

Outliers by malcolm gladwell

Literature



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Outliers by Malcolm Gladwell In his book, Gladwell challenges the common belief about outliers, ly that people called outliers are successful due to intelligence and talents they possess. He states, “ It is not the brightest who succeed [...] Outliers are those who have been given opportunities - and who have the strength and presence of mind to seize them.” (Gladwell 167) On a range of examples, the author analyzes the factors that actually underlie success.

The book is comprised of two parts, in which Gladwell discusses such factors as opportunity and legacy. The first part of the work is dedicated to opportunity. One of the brightest examples on how opportunities work in favor of those who get them is the one of Canadian junior hockey discussed by Gladwell. The matter is that the best players are born in the first three months of the year, which means they are biggest in the team and, consequently, have more experience. In other words, the author introduces the formula: more time = more experience = success. Gladwell applies the same to Bill Gate’s and The Beatles’ cases for they had opportunities to gain experience to become giants in their spheres. For the author of outliers, more opportunities and more time are not enough to become successful, though. He claims that geniuses are not born but made. Finally, the type of work one does matters as well and, in accordance with Gladwell, meaningful work is the one that presupposes “ autonomy, complexity, and a connection between effort and reward.” (149)

In the second part of the book, its author discusses cultural legacy as one of the factors that contribute to success. Gladwell states that cultural legacies “ persist, generation after generation, virtually intact [...] and they play such a role in directing attitude and behavior that we cannot make sense of our

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world without them.” (175) Among the examples used by the author to back up the argument that cultural legacy has a significant impact is the example of Asians. More specifically, the author states that the logical structure of numbers in Japanese explains why Asians are good at math. Agricultural legacy matters as well: cultures engaged in rice-growing appear to be more hard-working and persistent. Also, Gladwell discusses the notion of cultural power distance introduced by Hofstede and uses here the example of Korean airlines, which appears to be the example of both failure and success.

In *Outliers*, Malcolm Gladwell deconstructs the notion of success in order to define what factors actually influence it, and he does this through numerous examples of different people’s success. Some of the conclusions made by the author of the book are not backed up by researches and studies; Gladwell tends to use mostly anecdotal data. Despite this, his conclusions are really valuable as they are based on common knowledge and conventional wisdom. Examples are numerous and many of them are unexpected, which makes the book really entertaining. In addition to this, Gladwell is a very nice story-teller. This book is for those people who wish to know how to be more than average.

Work Cited

Gladwell, Malcolm. *Outliers: The Story Of Success*. New York: Little, Brown and Company, 2008. Print.