

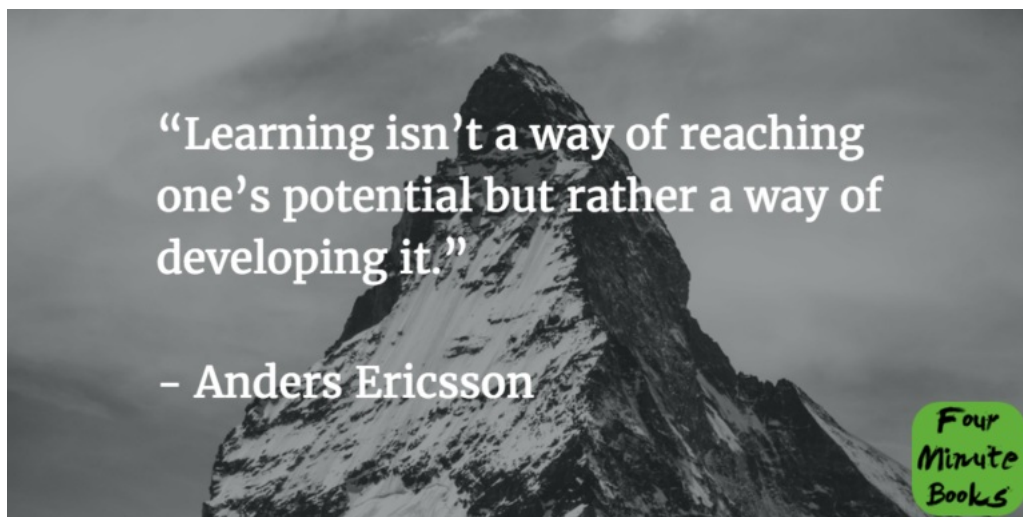
Peak Summary

 fourminutebooks.com/peak-summary

1-Sentence-Summary: *Peak* accumulates everything the pioneer researcher on deliberate practice has learned about expert performance through decades of exploration and analysis of what separates those, who are average, from those, who are world-class at what they do.

Read in: 4 minutes

Favorite quote from the author:



If you've spent a little bit of time on this site, you'll likely have come across a phrase that's dropped often in popular science: deliberate practice. This idea represents an alternative to the long-prevailing notion that world-class performance is the result of mere talent and innate ability. *Bounce*, *Deep Work* and *The Art of Learning* are just a few of numerous bestsellers discussing this topic you'll find on Four Minute Books.

What we *haven't* done so far is trace this powerful concept back to its humble beginnings. Anders Ericsson is the true pioneer in this field. It's his research that the 10,000-hour rule is based on and he's been investigating peak performance for decades. Only in 2016 did he finally wrap everything he's learned so far into this book, called *Peak: Secrets from the New Science of Expertise*.

Here are my 3 favorite lessons about how the idea has developed and transformed over the years and why it puts an end to the talent vs. skill debate:

1. The path professionals take is called 'purposeful practice' and it consists of four parts.
2. When you practice in a mature field of expertise and have someone to guide you, purposeful practice becomes deliberate.
3. True genius isn't an innate talent – but the mere result of years of deliberate

practice.

Are you sick and tired of believing you can't become who you want because you weren't built to? Then this is for you.

Lesson 1: Professionals practice with purpose, which is a 4-part approach.

Way back in the 1970s, Anders Ericsson did a study with one of his undergraduate students, named Steve. The goal was to see if Steve could significantly improve his ability to remember a sequence of numbers. When they began working together, Steve could remember the average length most people have no trouble with – seven digits in a row. Steve hadn't had any memory training before and he wasn't particularly good with numbers either.

At the end of the study, several months later, Steve could remember number sequences *up to 82 digits long*.

What happened in between? Four things, specifically, which shaped Steve's practice environment:

1. **He had a clear, specific goal:** memorize more numbers.
2. **Steve was focused during practice.** A researcher recited the numbers to him in one-second intervals. There were no distractions.
3. **Ericsson constantly pushed him to achieve more.** When he pulled off 32 numbers, they'd start again with 32 the next session, then shoot for 33.
4. Lastly, **Steve received feedback after every attempt**, telling him exactly how he had done.

These four things combined create a training environment Ericsson calls **purposeful practice**. However, purposeful practice is just a stepping stone. For the real deal, two more things must happen.

Lesson 2: Purposeful practice becomes deliberate when it's guided and within a well-developed field.

Going from an average to a world-class performer is like climbing a ladder with an infinite number of rungs. The difference between good and great is in how fast you can get to the next rung, including how many you can skip altogether.

This happens when your practice turns from purposeful to deliberate, for which two elements must come together:

1. **Your practice must take place in a field that's well-established.** The longer it's been around and the more seasoned experts you can potentially access, the better. If there's a clear gap in performance between beginners and pros, that's a

good sign.

2. **Your practice must be guided by a trainer, coach or mentor**, who can instruct you in the activities necessary to improve.

Take music, for example. It's been around forever and hundreds of training techniques for all kinds of instruments have been refined and crafted until today. By having a violin teacher, who shows you how to play scales the best way, you skip a lot of steps and frustrating attempts.

Leveraging the guidance of someone with access to a big share of the resources and strategies in your field takes your practice from purposeful to informed – and that's what makes it deliberate.

Lesson 3: Even the world's greatest talents are really the result of years of deliberate practice.

But what about child prodigies like? When did *they* practice?

Ericsson argues there is no evidence to prove something such as innate talent exists and that even the most gifted among us are the result of lots and lots of deliberate practice.

Even Mozart was trained, not just talented. He just happened to receive excellent training, particularly from his father, starting before he was four years old. Contrary to popular belief, Mozart likely only started composing “proper” music in his teenage years – by when he had put in a decade's worth of deliberate practice already.

Plus, even if you consider others to be “more of a natural” than you, it wouldn't change the fact that you too can become world-class, thanks to deliberate practice. Whether our starting points differ or not becomes moot: **he who practices the most and does so deliberately, wins.**

So get off the complain train and start calling potential mentors!

Peak Review

Given Anders Ericsson's background and his pioneer status when it comes to human performance, it'd be foolish to skip Peak for other books about the subject. Peak: Secrets from the New Science of Expertise should be your number one, go-to book about deliberate practice. If you're interested in learning about this topic, make it your first stop, not your last.

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What else can you learn from the blinks?

- Why everyone can acquire perfect pitch
- How deliberate practice makes your brain larger – literally
- What makes London cab drivers skilled, deliberate practitioners
- How mental representations let you bypass short-term memory
- Why baseball professionals don't have to think when they're on the field

Who would I recommend the Peak summary to?

The 13 year old, who's really tired of piano practice, but has a chance of being great if she continues, the 29 year old writer, who's seen some success, but feels like he's now hitting a wall and might need a mentor, and anyone who thinks they're "just not talented enough."