

By Peter Pearson, Ph.D.

What separates world class performers from everybody else?

I've just about finished reading a captivating book called *Talent Is Overrated* by Geoff Colvin, the Senior Editor at Large of *Fortune* magazine.

I have held the notion that hard work and innate talent were key factors in outstanding success of world class performers. Mr. Colvin comprehensively looks at the science behind the highest levels of achievement and bursts my delusion.

Here's is what he discovered.

It is not hard work that distinguishes world class performers from the rest of us. Plenty of people work very hard at their craft and never make it to the top. And it is not a natural gift for golf, chess, singing, playing the violin, etc. that makes them superstars, either.

What really separates them from the thundering herd is a *highly specific kind* of effort.

"Deliberate practice" is the key. Deliberate practice is identifying the key units for improvement and then working intently on them. It's not always easy making that identification for yourself, which is why a good coach can be invaluable. These key units of performance almost always stretch you beyond your comfort zone.

Because most of us have a lazy bone or two, we will resist identifying and practicing those specific and uncomfortable items. Practicing them in the right way in high volume is what makes

it challenging. It requires ongoing focus and concentration and this mental effort is what makes it deliberate.

Deliberate practice is identifying what you don't do easily in your pursuit of excellence. Then doing it again and again until it becomes mastered.

Being good at what we really want to do is deeply satisfying - whether it's painting, playing the piano, tennis, running, leading meetings, or anything else.

Deliberate practice will improve your skill in almost any life endeavor. If you want to learn more about the pathway to exceptional achievement *Talent is Overrated* will prove to you that the upper level of performance is not limited to a chosen few.

What do you think you need to practice in your relationship to make it better? It's an interesting idea for marriage help. Is it showing a little more patience? Do you need compassion? Maybe you need to stand up for yourself or follow through with your promises.

It is always easier to identify what our partner can or should do. Often we can identify what we could do individually, but then we make up all kinds of reasons to avoid the practice of it.

If you know what you really need to do and shudder at the thought of doing it, you have probably identified your deliberate practice. Share some ideas here on the blog and then return in a few days to see what others have written.

And if you'd like to bring on the ultimate coach for some extraordinary marriage help, I'd encourage you to attend my couples workshop next weekend. There are still a few spaces available at this intense, economical, weekend that's guaranteed to improve your relationship. For more information or to register click [couples workshop](#) .