



Tom Kelley:

Josh is not only the co-founder of the strategy and design consultants, Helicopter, but also a man lucky enough to be friends with Malcolm Gladwell so, please welcome, Josh Liberson.

[Applause]

[Music]

Josh Liberson:

What they don't tell is you can not see anything from up here but.... So the role I play in Malcolm's life is a role that probably lots of people here play in their friend's life, which is: "Josh, what do you think this lamp?" "Not much, dude." "What about this chair?" That's a bad chair, Malcolm." "Okay, how about these shoes? Do you like the neon laces?" "No, no I don't, Malcolm, and here's a link to five other pairs of shoes that I think you should be doing." So you can imagine my chagrin when Debbie Millman called me about a year ago and asked if I thought that Malcolm might be interested in talking at the design conference and I said, "It's a design conference, right?" And she said, "Yes." I said, "Well, Malcolm doesn't know anything about design?" and Debbie said, "That doesn't matter."

[Audience laughter]

So I called Malcolm and I said, "Malcolm, how would you feel about talking at a design conference?" And he said, "It's a design conference?"

[Audience laughter]

I said, "Yeah. It's a design conference," and Malcolm said correctly, "But you know I don't know anything about design." I said, "Yes, Malcolm. Yes, I do know that. But it's okay because nobody does." So really, without further ado, I wanna introduce you to my dear friend, Malcolm Gladwell, who as you know, author of "Blink" and "Tipping Point" and is now -- has a new book coming out called "Outliers," which seems to my eye, it's likely autobiographical. It's essentially about why some people are widely successful. So, Malcolm Gladwell.

[Applause]

[Music]

Malcolm Gladwell:

Thank you. I'm very flattered to have been asked because as Josh said correctly, I really don't know anything about design. In fact, I would describe my aesthetics sensibility as neo-Holiday Inn.

[Audience laughter]

But -- so it's very -- it's quite intimidating to have to talk to all of you but I -- so I decided instead of trying to out-cool you, which is probably impossible, I would instead just talk about

the most kind of prosaic and down-market topic I could possibly come up with so I'm gonna -- I'm gonna talk to you about the -- about the history of Fleetwood Mac.

[Audience laughter]

And trying -- try and draw some lessons that might be useful. My original thought was I would just -- I would just bring out a giant bong and we would lower the light even further and we will just play "Tusk" very loudly but I was -- that was nixed by Debbie because the bong apparently violates fire code. So I'm gonna have to talk, which is a shame.

So Fleetwood Mac, as many of you know, I mean, you should know that you're about to learn more about this band than you ever really cared to know about this band but the -- the story of Fleetwood Mac is a story of -- I'm actually serious about this, by the way. It's a story of -- of this -- it was started by this very famous British blues guitarist named Peter Green and he's a -- he's thought of in the same breath as Eric Clapton, and he forms this band with Mick Fleetwood and a bassist named -- who's a drummer -- and the bassist name John McVie, the Mick and the McVie and the Fleetwood gives us this Fleetwood Mac. And John McVie's girlfriend, Christine Perfect, and they form this band and they play in England for a while and they go to America and Mick Fleetwood is in a grocery store in Van Nuys and runs into a friend of his from England and the friend says, "You must come to my recording studio," and so Mick says "Alright." And he goes there and he sees this incredibly beautiful woman in the studio next to the one he's in who has an extraordinary voice and he says, "Who is that?" And the guy says, "Oh, that's Stevie Nicks" and he says, "Who is the guy with her?" And his friend says, "That's Lindsey Buckingham." And they are these two people who have had no success whatsoever in music. They're been total failures and no one is particularly interested in them except for Mick Fleetwood and about a month passes and he realizes you know what, I wanna invite those guys to join our band. And Stevie Nicks to that point is -- she works as waitress in a '20 steam bar in Hollywood called Clementine's and she -- they show up and she's in her flapper outfit and they get really drunk on tequila and then they go to the -- all of them go and they go to the basement of the ICM building on Beverly Boulevard and they just start to play together and it's magic and then a few months later they put out their self-titled album "Fleetwood Mac" and that one goes to number one and then 13 months later, they put out "Rumors," which is, as you know, the fifth or sixth best-selling album of all time and is considered a kind of masterpiece in the history of rock 'n' roll.

Now you've all heard that story, you know, a hundred times before, right? It's the classic rock 'n' roll band story. A bunch of scruffy young people, you know, get together and start to make music and then they have this incredibly lucky, fluky break and they have a record that everybody loves and they become multi-multimillionaires. And usually when we hear that story, we assume that there is nothing to learn from it. That it's just a kind of a random occurrence that just -- that there is no way to extract any kind of meaningful lessons from it because it's so dependent on chance and circumstance. But what I want to suggest today is that, in fact, there is something very profound to learn from that story and it's not a kind of fluky result of chance and circumstance. In fact, the success -- the creative success of that band tells us something very, very meaningful about -- about how creativity occurs.

So that's what I wanna talk about, I wanna go back over that story and try and pull out two lessons that I thought might be useful to all of you.

The first lesson has to do with time. I got interested with Fleetwood Mac because I have a friend who is in the record business and I was once talking to him and he -- he said -- he said -- he asked me, "What do you think is the best album of Fleetwood Mac?" Like in the history -- you know, and I said, "Well, the best album is obviously 'Rumors,' right?" Because, yes, that's their masterpiece. And he says, "What number album in the discography of Fleetwood Mac do you think 'Rumors' is?" And I said, "I don't know." I mean, I assumed -- you know, I knew that same little potted history I gave you so I said, "I assume maybe they did one album in England before they came over to America and I know they did the self-titled album 'Fleetwood Mac,' so I'm guessing 'Rumors' is number three," and he goes, "Wrong. It's number 16." Okay. They did 15 albums before they finally made it to the -- to the position that -- that we know them for reaching.

Now that is a very profound point and to understand that I wanna go back now and tell you that when I told you that little potted history of Fleetwood Mac, I misled you because I left out an awful lot of what's important. That Peter Green starts Fleetwood Mac in London in 1967 and they start playing in these clubs and he and the original band -- he doesn't have John McVie and Christine McVie in the band -- he's got this guy name Bob Spencer and a guy name Jeremy Brunning and they play together for awhile and then Brunning and Spencer leave and they bring in some guy named Danny Kirwan and then they have a minor hit with a instrumental in Europe called "Albatross" and they come to America and they tour with the Grateful Dead for a while. They opened for the Grateful Dead and then they come back and then they get rid of Kirwan and they bring in Christine McVie at that point, Christine Perfect as she is called at the time. And then Peter Green actually starts over-using LSD and he drops out and joined a German cult and disappears. And then the band buys this decrepit mansion in Hampshire called Benifold and they do enormous amounts of hashish in there. You know, they raised goats and their children ran around naked and they are there for like -- four years and then they meet this guy at -- at a train station named Bob Welch. He's an American guy. Randomly, and they like him and they invited him to join the party and then they hired these two other people -- a guy name Walker and a guy name something else who -- who then -- they then fire because they're having affairs with somebody's wife or Mick Fleetwood's girlfriend or something, although, you know, being accused of having affair by Mick Fleetwood is like being called ugly by a frog or, it's not particularly.... But anyway, the point is like, this goes on and on and on and then they don't move to America until the early '70s and they -- and when they get there it's only because Bob Welch leaves that they go -- that Mick Fleetwood has to hire Stevie Nicks and Lindsey Buckingham. But that's ten years. The time between that, Fleetwood Mac is created over the course of a decade and over the course of 15 albums, the majority of which are not very good. In fact, the majority of which are down right terrible, right, which is why they didn't make big until they had finally perfected their -- their lineup and their music.

Now, we have a sense, I think, that genius or creativity are something that springs forth relatively quickly, but what that story reminds us is actually that's not true. These kinds of things take enormous amount of time. You know, in my new book, "Outliers" -- comes out in three weeks, you should all buy it in triplicate -- I spend a lot of time on this. It's a wonderful theory that a lot of psychologists have been working recently and it's called that -- it's called the Theory of 10,000 Hours and it says that any kind of complex cognitive task takes 10,000 hours of deliberate practice to master and it's -- what's extraordinary about this rule, the 10,000-Hour rule, is that it seems to apply to virtually everything that's complicated. So if

you, for example, we've -- they've done studies of chess grand masters. There has only -- in the history of chess -- has only ever been one grand master who has become a grand master without having to first put in 10,000 hours of practice. Now 10,000 hours equates to about ten years, it's four hours a day for ten years, and the only person ever to do it faster than that is Bobby Fischer, the great American chess player, who did it in nine years. You can do the same thing with classical music composers. No great enduring work of classical music has been created by someone who did not first put in 10,000 hours of practice. Now, people, when you say that to them, they often say, "What about Mozart, the great prodigy?" Well, you know, Mozart was writing music when he was 11 years old, but if you look at the music he was writing when he was 11 years old, it's not very good, right? In fact, it's terrible and to the extent that it is very good, we think it was probably written by his father, who is this kind of pushy, domineering Little League parent of 18th-century Vienna. Mozart doesn't actually produce anything. The first great work of Mozart is his Concerto No. 9, K. 271, which he does when he's 22 years old after composing for 11 consecutive years. So he is not a refutation of this idea. He is, in fact, its embodiment.

One of the things I do in my new book is I spent the lot of time doing kind of in-depth studies of successful people's childhoods, and what you find when you look at the childhood or the developmental period of very successful creative people, is they always have some kind of extended, focused, disciplined period of practice. Now, that story of the Beatles, any of you -- those of you who are fans of the Beatles will know this. The most important episode in the history of the Beatles is what happens to them in the late '50s and early '60s when, for some totally random reason, they are just a garage band in Liverpool. They were invited to Hamburg, Germany, to be the house band for a strip club and so they go to Hamburg and they're, you know, they're barely old enough to have, like, work permits or whatever you need, and they play in these strip clubs in Hamburg and they play seven days a week, eight hours at a time, eight-hour sets for months on end, right? Can you imagine if you're, you know, if you're forced -- when they start off they are not a good band, they are a terrible band, but they are forced by virtue of having to fill eight hours every night, night after night, week after week, month after month, they are forced to master the popular-music repertoire, forced to play together compellingly as a band, forced to be inventive, forced to compose music, forced to become complete musicians. And by the time they leave Hamburg, their apprenticeship is complete and they are finally at a level where they can start to explore popular music in the genius way that they do. You know, by the time the Beatles come to America in 1964 at the start of the British Invasion, they have played together live 1200 times. We could go down tonight, to the Lower East Side and stop in at every bar where some promising young band is playing and I would submit to you, we would not find a single band that has even played together live 400 times. Beatles are off the charts in terms of the amount of time and energy they devote to their craft and that is a powerful and fundamental reason for why they did as well as they do. And so that's sort of the first, and, I think, and critical lesson from this the story of Fleetwood Mac and that is it -- it is a reminder of the length of the gestation period that creativity and successful innovation often requires.

Second lesson -- Oh, there's only two lessons, in case you're wondering, because, I know, some people have seven. You're thinking, you know, we're 15 minutes in and he's only got to the first lesson. We're half done, by the way. The second lesson is, if you listen to the -- if you're ever in the position where you have all of those first 16 Fleetwood Mac albums and you listen to them in sequence, you would discover something really interesting which is that,

they're, as a band, they evolved in a really interesting way. They start out -- when they start out in 19 -- in the mid-'60s in London, they are a blues band, they are -- you know, Peter Green is a kind of blues purist and then as he leaves and joins this shadowy German cult, he disappears for a while, they start to kind of evolve and soon they're much more of a rock 'n' roll act and they go through a stage where they are a kind of a party band and they actually, they hang -- they fill condoms with milk and hang them from the pegs of their guitars and at the end of the concert they throw them into the audience. Don't ask me why. And then they go for -- then for a while they experiment with reggae. Their hit, "Albatross," is really a kind of reggae-themed, actually more of a calypso-themed Caribbean thing and then they, for a while, they are like a progressive band, whatever that means. I guess, they wear berets and they stare off into the distance as they play for hours. And then it's really only the sound that we associate with Fleetwood Mac, is something that they kind of stumble upon in the early '70s. And when Bob Welch joins the band and they put out an album called "Heroes Are Hard to Find," which is hard to find itself. But it's their first real kind of foray in to that kind of music. In other words, the ten years that Fleetwood Mac takes to become Fleetwood Mac is not just a decade of getting to be good, of mastering music, it's also a decade of trying to understand what they're good at, of exploring and experimenting with all kinds of musical forms and all kinds of musicians, in order to find a combination that makes sense; that expresses whatever it is that they really want to express.

Now, the person who has thought the most about this idea, of the importance of this kind of evolution and experimentation, is an economist named David Galenson and he has this really interesting theory. What he says is, if you can divide creative types into -- broadly speaking, into two groups, and the first group is people that he calls conceptual innovators, and those are people who have a big, bold idea, which they express very -- kind of quickly and precisely and immediately and he thinks of -- he uses Picasso as the classic example of the conceptual innovator; a man, who over the course of his career, is possessed by a series of truly revolutionary ideas, which he expresses in his art immediately. I mean, Picasso is a legend by the age of 21. I mean, there is no kind of -- but Galenson says that's only one kind and, in fact, there's a far more important and far more common and far more interesting kind of innovator and that's the innovator that he calls the experimental innovator. And this is the kind of person who never has a big, bold revolutionary idea, but who rather painstakingly and carefully and slowly discovers what they are good at through a process of experimentation and trial-and-error. And the classic example of this kind of innovator is Cezanne. Cezanne is someone who is not a great painter until he is in his 50s. You know, if you go the Musee d'Orsay and you look at the Cezanne's there, you know, the greatest collections of Cezanne's in the world, they are all painted at the end of his life. There's nothing in there from his 20s and in his 30s, because when he's in his 20s and his 30s, he is not any good yet. Right? He is still trying to figure out what it is that he wants to paint. He spends the decade of his 30s in the fields with Pissarro. Pissarro teaching him, you know, brushstrokes and he, you know, he's renowned of the course of his career for this relentless kind of iterative trial-and-error. He would, you know, he would have in his famous painting that portrait of Geoffroy, or Geoffroy, my French is terrible.... But, you know he makes Geoffroy sit for -- come and sit for four hours a day for 180 consecutive days and then he says, "Oh, it's garbage," and throws it out, right. It's the kind of guy he is, right. That's his approach to creativity. He's someone who doesn't -- he doesn't know what he's going to do before he starts, rather, he discovers it in the doing and Galenson's argument is that that is a very, very important and common kind of creative approach.

You know, think about what's the greatest, what's the quintessential American novel? It's "Huck Finn," right? "Huckleberry Finn," we all agree on that. How old is Mark Twain when he writes "Huckleberry Finn," when he completes it? He's 50 and you say, "That's a bit old to produce your masterpiece." Well, you know why? It took him nine years to write it, nine years. That slender children's book takes nine years to write because he can't figure out how to end it and he does version after version after version after version, and you can imagine his publisher must have been beside himself with frustration, and people must have said, "This guy's never gonna amount to anything. He's still working on that damn 'Huckleberry Finn,'" but what happens? What grows out of that extraordinary long and protracted process of trial-and-error and experimentation? One of the greatest novels in the English language, a work of art that we will be -- that our children and our grandchildren will be reading in school just as we did.

So what does this kind of protracted experimentation give us? Well, one answer is that if you talk to art critics, they will say that the amount of time and effort and experimentation that Cezanne put into his work is the reason his art is so compelling. It gives his art a kind of emotional depth and power that simply would not be the case if he was dashing these things off in his 20s, okay? But more importantly, I think that there is something about that kind of experimental approach that is necessary when the problems that we're trying to solve are very, very complex and that's very much -- I mean, when I think of the separation, the distinction between Picasso and Cezanne, I actually think of Cezanne as being the truly modern painter and Picasso is being the profoundly 19th-century painter. For that very reason: that Picasso is capable of solving things with one simple revolutionary insight because he's solving something that can be summed up that simply. Cezanne is after something much more complex and nuanced and difficult and those are the kinds of problems that we deal with now in the 21st century. I mean if you think back, one of the greatest creative acts of the last 25 years is the mathematician Andrew Wiles' discovery of the proof of Fermat's Theorem, right? Fermat's Theorem is the great math -- unproven mathematical conjecture from the 17th century that had bedeviled the greatest mind in mathematics for 300 years and it's finally solved by this mathematician at Princeton named Andrew Wiles and if you read Andrew Wiles -- the account of how he solved that problem, it's really interesting. The first interesting thing is that it takes him -- if you add up all the time he spent on that problem, it comes to about 10,000 hours. It's -- he is really the first mathematician to devote 10,000 hours to a single problem, which is the explanation really for -- one simple explanation for why he solves it. But more interesting is to look at the course that his investigations took. You know, he spends -- he starts out convinced that the way to solve that problem is through the work of a French mathematician called Galois and he spends like four or five years just pursuing the Galois thing and then he realizes after locking himself in a study for four years that it's not gonna work. It's dead end. He stops. He realized, "I have failed on this particular thing," but rather than give up, he says, "I'm gonna start again." And he goes to a conference and he hears this brilliant lecture on a -- by a guy named Flach. Flach presents on the work of a Russian named Kolyvagin and he becomes convinced, Wiles does, that Flach and Kolyvagin are the key to solve this problem and he launches an entirely new trajectory in which he immerses himself in the work of those two until he solves Fermat's Theorem. And he presents it to all the world and he is a celebrity of the highest order and people called him the greatest genius since Einstein and every newspaper writes a story on it and then two months passed and he realizes, "You know what? I didn't solve it. I got it wrong," and he has egg on his face but what does he do? He

goes back and he starts again and he realizes, "Now, I think that the work of a Japanese mathematician named Ishiwara is the key to solving this problem." And he starts from point zero and takes what he has learned from Flach and Kolyvagin and what he has learned from Galois and puts it together with Ishiwara and you know what he does? He finally solves Fermat's Theorem was necessary. There was no way to conceive of the right approach at the beginning. That was a problem so large and so difficult and so daunting and so complex that the only way to solve it was to set aside 10, 000 hours and commit yourself to a course of experimentation and trial-and-error. That is the modern condition and when you give people the opportunity to experiment and to engage in trial-and-error, you are capable of solving problems that would otherwise remain unsolved.

Well, that to me is the great lesson of Fleetwood Mac. We think of them -- you think of them as a fluke. You think of them as this band that comes together in this strange, lucky moment in a recording studio in Van Nuys, but no, they emerged. Why? Because they were operating in a system, okay, with a record label that understood that creativity requires time, time, gestation time, time to work out things and it requires support, support so they could trial -- they could try and fail at things, support so they could experiment without losing their livelihood, and because the record label was able -- was willing to wait 15 albums, they got "Rumors," an album that made them hundreds of millions of dollars. Now today, of course, in the record industry, they don't wait 15 albums anymore for someone to hit. They don't wait one album anymore. They'll only really wait for your first single and if your first single doesn't make it, then you're gone and that's a tragedy, right, 'cause what it means is that today in that world, there will never be another Fleetwood Mac. They have essentially closed their doors to that kind of creativity and innovation. But when I look at the kind of process we're going through now with all of the economic meltdown and craziness of the last few months, my one big hope is that maybe this period of recession and contraction will give us a chance to step back and to slow down and to rediscover what the true roots of creativity and innovation are. Thank you very much.

[Applause]

Tom Kelley:

Well, that was fun. The thing that I most admire about Malcolm, and he's Canadian so he'll get embarrassed if I talk too much about this, but -- is, you know, there's lots of people who focus on a single topic. In fact, you kind of talk about that -- about, you know, selecting a topic and then, you know, devoting your life to it. I've kind of done that with innovation; if it goes out of style next year I'm in trouble, right? But you seem to be able, contrary to what you just described, you seem to be able to pick a topic, you know, dive down deeply into it and deliver insights. First of all, who knew there were any insights to be gained from Fleetwood Mac, but you delivered insights that other people have thought a lot about the same subject and haven't come up with. Is that -- can you -- I mean so, you know, "Blink," "Tipping point," these are -- these appear to me to be completely unrelated subjects and you've worked less than ten years on each of them. Can you speak to that or is there a -- is there a --

Malcolm Gladwell:

Well there -- I mean I would dispute your description of me diving deep into these subjects, but -- I would think I skim along the surface, but -- I don't know. I guess, I mean, I have a very short attention span. I suppose that might explain it, but they're not -- they're linked in

the sense that they are all investigations of ordinary experience, right? They're just -- they're attempts to kind of find patterns in ordinary experience, so I think of them as being part of the same project.

Tom Kelley:

The same. Okay. By the way, quick questions from the audience. So Malcolm said, you know, one of the most famous American novels ever, like if we have given you like 15 guesses, you could have gotten to "Huck Finn," right? Everybody, like, maybe eventually. Now he said one of the biggest breakthroughs of the last 25 years, was anybody -- like was anybody thinking, you know, solving Fermat's Theorem? No. I was not.

Malcolm Gladwell:

I'm the son of a mathematician. So when Andrew Wiles solved Fermat's Theorem, there was great excitement in the Gladwell household. But perhaps -- I remember once, years ago, I -- when -- I was a science writer at the "Washington Post" and there was a report that a mathematician had discovered the largest number ever discovered, I don't know what that means but, so I called my father and I said, "You know this guy, you know, the University of Texas has discovered this very large number and I told him what it was this, you know. And this pause in the line, my father says, "Wow! That is a large number."

[Audience laughter]

Tom Kelley:

So this a group that is intensely interested in how creativity happens and how you come up with new ideas and how you add new value to the world. And so I'm still reeling from this, when you started in the beginning about the 10, 000-hour rule or whatever, however you would refer to it. So what's the -- if, as many people in the audience do, if you want to change the world, right, if you want to be kind of a lever that, you know, does great things in your lifetime, the Boy Scouts that use to say, "Leave the camp ground better than you found it," right? If we take that on as our life challenge, what's the implication of the 10, 000-hour rule? Because one thing it says, I mean just on the surface it's obvious, can't do too many of these, right? I only got 1,700 weekends left, so....

Malcolm Gladwell:

Yes.

Tom Kelley:

I'm busy during the week but --

Malcolm Gladwell:

With that, you know it's funny that it never occurred to me to put that glass-half-empty spin on it.

Tom Kelley:

No. The audience knows too well at this point. No I was not suggesting that. I was suggesting that it informs life strategy, right? A speaker yesterday reminded us that you can do the calculation about how many, you know, days, weeks, months, and brought it down into 2,392

weekends and so, so I can't ultimately -- you describe yourself as a dilettante, I'm not quite buying it but -- so it informs a life strategy. Well, here let me ask a more specific question. You described two times the innovators, the conceptual innovator and the experimental innovator. Do you think people know which type that they are with respect to a topic?

Malcolm Gladwell:

Yes. I mean, I tend to think that we are mostly like Cezanne. The Picassos are very, very rare, right? I mean, they are exceedingly rare. They do change -- and they change the world in their own way, but we have such a -- we think of that as what genius is, and so we turn a blind eye to the far more ultimately important variety, which is the kind that evolves more slowly. But I want to go back to where you said before, you know, that -- The lesson I take from 10,000 hours is it is that the things that we -- it is that the jobs that we choose to do, the choice of a profession or discipline is not trivial, right? So if I decide to be a teacher, being a good teacher is not something that simply happens or emerges or that is, right? I am not a good teacher or not a good teacher. It is something that comes out of an investment on my part and an investment on the part of the organizations and communities that I'm a part of. So similarly, you know, I think of this in the Wall Street crisis. I was reading something about AIG, you know, and they were done in by a group of -- this huge multi-billion dollar corporation has been done in by a unit, a tiny unit in London of 400 people. You know, how old -- did those kids -- they were kids. Did those traders who destroyed the whole company, did they have 10,000 hours? I really, really doubt they did, right? And that's because they did not take their discipline seriously enough. They thought you could waltz in and be a trader. Well, you can't anymore than you can waltz and then be a graphic designer or waltz in and be a teacher. It's about us just, you know, restoring the notion that the things that we do ought to be approached with a degree of seriousness and dignity. And I think that we've lost that somehow.

Tom Kelley:

Just curiously, you're one of the --

[Applause]

-- one of the -- We've have a lot of very good speakers, very interesting, some quite thought provoking and one yesterday, it was actually my sense of it from just talking to people in the elevator and the party and things, like, that was one of the most interesting to the audience was a guy that you may know, Jonah Lehrer, who's written an article on --

Malcolm Gladwell:

Yeah.

Tom Kelley:

Does that -- does his work on how creativity happens in the brain, does that overlap with or is it compatible with, in your mind, your new thoughts on outliers?

Malcolm Gladwell:

I think so, yeah. I mean my problem is because I'm not a -- I mean he's an actual scientist.

Tom Kelley:

Yes.

Malcolm Gladwell:

And so when I'm confronted with someone like that, I merely just defer, I mean it. So he would know and he is right and I wouldn't, you know? Yes.

Tom Kelley:

I mean nobody -- is that the kind of material that would -- none of us have read the book yet. I think that's true, right.

Malcolm Gladwell:

Yeah.

Tom Kelley:

No one other than the insiders had seen the book.

Malcolm Gladwell:

[Oh he's had at] my book, yeah, yeah.

Tom Kelley:

Would he be somebody that would appear in your book or get mentioned or you know [simultaneous talking]? He does not, okay.

Malcolm Gladwell:

He doesn't. No, no. This -- yeah. There's not --

Tom Kelley:

No, okay.

[Audience laughter]

Tom Kelley:

So, I'm interested, you know, Josh said about the -- you know, they've say most novels, or at least first novels, are slightly autobiographical and there's certainly an element of autobiographality or whatever that word would be in this. Can you talk to us about -- you talked about the discipline that informs creativity. You talked about that for you, so you've two very successful books and, you know, I'm guessing a pretty good one on the way. How do you make that happen? I mean you've got other things going on in your life, how do you make that happen? How do you build in the kind of discipline to really do great work?

Malcolm Gladwell:

Well it's like playing the piano, in the sense that if you want to be a writer you have to write and you have to write everyday. And if you don't write everyday then your technique suffers and also you can't ever -- you have to be willing to do 20 drafts. And I always, whenever I to

talk to young writers who are starting out and they are curious about the process, I always ask them, "Well how many draft do you normally do?" and they always radically underestimate. They get very, they do two drafts and they get very discouraged and they say "Well I've written something that's terrible." And I always say, "Well everything I write is terrible after two drafts, too." I mean, everyone's stuff is terrible after two drafts unless you're, you know, some Picasso, right? And that's a difficult -- it took me a long time to learn that, and that's the hardest and that's the most valuable lesson that I've learned, to just understand that even when you're experienced, it doesn't come easy and it shouldn't come easy. If it comes easy then you're not doing it right. That wasn't meant as a downer, by the way. I mean it in the best sense and you should feel challenged by that.

Tom Kelley:

Great. Well, thank you very much, Malcolm.

Malcolm Gladwell:

Good.

[Applause]

Tom Kelley:

Thanks a lot.

[Music]