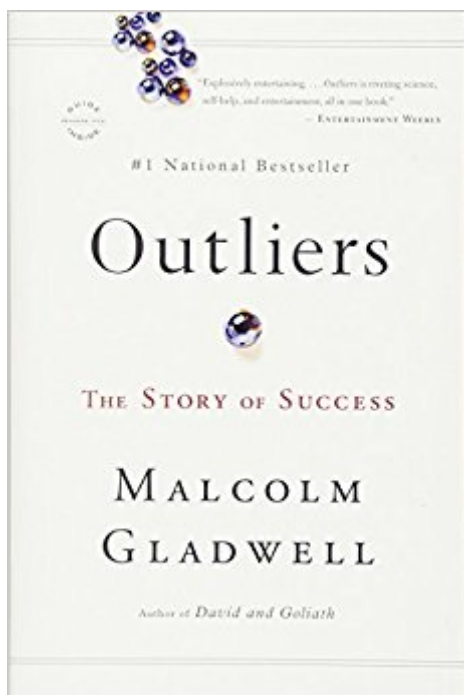


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Outliers: The Story Of Success



Synopsis

In this stunning new book, Malcolm Gladwell takes us on an intellectual journey through the world of "outliers"--the best and the brightest, the most famous and the most successful. He asks the question: what makes high-achievers different? His answer is that we pay too much attention to what successful people are like, and too little attention to where they are from: that is, their culture, their family, their generation, and the idiosyncratic experiences of their upbringing. Along the way he explains the secrets of software billionaires, what it takes to be a great soccer player, why Asians are good at math, and what made the Beatles the greatest rock band. Brilliant and entertaining, *Outliers* is a landmark work that will simultaneously delight and illuminate.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Best of the Month, November 2008: Now that he's gotten us talking about the viral life of ideas and the power of gut reactions, Malcolm Gladwell poses a more provocative question in *Outliers*: why do some people succeed, living remarkably productive and impactful lives, while so many more never reach their potential? Challenging our cherished belief of the "self-made man," he makes the democratic assertion that superstars don't arise out of nowhere, propelled by genius and talent: "they are invariably the beneficiaries of hidden advantages and extraordinary opportunities and cultural legacies that allow them to learn and work hard and make sense of the world in ways others cannot." Examining the lives of outliers from Mozart to Bill Gates, he builds a convincing case for how successful people rise on a tide of advantages, "some deserved, some not, some earned, some just plain lucky." *Outliers* can be enjoyed for its bits of trivia, like why most pro hockey players

were born in January, how many hours of practice it takes to master a skill, why the descendants of Jewish immigrant garment workers became the most powerful lawyers in New York, how a pilot's culture impacts their crash record, how a centuries-old culture of rice farming helps Asian kids master math. But there's more to it than that. Throughout all of these examples--and in more that delve into the social benefits of lighter skin color, and the reasons for school achievement gaps--Gladwell invites conversations about the complex ways privilege manifests in our culture. He leaves us pondering the gifts of our own history, and how the world could benefit if more of our kids were granted the opportunities to fulfill their remarkable potential. --Mari Malcolm

Signature
Reviewed by Leslie Chang
In *Outliers*, Gladwell (*The Tipping Point*) once again proves masterful in a genre he essentially pioneered--the book that illuminates secret patterns behind everyday phenomena. His gift for spotting an intriguing mystery, luring the reader in, then gradually revealing his lessons in lucid prose, is on vivid display. *Outliers* begins with a provocative look at why certain five-year-old boys enjoy an advantage in ice hockey, and how these advantages accumulate over time. We learn what Bill Gates, the Beatles and Mozart had in common: along with talent and ambition, each enjoyed an unusual opportunity to intensively cultivate a skill that allowed them to rise above their peers. A detailed investigation of the unique culture and skills of Eastern European Jewish immigrants persuasively explains their rise in 20th-century New York, first in the garment trade and then in the legal profession. Through case studies ranging from Canadian junior hockey champions to the robber barons of the Gilded Age, from Asian math whizzes to software entrepreneurs to the rise of his own family in Jamaica, Gladwell tears down the myth of individual merit to explore how culture, circumstance, timing, birth and luck account for success--and how historical legacies can hold others back despite ample individual gifts. Even as we know how many of these stories end, Gladwell restores the suspense and serendipity to these narratives that make them fresh and surprising. One hazard of this genre is glibness. In seeking to understand why Asian children score higher on math tests, Gladwell explores the persistence and painstaking labor required to cultivate rice as it has been done in East Asia for thousands of years; though fascinating in its details, the study does not prove that a rice-growing heritage explains math prowess, as Gladwell asserts. Another pitfall is the urge to state the obvious: No one, Gladwell concludes in a chapter comparing a high-IQ failure named Chris Langan with the brilliantly successful J. Robert Oppenheimer, not rock stars, not professional athletes, not software billionaires and not even geniuses--ever makes it alone. But who in this day and age believes that a high intelligence quotient in itself promises success? In structuring his book against that assumption, Gladwell has

set up a decidedly flimsy straw man. In the end it is the seemingly airtight nature of Gladwell's arguments that works against him. His conclusions are built almost exclusively on the findings of others—sociologists, psychologists, economists, historians—yet he rarely delves into the methodology behind those studies. And he is free to cherry-pick those cases that best illustrate his points; one is always left wondering about the data he evaluated and rejected because it did not support his argument, or perhaps contradicted it altogether. Real life is seldom as neat as it appears in a Malcolm Gladwell book. (Nov.) Leslie T. Chang is the author of *Factory Girls: From Village to City in a Changing China* (Spiegel & Grau). Copyright © Reed Business Information, a division of Reed Elsevier Inc. All rights reserved.

This work offers outstanding perspectives for individuals wishing to unlock the hard path to high achievement or accomplishment (and it's not even assured!) *Outliers* is arguably the best modern gestalt work drawing its resources from sociology, psychology, anthropology, all the -ologies are covered as Gladwell's scope is wide in subject but his talent is the ability to focus the reader within that wide range of very well documented observations to understand and benefit from from Gladwell's out of sight insights.

I usually do not read a whole lot of books but I bought this book on . Although I am not an avid reader enormous reviews and finding it in a lot of " Hudson news " stores during my flight travel, this book caught my eye. I love and absolutely look this book. If you know Indian mythology it is similar to tell you why " Lord Rama has become Rama and Ravana the main villain in the story has become Ravana". It is various circumstances, social status, opportunities, repetition, luck -- all combined that makes Rama what he is , a super star. I totally agree with the writer and lot of times success is always measured in one dimension. That is not true and it is absolutely affirmatively a multi dimensional measure. For eg:- if I am successful it is a lot of factors- our parents being able to afford college education, being able to buy the books we want I.e. Financial status, etc. enough of show spoiling I'll let you read the book in its entirety. Enjoy reading!!! :) P.s. I purchased audio book as well and it is definitely a must read...

Extremely interesting, but cuts some corners in how it presents evidence and ideas that are, from my experience in class at college, are more complex than Gladwell presents. However, for a more casual reader that wants an interesting book on genetics, behavior, and broader society, this is quick read I'd highly recommend for anyone.

A compelling explanation, and tales of what it takes to be 'a success' fully illustrated with validated science, through engaging, entertaining, and enlightening statistics and the necessary context for understanding something most of us only think we know about. Yet, give little actual thought, or analysis. A story rich with personal meaning for the author that will help all who read to understand the confluences of what happens when the opportunities of one's very own times are seen, and acted upon through the development, and application of mastery. It's work over time, and the generations who acted the opportunities presented by their times. It is an instructive read. One that asks us to look at when we are born, and how simple differences in the way we evolve as society's also have everything to do with how we are able to act upon the opportunities of our own times. It asks us to look at how we might make simple changes in bureaucratic process that might open additional opportunities for generations of millions, for next to nothing in investment of dollars. A great, well documented retelling of true success, and what it takes to get there, told with Mastery.

Coincidentally, I read the chapter about the relative ages of hockey players while I was watching the Chicago Blackhawk beat the Detroit Red Wings in game 7 of the western finals. I thought "wow this is an amazing insight!" However, after a quick check of the birth dates for the players I found Malcolm's conclusion to be bunk. Contrary to the book, there is an almost even distribution of birth months for the team members I checked multiple years and countries of origin just to be sure that I hadn't discovered another "Outlier". After this discovery, I have to call into question all that I have read from him. Maybe the book should be renamed to "Outliers!"

The central message percolating within Outliers is the context of one's life must never be ignored nor given short shrift. But is it not true that we cannot measure success until in many instances far past the life has been lived and historians may be the worst at finding where success has settled? We are far too complex and the connections of the stretch of our lives much too complicated to give the proper value due each person. How can we possibly know if Bill Gates or Abraham Lincoln were truly successful because we cannot know the full ramifications of their work and lives? Everyone thinks they know what success is, as if it is intuitive and yet what is the true plumb line for success? Do we really have a handle on that? Was Stalin a success because he got the metro system in place in Moscow? Was Micky Mantle a success because he built a Hall of Fame career? Was Charles Dickens a success because he wrote critically acclaimed and immensely popular novels? Are we certain we know what a successful life is?

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