by including a story about two men. The first named Christopher Langan, who is considered by many to be the smartest man in America. In grade school, he studied French, Russian, Philosophy and math during his summer. He also scored perfectly on the SAT. The second man is a student names Poole from top British High School. His creativity boosts his IQ level since his mind can bounce from one place to another just trying to answer the simple question of what a blanket can be used for. The main reason why Gladwell used these two people as examples is because they are two different people with high IQs, but would both of a drastic difference in the scores of the divergence and convergence tests. The divergence test mostly focuses on testing your general intelligence while convergence tests focuses on testing your mind and creativity. Both tests are equally important for testing IQ because the higher you score on these tests, the more likely you will receive a better education, which will lead to you making more money, and may lead to you living a longer, healthier life.

Extension

Terman's Termites was a special group of handpicked people with higher than average IQ. Terman believed that this specific group of people would grow up to be Nobel Peace Prize winners, but none of them did. Terman's flaw with his Termites is that once they were grown, they weren't out of the ordinary. Most of the Termites made a good income, but none of them have been award winners. Terman believed that there was a relationship between intelligence and success; however, his Termites proved him wrong.

Chapter Four

Summary

In Chapter Four, Gladwell continues with Langan's story, but he also introduces a new person named Robert Oppenheimer. Oppenheimer is a physicist who led to the development of a nuclear bomb in WWII. Langan and Oppenheimer have a very similar story. Both men had left college, one due to probation, and one due to dropping out. Just like Langan, Oppenheimer had an incredible mind as a child. Unlike Langan, though, Oppenheimer had received a college education. Also, Oppenheimer had more of a sagacious attitude than Langan, which probably would mean he wouldn't have been as successful. The main difference between these two is probably their childhoods. Oppenheimer had parents who cultivated his passions and pushed him to learn new things and meet new people. Langan, on the other hand, had parents who were either too busy or just not involved in helping him build on skills. If both men had parents who had been there to encourage their younger selves, then they would have achieved much more in life.

Extension

The difference between concerted cultivation and accomplishment of natural growth can greatly affect a child's development. More successful families tend to use concerted cultivation, which means they were more involved with improving their children's skills. The main reason why more middle and upper class families use concerted cultivation is because they have the extra time to spend with their kids while the lower or working class spend all their time at their jobs making money for their family. The poorer families use the parenting style of accomplishment of natural growth, which means the parents leave the options open for their children and allow them to choose what club or sport to do. Personally, I believe concerted cultivation is the better parenting style because those children are better off in the future when they enter higher educational levels and have already experienced what it's like to be pushed.

Chapter Five

Summary

In Chapter Five, Gladwell starts with a story about a man named Joe Flam. He introduces him by talking about his story and how being Jewish made it difficult for him to enter large law firms. All of his fellow Jewish lawyers were faced the problem of being discriminated from their peers. However in 1970 and 1980, there was a large increase in mergers, so all the Jewish lawyers that were pushed out of the big law firms took over. In *The Outliers*, Malcolm Gladwell states,

“Buried in that setback was a golden opportunity.” Joe Flom and his Jewish colleagues all experienced a wonderful opportunity after being forced out of law practices. More reasons to why Flom was so successful in the law field is because he was bestowed opportunities, became a Jewish lawyer in New York at the perfect time -- offered more options -- and his religious views helped him know important lessons to being successful.

Extension

“Hard work is a prison sentence only if it has no meaning” is stated in Chapter Four of *The Outliers* and is incorporated throughout the entire passage. It is mainly related to how Joe Flom and the other Jewish lawyers all worked hard in college and law school but weren't allowed to work in successful law firms just because of their faith. Even the talented Jewish lawyers were pushed out of major firms and forced to take any job they could get. Flom himself was diligent, intelligent, and skilled with law; however, he still wasn't accepted in the legal profession due to his religious standpoint.

Chapter Six

Summary

Gladwell begins Chapter Six by introducing the culture of honor in the Appalachian Mountains. The culture of honor is a culture where people either try and avoid offending others, or depended on being feared. Both ways are used to help protect their homes and livestock. Gladwell later explains he believes many Appalachian people use the culture of honor is because of their cultural legacy. Cultural legacy explains why many people act how they do, since that's how their ancestors did it and that's how they were taught. Many believe that cultural traits influence success and failure. Mainly because of practices that have been passed down through the ages and are continued to be used. Cultural legacy also helps people understand their past so they can understand the future.

Extension

Many peoples ancestors believed in intimidating others to protect their personal belongings. However, mine is much different. My ancestors cultural legacy was believing you had to succeed alone and no one is there to help you. I know that doesn't seem very great, and actually sounds quite negative, but this can honestly help with success in my family. Generations before me have taken great strides from believing everyone only cared about themselves. Honestly, it's kind of true, but the problem is that people are there to help you improve and become great. Past generations in my family were probably provided multiple different opportunities, but thought the person trying to help them was only doing so to get something in return.

Chapter Seven

Summary

Malcolm Gladwell opens this chapter with a story the Korean Air flight 801 crash. He explained why this crash was significant and that there are many others like this in the Korean airlines.

After so many crashes, though, the Korean Air pilots had to be willing to change so they could create after airfare. To do so, they brought in trainers to retrain the under-trained. The experts taught the new crew members how to effectively communicate with each other. Since the captains and officers were willing to change, they fixed the Korean Air reputation and made it as safe as all the other airlines.

Extension

Gladwell believes that you must put your cultural legacy behind in order to communicate with others effectively. Personally, I agree with him. That doesn't mean you must lose all your views, but it means you might have to put some aside to help keep others safe and make things easier. Sometimes not expressing your opinions can be helpful because miscommunication can lead to mistakes and enough mistakes can lead to something fatal.

Chapter Eight

Summary

In this Chapter, Gladwell creates a connection between the 10,000-Hour Rule with wet-rice farmers in Asia. He starts this idea by introducing the hard work wet-rice farmers put into their farms including 3,000 hours a year. Rice work takes a great deal of effort and devotion, just like the 10,000-Hour Rule. Both tasks require complete attention and great dedication to succeed. Gladwell states in this chapter that the more often you work, the more you will stay motivated, which will help you succeed at many things, including math, programming, or even rice farming.

Extension

Gladwell believes that one's math skills aren't based solely on their comprehension, but on different cultural ways. For instance, Chinese schools teach their young a much simpler and easier way to add numbers. Instead of changing the words into numbers in their head, they add by saying "three-tens-seven and two-tens-two, and the necessary equation is right there" (Gladwell 229). Asians tend to have an advantage in math because they literally say things like out of ten parts, take six, which makes it much easier for the human brain to understand and visualize. I suggest America's education system should change parts of their math language so people are able to apprehend equations more efficiently. By doing this, the American school system will be able to excel in math since students will be able to quickly translate numbers and will want to push themselves to learn more.

Chapter Nine

Summary

Chapter Nine, Marita's Bargain, in *The Outliers* discusses the effect of having a long summer vacation for both upper-class students and lower-class students. Of course having a rest period is important for students, but what really affects how students succeed is by how they spend their rest period. Upper-class students tend to join new clubs, and are pushed to expand their knowledge. Alex Williams is a great example of the advantages of an upper-class student. "He gets taken to museums and gets enrolled in special programs and goes to summer camp,

where he takes classes. When he's bored at home, there are plenty of books to read" (Gladwell 258). Lower-class students, on the other hand, don't have these types of opportunities to surpass their peers. Often times, they lose some of their knowledge because of not having those new learning resources that the wealthier kids get. In this chapter, Gladwell also states, "Success follows a predictable course." This quote applies to many of the outliers in this book; however, it most likely pertains to Marita and Chris Langan. Mainly because both people follow a strict schedule religiously. They do this so they can be more successful and receive as much education as they can.

Extension:

Gladwell believes that the American school system has too long of summers, so it affects the school tests. I completely disagree with him. Schools' summer vacation isn't too long because kids need to be kids too. However, if schools provided a free class once a week, that wasn't mandatory, to review everything taught in the previous year it would help students with their education tremendously. Sometimes students need a long summer so they can learn new things in a new environment. Of course some people can't afford summer camps, or trips to museums, but if the school offered a class during the summer to help students improve their education, it would continue to boost understanding and test scores.

Introduction and Epilogue

Summary

Gladwell starts his book off by introducing a small town of Roseto. Roseto is a small town that had a large mystery to scientists for years. For some unknown reason, Roseto had incredibly low death rates compared to any other town around it. Many people began to research this small town to see why it's health rates were such an outlier. Researchers created many hypotheses including diet and exercise, but everything failed. Eventually, one researcher named Stewart Wolf claimed that it's probably their atmosphere that causes great health. The town's family culture and friendly community are what kept these people healthy. At the end of the book, Malcolm Gladwell states, "The outlier, in the end, is not an outlier at all." What he means by this is that outliers are normal people just like everyone else, but they were given extraordinary opportunities. The Roseto Mystery and The Beatles are great examples of what Gladwell means. Both were just an ordinary town and band, but were offered an extreme opportunity to succeed. Roseto was given a new chance to have a healthy atmosphere, and the Beatles were given a rare chance to perform and practice and become the band they are today.