

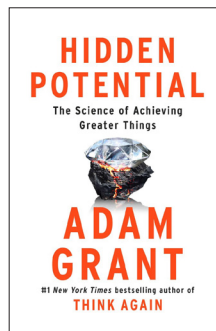


HIDDEN POTENTIAL

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THE BOOK

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

By Adam Grant



INTRODUCTION

Find your hidden potential with New York Times best-selling author Adam Grant.

Grant's book explores what it takes to raise your aspirations and exceed others' expectations, smashing through fixed beliefs and highlighting the importance of perseverance.

Hidden Potential teaches that being great takes more than skill or intelligence. It takes dedication along with social skills that are all too often overlooked. The book also demonstrates that the way you learn, rather than how hard you work is what puts you ahead.

Thoroughly researched and full of inspirational tales, Hidden Potential is engaging and informative. Grant breaks down the keys to success in any field, from the sports field to outer space and the classroom to the boardroom. This is a great read for anyone who wants to break through mental barriers and take things to the next level.



5 BEST QUOTES

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

"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 often said that where there's a will, there's a way. What we overlook is that when people can't see a path, they stop dreaming of the destination."

"Comfort in learning is a paradox. You can't become truly comfortable with a skill until you've practiced it enough to master it. But practicing it before you master it is uncomfortable, so you often avoid it. Accelerating learning requires a second form of courage: being brave enough to use your knowledge as you acquire it."

"Character cannot be developed in ease and quiet. Only through experiences of trial and suffering can the soul be strengthened, vision cleared, ambition inspired, and success achieved."



9 BIG IDEAS

1. SEEK DISCOMFORT

You won't unlock your potential if you stay in your comfort zone. Grant recommends actively seeking discomfort in order to break new ground. For example, he cites the experience of several polyglots who master languages with relative ease.

These language experts do not learn by sitting and studying. They learn by putting themselves outside their comfort zone. They will actively speak languages they barely know to native speakers with the expectation of making plenty of mistakes. The point is to push their boundaries, and only by doing so can they reach their potential.

They would never have mastered dozens of languages if they tried to stay comfortably in their lanes. The same applies to you and any enterprise that you are pursuing. Seek discomfort to push forward.

2. BE A SPONGE

In nature, sponges; one of the oldest and most successful forms of life on the planet, don't only absorb vital materials. They also filter out what isn't needed. Being a sponge as a person means taking in useful and constructive information and filtering out what is unnecessary.

Grant says being a sponge is about more than what you read or absorb through other media. It is the way you take advice from others. He advises establishing coaches around you, rather than critics.

While criticism can be useful, it can also set you back. When Grant sought advice on his work, he discovered that the better course was to ask, "What can I do better?" rather than "What did I do wrong?" His strategy now is to have trusted friends and colleagues rate his work out of 10. This leads nicely to the next big idea...

3. IMPERFECTIONISM

When Grant asks for his coaches to rate his work out of ten, he never expects a perfect score. For him, anything under 8 and he will rework, but 8 or 9 are good enough. He won't waste his time seeking a perfect ten because perfectionism is a trap. Instead, he chooses to embrace the Japanese philosophy of Wabi Sabi and become an 'imperfectionist'.

Another concept, Wabi Sabi, is about embracing the beauty of the imperfect. This is a clever way to help unlock your hidden potential because seeking perfection can lead to dead ends when you find nothing meets your standards.

Grant says to choose a 'minimum loveable product'. For him, that's a rating of 8 or above. Find your minimum lovable product and you will be able to put your work out there at a much higher rate.



9 BIG IDEAS

4. TRANSFORM THE DAILY GRIND

While practice is vital to getting ahead in many fields, how you practice can make a significant difference.

Practising for hours on end can lead to burnout and a loss of desire to pursue your goal. There are other ways to practice that make it less of a grind.

To start with, take breaks when you need to. Grant explains that taking a break can help to:

- Maintain passion
- Unlock fresh ideas
- And deepen learning

Next, you can make practicing more fun by adding elements of play. Don't only grind away at scales, see what else you can do with your instrument. Play songs backwards. Find new sounds. Anything that keeps your mind functioning and the goal in sight. This applies to far more than music as well, any discipline can benefit from some creative play.

5. GET UNSTUCK

Progress isn't a linear upward trajectory. It is a rolling countryside of hills and valleys.

Sometimes, you can find yourself deep in a valley, and the best course is to go backward to get your momentum going again.

6. DEFY GRAVITY

Pulling yourself up by the bootstraps is an old saying, meaning to get yourself out of a rut and succeed of your own volition. The adage creates an image of someone defying gravity by hauling themselves into the air.

Grant says that pulling up your bootstraps to defy gravity is only possible with help. You won't get far on your own.

One way that Grant recommends to get better in a field is to teach it. When you teach, you learn. If you are in a group, have those with the most knowledge of a subject take the lead, and together, you can pull yourselves up by your bootstraps.



9 BIG IDEAS

7. EVERY CHILD GETS AHEAD

A trend that Grant advocates, one found in Finland and Estonia but not many other nations, is to treat every child as having the same potential.

It is far more often the norm for schools to support the stand-out students, the ones who exhibit potential early on, with extension courses and other specialised curricula. However, this drops the ball for the children who need more support. Grant says that “building schools where students achieve greater things isn’t about focusing on a select few and pushing them to excel. It’s about fostering a culture that allows all students to grow intellectually and thrive emotionally.”

Finland and Estonia set up educational systems that work this way and have since risen to new heights in international academic testing. Perhaps more importantly, while some countries might have higher academic achievement, Finland and Estonia stand out as having the highest academic achievement, which correlates with students' happiness. Happy and well-educated. What could be better?

8. MINING FOR GOLD

When thirty-three men got trapped more than 700 metres underground in a mine in Chile in 2010, it took a team to rescue them.

But this team was a little different.

Due to exemplary leadership, the team worked as a lattice rather than as a ladder. The idea that eventually saved the miners came from someone who would have been low on a ladder, but on a lattice, they had multiple people to talk to.

The traditional hierarchy and unwritten rules of always going to your direct boss and never going above them can strangle creativity and end up neglecting great ideas.

9. DIAMONDS IN THE ROUGH

NASA rejected Jose Hernandez over and over before he was finally selected to become an astronaut. The problem? NASA was only looking at what Jose had achieved, not what he had overcome to achieve it. What Jose had achieved may not have looked impressive compared to others, but Jose had done it all as the son of undocumented immigrants. He didn’t speak English until he was 12 and spent much time picking fruit as he grew up.

Reaching his achievement level was remarkable, considering the challenges Jose began with.

Grant advocates taking the level of challenge into account when recruiting. Don’t just look at a student’s marks, look at the difficulty of the unit. Straight A’s in an easy unit doesn’t really count for as much as B’s in a harder unit.

**3 ACTION STEPS****1. BUILD CHARACTER SKILLS**

To find your hidden potential, you must build your character skills.

The smartest people in the room aren't always the ones who grow the most. It's those who strive to make themselves or others smarter.

Building character means you are always striving and seeking out opportunities rather than waiting for them to come knocking.

2. SET UP SCAFFOLDING

You will always need support to face challenges.

By using scaffolding as your support, you can remove it when you are ready and face the challenge on your own. The important thing is that you find the support first.

3. BUILD SYSTEMS OF OPPORTUNITY

Create systems that invest in and create opportunities for all—not just gifted students and high-potential employees.

A good system allows underdogs and late bloomers to show how far they've come.

**1 KEY TAKEAWAY**

The key takeaway of Hidden Potential is that success means reaching your goals and living your values.

There's no higher value than aspiring to be better tomorrow than we are today, and there's no greater accomplishment than unleashing our hidden potential.

By seeking to improve constantly rather than wondering why you're not good enough, you have the greatest odds of uncovering your hidden potential.



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