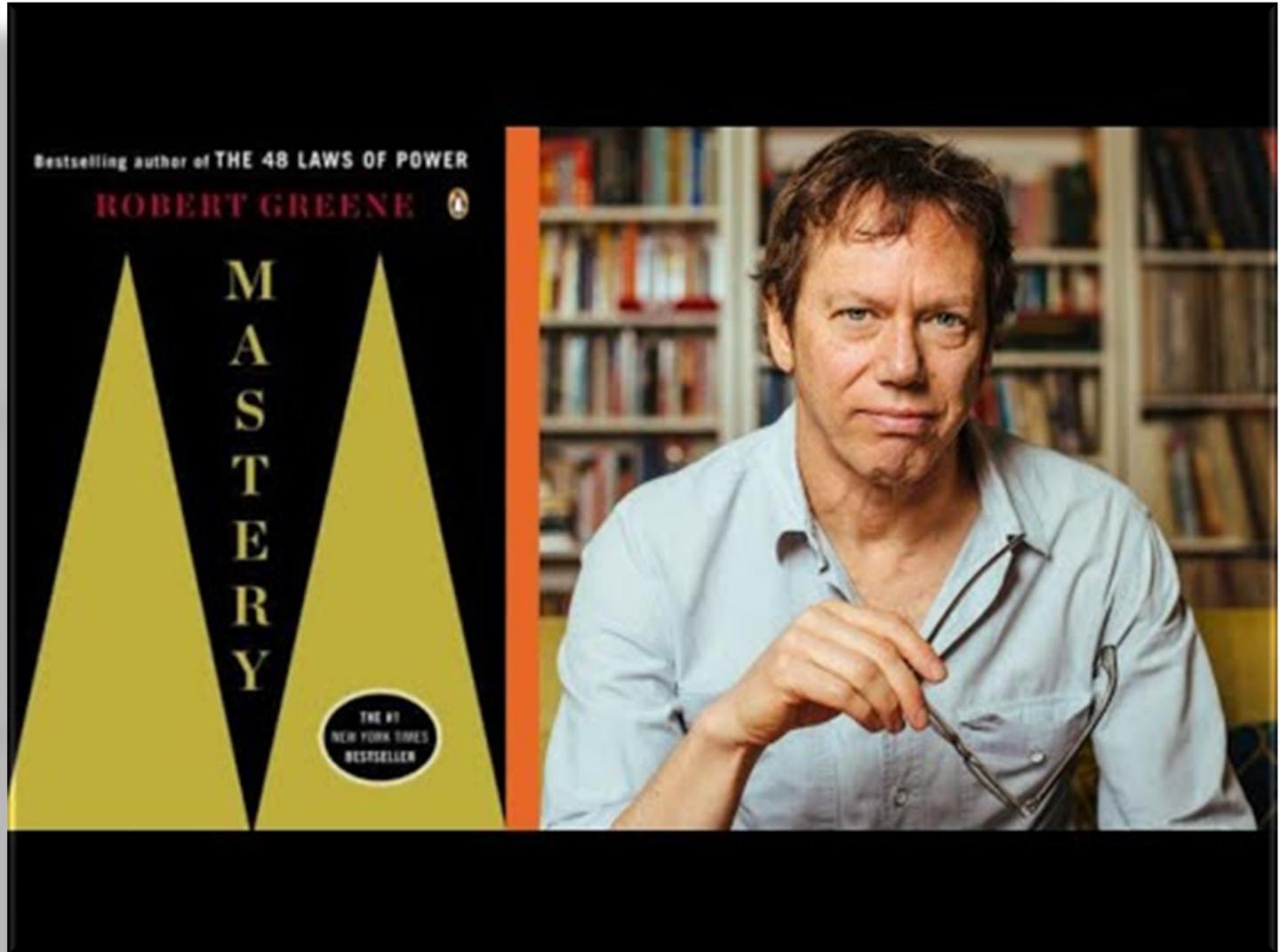


# Mastery

Robert Greene





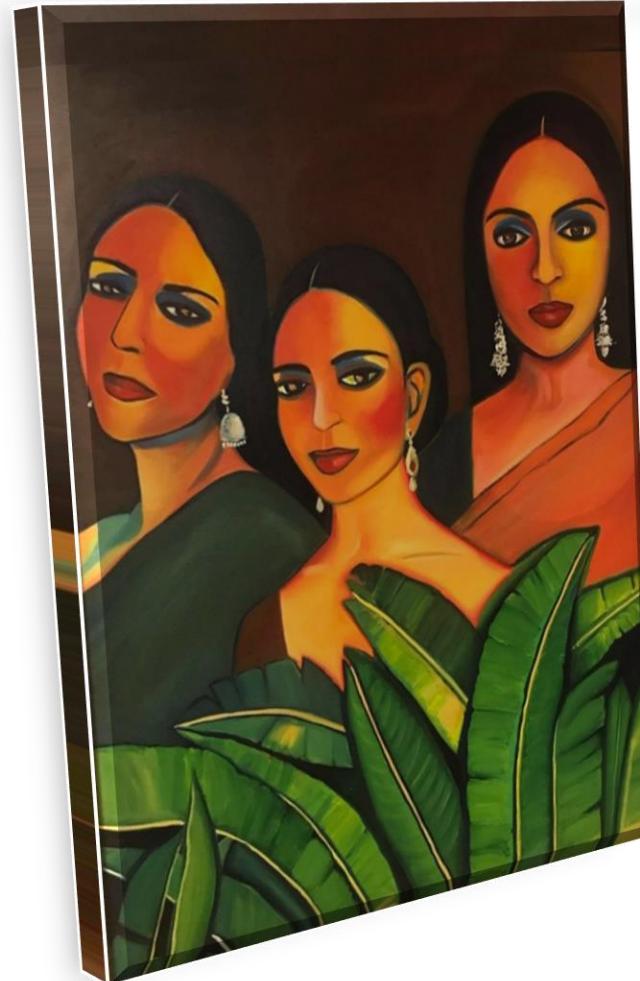
# Power (lessness) of Self

- Most of the time we live in an interior world of dreams, desires, and obsessive thoughts.
- But in this period of exceptional creativity, we are impelled by the need to get something done that has a practical effect.
- We force ourselves to step outside our inner chamber of habitual thoughts and connect to the world, to other people, to reality



# Creativity Brilliance Mystery

- We imagine that creativity and brilliance just appear out of nowhere, the fruit of natural talent, or perhaps of a good mood, or an alignment of the stars
- It would be an immense help to clear up the mystery—to name this feeling of power, to examine its roots, to define the kind of intelligence that leads to it, and to understand how it can be manufactured and maintained.



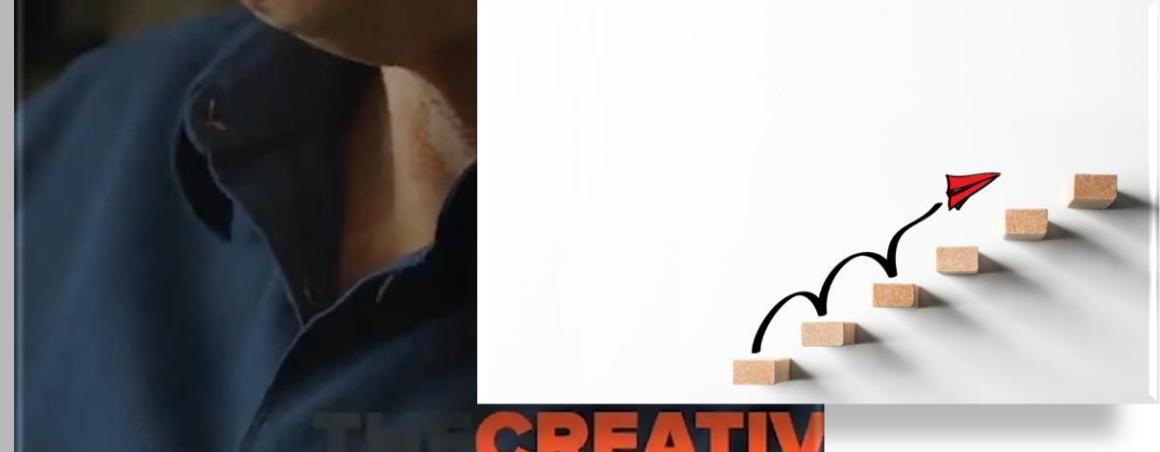


# The Ultimate Power

Every one holds his fortune in his own hands, like a sculptor the raw material he will fashion into a figure.

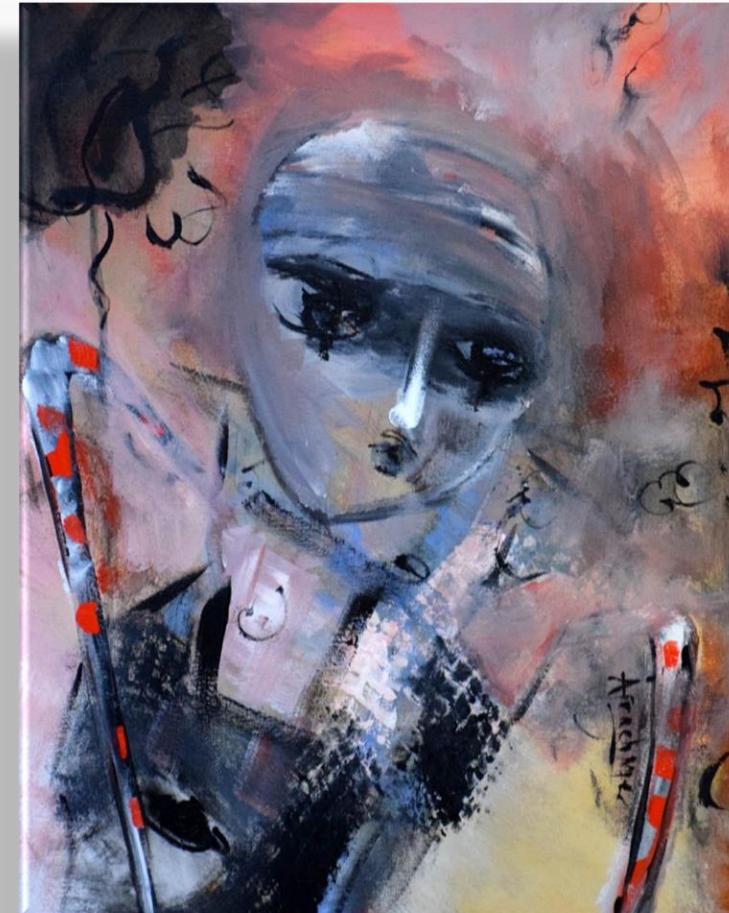
But it's the same with that type of artistic activity as with all others: We are merely born with the capability to do it.

The skill to mold the material into what we want must be learned and attentively cultivated. —JOHANN WOLFGANG VON GOETHE



# To begin with...

- In a new job situation, we are ignorant of the power relationships between people, the psychology of our boss, the rules and procedures that are considered critical for success



# Student to Practitioner

- As we continue to observe and follow the lead of others, we gain clarity, learning the rules and seeing how things work and fit together.
- If we keep practicing, we gain fluency; basic skills are mastered, allowing us to take on newer and more exciting challenges.
- At a certain point, we move from student to practitioner



# To Mastery



- As years go by and we remain faithful to this process, we move to yet another level - Mastery
- In our career, we now have a feel for the group dynamic, the current state of business.
- We can apply this feel to social situations, seeing deeper into other people and anticipating their reactions.
- We can make decisions that are rapid and highly creative. Ideas come to us.
- We have learned the rules so well that we can now be the ones to break or rewrite them.



# Beginning to Mastery

- When we first study the piano the keyboard looks rather intimidating—we don't understand the relationships between the keys, the chords, the pedals, and everything else that goes into creating music

- The keyboard is no longer something outside of us; it is internalized and becomes part of our nervous system, our fingertips. In our career, we now have a feel for the group dynamic, the current state of business

# Three Distinct phases or levels

## **Apprenticeship:**

Standing at the outside of our field, learning as much on the basics...

## **Creative Active**

Through much practice and immersion, we see into the inside of the machinery, how things connect with one another...

## **Mastery**

Our degree of knowledge, experience and focus is so deep, we can see the whole picture with complete clarity. We have access to the heart of Life



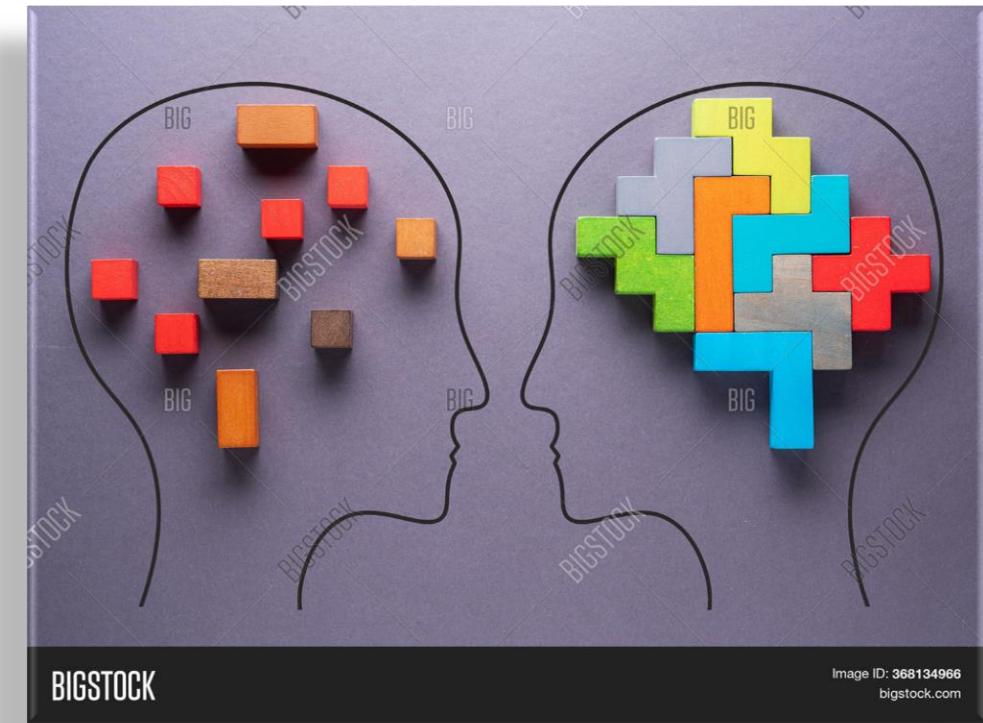
# Masters Mastery

- We have access to the heart of life—to human nature and natural phenomena.
- That is why the artwork of Masters touches us to the core; the artist has captured something of the essence of reality.
- That is why the brilliant scientist can uncover a new law of physics, and the inventor or entrepreneur can hit upon something no one else has imagined



# Instinct and Rationale

- An animal has the capacity to learn, but it largely relies on its instincts to connect to its surroundings and save itself from danger.
- Through instinct, it can act quickly and effectively.
- The human relies instead on thinking and rationality to understand its environment.
- But such thinking can be slow, and in its slowness can become ineffective



# Instinct, Rationale and Mastery

- As children we had some of this intuitive power and spontaneity, but it is generally drummed out of us by all of the information that overloads our minds over time.
- Masters return to this childlike state, their works displaying degrees of spontaneity and access to the unconscious, but at a much higher level than the child



# Mystery..

- Think of mastery in this way:  
Throughout history, men and women have felt trapped by the limitations of their consciousness, by their lack of contact with reality and the power to affect the world around them
- At the same time that so many people lose themselves in these endless fantasies, they ignore the one real power that they actually possess



# Mastery

**Artwork of Masters touches us to the core;**

**The artist has captured something of the essence of reality.**

**The brilliant scientist can uncover a new law of physics,**

**The inventor or entrepreneur can hit upon something no one else has imagined.**



Mastery is not a function of genius or talent. It is a function of time and intense focus applied to a particular field of knowledge.

— Robert Greene —

AZ QUOTES

# Power at Mastery level

- Intuitive powers at the mastery level are a mix of the instinctive and the rational, the conscious and the unconscious, the human and the animal.
- It is our way of making sudden and powerful connections to the environment, to feeling or thinking inside things



# The Big Secret

This is the real secret: the brain that we possess is the work of six million years of development, and more than anything else, this evolution of the brain was designed to lead us to mastery, the latent power within us all.



# Human Evolution



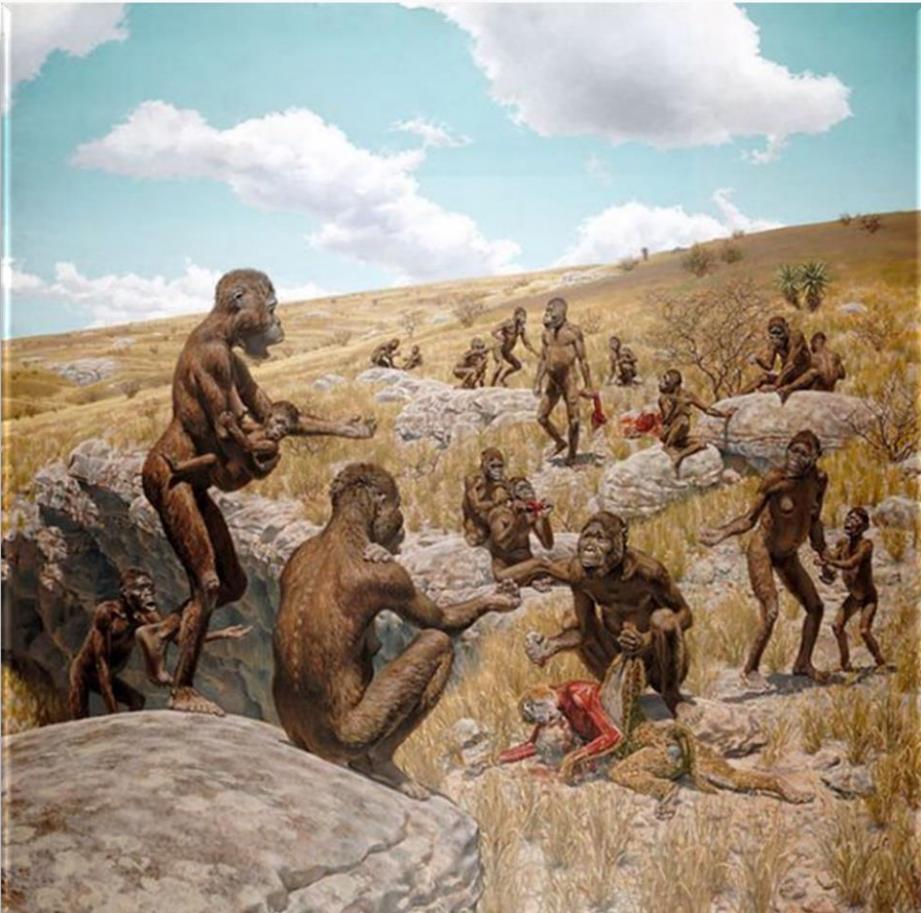
- By looking long enough at any object and refusing to be distracted—even for a few seconds—Humans could momentarily detach themselves from their immediate surroundings.
- In this way they could notice patterns, make generalizations, and think ahead.
- They had the mental distance to think and reflect, even on the smallest scale.

# The Real Power

- A monkey or primate can see an action from the point of view of the performer and imagine its intentions, but we can take this further.
- Without any visual cues or any action on the part of others, we can place ourselves inside their minds and imagine what they might be thinking



# The Big Leap



- Mastery at this level meant our ancestors could make decisions rapidly and effectively, having gained a complete understanding of their environment and their prey
- They had developed this intuitive power hundreds of thousands of years before the invention of language, and that is why when we experience this intelligence it seems like something preverbal, a power that transcends our ability to put it into words

# Keys to Mastery



- A man should learn to detect and watch that gleam of light which flashes across his mind from within, more than the luster of the firmament of bards and sages.
- Yet he dismisses without notice his thought, because it is his. In every work of genius we recognize our own rejected thoughts; they come back to us with a certain alienated majesty. —RALPH WALDO EMERSON

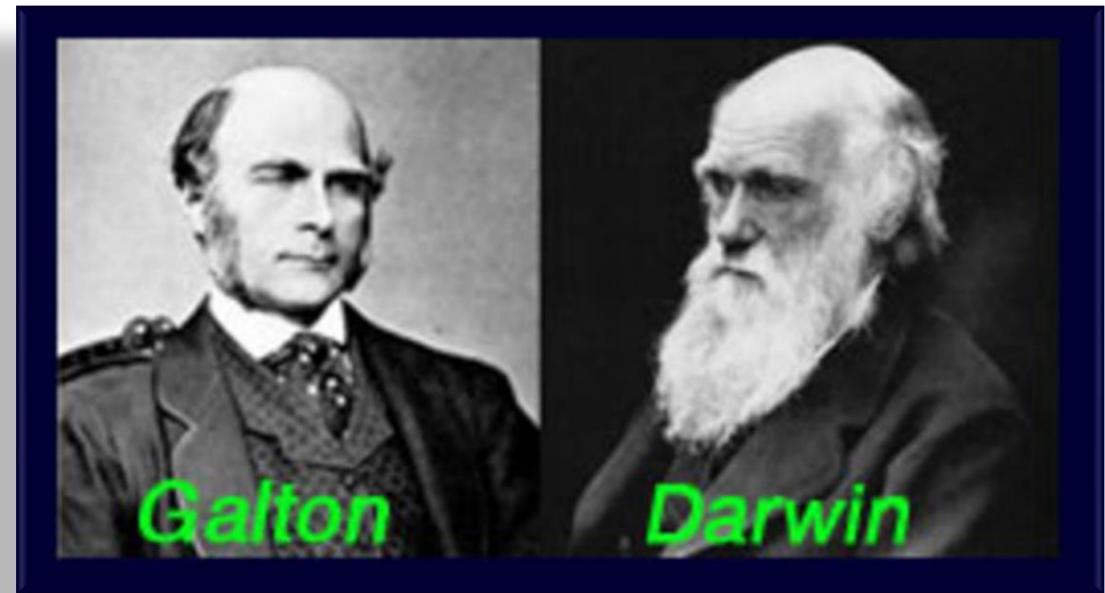
# Keys to Mastery

- If all of us are born with an essentially similar brain, with more or less the same configuration and potential for mastery, why is it then that in history only a limited number of people seem to truly excel and realize this potential power?



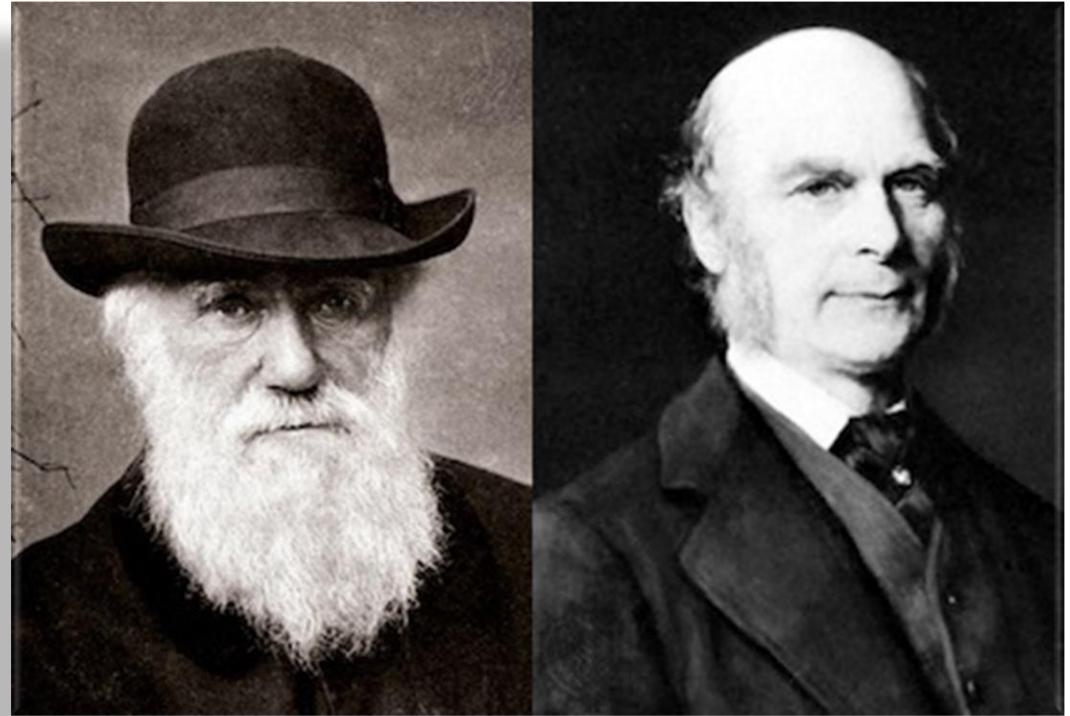
# Keys to Mastery

- As a classic example, compare the lives of Sir Francis Galton and his older cousin, Charles Darwin.
- By all accounts, Galton was a super-genius with an exceptionally high IQ, quite a bit higher than Darwin's (these are estimates done by experts years after the invention of the measurement).
- Galton was a boy wonder who went on to have an illustrious scientific career, but he never quite mastered any of the fields he went into. He was notoriously restless, as is often the case with child prodigies



# Keys to Mastery

- As Darwin himself admitted, he was “a very ordinary boy, rather below the common standard in intellect.... I have no great quickness of apprehension.... My power to follow a long and purely abstract train of thought is very limited.”
- Darwin, however, must have possessed something that Galton lacked.



# Keys to Mastery – Intelligence?

- In our culture we tend to equate thinking and intellectual powers with success and achievement.
- In many ways, however, it is an emotional quality that separates those who master a field from the many who simply work at a job.



# Keys to Mastery – Persistence?

- Our levels of desire, patience, persistence, and confidence end up playing a much larger role in success than sheer reasoning powers.
- Feeling motivated and energized, we can overcome almost anything.
- Feeling bored and restless, our minds shut off and we become increasingly passive



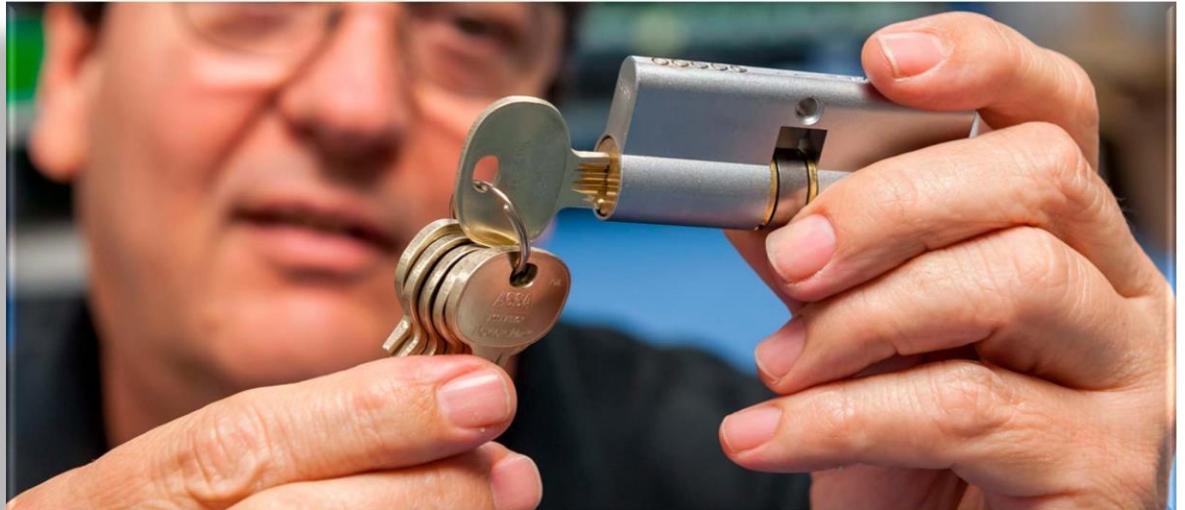
# Keys to Mastery – Being elite?

- Millions of people who were not part of the right social class, gender, and ethnic group were rigidly excluded from the possibility of pursuing their calling.
- Even if people wanted to follow their inclinations, access to the information and knowledge pertaining to that particular field was controlled by elites



# Keys to Mastery – Technology?

- The idea that they might have to expend much effort to get what they want has been eroded by the proliferation of devices that do so much of the work for them, fostering the idea that they deserve all of this—that it is their inherent right to have and to consume what they want.
- “Why bother working for years to attain mastery when we can have so much power with very little effort? Technology will solve everything.”



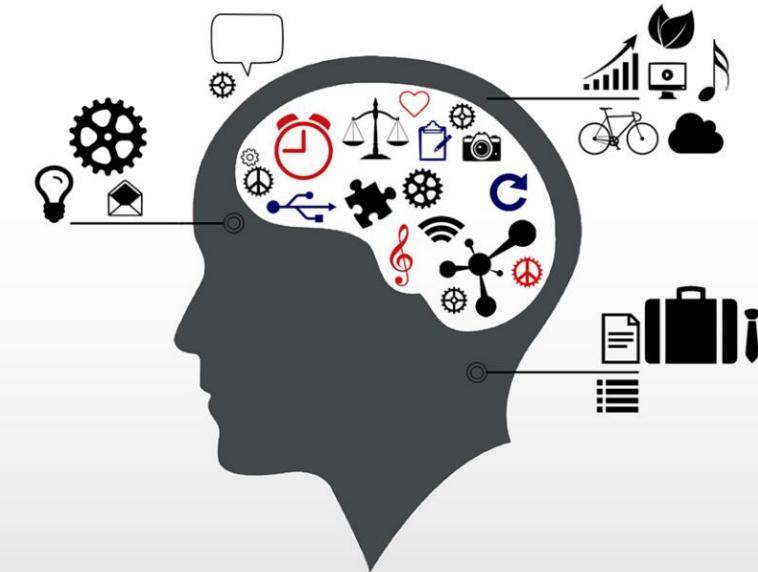
# Keys to Mastery

- First, you must see your attempt at attaining mastery as something extremely necessary and positive.
- Second, you must convince yourself of the following: people get the mind and quality of brain that they deserve through their actions in life.



# Keys to Mastery

- Scientists are demonstrating the degree to which the brain is actually quite plastic—how our thoughts determine our mental landscape
- People who are passive create a mental landscape that is rather barren. Because of their limited experiences and action, all kinds of connections in the brain die off from lack of use



**INSIDE  
MASTERY**

# Keys to Mastery

- Pushing against the passive trend of these times, you must work to see how far you can extend control of your circumstances and create the kind of mind you desire—not through drugs but through action.
- Unleashing the masterful mind within, you will be at the vanguard of those who are exploring the extended limits of human willpower.



# Keys to Mastery

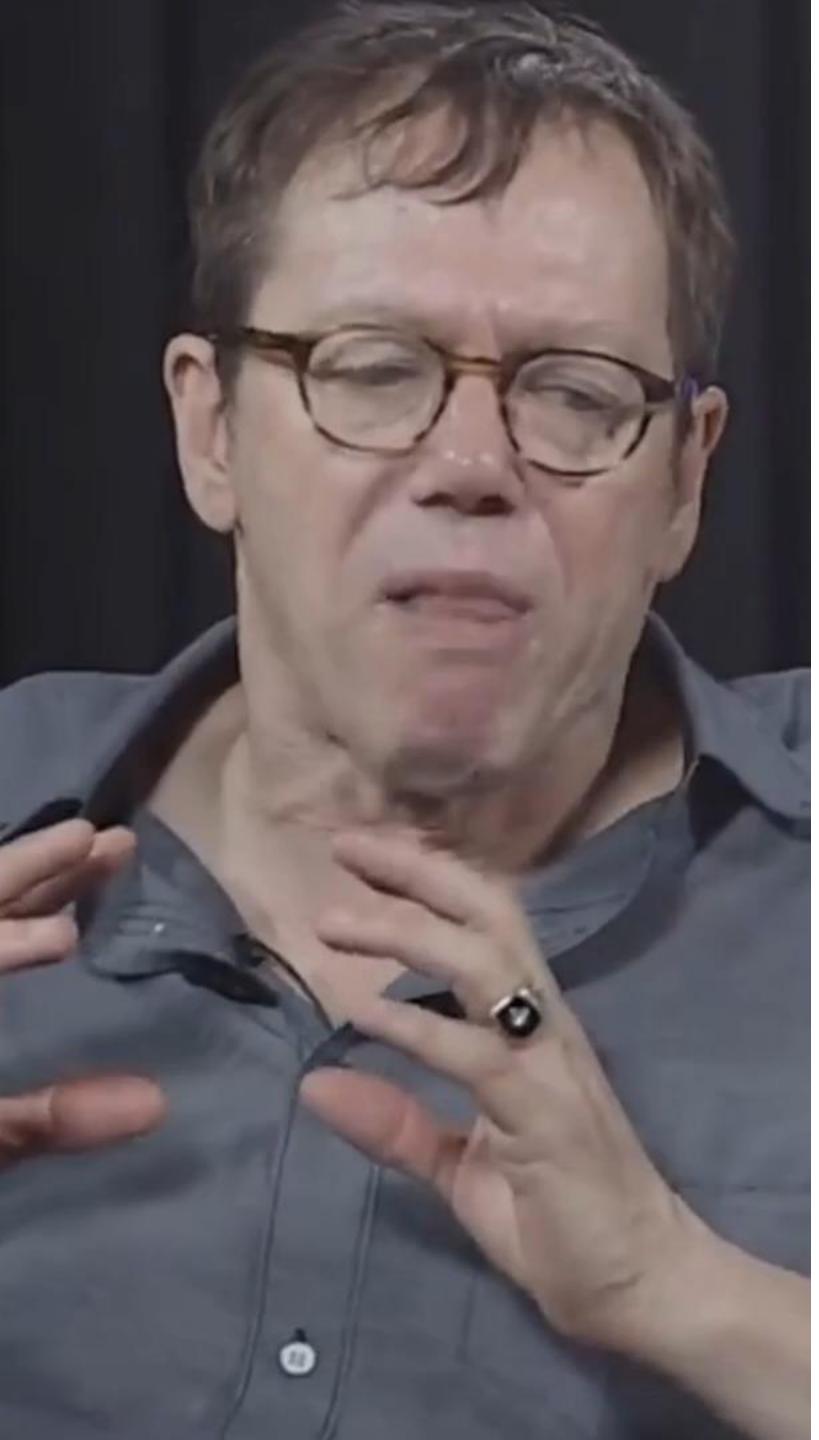
- Do not talk about giftedness, inborn talents! One can name great men of all kinds who were very little gifted.
- They acquired greatness, became “geniuses” (as we put it), through qualities the lack of which no one who knew what they were would boast of:
- They all possessed that seriousness of the efficient workman which first learns to construct the parts properly before it ventures to fashion a great whole; they allowed themselves time for it, because they took more pleasure in making the little, secondary things well than in the effect of a dazzling whole. —FRIEDRICH NIETZSCH



Mastery is not a function of genius or talent. It is a function of time and intense focus applied to a particular field of knowledge.

— Robert Greene —

AZ QUOTES

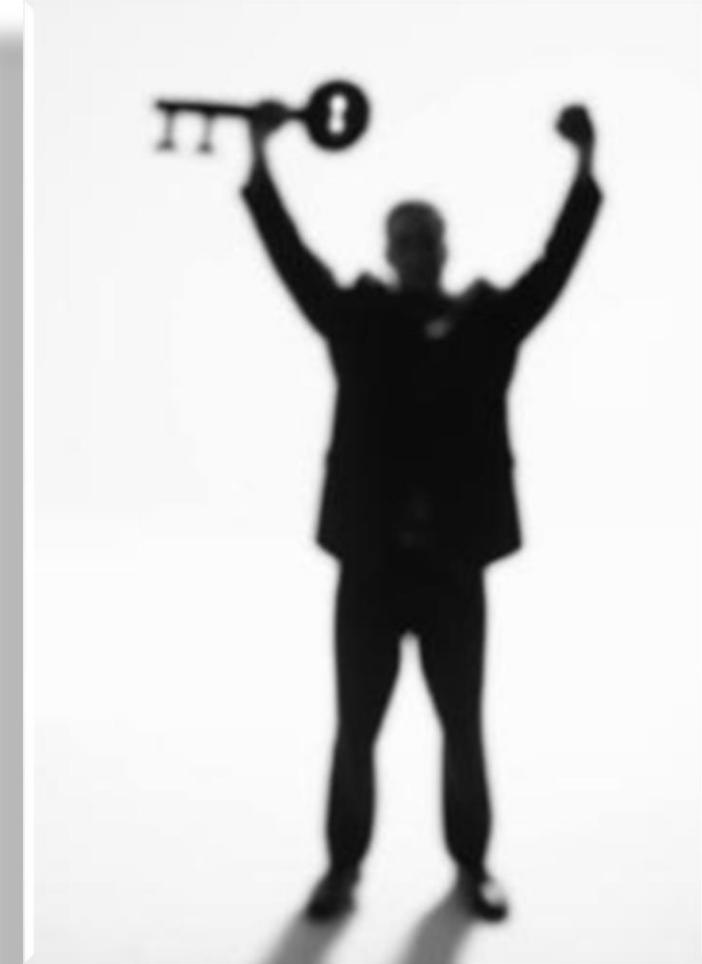
A close-up photograph of a middle-aged man with short brown hair and glasses. He is wearing a dark grey button-down shirt and a gold ring on his left hand. He is gesturing with his hands while speaking, with one hand near his chin and the other pointing towards the camera.

# Discover your calling: the life's task

- The first move toward mastery is always inward—learning who you really are and reconnecting with that innate force.
- Knowing it with clarity, you will find your way to the proper career path and everything else will fall into place.
- It is never too late to start this process

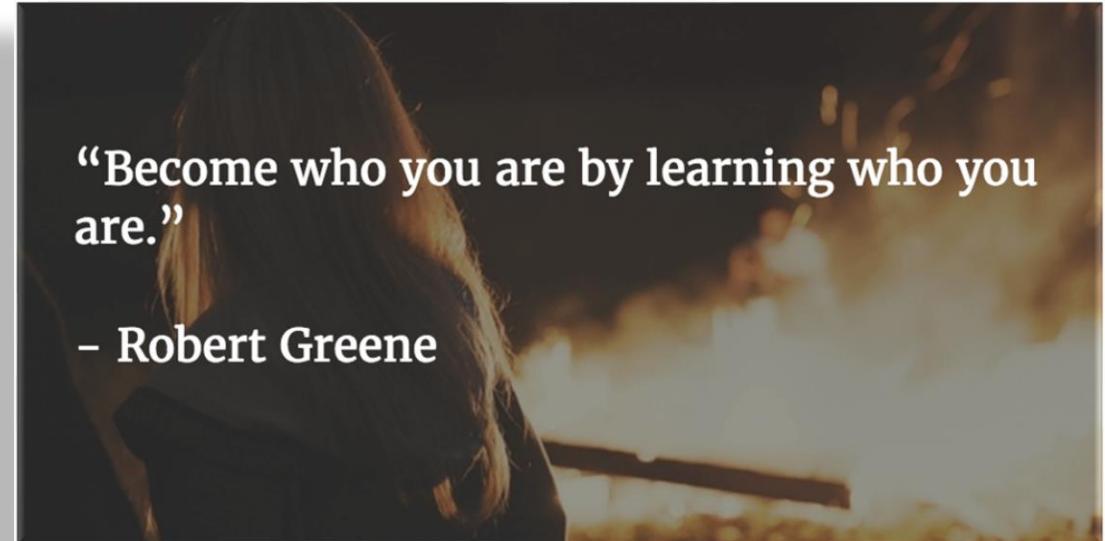
# Work Sleep Death

- “Just as a well-filled day brings blessed sleep, so a well-employed life brings a blessed death.” Leonardo da Vinci



# Discover your calling

- Among his various possible beings each man always finds one which is his genuine and authentic being. The voice which calls him to that authentic being is what we call “vocation.”
- But the majority of men devote themselves to silencing that voice of the vocation and refusing to hear it.
- They manage to make a noise within themselves...to distract their own attention in order not to hear it; and they defraud themselves by substituting for their genuine selves a false course of life.
- JOSÉ ORTEGA Y GASSET



# Discover your calling – How?

- For Napoleon Bonaparte it was his “star” that he always felt in ascendance when he made the right move.
- Albert Einstein talked of a kind of inner voice that shaped the direction of his speculations.



# Discover your calling – How?

- At your birth a seed is planted. That seed is your uniqueness. It wants to grow, transform itself, and flower to its full potential.
- It has a natural, assertive energy to it.
- Your Life's Task is to bring that seed to flower, to express your uniqueness through your work.
- You have a destiny to fulfill



# Discover your calling – Obstacles

- What weakens this force, what makes you not feel it or even doubt its existence, is the degree to which you have succumbed to another force in life—social pressures to conform.
- This counterforce can be very powerful.
- You want to fit into a group.
- This can set you off on a very dangerous path. You end up choosing a career that does not really suit you



# Discover your calling – How?

- First, you must connect or reconnect with your inclinations, that sense of uniqueness. The first step then is always inward. You search the past for signs of that inner voice or force
- Second, with this connection established, you must look at the career path you are already on or are about to begin
- Finally, you must see your career or vocational path more as a journey with twists and turns rather than a straight line.





# Discover your calling – How?

- Eventually, you will hit upon a particular field, niche, or opportunity that suits you perfectly.
- You will recognize it when you find it because it will spark that childlike sense of wonder and excitement; it will feel right.
- Once found, everything will fall into place
- As your own Master, you will no longer be subject to the whims of tyrannical bosses or scheming peers.

# Strategies for finding your life's task

- The misery that oppresses you lies not in your profession but in yourself!
- What man in the world would not find his situation intolerable if he chooses a craft, an art, indeed any form of life, without experiencing an inner calling?
- Whoever is born with a talent, or to a talent, must surely find in that the most pleasing of occupations! Everything on this earth has its difficult sides!



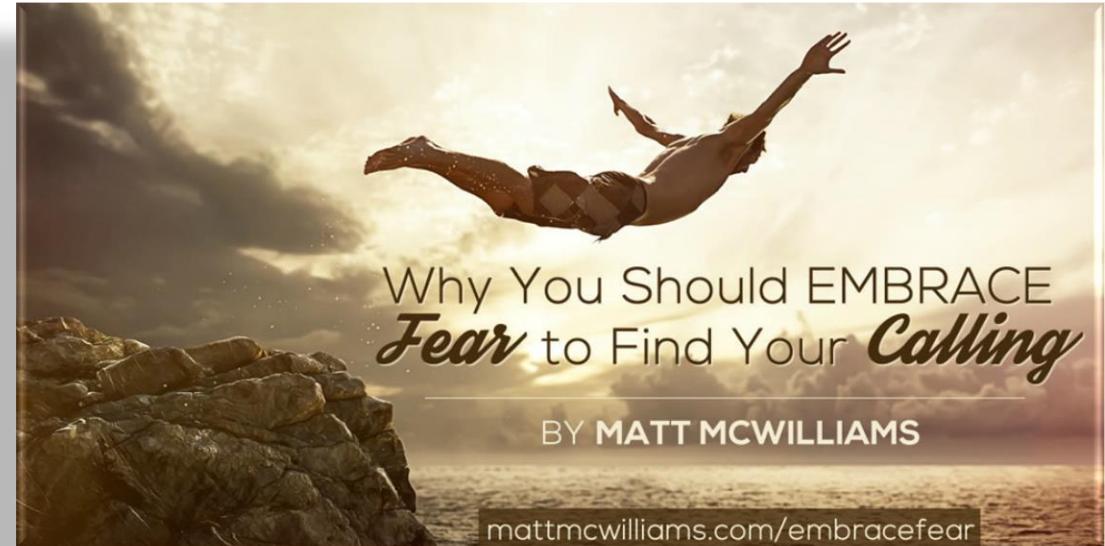
# Strategies for finding your life's task

- Return to your origins—The primal inclination strategy
- Occupy the perfect niche—The Darwinian strategy
- Avoid the false path—The rebellion strategy
- Let go of the past—The adaptation strategy
- Find your way back—The life-or-death strategy



# Reversal

- Understand: Your Life's Task does not always appear to you through some grand or promising inclination.
- It can appear in the guise of your deficiencies, making you focus on the one or two things that you are inevitably good at.
- Working at these skills, you learn the value of discipline and see the rewards you get from your efforts.



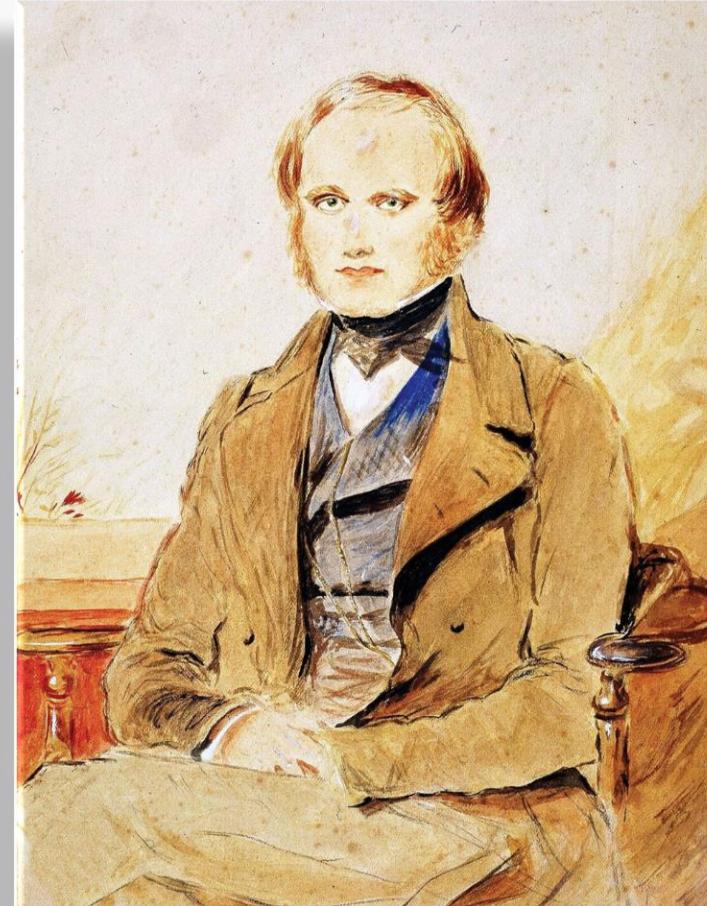
Why You Should EMBRACE  
*Fear* to Find Your *Calling*

BY MATT MCWILLIAMS

[mattmcwilliams.com/embracefear](http://mattmcwilliams.com/embracefear)

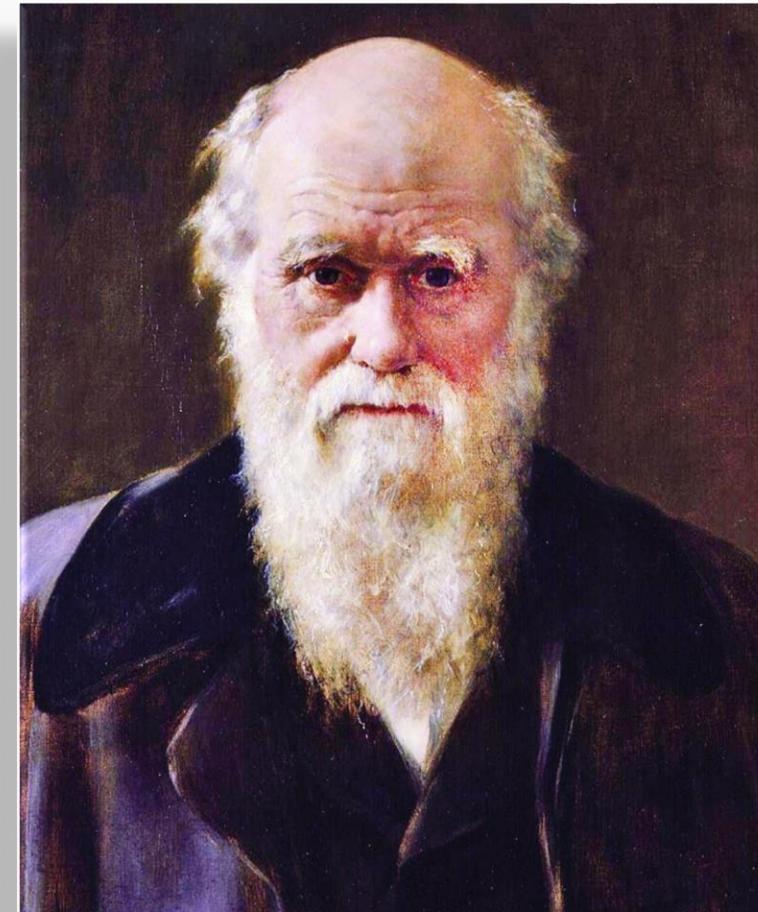
# Submit to reality: the ideal apprenticeship: Charles Darwin

- As the journey progressed, Darwin noted some obvious changes in himself.
- He used to find almost any kind of work boring, but now he could labor all hours of the day; in fact, with so much to explore and learn, he hated wasting a single minute of the voyage.
- He had cultivated an incredible eye for the flora and fauna of South America.
- He could identify local birds by their songs, the markings on their eggs, their manner of taking flight



**One can have no smaller or greater mastery than mastery of oneself. —LEONARDO DA VINCI**

- On the journey home Darwin began to develop this theory further, so revolutionary in its implications.
- Darwin hurried home, and when his father first saw him he was astonished. Physically, he had changed.
- His head seemed larger. His whole manner was different—a seriousness of purpose and sharpness could be read in his eyes, almost the opposite look of the lost young man who had gone to sea years before.



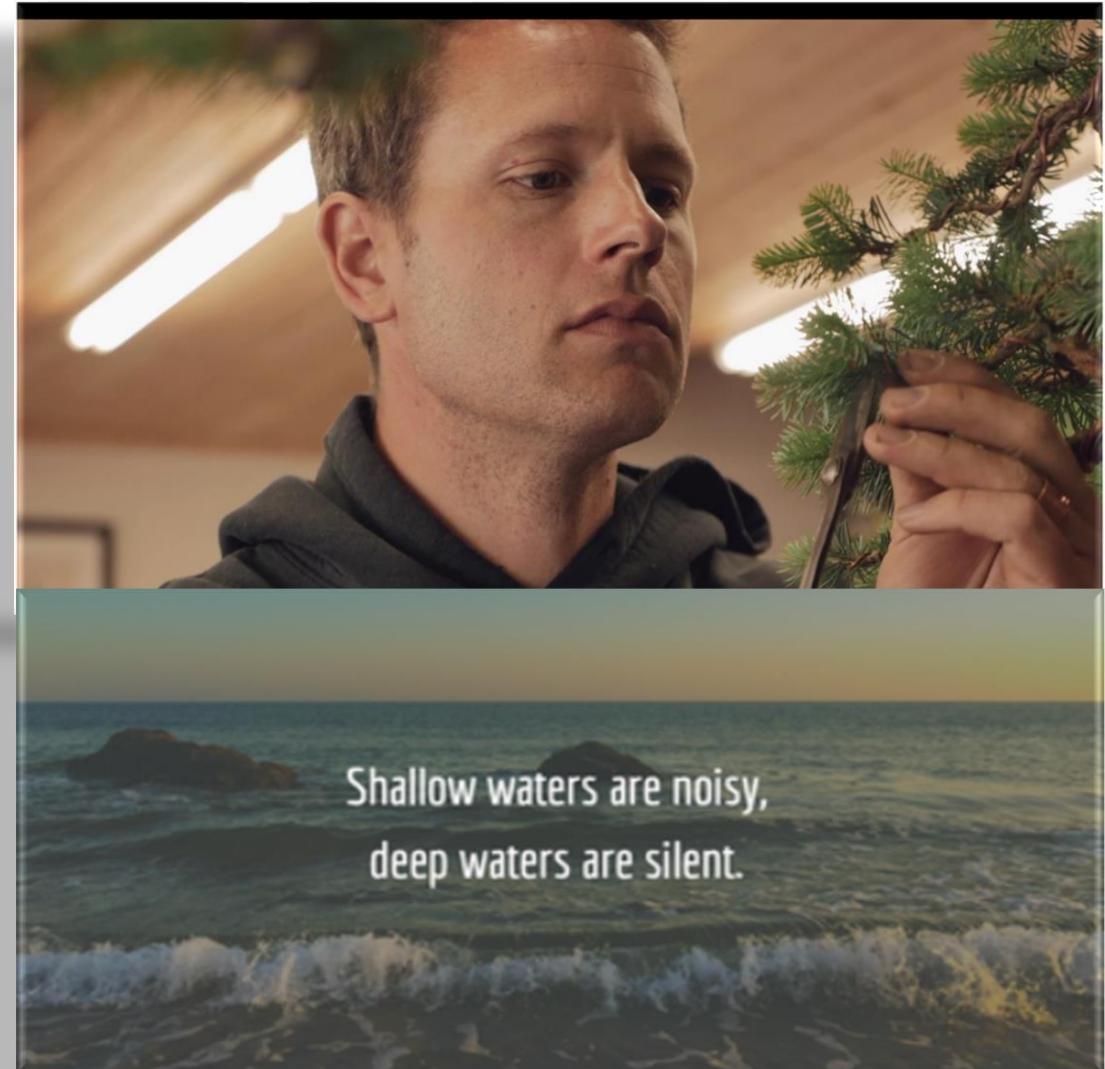
# The Apprenticeship Phase—The Three Steps or Modes

- Deep Observation (The Passive Mode),
- Skills Acquisition (The Practice Mode),
- Experimentation (The Active Mode).



# Deep Observation—The Passive Mode

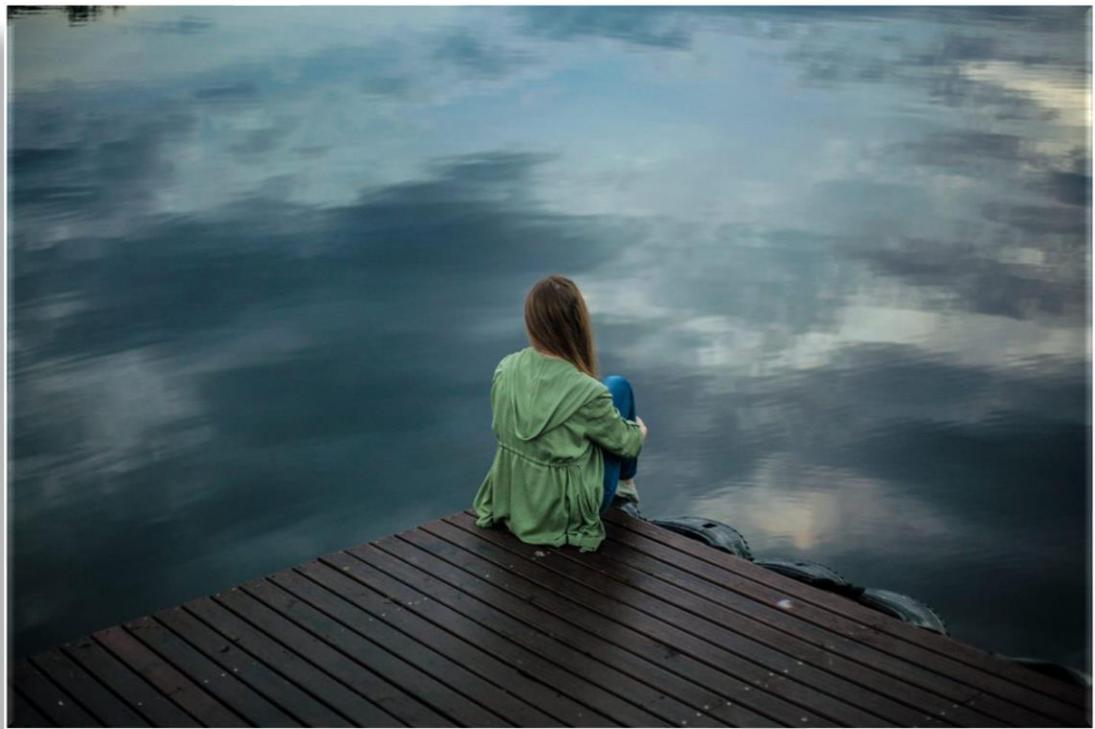
- First, you will observe the rules and procedures that govern success in this environment—in other words, “this is how we do things here.”
- The second reality you will observe is the power relationships that exist within the group: who has real control; through whom do all communications flow; who is on the rise and who is on the decline



Shallow waters are noisy,  
deep waters are silent.

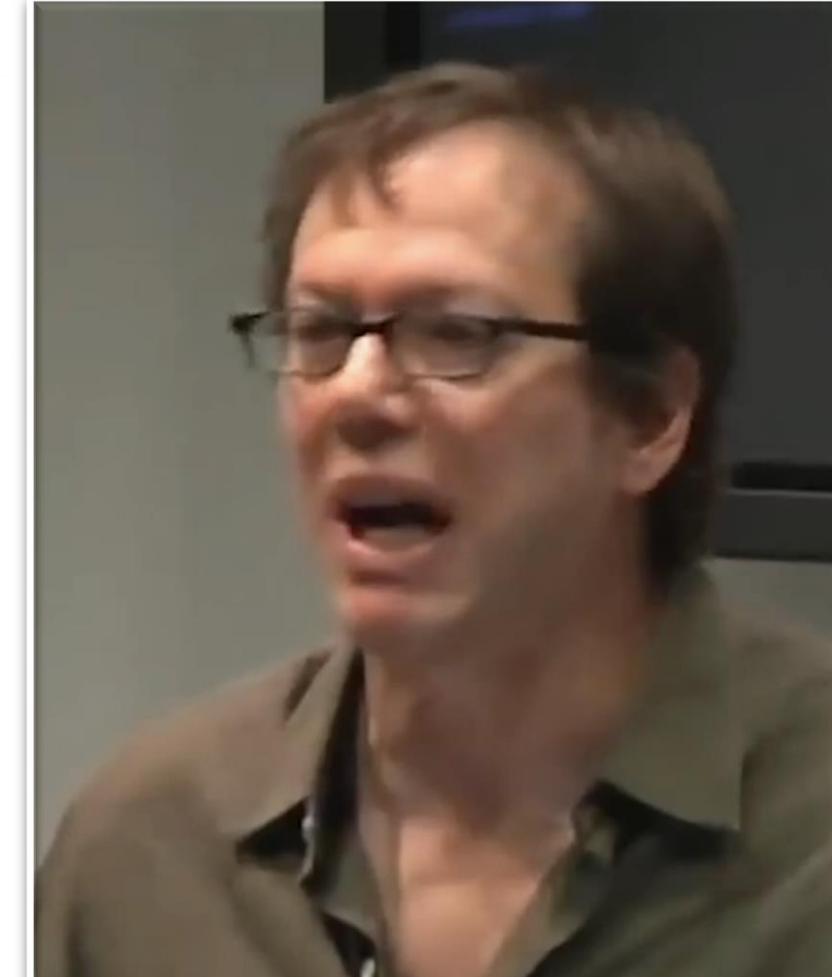
# Deep Observation—The Passive Mode

- First, knowing your environment inside and out will help you in navigating it and avoiding costly mistakes.
- You are like a hunter: your knowledge of every detail of the forest and of the ecosystem as a whole will give you many more options for survival and success.
- Second, the ability to observe any unfamiliar environment will become a critical lifelong skill.
- You will develop the habit of stilling your ego and looking outward instead of inward.



# Step Two: Skills Acquisition— The Practice Mode

- And so they developed the apprenticeship system, in which young people from approximately the ages of twelve to seventeen would enter work in a shop, signing a contract that would commit them for the term of seven years.
- At the end of this term, apprentices would have to pass a master test, or produce a master work, to prove their level of skill.
- Once passed, they were now elevated to the rank of journeymen and could travel wherever there was work, practicing the craft.



# Skills Acquisition—The Practice Mode

- If one added up the time that apprentices ended up working directly on materials in those years, it would amount to more than 10,000 hours, enough to establish exceptional skill level at a craft.
- The power of this form of tacit knowledge is embodied in the great Gothic cathedrals of Europe— masterpieces of beauty, craftsmanship, and stability, all erected without blueprints or book



# Skills Acquisition—The Practice Mode

- Once you take this far enough, you enter a cycle of accelerated returns in which the practice becomes easier and more interesting, leading to the ability to practice for longer hours, which increases your skill level, which in turn makes practice even more interesting.



The 10,000-hours rule says that if you look at any kind of cognitively complex field, from playing chess to being a neurosurgeon, we see this incredibly consistent pattern that you cannot be good at that unless you practice for 10,000 hours, which is roughly ten years, if you think about four hours a day.

— *Malcolm Gladwell* —

AZ QUOTES

# Skills Acquisition—The Practice Mode

- First, it is essential that you begin with one skill that you can master, and that serves as a foundation for acquiring others.
- You must avoid at all cost the idea that you can manage learning several skills at a time.
- You need to develop your powers of concentration, and understand that trying to multitask will be the death of the process



# Skills Acquisition—The Practice Mode

- Second, the initial stages of learning a skill invariably involve tedium.
- Yet rather than avoiding this inevitable tedium, you must accept and embrace it.
- The pain and boredom we experience in the initial stage of learning a skill toughens our minds, much like physical exercise



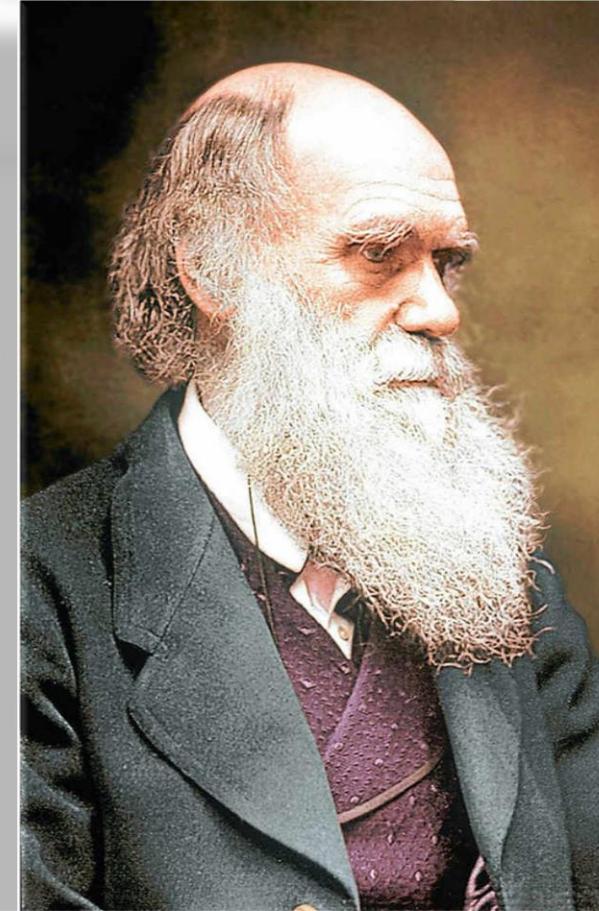
# Skills Acquisition—The Practice Mode

- It is better to dedicate two or three hours of intense focus to a skill than to spend eight hours of diffused concentration on it
- Once an action becomes automatic, you now have the mental space to observe yourself as you practice
- If you take this far enough, you will naturally enter the cycle of accelerated returns
- the time necessary to master the requisite skills and attain a level of a master, repeatedly come up with the number of 10,000 hours



# Step Three: Experimentation—The Active Mode

- This could mean taking on more responsibility, initiating a project of some sort, doing work that exposes you to the criticisms of peers or even the public.
- The point of this is to gauge your progress and whether there are still gaps in your knowledge.
- You are observing yourself in action and seeing how you respond to the judgments of others.
- Can you take criticism and use it constructively?



First, on the Beagle, he discussed them with the captain and patiently absorbed his vehement criticisms of the idea. This, Darwin told himself, would be more or less the reaction of the public, and he would have to prepare himself for that

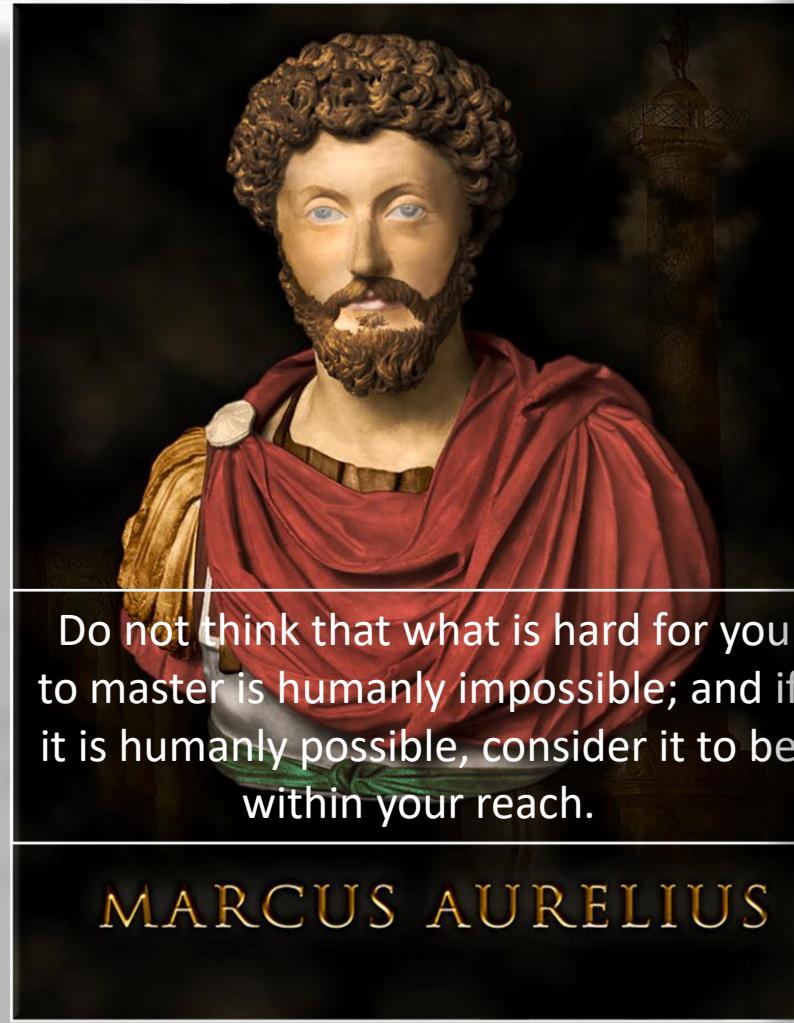
# Experimentation—The Active Mode

- When we work with our hands and build something, we learn how to sequence our actions and how to organize our thoughts
- Thomas Jefferson, who himself was an avid tinkerer and inventor, believed that craftspeople made better citizens because they understood how things functioned and had practical common sense
- Albert Einstein was an avid violinist. He believed that working with his hands in this way and playing music helped his thinking process as well.



# Strategies for completing the ideal apprenticeship

- Value learning over Money
- Keep expanding your horizons
- Revert to a feeling of inferiority
- Trust the process
- Move toward resistance and pain
- Apprentice yourself in failure
- Combine the “how” and the “what”



Do not think that what is hard for you to master is humanly impossible; and if it is humanly possible, consider it to be within your reach.

MARCUS AURELIUS

I always look at it

@LEWISHOWES



# Two Worlds

- Outer world of appearances —all of the forms of things that captivate our eye.
- How these things actually function, their anatomy or composition, the parts working together and forming the whole
- This division between the “how” and the “what” can be applied to almost everything around us—we see the machine, not how it works

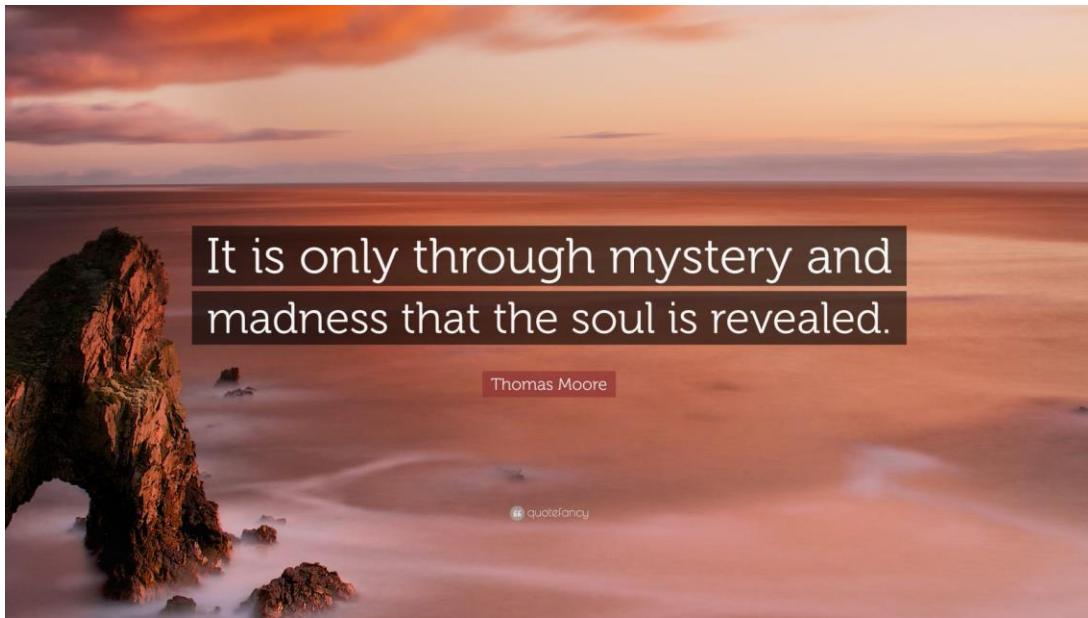


# Two Worlds

- Scientists and technicians live in their own world, focusing mostly on the “how” of things.
- Others live in the world of appearances, using these things but not really understanding how they function
- This is why the work of Leonardo da Vinci continues to fascinate us, and why the Renaissance remains an ideal



# Absorb the master's power: the mentor dynamic



It is only through mystery and  
madness that the soul is revealed.

Thomas Moore

quotefancy