

Think You Can Be Anything You Want to Be? Science Says No--Unless You Want to Be an Entrepreneur

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My best friend growing up rolled a 160 the first time we went bowling. He had never hit a tennis ball, but on a whim he borrowed a kid's racket, entered a youth tournament, and won. He went on to be all-state in baseball and basketball, and played minor league ball until a shoulder injury ended his career.

I worked hard to be as good. Way harder than he did; sure, he played, but he never *practiced*. Yet no matter how hard I tried, I never came anywhere close to his level in any athletic or physical pursuit.

I realized early on that people who said “You can be anything you want to be” didn't know what they were talking about. I might be able to be a number of things, but I was never going to be Matt.

Turns out science agrees. According to 2016 research published in *Association for Psychological Science*, in sports, [practice accounts for less than 20 percent of the performance difference](#) between amateurs — and only 1 percent of the performance difference between professionals.

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