

GIVE A NEWBIE A BREAK

Recently I had an interesting conversation with a friend while we were both exercising on neighboring ski machines at the gym. We discussed how exciting it was that the Arizona Diamondbacks had a commanding lead in the National League West pennant race (as of early September of 2011). My friend remarked that the Diamondbacks are comprised largely of a group of rookies and journeyman; he said that with perhaps one exception none of the Diamondbacks would start for the Yankees.

During the conversation we realized that, coincidentally, both of us had attended the same musical review the night before at a local casino—which we both very much enjoyed. My friend, again, commented that the lead singer was outstanding; he wondered why she had not become a well-known celebrity.

Last week my wife and I saw the Movie, *The Help*. We both loved it. The author of *The Help*, Kathryn Stockett, I subsequently learned, had submitted her manuscript 60 times before it was accepted and published.

Malcolm Gladwell, in his excellent book, *Outliers*, essentially concluded that exceptional people—*outliers*-- become such due to talent, opportunity, and the wisdom to partake of that opportunity. It would appear that the management of the Diamondbacks provided the opportunity to play major league baseball to a group of average ball players, and, with exemplary coaching, these non-elite players have come together to lead their division.

Why isn't that lead singer a national celebrity? I don't know. Would she like national recognition? Probably. Does she have sufficient talent? I'm not a professional judge of singing talent, but it seems to me that she has as much talent as many current popular singers. Has she been given sufficient opportunity? Again, I don't know.

Fifty-nine professional editors rejected Ms. Stockett's manuscript, which became a best-seller and a blockbuster movie. As far as I am concerned, all 59 of them should be fired for failing to recognize talent and to not be willing to give a new author a chance. Obviously Ms. Stockett has plenty of talent. I admire her perseverance to finally gain her opportunity.

It occurs to me that one of the reasons reality shows are permeating TV is that these programs provide an opportunity for average Joes and/or Josephines to be given an opportunity to shine. I believe this concept resonates with many persons who desire to have their talent recognized. It is that old conundrum that no one wants you until you are known, but you can't get known until someone wants you.

If you are ever in a position to give a newbie a chance, please do so. I do. You never know; you might be responsible for discovering the next celebrity, star, scientist—or outlier.

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