

# **Becoming a Great Strength Coach: Deliberately**

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I have had the privilege of learning from some of the best strength and conditioning coaches in the world. Attending mentorship programs from Coach Michael Boyle, listening to Alwyn Cosgrove and Gray Cook lecture, reading books from the likes of Stuart McGill, Shirley Sahrmann, Hoppenfield and Myers, and becoming a member of StrengthCoach.com, a web site leader in strength and conditioning information and research. Some may say that I spend a lot of money on continuing education. **I would disagree wholeheartedly!** I choose the word **invest!** In fact, my business (2,700 sq foot facility in Columbus, Ohio) has prospered enormously from the valuable information that I have gathered from these coaches and put into practice.

Recently Coach Boyle recommended a book called “Talent is Overrated: What Really Separates World Class Performers from Everybody Else.” The fact is that nearly 100 percent of the time, talent is overrated; deliberate practice is what separates the good from the great. The elements of deliberate practice are listed below. Do you want to become a great strength coach/trainer? The choice is yours!

- **It’s Designed to Improve Performance**

According to the author, Geoff Colvin “At least in the early going, therefore, and sometimes long after, it’s almost always necessary for a teacher to design the activity best suited to improve an individuals performance.” For me, my teacher has been Coach Boyle. I have traveled to Boston to attend his mentorship program, attended lectures and watched DVD’s. I cannot tell you how much this has improved my performance as a coach from both a practical and knowledge based standpoint. FIND A GOOD TEACHER. “Good teachers are costly, but bad teachers cost more.”

- **It can be repeated a lot**

The most effective deliberate practice activities can be repeated at high volume. For strength coaches: read, read, read, but most importantly put the results based knowledge from your teacher into practical use on your clients/athletes. They will thank you for it.

- **Feedback is continuously available**

For most coaches our feedback is viewing first hand the changes in our athletes/clients. “Lift the curtain and a bowler knows immediately how he did: in sports generally, seeing the results of practice is no problem.” Are your athletes becoming bigger, stronger, faster? Are your clients loosing weight? Another form of feedback is the Internet. StrengthCoach.com has a

strength and conditioning forum, blogs, video and more. In this day and age, feedback is immediate.

- **It's highly demanding mentally**

“Deliberate practice is above all an effort of focus and concentration.” It’s much easier to not have the time than to make the time! Great coaches “make” the time to become great. Work on your weaknesses as a coach. It isn’t much fun, but we all have them. As far as I know, there is not a “perfect” program out there in circulation!

- **It isn't much fun**

Many times it may be humbling to realize that we as coaches need to learn a lot more. Trying to attend a lecture or mentorship program while holding down a busy job, as a coach is many times not fun, but then again, deliberate practice isn't always designed to be!

The good news is that we all can make the choice to become great coaches deliberately! “The reality is that deliberate practice is hard can even be seen as good news. It means that most people won't do it. So your willingness to do it will distinguish you all the more.” After all the decision is yours “deliberately!”

## **Reference**

- (1) Colvin, Geoff, Talent is Overrated: What Really Separates World-Class Performers from Everybody Else, Penguin Books, 2008.

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