

Are 10,000 hours really enough to become an expert?

Upcoming episode

What does it take to succeed enormously? Not what you think, argues Malcolm Gladwell. A walk through the ideas in *Outliers* – 10,000 hours, birth months, opportunity and cultural legacy – and why the book's most famous rule is misread.

THE BOOK THIS EPISODE IS ABOUT

Outliers: The Story of Success – Malcolm Gladwell

2008

MAIN TOPICS

- The 10,000-hour rule, and what the researcher behind the number actually thinks
- Why birth month decides who becomes a hockey player
- Bill Gates, the Beatles and the opportunity that came at the right time
- The Matthew effect – advantages that accumulate
- Cultural legacy, plane crashes and rice paddies
- Why intelligence has a threshold
- The criticism of the book

QUESTIONS THIS EPISODE ANSWERS

- Is the 10,000-hour rule true?
- What does Gladwell mean when he says success is accidental?
- Why are so many elite athletes born early in the year?
- What is the Matthew effect?
- How much does intelligence matter for success?
- What is the criticism of *Outliers*?

KEY POINTS

- People who succeed enormously have almost always been handed an opportunity they did not create.
- Small early advantages become large later advantages, because they buy more practice.
- 10,000 hours is not a threshold. The researcher behind the number has said it is misread.
- Culture and upbringing shape how we work more than we like to think.
- The book argues with examples, not data. That is both its strength and its problem.

SOURCES AND REFERENCES

- Malcolm Gladwell – *Outliers: The Story of Success* (2008)
- K. Anders Ericsson – *Peak* (2016), on what the 10,000-hour rule actually rests on

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