

Insights from Mastery by Robert Greene

How can we hope to survive in today's harshly competitive, technology centered, globalized marketplace?

Companies are outsourcing work to people thousands of miles away, who produce high quality work for a fraction of the cost.

Soon artificial intelligence will be powerful enough to replace all truck drivers, bank tellers, and language translators. Eventually AI will do all work that doesn't require a great deal of creativity.

To become irreplaceable in this harsh marketplace, we need to attain Mastery. If we can attain Mastery, we will unlock a higher intelligence and creative ability that will be hard to outsource and difficult to automate.

Three essential mindsets to Mastery:



Primal Curiosity

When Albert Einstein was five, his father gave him a compass. As he examined the compass, he was mesmerized by the invisible force moving the needle. It made him wonder, "What other undiscovered or poorly defined forces exist in the world?" This early experience hinted at a primal curiosity for Einstein that would fuel his obsessive drive for the remaining decades of his life.

The first mindset we must adopt is to re-discover and stay connected to our primal curiosity as we navigate our career decisions.

Spend a few weeks journaling 20 minutes a day to better understand and reconnect with your primal curiosity. Remove yourself from distraction and write fast and freely for twenty minutes. Repeat the question "What did I naturally gravitate to before social pressure?"

"Your primal curiosities are like your DNA, they are unique to you. But we lose touch with it as we get older. Many schools and universities kill curiosity. We forget what once captivated us." – Robert Greene



Learning Above Everything Else

The master boxing coach, Freddie Roach, started a coaching apprenticeship at night while working as a telemarketer in Las Vegas during the day. Without being asked, he began to hang around a boxing gym every night and show the young boxers some tips he picked up as a boxer in his late teens and early twenties.

Roach sacrificed daily comforts and balance to maximize his learning opportunities. Eventually, with enough 1-on-1 personalized training at the gym, he had sufficient skill and trust from young boxers to set up his own business. He became a renowned boxing coach and would go on to work with and train great boxing champions like Manny Pacquiao.

The second mindset of Mastery is learning above all else even if it means taking lower pay, getting zero recognition for your work, facing harsh criticism, and enduring long hours of tedious work.

"Eventually, the time that was not spent on learning skills will catch up with you, and the fall will be painful. Instead, you must value learning above everything else. This will lead you to all of the right choices."– Robert Greene



Unique Combination

Robotics engineer Yoky Matsuoka reconnected with her fascination of the human hand. With a base level of skill and the help of her robotics professor, she could manifest her primal curiosity. After years of work, Matsuoka designed the most advanced robotic hand of its kind.

But she didn't stop there. Connected to her primal curiosity, she was eager to understand how the brain commanded the hand to move. Matsuoka turned her attention to getting a doctorate in neuroscience.

With her advanced knowledge, skills, and experience in both robotics and neuroscience, Matsuoka merged these fields to pioneer a new discipline known as 'neurobotics' within the scientific community. By combining seemingly different skills and experiences in a unique way, you can carve out a niche field where you are considered a one of kind.

"Ultimately you create a field that is uniquely your own...you have found a niche that is not crowded with competitors. You have freedom to roam, to pursue particular questions that interest you. You set your own agenda and command the resources available to this niche. Unburdened by overwhelming competition and politicking, you have time and space to bring to flower your Life's Task (your primal curiosity)" – Robert Greene