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Outliers Chapters 1 & 2

I think that the main argument of the book is that the highest degrees of success come from opportunities that come by luck. Gladwell goes on to describe stories that are examples of this, like the anecdote about the correlation between hockey players' success and their birth months.

A passage from the introduction that I feel pertains to the main argument is, "They had to look beyond the individual. They had to understand the culture he or she was a part of, and who their friends and families were, and what town their families came from. They had to appreciate the idea that the values of the world we inhabit and the people we surround ourselves with have a profound effect on who we are" (Gladwell 2). This quote adds on to the main argument, claiming that it is not a single factor that determines whether a person is successful or not, but actually a combined effort, with contributions from the surroundings, a lot of hard work, and luck.

A quote from Chapter 1 that I feel adds on to the main idea is, "We could easily take control of the machinery of achievement, in other words — not just in sports but, as we will see, in other more consequential areas as well. But we don't. And why? Because we cling to the idea that success is a simple function of individual merit and that the world in which we all grow up and the rules we choose to write as a society don't matter at all" (Gladwell 5). Gladwell highlights the complex matter of society and its one-dimensional idea of achievement, discussing multiple factors that play a role in determining personal success. He focuses on factors that are

commonly not attributed towards success, like importance of meaningful work, practice, family history, culture, and birth month.

A passage from Chapter 2 that I feel pertains to the main argument is, "But what truly distinguishes their histories is not their extraordinary talent but their extraordinary opportunities" (Gladwell 6). In Chapter 2, Gladwell provides examples of extremely successful people which at first glance, seem like just very talented, but they were actually presented with extraordinary opportunities. He lists very popular examples, like The Beatles, Bill Joy, and Steve Jobs.

Works Cited

Gladwell, Malcolm. *Outliers The Story of Success*. Penguin Books, 2008.