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Developing Talent in Young People: Messages for the Middle Years



Professor Roger Moltzen
Faculty of Education
University of Waikato, Hamilton, NEW ZEALAND
rim@waikato.ac.nz

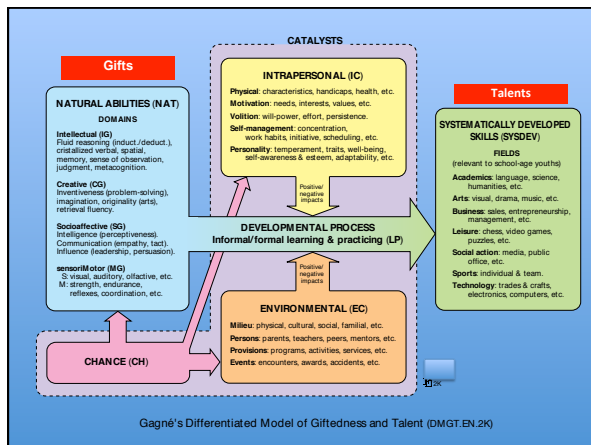
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Dimensions of Talent



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Is there a Recipe for Success?

Multipliers: How the Best Leaders Make Everyone Smarter
Liz Wiseman and Greg Mckeown

The Genius in All of Us: Why Everything You've Been Told About Genetics, Talent, and IQ Is Wrong
David Shenk

Talent Is Overrated: What Really Separates World-Class Performers from Everybody Else
Geoff Colvin

The Talent Code: Greatness Isn't Born. It's Grown. Here's How
Daniel Coyle

Overachievement: The New Science of Working Less to Accomplish More
John Eliot

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Is there a Recipe for Success?



Intelligence and the Brain: Solving the Mystery of Why People Differ in IQ and How a Child Can Be a Genius
Dennis Garlick

Cracking Creativity: The Secrets of Creative Genius
Michael Michalko

Bounce: Mozart, Federer, Picasso, Beckham, and the Science of Success
Matthew Syed

The Winner's Brain: 8 Strategies Great Minds Use to Achieve Success
Jeff Brown and Mark Fenske

The Winner's Bible: Rewire Your Brain for Permanent Change
Kerry Spackman

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From Gifted Child to Talented Adult: What Seems to Make a Difference?



Good genes help

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"You can rise above someone with better genes. If they are born taller and quicker, you may have better luck ... Or despite no better luck ... practice harder throughout life. If they have a better brain, you will have to be very fortunate to be handed better environments throughout life" (Flynn, 2006)

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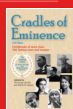
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Birth order appears to exert some influence

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From Gifted Child to Talented Adult: What Seems to Make a Difference?



.... of 314 eminent personalities of the 20th century they found 30 percent were firstborn

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- Of the first 23 US astronauts, 21 were first-born
- Over half the US presidents have been first-born
- A large Norwegian study suggests eldest children are more successful at school and work (Kristensen & Bjerkedal, 2006)
- First-borns represent 50% or more of active scientists
- Over 50% of all the notable creators of the 20th century were first-born children
- First-borns are over-represented among Nobel Prize winners
- First-borns are overrepresented amongst CEOs, surgeons and MBAs (Simonton, 1999; 2009)

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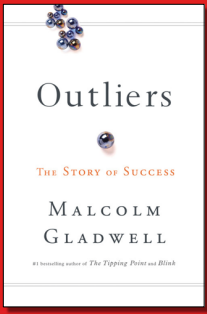

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**Luck and chance factors can
play a part**

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What Seems to Make a Difference?

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From Gifted Child to Talented Adult:
What Seems to Make a Difference?



Outliers are, "... people who do not fit into our normal understanding of achievement."




Their success is about:

- ✓ practice – typically about 10,000 hours, or 20 hours of work a week for 10 years
- ✓ being the right person, in the right place and at the right time

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Zeitgeist (spirit of the age or spirit of the time)
– history's leaders are the product of the social circumstances at the time

Vs

The Great Man Theory – history can be largely explained by the impact of "great men", or heroes

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What Seems to Make a Difference?

"I'm a great believer in luck, and I find the harder I work the more I have of it." (Thomas Jefferson)

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Dr. Wayne R. Hargrave & Hilda

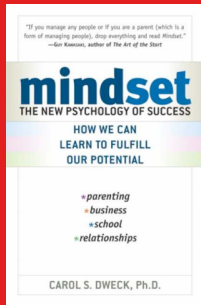


How ability is perceived could be important

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an *entity* view



Intelligence/ability is a fixed or stable trait, and unevenly distributed among individuals

You-either-have-it-or-you-don't and "it" can be accurately judged by others *and* "it" can't be improved or increased much

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an *incremental* view



Intelligence consists of an ever expanding repertoire of skills and knowledge that can be increased through effort and figuring out successful strategies

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an *entity* view



Goal: To perform well and look smart, even if sacrificing learning (since negative evaluations are signs that I am not smart enough to succeed and there's only a fixed amount of smartness)

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an *entity* view



- Failure often results in "Why bother? I'm just not smart enough to do any better."
- "Only a few students can get top marks"
- "I just can't get this."
- Or externalise — poor teacher, unfair or limiting conditions

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From Gifted Child to Talented Adult: What Seems to Make a Difference?



**An inquiring mind is a key
disposition**

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From Gifted Child to Talented Adult: What Seems to Make a Difference?



"Although my parents were not well educated themselves they valued learning — both formal and informal. We were taught to enquire. We were always encouraged to find out for ourselves." (Gifted Adult)

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From Gifted Child to Talented Adult: What Seems to Make a Difference?



"Your best chance is to fall in love with ideas, or intelligent books, or some intellectual pursuit, thereby building a cognitive gymnasium within - one that you visit daily." (Flynn, 2006)

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"My parents always treated my two sisters ... and me as equals whose opinions were just as valid as theirs ... [They] always encouraged us to have our own opinions and rarely gave us advice unless we asked for it." (Richard Branson)

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**There is definitely no substitute
for persistence, perseverance
and hard work**

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From Gifted Child to Talented Adult: What Seems to Make a Difference?



Outliers are, "... people who do not fit into our normal understanding of achievement."

Their success is about:

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an *incremental* view



- Failure encourages more practice and study
- Failure → work harder, don't give up
- Seek out challenges
- "Making mistakes is part of learning"
- "The harder you work at something, the better you will be at it"
- Strategy after difficulty → more effort, strategy seeking

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"[they] are characterised not only by high intellectual traits, but also by persistence of motive and effort, confidence in their abilities, and a great strength or force of character."

"That high but not the highest intelligence, combined with the greatest degree of persistence, will achieve greater eminence than the highest degree of intelligence with somewhat less persistence." (Cox, 1926).

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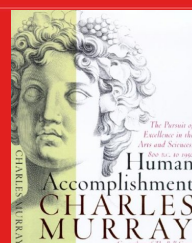
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"After curiosity, this quality of concentrated attention is what creative individuals mention most often as having set them apart ... Without this quality, they could not have sustained the hard work, the 'perspiration'" (Csikszentmihalyi, 1996).

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From Gifted Child to Talented Adult: What Seems to Make a Difference?



**Achievement is enhanced by
finding a sense of purpose**

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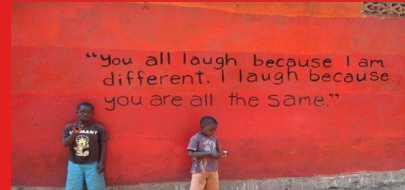


"A major stream of human accomplishment is fostered by a culture in which the most talented believe that life has a purpose and that the function of life is to fulfil that purpose."

"A person with a strong sense of *this is what I have been put on earth* to do is more likely to accomplish great things than someone who doesn't." (Murray, 2003)

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From Gifted Child to Talented Adult: What Seems to Make a Difference?



Often the realisation of talent requires resilience, daring to be different and determining one's own measure of success

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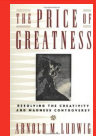
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Ludwig (1995) investigated the link between mental illness and exceptional creative achievement and studied over 1,000 extraordinary individuals from the 20th century from the arts, sciences, public office, the military, exploration, sport, philanthropy, business, and social activism.

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About 20% were described as decidedly odd, peculiar, or eccentric as children. (Ludwig, 1995)

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**From Gifted Child to Talented Adult:
What Seems to Make a Difference?**



**Schools and teachers can play
a critical part**

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**Nurturing Talent with the Potential to Change the
World**

- Value difference and support those who dare to be different and opinionative

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Some Characteristics of Creative and Innovative Achievers

- they prefer the margins and can resist joining 'the mainstream'
- they march to their own drummer
- they are not all-rounders but rather selective consumers
- they are opinionative and with a strong sense of social justice
- they demonstrate high levels of ethical and aesthetic awareness
- they may challenge authority, resist routine and prefer alternative ways of learning
- they can be extremely energetic and can persevere in the face of obstacles
- they have a tenacity of purpose and a 'divine discontent'
- they have an insatiable appetite for knowledge, a rage to master and a desire to excel
- they can be perfectionists
- sometimes there's an impatience with slow and/or conservative thinkers

(Moltzen, 2012)

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World**

Csikszentmihalyi (1997) paints a rather cynical picture of the school experiences of creative achievers, suggesting that frequently school had little effect, or in fact threatened to extinguish the interest and curiosity that had been developed and nurtured beyond the school gates.


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Nurturing Talent with the Potential to Change the World


- Avoid narrow stereotyping of success

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“A musician must make music, an artist must paint, a poet must write, if [one] is to be ultimately happy ... This tendency might be phrased as the desire to become more and more what one is, to become everything one is capable of becoming.” (Maslow, 1943).



What a man can be,
he must be!
~ Abraham Maslow ~
Positive Psychology Wiki.com

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Nurturing Talent with the Potential to Change the World

- Do not overvalue well-roundedness and balance or undervalue persistence and perseverance

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“But while valedictorians may not change the world, they run it and run it well, since they are the best of the mainstream. They obey rules, work hard and like learning, but they're not the mould breakers. They work best within the system and aren't likely to.” (Arnold, 1995).



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"They're extremely well rounded and successful, personally and professionally ... but they've never been devoted to a single area in which they put all their passion. That is not usually a recipe for eminence." (Arnold, 1995).

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Nurturing Talent with the Potential to Change the World

"Are schools rewarding the right people, as the highest achievers? If the goal is hard-working, productive, adaptable citizens ... then [we] are recognising precisely the correct group ... Whether this is what schools should reward is, in the end, a question of values." (Arnold, 1995).

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- Support the development of Critical, Creative and Caring Thinking

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Nurturing Talent with the Potential to Change the World

- Give licence to question, challenge and to be contentious

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Sowing and Nurturing the Seeds of Success



"You know, the teachers were fantastic. They encouraged us to be contentious. They encouraged us to ask questions. We were never afraid to disagree. We knew we wouldn't be punished if we did and no one was. We were disciplined, we had to be, but the teacher never felt that he was going to be put off his schedule because we were asking questions." (Gifted Adult)

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Nurturing Talent with the Potential to Change the World



- Don't quash intrinsic motivation

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- Offer real challenge

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"My science teacher has introduced Jonathon-free times. During these times I am not allowed to put my hand up. The teacher says I intimidate the other students and they won't volunteer answers because of my knowledge. Hello, what am I doing here then? My parents should get a refund on their taxes."

Jonathon 14

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"Mr T really pushes us. I really didn't like it at first and didn't like getting things wrong. But I realise I am learning far more and coping better with not succeeding all the time. It's probably a good thing because up until now things came pretty easy to."

Thomas 15


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- Model and encourage creative and divergent expression, and risk-taking.

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- Provide 'alternative' examples and 'different' role models


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- Make it safe to exist on the margins

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“ My best to years at school were at intermediate school. I felt totally safe to be myself. I even played a woman in a class play - something I would never have done in any other class. If is hadn’t been for this class and this teacher, school probably would have robbed me of my creativity. I thought university would be better in this regard - it was not.”

Gifted Adult

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Nurturing Talent with the Potential to Change the World

“I am different and I am happy to be different. Both my school teachers and university professors tried to get me to conform. I choose to live on the fringes. Bring me into the mainstream and I lose my creative edge.”

Gifted Adult


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Nurturing Talent with the Potential to Change the World

Provide optimal experiences

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Nurturing Talent with the Potential to Change the World

“I can trace my career as a writer back to one teacher, who said to me, “J...., I can see you are a writer.” That same teacher was responsible for getting my first story published. I was eight years old at the time.”

Gifted Adult

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"I had my own art exhibition at 11 years of age. It was in the school foyer but it could have been the Tate. I think at that point I knew that to be an artist was a legitimate pursuit."

Gifted Adult

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Thank You

Professor Roger Moltzen
Dean
Faculty of Education
University of Waikato, Hamilton, NEW ZEALAND
rim@waikato.ac.nz

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