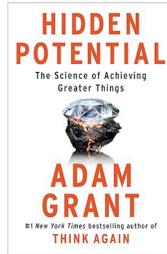


## Your Kindle Notes For:



### Hidden Potential: The Science of Achieving Greater Things

Adam Grant

111 Highlight(s) | 0 Note(s)

Location: 117

He knew from experience that although talent is evenly distributed, opportunity is not. He could see potential where others had missed it. He was looking to grow roses in concrete.

Location: 138

Everyone has hidden potential. This book is about how we unlock it. There's a widely held belief that greatness is mostly born—not made. That leads us to celebrate gifted students in school, natural athletes in sports, and child prodigies in music. But you don't have to be a wunderkind to accomplish great things. My goal is to illuminate how we can all rise to achieve greater things.

Location: 153

“What any person in the world can learn, almost all persons can learn,” the lead psychologist concluded, “if provided with appropriate . . . conditions of learning.”

Location: 160

What look like differences in natural ability are often differences in opportunity and motivation.

Location: 163

But high achievers vary dramatically in their initial aptitudes. If we judge people only by what they can do on day one, their potential remains hidden.

Location: 165

Potential is not a matter of where you start, but of how far you travel. We need to focus less on starting points and more on distance traveled.

Location: 169

People who make major strides are rarely freaks of nature. They're usually freaks of nurture.

Location: 175

This book is not about ambition. It's about aspiration. As the philosopher Agnes Callard highlights, ambition is the outcome you want to attain. Aspiration is the person you hope to become.

Location: 178

What counts is not how hard you work but how much you grow. And growth requires much more than a mindset—it begins with a set of skills that we normally overlook.

Location: 186

The Tennessee experiment contained a startling result. Chetty was able to predict the success that students achieved as adults simply by looking at who taught their kindergarten class. By age 25, students who happened to have had more experienced kindergarten teachers were earning significantly more money than their peers.

Location: 207

When Chetty and his colleagues predicted adult income from fourth-grade scores, the ratings on these behaviors mattered 2.4 times as much as math and reading performance on standardized tests.

Location: 219

Character is more than just having principles. It's a learned capacity to live by your principles. Character skills equip a chronic procrastinator to meet a deadline for someone who matters deeply to them, a shy introvert to find the courage to speak out against an injustice, and the class bully to circumvent a fistfight with his teammates before a big game.

Location: 256

In learning, scaffolding serves a similar purpose. A teacher or coach offers initial instruction and then removes the support.

Location: 264

What we overlook is that when people can't see a path, they stop dreaming of the destination. To ignite their will, we need to show them the way. That's what scaffolding can do.

Location: 273

They were learning to treat a solitary game as a prosocial exercise in teamwork. When a player cried at nationals, it wasn't because he lost; he was devastated that he had let his teammates down.

Location: 318

What makes a difference is not the activity but the lessons you learn. As Maurice says, "The achievement is in the growing."

Location: 362

Character is often confused with personality, but they're not the same. Personality is your predisposition—your basic instincts for how to think, feel, and act.

Blue highlight | Location: 363

Character is your capacity to prioritize your values over your instincts.

Location: 439

because they're professional learners. I was surprised to discover that when they finally picked up their first foreign tongue, it wasn't due to overcoming a cognitive block. It was because they cleared a motivational hurdle: they got comfortable being uncomfortable.

Location: 441

Becoming a creature of discomfort can unlock hidden potential in many different types of learning.

Blue highlight | Location: 442

Summoning the nerve to face discomfort is a character skill—an especially important form of determination. It takes three kinds of courage: to abandon your tried-and-true methods, to put yourself in the ring before you feel ready, and to make more mistakes than others make attempts.

Location: 444

The best way to accelerate growth is to embrace, seek, and amplify discomfort.

Location: 463

"There is no adequate evidence base to justify incorporating learning styles assessments into general educational practice," the researchers conclude. "The contrast between the enormous popularity of the learning-styles approach within education and the lack of credible evidence for its utility is . . . striking and disturbing."

Location: 469

The way you like to learn is what makes you comfortable, but it isn't necessarily how you learn best.

Location: 510

Writing exposes gaps in your knowledge and logic. It pushes you to articulate assumptions and consider counterarguments. Unclear writing is a sign of unclear thinking.

Location: 521

Although listening is often more fun, reading improves comprehension and recall. Whereas listening promotes intuitive thinking, reading activates more analytical processing.

Location: 541

She realized that if she could keep getting comfortable being uncomfortable, she could learn any language.

Location: 564

but she reminded herself that feeling awkward and making mistakes was a sign of learning.

Location: 611

Pilots learn to cope with discomfort by intensifying it, and they build their skills as they navigate it.

Location: 628

When we're encouraged to make mistakes, we end up making fewer of them. Early mistakes help us remember the correct answer—and motivate us to keep learning.

Location: 631

"The more mistakes you make, the faster you will improve and the less they will bother you," he observes. "The best cure to feeling uncomfortable about making mistakes is to make more mistakes."

Location: 636

Psychologists call that cycle learned industriousness. When you get praised for making an effort, the feeling of effort itself starts to take on secondary reward properties. Instead of having to push yourself to keep trying, you feel pulled toward it.

Blue highlight | Location: 674

Growth is less about how hard you work than how well you learn.

Location: 735

Absorptive capacity is the ability to recognize, value, assimilate, and apply new information. It hinges on two key habits. The first is how you acquire information: Do you react to what enters your field of vision, or are you proactive in seeking new knowledge, skills, and perspectives? The second is the goal you're pursuing when you filter information: Do you focus on feeding your ego or fueling your growth?

Location: 740

Their thin skin leaves them with thick skulls.

Location: 810

We're confusing politeness with kindness. Being polite is withholding feedback to make someone feel good today. Being kind is being candid about how they can get better tomorrow. It's possible to be direct in what you say while being thoughtful about how you deliver it.

Location: 821

It's easy for people to be critics or cheerleaders. It's harder to get them to be coaches. A critic sees your weaknesses and attacks your worst self. A cheerleader sees your strengths and celebrates your best self. A coach sees your potential and helps you become a better version of yourself.

Location: 825

Instead of seeking feedback, you're better off asking for advice. Feedback tends to focus on how well you did last time. Advice shifts attention to how you can do better next time.

Location: 847

Getting upset isn't a mark of weakness or even defensiveness—as long as your ego doesn't stand in the way of your learning.

Location: 919

Ando is esteemed for his ability to make the most of limited spaces with limited budgets. He's only able to do this because he fully rejects the notion of perfectionism. He knows that to be disciplined in some areas, we have to let others go.

Location: 935

I've come to understand that unlocking hidden potential is not about the pursuit of perfection. Tolerating flaws isn't just something novices need to do—it's part of becoming an expert and continuing to gain mastery. The more you grow, the better you know which flaws are acceptable.

Location: 961

In a meta-analysis, the average correlation between perfectionism and performance at work was zero. When it came to mastering their tasks, perfectionists were no better than their peers. Sometimes they even did worse. The skills and inclinations that drive people to the top of their high school or college class may not serve them so well after they graduate.

Location: 969

In their quest for flawless results, research suggests that perfectionists tend to get three things wrong. One: they obsess about details that don't matter. They're so busy finding the right solution to tiny problems that they lack the discipline to find the right problems to solve. They can't see the forest for the trees. Two: they avoid unfamiliar situations and difficult tasks that might lead to failure. That leaves them refining a narrow set of existing skills rather than working to develop new ones. Three: they berate themselves for making mistakes, which makes it harder to learn from them. They fail to realize that the purpose of reviewing your mistakes isn't to shame your past self. It's to educate your future self.

Location: 999

He would strive not for perfection but for "perfectly acceptable."

Location: 1,011

Wabi sabi is a character skill. It gives you the discipline to shift your attention from impossible ideals to achievable standards—and then adjust those standards over time. But finding beauty in imperfection is often easier said than done.

Location: 1,040

Extensive evidence shows that it's having high personal standards, not pursuing perfection, that fuels growth.

Location: 1,053

Then he gave me a change to make and reminded me that if I wanted to get closer to right, it had to feel wrong.

Location: 1,059

Did you make yourself better today? Did you make someone else better today? If the answer to either question is yes, it was a good day. His last name may be Best, but he's all about better.

Location: 1,067

Beating yourself up doesn't make you stronger—it leaves you bruised.

Location: 1,077

People judge your potential from your best moments, not your worst. What if you gave yourself the same grace?

Location: 1,103

Research indicates that one of the best ways to gauge the value of other people's judgments is to look for convergence between them.

Location: 1,139

I've accepted that life is like diving: if you're ever lucky enough to get a 10, it's not for perfection but for excellence.

Location: 1,147

After all, it's impossible to please everyone. The question is whether you're letting down the right people. It's better to disappoint others than to disappoint yourself.

Location: 1,148

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Location: 1,269

Elite musicians are rarely driven by obsessive compulsion. They're usually fueled by what psychologists call harmonious passion. Harmonious passion is taking joy in a process rather than feeling pressure to achieve an outcome.

Blue highlight | Location: 1,300

These benefits aren't limited to healthcare. In some sales classes, students were invited to learn through playing the role of salesperson and customer. In one exercise, the customer would walk up holding a box, and the salesperson would ask what was in it, with the objective of keeping the conversation going for three minutes without skipping a beat. Over the next month, when they were sent to sell tickets for a professional sports team, the students who participated in this role-play exercise sold 43 percent more tickets than a control group of students who had not completed this training. They also enjoyed the course more.

Location: 1,313

You're not counting your hours; you're tracking your improvement. Your score is not a symbol of victory; it's a gauge of progress.

Location: 1,390

In Brandon's form of deliberate play, the person you're competing with is your past self, and the bar you're raising is for your future self. You're not aiming for perfect—you're shooting for better. The only way to win is to grow.

Location: 1,448

Relaxing is not a waste of time—it's an investment in well-being. Breaks are not a distraction—they're a chance to reset attention and incubate ideas. Play is not a frivolous activity—it's a source of joy and a path to mastery.

Location: 1,455

"Worthwhile practice is where progress is made. It's about quality, not quantity. You need to feel there's a shift—something is different when you walked out of the room."

Location: 1,504

When you're stuck, it's usually because you're heading in the wrong direction, you're taking the wrong path, or you're running out of fuel. Gaining momentum often involves backing up and navigating your way down a different road—even if it's not the one you initially intended to travel. It might be unfamiliar, winding, and bumpy. Progress rarely happens in a straight line; it typically unfolds in loops.

Location: 1,540

It shouldn't take an extreme event like an injury to push us to stop, reverse, and switch routes. But the truth is we're often afraid to go backward. We see slowing down as losing ground, backing up as giving up, and rerouting as veering off course. We worry that when we step back, we'll lose our footing altogether. This means we stay exactly where we are—steady but stuck. We need to embrace the discomfort of getting lost.

Location: 1,603

One is the distance they've traveled—they've come too far to remember what it's like being in your shoes. It's called the curse of knowledge: the more you know, the harder it is for you to fathom what it's like to not know. As cognitive scientist Sian Beilock summarizes it, "As you get better and better at what you do, your ability to communicate your understanding or to help others learn that skill often gets worse and worse."

Location: 1,631

Different mentors were able to share different tidbits on how to advance. It didn't take a village, though—all it took was two or three mentors to help lawyers make the climb to partner rather than seeing their careers stall.

Location: 1,758

When you get stuck on your way up a mountain, it's better to shift into reverse than to stand still. As you take U-turns and detours, you'll feel as if you're going in circles. In the short run, a straight line brings faster progress. But in the long run, loops lead to the highest peaks.

Location: 1,802

But it's actually in turning outward to harness resources with and for others that we discover—and develop—our hidden potential. When the odds are against us, focusing beyond ourselves is what launches us off the ground.

Location: 1,807

Our ability to elevate our skills and our expectations depends first on how we interpret the obstacles in front of us. Extensive evidence shows that when we view hurdles as threats, we tend to back down and give up. When we treat barriers as challenges to conquer, we rise to the occasion.

Location: 1,823

For the one multiple-choice question that stumped them, they could write the name of a classmate who might know the answer. If that student got it right, they would get credit too. It was the academic equivalent of a lifeline in *Who Wants to Be a Millionaire*.

Location: 1,840

Teaching is a surprisingly powerful method of learning.

Location: 1,845

Psychologists call this the tutor effect. It's even effective for novices: the best way to learn something is to teach it. You remember it better after you recall it—and you understand it better after you explain it. All it takes is embracing the discomfort of putting yourself in the instructor's seat before you've reached mastery. Even just being told you're going to teach something is enough to boost your learning.

Blue highlight | Location: 1,850

Those who can't do yet can learn by teaching.

Location: 1,885

Teaching others can build our competence. But it's coaching others that elevates our confidence.

Location: 1,904

In trying times, our first instinct is to pick up the phone and ask for advice. We're better off pausing to reflect on the advice we've provided in the past or calling someone in a similar situation and offering them some suggestions. We should listen to the advice we give to others—it's usually the advice we need to take for ourselves.

Location: 2,037

Resilience is a form of growth.

Location: 2,050

We find our deepest reserves of resolve when an entire group is relying on us.

Location: 2,063

Too many people spend their lives being custodians of the past instead of stewards of the future. We worry about making our parents proud when we should be focused on making our children proud. The responsibility of each generation is not to please our predecessors—it's to improve conditions for our successors.

Location: 2,160

That culture is rooted in a belief in the potential of all students.

Location: 2,169

In organizational psychology, culture has three elements: practices, values, and underlying assumptions. Practices are the daily routines that reflect and reinforce values. Values are shared principles around what's important and desirable—what should be rewarded versus what should be punished. Underlying assumptions are deeply held, often taken-for-granted beliefs about how the world works. Our assumptions shape our values, which in turn drive our practices.

Location: 2,280

In Finland, starting in the fall of kindergarten, teachers meet with parents to develop individualized learning plans for each student.

Location: 2,306

Because Finnish educators assume the most important lesson to teach children is that learning is fun.

Location: 2,307

Research in the United Kingdom reveals that students who enjoy school at age six go on to earn higher standardized test scores at sixteen—even after controlling for their intelligence and socioeconomic status. A refrain among Finnish teachers captures it nicely: “The work of a child is to play.” In the United States, play is practiced in Montessori schools. In Finland, it’s mandated in the common core for all primary schools.

Location: 2,388

It’s a virtuous cycle: the more they read for fun, the better they get and the more they like it. And the more they like it, the more they learn—and the better they perform on exams. A teacher’s task is not to ensure that students have read the literary canons. It’s to kindle excitement about reading.

Location: 2,417

Their deepest underlying assumption may be that the tradeoff between doing well and being well is a false choice. An education system isn’t truly successful until all children—regardless of background and resources—have the opportunity to reach their potential.

Location: 2,461

The best teams aren’t the ones with the best thinkers. They’re the teams that unearth and use the best thinking from everyone.

Blue highlight | Location: 2,501

Collective intelligence rises as team members recognize one another’s strengths, develop strategies for leveraging them, and motivate one another to align their efforts in pursuit of a shared purpose. Unleashing hidden potential is about more than having the best pieces—it’s about having the best glue.

Location: 2,513

Putting people in a group doesn’t automatically make them a team.

Location: 2,519

When we select leaders, we don’t usually pick the person with the strongest leadership skills. We frequently choose the person who talks the most. It’s called the babble effect. Research shows that groups promote the people who command the most airtime—regardless of their aptitude and expertise. We mistake confidence for competence, certainty for credibility, and quantity for quality. We get stuck following people who dominate the discussion instead of those who elevate it.

Location: 2,543

Research demonstrates that when organizations have cultures that prize results above relationships, if they have a leader who puts people first, they actually achieve greater performance gains. When

Location: 2,560

With a team of sponges, the best leader is not the person who talks the most, but the one who listens best.

Location: 2,576

Many Brains Make Light Work

Location: 2,588

we're better off shifting to a process called brainwriting. The initial steps are solo. You start by asking everyone to generate ideas separately. Next, you pool them and share them anonymously among the group. To preserve independent judgment, each member evaluates them on their own. Only then does the team come together to select and refine the most promising options. By developing and assessing ideas individually before choosing and elaborating them, teams can surface and advance possibilities that might not get attention otherwise.

Location: 2,598

Collective intelligence begins with individual creativity. But it doesn't end there. Individuals produce a greater volume and variety of novel ideas when they work alone. That means that they come up with more brilliant ideas than groups—but also more terrible ideas than groups. It takes collective judgment to find the signal in the noise.

Location: 2,644

We normally call that a climate for voice and psychological safety.

Location: 2,662

A powerful alternative to a corporate ladder is a lattice. A physical lattice is a crisscrossing structure that looks like a checkerboard. In organizations, a lattice is an organizational chart with channels across levels and between teams. Rather than one path of reporting and responsibility from you to the people above you in the hierarchy, a lattice offers multiple paths to the top.

Location: 2,682

A lattice system rejects two unwritten rules that dominate ladder hierarchies: don't go behind your boss's back or above your boss's head. Amy Edmondson's research suggests that these implicit rules stop many people from speaking up and being heard. The purpose of a lattice system is to remove the punishment for going around and above the boss.

Location: 2,696

Weak leaders silence voice and shoot the messenger. Strong leaders welcome voice and thank the messenger. Great leaders build systems to amplify voice and elevate the messenger.

Location: 2,770

When we confuse past performance with future potential, we miss out on people whose achievements have involved overcoming major obstacles. We need to consider how steep their slope was, how far they've climbed, and how they've grown along the way. The test of a diamond in the rough is not whether it shines from the start, but how it responds to heat or pressure.

Location: 2,811

This is an example of a phenomenon known as the Peter Principle. It's the idea that people at work tend to get promoted to their "level of incompetence"—they keep advancing based on their success in previous jobs until they get trapped in a new role that's beyond their abilities. In this case, the best salespeople went on to become incompetent managers, and the best potential managers got stuck as mediocre salespeople.[\*]

Location: 2,823

It's often said that talent sets the floor, but character sets the ceiling.

Location: 2,923

Similar patterns held for the odds of finishing college. Students whose grades improved from freshman to junior year of high school were significantly more likely to graduate from college—and less likely to drop out—than those whose grades declined over the same period. But admissions officers didn't take that delta into account.

Location: 2,927

It's hard to overstate how ridiculous that is. Schools judge you as much for your performance three years ago as for three months ago—and they don't even bother to look at the most recent and relevant data at all. We penalize people who rise after rocky starts when we should be rewarding them for the distance they've traveled.

Blue highlight | Location: 2,929

It's time for universities and employers to add another metric. Along with GPA, I think they should be assessing GPT: grade point trajectory. They can calculate the rate of improvement over time with basic division: rise over run. Early failure followed by later success is a mark of hidden potential.

Location: 2,951

No single measure of improvement should be our sole metric.

Location: 3,028

Skills are best gauged by what people can do, not what they say or what they've done before. Instead of trying to trip people up, we should give them the chance to put their best foot forward. How they respond in a do-over is a more meaningful window into their character than how they handle the first try.

Location: 3,142

Impostor syndrome says, "I don't know what I'm doing. It's only a matter of time until everyone finds out." Growth mindset says, "I don't know what I'm doing yet. It's only a matter of time until I figure it out."

Location: 3,174

Not long ago, it dawned on me that impostor syndrome is a paradox: Others believe in you. You don't believe in yourself. Yet you believe yourself instead of them. If you doubt yourself, shouldn't you also doubt your low opinion of yourself?

Blue highlight | Location: 3,178

I now believe that impostor syndrome is a sign of hidden potential. It feels like other people are overestimating you, but it's more likely that you're underestimating yourself.

Location: 3,195

Reading and writing are usually best for critical thinking. Listening is ideal for understanding emotions, and doing is better for remembering information.

Location: 3,199

Pursuing discomfort sets you on a faster path to growth. If you want to get it right, it has to first feel wrong.

Location: 3,206

You can get your critics and cheerleaders to act more like coaches by asking a simple question: "What's one thing I can do better next time?"

Location: 3,214

Progress comes from maintaining high standards, not eliminating every flaw.