

Reading response on peoples success stories essay sample

[Psychology](#), [Success](#)



The book *Outliers* is written by Malcolm Gladwell. In it, he seeks to investigate the cause of what he calls outliers or extremely successful persons. He tries to bring out the notion that success doesn't come because of a person's talent, hard work or merit but rather circumstance and pure luck also plays a role. He writes about outliers and defines who they are. According to him, an outlier is a person who stands out from the rest with regard to their success stories. These are people who are viewed as different from the rest of the data. Data in this case he is referring to their birthdays, as seen in the example of hockey players which he uses. The relevant circumstances which people find themselves in are determinants of the success they achieve. People have their own personal stories to tell about their success and how they achieved it. It takes a lot of effort and time to be at the top of the chart of success and therefore one need to look at how the journey was.

Even when success is attributed to an individual person, there are many factors and players in their lives who made it possible for them to become successful. It does not come as a surprise that in his epilogue, Gladwell concludes by saying that " the outlier, in the end, is not an outlier at all. By saying so, he means that the outliers may have become successful but there are lots of other people who played a huge role in their lives in order for them to become successful. For instance, it is impossible for Bill Gates to look back from where they are at the moment and proclaim that he walked the journey alone. He is part of a community that helped build him. His success is not, therefore, mysterious or exceptional. The same can be said about The Beatles and other successful people who have made history in

their various fields. There are webs of advantages which were deserved, some were just lucky and others earned that made them who they are and that is why the “ outlier, in the end, is not an outlier” (285).

People ought to use that which they have in order to attain their success. This means that success is only dependent on outside forces. A person can use their attributes to make the best out of life. In chapter three and four, Gladwell gives a good example of Christopher Langan in chapter three and four. Langan had an IQ that was way higher that it is expected of normal people. He then went on to perform well in tasks he found himself doing and is said to have taught himself how to read and at the age of three. This therefore means that a person can use all that is at their disposal to achieve success. He was smart enough to achieve success in the world.

My story can also be told from that point of view. My college life could not have been easy and as successful as it is were it not for some of the factors discussed by Gladwell. In chapter two, Gladwell says that the magic number ten thousand hours spent in doing something can lead to expertise. This means that one has got to spend a substantial amount of time in doing a task that their hands find to do in order to start seeing success. It has been a while since I joined college in order to get training which will enable me pursue my career. I would have just gone ahead and looked for employment after high school but then I knew that I needed training. The amount of time that I will have spent in training will reflect on my good performance while out there working. This therefore means that the time I have spent in college will not go unrewarded. I will come out better and aimed for success in my field of training.

Also, Gladwell says in chapter six, that success comes by way of a steady accumulation of advantages. Some of these advantages include the place where one was born, what their parents do for a living and even circumstances surrounding their upbringing. When I reflect on these factors, I try to analyze the way some of them may have played a huge role in determining my current status. I come from a middleclass family. My parents have always stressed on the importance of schooling and that their children cannot settle for less. I draw examples from other young people I have seen become successful and others failures depending on the decisions they made in their lives. This has made me always want the best out of life just as I see some of my friends live well. I would rather be associated to them than those who have turned out as failures.

I strongly believe that my current outcome would not be as it is if things were different. For instance, I had the option of not working had in high school and then end up as a high school dropout. This means that I would have started looking for jobs in order to earn a living and chances are that I would join gangs and become a social misfit. This would have changed my social life completely and I must say that it would have been a lot different from what it is today. But then, I had the hidden advantages of self motivation, supportive family, role models and also the place where I grew up. These are the factors that have helped bring out the best in me. I believe that were it not for them, my life could have been very different, maybe better or even worse.

My experiences to a huge extent connect with Gladwell's thesis. Just like the superstars and the people who have made history because of their success I

am not a product of my effort. It has taken a lot more people to bring out the best in me. I am a product of a community, opportunity and a legacy that was shaped by the people in my life. That is why I am in college today, performing well in my academics and making new friends all the time. From the epilogue, it is clear that superstars seem to lie outside of the extraordinary experiences that people go through. That is not true. All of them are as a result of their effort and the effort of other people and society in general.

Gladwell advocates for building of a better world where everyone needs to get rid of the patchwork of mere lucky breaks and advantages that make people successful. Instead, people should rely on opportunities provided to them and make the best out of them. In my life, I believe I have made the best out of the opportunities that have come my way. Not that I have not made mistakes like everyone else. Bill Gates and other successful people may have made their mistakes but then people choose to look at their successes and not their failures. He may have failed countless times but then at the end of the day he made a success story. I am a strong believer in seizing opportunities and making the best out of them. Society will provide an equal opportunity for all of us but then what one chooses to do with the opportunities will determine their success or failure stories.

Work Cited

Gladwell, Malcolm. *Outliers: The Story of Success*. New York: Little Brown. 2008