



Time Management and Productivity Pro Laura Stack Talks Equality: Hard Work vs. Talent and the Roles Each Play in Getting Ahead in Today's Workforce



DENVER, Colorado, September 11, 2012 – It's a cornerstone of American culture, but the argument continues to be analyzed and debated: does talent trump hard work when it comes to achieving success, or vice versa? Time Management and Productivity expert Laura Stack addresses the concept of human equality and success in her new blog, [“Hard Work vs. Talent: The Eternal Debate.”](#)

In the blog, Stack examines the notion that some people, born into better circumstances than others, may have an edge when it comes to successes in life. However, is that edge dulled when someone with a natural talent steps up to challenge a privileged peer?

When it comes to pure, innate talent—particularly in terms of intelligence—Stack cites a recent New York Times article that gives the advantage to the natural talents. However, Stack counters that argument with studies suggesting that hard work and constant practice can carry some people farther and higher than those possessing talent alone.

“We're all equal in the eyes of the law, but as *equal* as we may be, it would be a mistake to assume or assert we're all the *same*,” Stack says. “We all have special talents for things that come more easily for us than they do for other people, even the very first time we try them.

“Like it or not, we can't doubt the existence of the elusive quality we call *talent*.”

For instance, Stack points out that some people are naturally-talented musicians, while others may be naturally-talented time managers. Dealing successfully with all different types of people is definitely an enviable talent for some, but others who work very hard at honing their people skills can become just as successful as the natural talents, Stack says.

In fact, Stack examines whether hard work and perseverance can trump natural talent when it comes down to who best executes any given skill.

“The studies suggest that in the long run, hard work and constant practice can overcome a lack of natural talent, which can often take people farther and higher than talent alone,” Stack says.

In her blog, Stack further examines some truths that are unchangeable. There may be a genetic component to certain talents that one either possesses, or does not. For instance, many people have a “talent” for rolling their tongues, while others lacking a certain gene can’t roll their tongues at all, no matter how hard they try.

When it comes to human intellect and behavior, Stack cites research by psychologist Anders Ericsson (popularized by writer Malcolm Gladwell), which estimates that it takes about 10,000 hours of practice to become an expert at anything. This applies most obviously to music and sports, but it also extends to mundane activities like business skills, learning to write well, driving, and even housework.

“We just don’t see these sorts of things celebrated the way we do Yo Ya Ma’s cello playing or Michael Jordan’s basketball skills,” Stack says. “For every Mozart who excelled as a child prodigy, we have an Albert Einstein, who did only reasonably well at math in school (the popular misconception that he failed is a myth) but later built himself into the world’s top physicist.

“Better yet, consider Tiger Woods, who started playing golf at the age of 18 months before going on to become a superstar in the sport starting at age 18,” Stack says. “Does Woods have talent? Indubitably. Did almost two decades of constant practice hone his talent to a keen edge? Absolutely.”

It may seem obvious that those with natural talents who work hard to improve their skills are going to land on top of the success pile. But can sheer determination in the form of day in and day out practice help someone of ordinary intelligence or talents become a superstar?

Stack argues that people are more likely to succeed when natural talent is enhanced by hard work, or an absence of natural talent is compensated through hard work.

The lesson here? Talent does give you an edge, according to Stack. But hard work beats talent when the talent doesn’t work hard.

For more information on the talent versus hard work debate, visit [TheProductivityPro.com website](http://TheProductivityPro.com), Email Laura@TheProductivityPro.com, or call 303-471-7401.

About Laura Stack:

[Laura Stack](#) is a time management and productivity expert who has been speaking and writing about human potential and peak performance since 1992. She has implemented employee productivity improvement programs at Wal-Mart, Cisco Systems, UBS, Aramark, and Bank of America. Stack presents keynotes and seminars internationally for leaders, entrepreneurs, salespeople, and professional services firms on improving output, lowering stress, and saving time in the workplace.

The president of [The Productivity Pro®, Inc.](#), a time management firm specializing in high-stress environments, Stack is the bestselling author of five books: [“What to do When There’s Too Much to do” \(2012\)](#); “SuperCompetent” (2010); “The Exhaustion Cure” (2008); “Find More Time” (2006); “Leave the Office Earlier” (2004). The 2011-2012 President of the National Speakers Association and recipient of the Certified Speaking Professional (CSP) designation, Stack has served as a spokesperson for Microsoft, 3M, Xerox, and Office Depot and is the creator of The Productivity Pro® planner by Day-Timer. Widely regarded as one of the leading experts in the field of employee productivity and workplace issues, Stack has been featured nationally on the CBS Early Show and CNN, and in USA Today and the New York Times.