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# The Talent Code: Unlocking The Secret Of Skill In Sports, Art, Music, Math, And Just About Anything

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THE



CODE

UNLOCKING THE SECRET OF SKILL  
IN SPORTS, ART, MUSIC, MATH,  
AND JUST ABOUT ANYTHING

**DANIEL COYLE**

author of the *New York Times* bestseller *Lance Armstrong's War*

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## Synopsis

What is the secret of talent? How do we unlock it? In this groundbreaking work, journalist and New York Times bestselling author Daniel Coyle provides parents, teachers, coaches, businesspeople—and everyone else—with tools they can use to maximize potential in themselves and others. Whether you're coaching soccer or teaching a child to play the piano, writing a novel or trying to improve your golf swing, this revolutionary book shows you how to grow talent by tapping into a newly discovered brain mechanism. Drawing on cutting-edge neurology and firsthand research gathered on journeys to nine of the world's talent hotbeds—from the baseball fields of the Caribbean to a classical-music academy in upstate New York—Coyle identifies the three key elements that will allow you to develop your gifts and optimize your performance in sports, art, music, math, or just about anything.

- **Deep Practice** Everyone knows that practice is a key to success. What everyone doesn't know is that specific kinds of practice can increase skill up to ten times faster than conventional practice.
- **Ignition** We all need a little motivation to get started. But what separates truly high achievers from the rest of the pack? A higher level of commitment—call it passion—born out of our deepest unconscious desires and triggered by certain primal cues. Understanding how these signals work can help you ignite passion and catalyze skill development.
- **Master Coaching** What are the secrets of the world's most effective teachers, trainers, and coaches? Discover the four virtues that enable these talented whisperers to fuel passion, inspire deep practice, and bring out the best in their students. These three elements work together within your brain to form myelin, a microscopic neural substance that adds vast amounts of speed and accuracy to your movements and thoughts. Scientists have discovered that myelin might just be the holy grail: the foundation of all forms of greatness, from Michelangelo's to Michael Jordan's. The good news about myelin is that it isn't fixed at birth; to the contrary, it grows, and like anything that grows, it can be cultivated and nourished. Combining revelatory analysis with illuminating examples of regular people who have achieved greatness, this book will not only change the way you think about talent, but equip you to reach your own highest potential.

From the Hardcover edition. --This text refers to the Paperback edition.

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## Customer Reviews

How do people get good at something? Wait a minute, that's the not the right question, how do people get great at something? Well, frankly, there has been a significant amount of research on the matter of human performance and the development of skill/talent. Author, Daniel Coyle, has looked at the research and he also went on a road trip to what he calls "talent hotbeds", places where great talent has been produced out of proportion to their size and perceived stature; for example, a Russian tennis club, a music school in Dallas, a soccer field in Brazil, and others. Coyle shares what he learned in this excellent book, "The Talent Code". The Talent Code covers three basic areas: 1) Deep practice. Practice is important to world-class performance. I guess everyone knew that already, huh? Well, sometimes, it doesn't hurt to remind of everyone of the obvious. What might be a little more helpful is the understanding of "how" to practice. What constitutes "deep practice"? This is the kind of practice that separates the great from the not-so-great. The understanding of "deep practice" involves an understanding of a substance called "myelin". Myelin is the insulation that wraps around nerve fibers. According to Coyle, myelin turns out to be a very big deal in the development of skill. Myelin is increased through deep practice and, in turn, increased myelin affects the signal strength, speed and accuracy of the electric signals traveling through nerve fibers. This increase of myelin and its effect on neurons has more to do with skill development than had previously been realized. 2) Ignition.

"I'm going to practice it a zillion million times," she said. "I'm going to play super good." "The Talent Code" by Daniel Coyle is a book on how to grow talent. The author is against the wisdom that talent is natural. The book is around the belief that talent come from Myelin. Myelin is the "insulation that wrap these nerve fibers and increases signal strength, speed, and accuracy." When the certain signal is sent down the nerve system, myelin wraps around the nerve fibre. The thicker the myelin, the better the signal. Thus, "skill is myelin insulation that wraps neural circuits and that grows

according to certain signals."The book is divided into three parts of talent growing; 1. Deep Practice 2. Ignition 3. Master CoachingContentsPart 1: Deep PracticeChapter 1: The Sweet SpotThis is the first chapter to familiarise us with the deep practice. Coyle wrote about Brazilian football (soccer) and why it is the world's talent hotbed. He had an amazing story of Edwin Link and how his unusual device transformed the training of the Air Force.Chapter 2: The Deep Practice CellThis chapter surrounds the idea of myelin and how it might be the holy grail to talent. It is very scientific. To sum it up, "deep practice x 10,000 hours = world-class skill."Chapter 3: The Brontë's, the Z-Boys, and the RenaissanceThe author started with the Brontë sisters from England in the 1850s who wrote fantastic children books. He also wrote about the group of skaters by the name of Z-Boys and the guilds during the renaissance and how they produced highly talented people.Chapter 4: The Three Rules of Deep PracticeThis chapter, Coyle gives us three rules of Deep Practicing. 1. Chunk It Up 2. Repeat It 3.

(This is a long review because there's a lot to say about this book--none of it good.) The premise of The Talent Code is straightforward. Myelin is a neurological substance that wraps itself around neurons that are specifically engaged when we learn and practice skills The thicker the sheath of myelin around these neurons, the more hardwired and precise these skills become. The Talent Code examines teaching/learning methods that ostensibly hasten and maximize the process of myelin wrapping thereby radically increasing our ability to acquire, polish and hardwire complex skills quickly and efficiently. This, Coyle claims, is the key to greatness in sports, music and (possibly) academic learning.Coyle attempts to illustrate and prove this theory with anecdotal rather than scientific evidence (although he often refers to scientific studies on myelin to validate his observations) that he has gleaned from his visits to "hotbeds of talent", as he calls them, around the globe where learning methods that stimulate myelin wrapping are used, producing (in a few cases anyway) inordinate numbers of exceptional athletes and musicians.It's an interesting premise but Coyle's exploration of it is riddled with errors,fallacies, unproven claims, poor research, puzzling semantics and old ideas and concepts from other sources that Coyle has cobbled together and presented as cutting edge information. These problems are evident right out of the gate when Coyle presents his dumbed down description of the part myelin plays in skill acquisition and shows just how shaky his grasp of his subject is. Yes, myelin is important in the learning process but it's controlled and regulated by the neurochemical BDNF.

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