



## Why People Reward Innate Talent over Hard Work

### 为什么人们更重视天赋而非努力

Date: May. 22, 2023

636 Words

In almost every **discipline**, success comes from a combination of talent and **grit**. But if you listen to most famous figures describe their life journeys, you'll soon hear them **waxing lyrical about** their hard **graft**, while strangely **downplaying** the role of their **innate** abilities.

几乎在每个领域，成功都源于天赋和毅力的结合。但是，如果你听过大多数名人描述他们的人生历程，你很快会发现他们特别强调自己的努力奋斗，而对天赋的作用轻描淡写。

Thomas Edison may be the most often quoted, with his claim that “genius is one percent inspiration and ninety-nine percent **perspiration**”, but many other variations exist. The Portuguese footballer Cristiano Ronaldo also emphasises the blood, sweat and tears that went into his training. “Talent without work is nothing,” he said, when asked about the secrets of his success on the **pitch**.

人们最常引用托马斯·爱迪生的“天才是百分之一的灵感加上百分之九十九的汗水”，还有其他许多类似的说法。葡萄牙足球运动员C罗也强调了他在训练中付出的血汗和泪水。当被问及他在球场上取得成功的秘诀时，他说：“没有努力，天赋一无是处。”

Such narratives may be beneficial for celebrated figures who wish to appear **humble** and **grounded**. But recent psychological research shows overemphasising the importance of hard work could **backfire** in many professional situations – thanks to a phenomenon known as the “naturalness bias”. These studies suggest people have greater respect for those with an

**discipline** [ˈdɪsəplɪn] *n.* 知识领域，学科；自制力；训练，纪律 | We're looking for people from a wide range of disciplines. 我们需要各个学科的人才。

**grit** [grɪt] *n.* 勇气，毅力；沙砾，细沙 *v.* (在结冰的道路上) 撒沙砾 | I had a piece of grit in my eye. 我眼睛里进了一粒沙子。

**wax lyrical about sth.** 热情洋溢地谈论（某事物） | He began to wax lyrical about his new car. 他开始兴高采烈地谈论他的新车。

**graft** [græft] *n.* 艰苦的工作；嫁接；移植；贿赂 *v.* 嫁接；移植；努力地工作；引入 | Their success was the result of years of hard graft. 他们的成功是多年艰苦奋斗的结果。

**downplay** [ˌdaʊnˈpleɪ] *v.* 对……轻描淡写，使轻视，贬低 | The coach is downplaying the team's poor performance. 教练对这个队的拙劣表现不以为然。

**innate** [ɪˈneɪt] *adj.* 天生的，与生俱来的 | Children have an innate ability to learn language. 儿童学习语言的能力是与生俱来的。

innate gift than for those who have had to **strive for** their success.

这样的表述可能对那些希望显得谦逊和踏实的名人有益。但最近的心理研究表明，过分强调努力的重要性在许多职业场合可能会适得其反，原因在于一种被称为“自然偏见”的现象。这些研究表明，人们更尊重那些有天赋的人，而不是那些必须努力才能成功的人。

In consumer psychology, the term “naturalness bias” is often used to describe our preference for natural over **synthetic** goods. The author Malcolm Gladwell seems to have been the first to apply the concept to human abilities, during a presentation to the American Psychological Association (APA) in 2002. “On some fundamental level, we believe that the closer something is to its original state, the less altered or **adulterated** it is, the more **desirable** it is,” he declared. By that logic, he proposed, someone who had to work hard to achieve success has essentially gone against their “nature”, and their achievements would be respected less.

在消费心理学中，“自然偏见”一词常被用来描述我们更喜欢天然产品而不是人工合成的产品。作家马尔科姆·格拉德威尔似乎是第一个将这一概念用于描述人类能力的人，他在2002年向美国心理协会做报告时提出了这一概念。他指出，“在某种基本层面上，我们相信，越是接近原始状态的东西，改变或掺假越少，就越好。”他提出，按照这种逻辑，那些必须努力才能取得成功的人，本质上违背了他们的“本性”，他们的成就会不那么受到尊重。

On an individual level, the existence of the naturalness bias might influence the way we present ourselves to others, so that our achievements are not **unduly** overlooked.

在个人层面上，自然偏见的存在可能会影响我们向他人展示自己的方式，这样我们的成就就不会被过度忽视。

At this year's annual convention of the Society for Personality and Social Psychology, Clarissa Cortland, an

**perspiration** [ˌpɜːrspə'reɪʃn] *n.*  
汗水 | His success is the fruit of perspiration. 他的成功是辛劳的结果。

**pitch** [pɪtʃ] *n.* (体育比赛的) 场地，球场；音高；最高点 *v.* 用力扔；投球；跌倒 | With a cry she pitched forward. 她大叫一声向前跌倒了。

**humble** ['hʌmbəl] *adj.* 谦逊的，虚心的；低下的，卑微的 *v.* 贬低，使感到卑微；轻松打败 | Be humble enough to learn from your mistakes. 要虚心地从自己的错误中学习。

**grounded** ['graʊndɪd] *adj.* 头脑清醒的；理智的；脚踏实地的

**backfire** [ˌbæk'faɪər] *v.* 产生事与愿违的不良（或危险）后果；逆火，回火 | Unfortunately the plan backfired. 不幸的是，计划产生了适得其反的结果。

**strive for sth.** 争取，力求 | We encourage all members to strive for the highest standards. 我们鼓励所有成员为达到最高标准而努力。

**synthetic** [sɪn'tetɪk] *adj.* 人造的，（人工）合成的 | synthetic chemicals 合成化学品

**adulterate** [ə'dʌltəreɪt] *v.* (在饮食中) 掺杂，掺假 | adulterate wine with water 在酒里掺水

**desirable** [dɪ'zaɪərəbl̩] *adj.* 合意的，可取的，受欢迎的 | It is desirable to keep the cost as low as possible. 把成本控制得越低越好。

associate professor at University College London School of Management, presented the results of a survey examining the attitudes of 6,000 university **alumni** working as business leaders. When asked to describe their career journey, around 80% of the respondents focused on their effort and discipline over their innate ability. That figure was even greater when they had to imagine describing that journey to other people. “There’s an **instinctive** shift to ‘striver descriptions’ when self-presentational motives are high,” said Cortland.

在今年的人格与社会心理学学会年会上，伦敦大学学院管理学院副教授克拉丽莎·科特兰展示了一项调查的结果，该调查对 6000 名担任企业领导的大学校友进行了看法调查。当被要求描述自己的职业生涯时，大约 80% 的受访者更关注自己的努力和自律，而不是天赋。当他们需要想象向其他人描述这段经历时，这个比例甚至更高。科特兰说：“当自我表现的动机很高时，人们本能地转向‘奋斗者描述’。”

One reason could be that most people wish to avoid seeming **arrogant**, and believe that focusing on hard work over natural talent can make them seem more grounded. Arrogance is an unattractive **attribute** and during a job interview, for instance, it may signal that you will be **disagreeable** with the rest of your team and struggle to follow orders.

其中一个原因可能是大多数人都不想显得傲慢，他们认为把重点放在努力而不是天赋上可以让他们看起来更脚踏实地。傲慢是一种令人反感的特质，例如，在求职面试中，傲慢可能表明你很难与团队其他成员友好相处，难以服从命令。

**Along these lines**, research by Christina Brown, an associate professor at Arcadia University in Pennsylvania, US, has shown certain contextual factors can **mitigate** the bias. While people may prefer natural geniuses for jobs that require a single star performer to shine, Brown found that people tend to prefer strivers for tasks that require cooperation. Most modern

**unduly** [ˌʌnˈduːli] *adv.* 过分，过度，不适当地 | She doesn’t seem unduly concerned about her exams. 她似乎对考试并未过分担忧。

**alumni** [əˈlʌmnaɪ] *n.* 校友，毕业生 | Harvard Alumni Association 哈佛大学校友会

**instinctive** [ɪnˈstɪŋktɪv] *adj.* 本能的，直觉的，天生的 | His reaction was purely instinctive. 他的反应纯粹是出于本能。

**arrogant** [ˈærəɡənt] *adj.* 傲慢的，自大的 | an arrogant attitude 傲慢的态度

**attribute** [əˈtrɪbjʊːt] *n.* 属性，特征 *v.* 把……归因于，认为……是由于；认为……出自（某人） | Patience is one of the most important attributes in a teacher. 耐心是教师最重要的品质之一。

**disagreeable** [ˌdɪsəˈɡriːəbl] *adj.* 不友善的，难相处的；不合意的，讨厌的 | He’s a shallow, disagreeable man. 他是个肤浅、难相处的人。

**along these/those lines** 这一类的，类似的 | They’re trying to organize a trip to the beach or something along those lines. 他们正想安排一次去海滨的旅行或类似的活动。

**mitigate** [ˈmɪtɪɡeɪt] *v.* 减轻，缓和 | Only international cooperation can mitigate environmental damage. 只

careers are going to require a certain level of teamwork – and if we solely emphasised our innate ability, we might **come across** like a **diva** who will struggle to collaborate.

按照这些思路,美国宾夕法尼亚州阿卡迪亚大学副教授克里斯蒂娜·布朗的研究表明,某些背景因素可以减轻这种偏见。布朗发现,虽然人们可能倾向于让天才去做需要一个尖子发挥才能的工作,但人们往往倾向于让奋斗者去做需要合作的工作。大多数现代职业都需要一定程度的团队合作——如果我们只强调自己的天赋,可能会给人留下难以合作、高高在上的印象。

The smartest solution, then, may be to give a more **nuanced** picture of our success without focusing **exclusively** on one element or the other. At a job interview, for instance, we could **make a point of** discussing the areas that had needed extra **dedication** while also listing the innate strengths that had helped us to get ahead.

因此,最明智的解决方案可能是更细致地描述我们的成功,而不是只关注其中某个因素。例如,在求职面试中,我们可以特意讨论自己付出过额外努力的领域,同时列出帮助我们取得成功的先天优势。

Whether the ratio of inspiration and perspiration is 99 to 1, as Edison suggested, or a 50:50 split, you can acknowledge how both characteristics led to your success. Only then will you win the respect that you deserve.

无论灵感和汗水的比例是爱迪生所说的 99 比 1, 还是 50 比 50, 你都可以承认这两个因素是如何让你取得成功的。只有这样, 你才能赢得你应得的尊重。

有开展国际合作才能减轻对环境的破坏。

**come across** 给人以……印象, 使产生……印象; 被理解, 被看懂 | He comes across as a very intelligent sensitive man. 他给人的印象是非常聪明且体贴。

**diva** ['di:və] *n.* 女歌唱家, (尤指) 歌剧女主角

**nuanced** ['nu:ɑ:nst] *adj.* 细致入微的, 有细微差别的 | a nuanced portrayal 细致入微的描绘

**exclusively** [ɪk'sklu:svli] *adv.* 专门地, 仅仅, 完全地 | This offer is available exclusively to people who call now. 只有现在打来电话的人才能享有这个优惠。

**make a point of doing sth.** 特意做某事 | He made a point of spending Saturdays with his children. 星期六他必定要和自己的孩子在一起。

**dedication** [ˌdedɪˈkeɪʃn] *n.* 献身, 奉献; 献词 | I admire his dedication to the job. 我佩服他的敬业精神。

## ➤ 脉络梳理

- Para. 1-2 指出名人普遍强调自己的成功归因于努力，淡化天赋的作用
- Para. 3-4 指出过于强调努力会造成负面影响，并分析原因
- Para. 5-9 指出自然偏见的存在使人们更强调努力在自己职业生涯中的作用，分析原因并提出解决措施
- Para. 10 总结全文，强调应如实描述自己的努力和天赋，而不是偏向一方

## ➤ 长难句拆解

At this year's annual convention of the Society for Personality and Social Psychology,  
Clarissa Cortland, an associate professor at University College London School of Management,  
presented the results of a survey examining the attitudes of 6,000 university alumni working as business leaders.

状语

主语

同位语，解释说明 Clarissa Cortland

谓语+宾语

后置定语，修饰 survey

后置定语，修饰 alumni