



Malcolm Gladwell. *Outliers: The Story of Success.* (New York, NY: Little, Brown and Company, c2008.)

In *Outliers*, Malcolm Gladwell asks the pertinent question, “Why do some gifted people succeed, while other equally gifted or *more* talented peers fail to live up to their potential?” He has a number of answers to that question: 1. opportunity, 2. practice, 3. practical intelligence, and 4. cultural influences. If an intellectually gifted person can capitalize on these four factors, they can succeed in their chosen endeavors at extremely high levels.

But this does not mean there is no relevance to supposedly “average” people. If all things are equal in terms of intellect, then the four “enhancements” listed above will tilt the career playing field to that individual's advantage if they bring them into play. Gladwell brings this point home: you can use this template to improve both your and your children's performance potential at school and work. The four factors outside of intelligence are not sure-fire guarantees of success, but they certainly reinforce the notion of talent is “90% perspiration and 10% inspiration”. It is not a new idea, but Gladwell's examples are highlighted by talented individuals (Albert Einstein, Bill Gates, the Beatles, and J. Robert Oppenheimer) who made the most of their unique abilities combined with opportunities, practice, practical intelligence, and their own unique cultural experiences.