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Ability: Innate or Developed

Some believe that athletic ability, skill, creativity, artistic talent, attention, memory, judgment, understanding, and social skills are innate and static.

Dweck (2006), Bloom (1985), and Ericsson (1996) tell us that these abilities can be improved. This growth requires that we assume responsibility for continuous improvement through planning, deliberate practice, adjusting performance based upon feedback and guidance, showing resilience in the face of setbacks, perseverance, valuing challenges, believing in effort, seeing success as learning and improving, and finding setbacks as motivating and informative.

The authors cited many famous examples of people who developed their abilities over a long period of time: golfer Ben Hogan, choreographer Twyla Tharp, artist Paul Cezanne, Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart (worked for ten years before producing his best music), Charles Darwin, Babe Ruth (practiced batting every day during his pitching days), Michael Jordan, and Olympic athlete Wilma Rudolph (had double pneumonia, scarlet fever, and polio as a child).

References

Bloom, B. (1985). *Developing talent in young people*. New York, NY: Ballantine Books.

Dweck, C. (2006). *Mindset: The new psychology of success*. New York, NY: Ballantine Books.

Ericsson, K. A. (1996). The acquisition of expert performance: An introduction to some of the issues. In K. A. Ericsson (Ed.), *The road to excellence: The acquisition of expert performance in the arts and sciences, sports, and games* (pp. 1-50). Mahwah, NJ: Erlbaum.