



The Power Of Commitment

A coeur valliant, rien impossible (To a valiant heart, nothing is impossible)

As simple as it seems, it is my experience that the primary reason most people fail to achieve their goals (**Winning a state championship**) is that simply never decide to be achieve them.

Choice is the beginning of all journeys. And as with all first steps, it is the most important step of all. It is also the easiest. As others have noted: "Championships begin with a state of mind and with definiteness of purpose." There is something remarkably powerful about commitment. Commitment to a plan or thought carries with it a force that can influence the unconscious mind and bring about the desired effect. In other words, once we decide to achieve something, the mind unconsciously begins to create the reality necessary to bring to pass what we desire. The opposite is true as well. If we believe that we can't do something, we can't. If we think we will fail, most likely we will.

To illustrate the power of commitment, try this simple experiment. Take a piece of string and tie it to a key. Hold one end of the string with your clenched fist, dangling the key in front of you. Now look at the key and mentally tell it to rotate clockwise. Don't move your fist; just watch the key. It will begin to move in the direction you desire. Then desire the key to stop. Then tell it to change its direction and rotate counterclockwise.

The key's movement seems almost mystical. But what you are really seeing is your body moving in almost imperceptible ways to grant your desire. What you have desired to happen is, in fact, happening.

To that end, you need to realize that it is within your power right now to take the first step to **winning a state championship**. Decide right now to be **a champion**. Declare your intention by saying it aloud, then writing it on a card.

Today I decide to be a state champion

Put that card on your nightstand or next to your toothbrush. Look at it and read those words every morning when you get up and every evening when you go to bed. Keep a copy of it in your wallet. Do this from now until the season starts. Then congratulate yourself. You have made a life changing commitment to being a state champion.

Press on

Nothing in the world can take the place of persistence.

Talent will not.

Nothing is more common then unsuccessful men with talent.

Genius will not

Unrewarded genius is almost a proverb.

Education will not

The world is full of educated derelicts

Persistence and determination alone are omnipotent



Goal Setting

The coaching staff pledged to your parents and whoever else cares about you that your time at Burning River is going to be a whole life experience. We aren't going to diminish the value of playing lacrosse, we want that to be satisfying and invigorating but that's not the only thing you are going to learn. Our job as coaches is to do more than just teach us Xs and Os. (Coaches jobs are to convey something or someone from one place to another) The most important thing we do is help you grow in men of substance and impact. Your spiritual plan, your morals, your values, your work ethic all of those elements need to be a part of who you are, what we talk about, and what we demand from each other as a team.

We have spoken in the past about the topic of what it means to be a man/a success. Many people define success be how much money they make, how far up the corporate ladder they can ascend, how many women they date. Coaches and athletes can define success in terms of championships, winning records or individual stats. Championships and wins are fine goals. The coaching staff certainly wants St Ignatius to be the best team in the state every year. We are certainly are going to work very hard on our team goals and if you don't want to be a champion you are probably on the wrong team.

However, the problem with defining yourself by your goals is that winning every game every year is an unrealistic expectation. The truth is only one team of 110 can win the state title, one of 32 can win the super bowl, only 1 of 119 can win the BCS. In life not everyone can be the top salesman at a company or get the big promotion. Not everyone starts a business and sees it grow and thrive and expand.

Goals are important but it is important to understand that people are not defined by their goals and whether or not they achieve them. A win or a loss does not make you a better person. We have to separate what we are from what we do. Understanding the difference between purpose and goals is essential to understanding the true definition of success.

John Wooden described individual success this way "Success is peace of mind which is a direct result of self satisfaction in knowing you did your best to become the best you are capable of becoming."

Team success can then be described this way "Success is the inner satisfaction and peace of mind that comes from knowing I did the best I was capable of doing for my team." (Tressel) This definition forces us to define success in terms of what the group needs, what our team needs, or what our society or country needs.

We must never let goals, adversity, or success define us.

That is why it is important that your goals come from your purpose.



Developing A Purpose And Setting Goals

We have spoken in the past about the topic of setting goals and the topic of what it means to be a man/a success. Success is a journey we all take. In order to thrive on that journey we have to have a clear view of what success is, what it is not, and what it will take to achieve it.

Below is a “Personal Success Plan” that we will use to help you learn how to set goals, pursue your dreams, and develop a plan to fulfill your purpose.

Quotes

“Nurture your mind with great thoughts, for you will never go any higher than you think” **(Benjamin Disraeli)**

“The greater danger for most of us lies not in setting our aim too high and falling short; but in setting our aim too low and achieving our mark.” **(Michelangelo)**

“Success is peace of mind which is a direct result of self satisfaction in knowing you did your best to become the best you are capable of becoming.” **(Wooden)**

“Every thing must be done for the purpose of something. We were created not just to exist, not just to pass through this world and be about, but to live with purpose. Fulfilling our purpose is part of who we are. But what we are- about the goals we set the dreams we have – is part of what we do.” **(Tressel)**

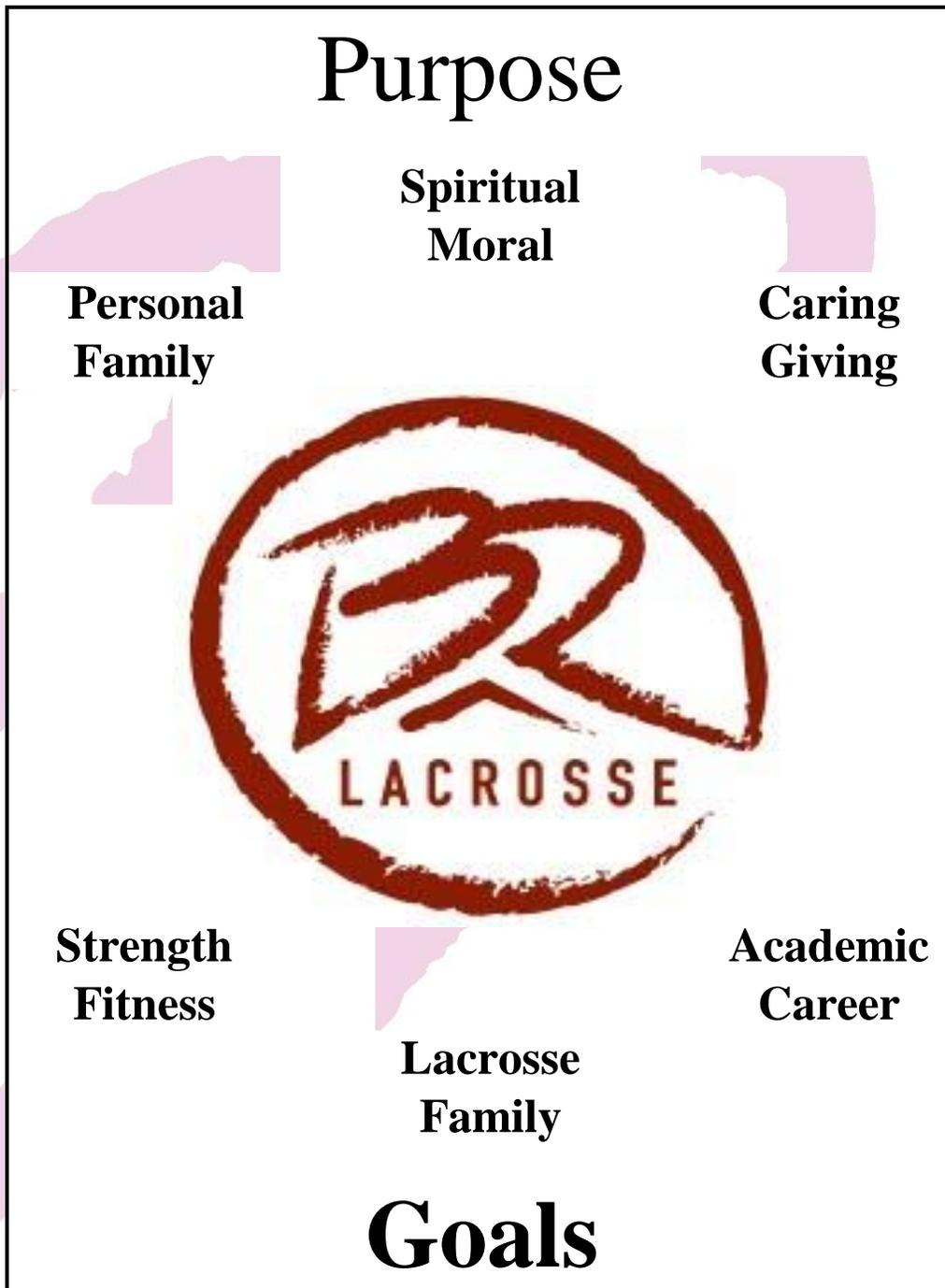
“Success is the inner satisfaction and peace of mind that comes from knowing I did the best I was capable of doing for my team.” **(Tressel)**

“The first step in creating an improved future is developing the ability to envision it. This vision will ignite the fire of passion, which fuels our commitment to do whatever it takes to achieve excellence. This vision will allow us to transform dreams of greatness into the reality of achievement through our actions. This vision has no boundaries and knows no limits. Our vision is what we become in life.” **(Unknown)**

“If you do the things you need to do
When you need to do them,
Someday you can do the things you want to do
When you want to do them” **(Unknown)**



A significant amount of the following is taken directly from "The Winner's Manual" by Jim Tressel.
The coaching staff highly recommends that you take the time to read the book.





Purpose Components

The purpose section comprises those aspects of life that define who we are as individuals and the kind of people we want to become. We start with Purpose because we know that our spiritual beliefs and ethical values, and our commitment to personal integrity, family, and community, will become the foundation for all of our goals and everything else we do in life. By starting with the purpose we establish the importance of becoming whole people, not just lacrosse players.

- **Family – My Relationship With My Family** – Family is always a major part of your purpose. Always stay connected with them, and start thinking about the future. What is your relationship with your parents like? Do you need to spend more time with your siblings? Are you respectful and helpful with your parents? What areas of this relationship need improvement and what will it take for that to happen?
- **Spiritual – My Relationship With God** – You are going to find opportunities to grow spiritually and learn more about belief system and you will be able to test your own belief system. Because the faith aspect of a person's life affects everything else and is thus an integral part of his purpose, it is right at the top. What areas of your life lead you to God and which areas lead you away from him? How can you change to strengthen your relationship?
- **Caring/Giving – My Relationship With Others** - This is the final component of the purpose section. Understand that you are blessed. You have been the recipient of lots of good things - God given athletic ability (height, speed, and strength), coaching, parental support, teammates, and the opportunity to succeed. Along with great blessings comes responsibility to reach out and care and make a difference to others. You have been blessed for a reason - not to hoard your talent but to use it for good. The coaching staff wants to see you pass on to others the blessings you've received. So that when you leave BR you will have a desire to reach out and connect with other people.

These 3 segments are the purpose section of your lives. This is where you derive your definition of success. No matter how much playing time you get, no matter how many games you win, or what your GPA - no matter what happens while you are part of our team - if you grow in these areas of purpose and strive to improve you are going to be successful.

Goals Components

The goals section is the second half of the Personal Success Plan. This section is what we do, as opposed to who we are. We know lacrosse is one of your favorite things, which is why we are together, it is our common bond. The coaching staff has exceptionally high goals in mind for the group and those come first in our team goals. The needs of the team have to always come first, but that should not negatively affect your personal dreams concerning who you want to become. We are going to help you create a plan that can help us achieve our team goals and at the same time help you achieve your individual goals.

- **Lacrosse Family** when we talk about goals, we always emphasize that they must be measurable. You need to be able to quantify what you want to accomplish – things such as starting, 20 wins, or 60 goals. Do not apologize for having big goals. The coaching staff will not apologize for having the goal of winning a state championship and being nationally ranked in the top 25 (The national championship is a political process that we can not control. Therefore our goal is to finish in the top of the top whether it means #1 or #20). We want you to set specific measurable goals related to the lacrosse portion of your lives. Along the way we want you to understand what it is going to take to achieve those goals – the difficulty of the challenge, and the characteristics of a champion.
- **Strength/Fitness** – there are a lot of reasons why maintaining good health makes sense. For players it means you are going to be able to participate at practice and in games. If you are in great shape, the time spent rehabbing from injuries or recovering from normal game bruising is reduced. But the benefits of good health transcend the time you will be athletes are St. Ignatius. Having your health is the best thing you can do for yourself and your loved ones.
- **Academics/Career** – This segment is a vital part of the goals section. The coaching staff knows from personal experience that many people without an academic degree do wonderful things. We would never suggest that having a degree makes you a better person. But if you have a degree you will find yourself with choices and opportunities that someone without the degree might not have.



Goal Setting

You become what you plan. You are at this very moment exactly what you have planned to be; nothing more, nothing less. If you want to change or get better you must plan. And you must do it right! Planning is setting goals. The common denominator of every successful person is they set specific goals and devised a plan to achieve those goals.

Yale University produced a study of graduates who had been out of school for 20 years. Three percent committed their goal to writing and changed them as they went along. Ten percent knew what they wanted to do with their lives but did not write their goals down. Eighty-seven percent never bothered to write down their goals because they had not yet thought them out. The result? The three percent had achieved more than the ninety-seven percent combined.

Goals give you a destination, a map, directions to get there from here, and let you know when you get there. Goals are not be confused with dreams. Dreams are fantasies which require no action; Goals must be acted upon.

Goals must be both Realistic and Worthwhile. Realistic so that the goal will be challenging, but reachable; Worthwhile so that when you reach the goal you are proud of having done it

“Living without a goal is like shooting without a target.” (Ben Franklin)

Actual goal setting involves a 10 step-plan

1. You decide what it is you want to do and **write it down**
2. You decide on a deadline for reaching your goal and **write it down.**
3. You decide on a plan for reaching your goal and **write it down.**
4. You decide what you are willing to give up in order to reach your goal and **write it down.**
5. You read your written goal(s), deadline(s), plan(s) and sacrifices(s) everyday.
6. You remain committed to your goal(s), deadline(s), plan(s) and sacrifices(s) and don't let anyone talk you out of them.
7. You visualize your goal(s) and having reached your goal(s).
8. You believe and expect to achieve your goal(s).
9. You evaluate your progress and adjust accordingly.
10. You repeat this again, and again, and again, and again.

You are the key ... unlock your potential... Plan to become the best you can... Set goals and achieve them... You are the key.



Personal Success Plan

Goals must be specific and measurable

Personal Success Plan						
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		General Thoughts	Short Range Goals	How I Plan to Accomplish My Short Range Goals	Dreams	How I Plan to Accomplish My Dreams
PURPOSE	Personal/Family	The family is the basic unit of our society. My family is very important to me	1.	1.	1.	1.
			2.	2.	2.	2.
	Spiritual/Moral	Above all else, I realize that my spiritual beliefs and my moral values will shape my life. I will do what is right!	1.	1.	1.	1.
			2.	2.	2.	2.
	Caring/Giving	How I function as a total person in society is important. I will give back to my community.	1.	1.	1.	1.
			2.	2.	2.	2.
		Name:	7			Date:



Personal Success Plan

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		General Thoughts	Short Range Goals	How I Plan to Accomplish My Short Range Goals	Dreams	How I Plan to Accomplish My Dreams
GOALS	Health/Fitness	One of the greatest gifts we have is our health. My physical conditioning is a controllable commodity. I will develop lifetime fitness habits.	1.	1.	1.	1.
			2.	2.	2.	2.
	Your Team	I am part of a great team. I count on my teammates, and they are counting on me. I will achieve great things for the team.	1.	1.	1.	1.
			2.	1	2.	2.
	Academics/Career	I am in school to achieve academically and obtain a valuable degree. I want to grow both productively and profitably in my career.	1.	1.	1.	1.
			2.	2.	2.	2.
			Name: _____ Date: _____			



“Paradise is where I am”

Voltaire

What it takes to be great

**Research now shows that the lack of natural talent is irrelevant to great success.
The secret? Painful and demanding practice and hard work**

By [Geoffrey Colvin](#), senior editor-at-large (Fortune Magazine) -- What makes Tiger Woods great? What made [Berkshire Hathaway](#) Chairman Warren Buffett the world's premier investor? We think we know: Each was a natural who came into the world with a gift for doing exactly what he ended up doing. As Buffett told *Fortune* not long ago, he was "wired at birth to allocate capital." It's a one-in-a-million thing. You've got it - or you don't.

Well, folks, it's not so simple. For one thing, you do not possess a natural gift for a certain job, because targeted natural gifts don't exist. (Sorry, Warren.) You are not a born CEO or investor or chess grandmaster. You will achieve greatness only through an enormous amount of hard work over many years. And not just any hard work, but work of a particular type that's demanding and painful.

Buffett, for instance, is famed for his discipline and the hours he spends studying financial statements of potential investment targets. The good news is that your lack of a natural gift is irrelevant - talent has little or nothing to do with greatness. You can make yourself into any number of things, and you can even make yourself great.

Scientific experts are producing remarkably consistent findings across a wide array of fields. Understand that talent doesn't mean intelligence, motivation or personality traits. It's an innate ability to do some specific activity especially well. British-based researchers Michael J. Howe, Jane W. Davidson and John A. Sluboda conclude in an extensive study, "The evidence we have surveyed ... does not support the [notion that] excelling is a consequence of possessing innate gifts."

To see how the researchers could reach such a conclusion, consider the problem they were trying to solve. In virtually every field of endeavor, most people learn quickly at first, then more slowly and then stop developing completely. Yet a few do improve for years and even decades, and go on to greatness.

The irresistible question - the "fundamental challenge" for researchers in this field, says the most prominent of them, professor K. Anders Ericsson of Florida State University - is, **Why? How are certain people able to go on improving?** The answers begin with consistent observations about great performers in many fields.

Scientists worldwide have conducted scores of studies since the 1993 publication of a landmark paper by Ericsson and two colleagues, many focusing on sports, music and chess, in which performance is relatively easy to measure and plot over time. But plenty of additional studies have also examined other fields, including business.

No substitute for hard work

The first major conclusion is that nobody is great without work. It's nice to believe that if you find the field where you're naturally gifted, you'll be great from day one, but it doesn't happen. **There's no evidence of high-level performance without experience or practice.**

Reinforcing that no-free-lunch finding is vast evidence that even the most accomplished people need around ten years of hard work before becoming world-class, a pattern so well established researchers call it the ten-year rule.

What about Bobby Fischer, who became a chess grandmaster at 16? Turns out the rule holds: He'd had nine years of intensive study. And as John Horn of the University of Southern California and Hiromi Masunaga of California State University observe, "The ten-year rule represents a very rough estimate, and most researchers regard it as a minimum, not an average." In many fields (music, literature) elite performers need 20 or 30 years' experience before hitting their zenith.

So greatness isn't handed to anyone; it requires a lot of hard work. Yet that isn't enough, since many people work hard for decades without approaching greatness or even getting significantly better. What's missing?

Practice makes perfect

The best people in any field are those who devote the most hours to what the researchers call "deliberate practice." It's activity that's explicitly intended to improve performance, that reaches for objectives just beyond one's level of competence, provides feedback on results and involves high levels of repetition. For example: Simply hitting a bucket of balls is not deliberate practice, which is why most golfers don't get better. Hitting an eight-iron 300 times with a goal of leaving the ball within 20 feet of the pin 80 percent of the time, continually observing results and making appropriate adjustments, and doing that for hours every day - that's deliberate practice. Consistency is crucial. As Ericsson notes, "Elite performers in many diverse domains have been found to practice, on the average, roughly the same amount every day, including weekends." Evidence crosses a remarkable range of fields. In a study of 20-year-old violinists by Ericsson and colleagues, the best group (judged by conservatory teachers) averaged 10,000 hours of deliberate practice over their lives; the next-best averaged 7,500 hours; and the next, 5,000. It's the same story in surgery, insurance sales, and virtually every sport. More deliberate practice equals better performance. Tons of it equals great performance.

The skeptics

Not all researchers are totally onboard with the myth-of-talent hypothesis, though their objections go to its edges rather than its center. For one thing, there are the intangibles. Two athletes might work equally hard, but what explains the ability of New England Patriots quarterback Tom Brady to perform at a higher level in the last two minutes of a game? Researchers also note, for example, child prodigies who could speak, read or play music at an unusually early age. But on investigation those cases generally include highly involved parents. And many prodigies do not go on to greatness in their early field, while great performers include many who showed no special early aptitude. Certainly some important traits are partly inherited, such as physical size and particular measures of intelligence, but those influence what a person doesn't do more than what he does; a five-footer will never be an NFL lineman, and a seven-footer will never be an Olympic gymnast. Even those restrictions are less severe than you'd expect: Ericsson notes, "Some international chess masters have IQs in the 90s." The more research that's done, the more solid the deliberate-practice model becomes.

Real-world examples

All this scholarly research is simply evidence for what great performers have been showing us for years. To take a handful of examples: Winston Churchill, one of the 20th century's greatest orators, practiced his speeches compulsively. Vladimir Horowitz supposedly said, "If I don't practice for a day, I know it. If I don't practice for two days, my wife knows it. If I don't practice for three days, the world knows it." He was certainly a demon practicer, but the same quote has been attributed to world-class musicians like Ignace Paderewski and Luciano Pavarotti. Many great athletes are legendary for the brutal discipline of their practice routines. In basketball, Michael Jordan practiced intensely beyond the already punishing team practices. (Had Jordan possessed some mammoth natural gift specifically for basketball, it seems unlikely he'd have been cut from his high school team.) In football, all-time-great receiver Jerry Rice - passed up by 15 teams because they considered him too slow - practiced so hard that other players would get sick trying to keep up. Tiger Woods is a textbook example of what the research shows. Because his father introduced him to golf at an extremely early age - 18 months - and encouraged him to practice intensively, Woods had racked up at least 15 years of practice by the time he became the youngest-ever winner of the U.S. Amateur Championship, at age 18. Also in line with the findings, he has never stopped trying to improve, devoting many hours a day to conditioning and practice, even remaking his swing twice because that's what it took to get even better.

The business side

The evidence, scientific as well as anecdotal, seems overwhelmingly in favor of deliberate practice as the source of great performance. Just one problem: How do you practice business? Many elements of business, in fact, are directly practicable. Presenting, negotiating, delivering evaluations, deciphering financial statements - you can practice them all. Still, they aren't the essence of great managerial performance. That requires making judgments and decisions with imperfect information in an uncertain environment, interacting with people, seeking information - can you practice those things too? You can, though not in the way you would practice a Chopin etude. Instead, it's all about how you do what you're already doing - you create the practice in your work, which requires a few critical changes. The first is going at any task with a new goal: Instead of merely trying to get it done, you aim to get better at it. Report writing involves finding information, analyzing it and presenting it - each an improvable skill. Chairing a board meeting requires understanding the company's strategy in the deepest way, forming a coherent view of coming market changes and setting a tone for the discussion. Anything that anyone does at work, from the most basic task to the most exalted, is an improvable skill.

Adopting a new mindset

Armed with that mindset, people go at a job in a new way. Research shows they process information more deeply and retain it longer. They want more information on what they're doing and seek other perspectives. They adopt a longer-term point of view. In the activity itself, the mindset persists. You aren't just doing the job, you're explicitly trying to get better at it in the larger sense. Again, research shows that this difference in mental approach is vital. For example, when amateur singers take a singing lesson, they experience it as fun, a release of tension. But for professional singers, it's the opposite: They increase their concentration and focus on improving their performance during the lesson. Same activity, different mindset. Feedback is crucial, and getting it should be no problem in business. Yet most people don't seek it; they just wait for it, half hoping it won't come. Without it, as Goldman Sachs leadership-development chief Steve Kerr says, "it's as if you're bowling through a curtain that comes down to knee level. If you don't know how successful you are, two things happen: One, you don't get any better, and two, you stop caring." In some companies, like General Electric, frequent feedback is part of the culture. If you aren't lucky enough to get that, seek it out.

Be the ball

Through the whole process, one of your goals is to build what the researchers call "mental models of your business" - pictures of how the elements fit together and influence one another. The more you work on it, the larger your mental models will become and the better your performance will grow. Andy Grove could keep a model of a whole world-changing technology industry in his head and adapt [Intel \(Charts\)](#) as needed. Bill Gates, [Microsoft's \(Charts\)](#) founder, had the same knack: He could see at the dawn of the PC that his goal of a computer on every desk was realistic and would create an unimaginably large market. John D. Rockefeller, too, saw ahead when the world-changing new industry was oil. Napoleon was perhaps the greatest ever. He could not only hold all the elements of a vast battle in his mind but, more important, could also respond quickly when they shifted in unexpected ways. That's a lot to focus on for the benefits of deliberate practice - and worthless without one more requirement: Do it regularly, not sporadically.

Why?

For most people, work is hard enough without pushing even harder. Those extra steps are so difficult and painful they almost never get done. That's the way it must be. If great performance were easy, it wouldn't be rare. Which leads to possibly the deepest question about greatness. While experts understand an enormous amount about the behavior that produces great performance, they understand very little about where that behavior comes from. The authors of one study conclude, "We still do not know which factors encourage individuals to engage in deliberate practice." Or as University of Michigan business school professor Noel Tichy puts it after 30 years of working with managers, "Some people are much more motivated than others, and that's the existential question I cannot answer - why." The critical reality is that we are not hostage to some naturally granted level of talent. We can make ourselves what we will. Strangely, that idea is not popular. People hate abandoning the notion that they would coast to fame and riches if they found their talent. But that view is tragically constraining, because when they hit life's inevitable bumps in the road, they conclude that they just aren't gifted and give up. Maybe we can't expect most people to achieve greatness. It's just too demanding. But the striking, liberating news is that greatness isn't reserved for a preordained few. It is available to you and to everyone.