

BEING TERRIBLE AT WHAT YOU LOVE

— PATRICK WILTSE

All Happy Glisson wanted was to play hockey

I'd like to show you something.

It's 5 seconds long and it's amazing:



That's Luan Oliveira, a pro skateboarder, doing a trick I can't do.

That's not because I'm too scared or need more practice.

I literally could never do that trick.

Even if an elite team of psychotherapists placed me in a drug-induced stupor in which I was capable of rapidly absorbing new information, hypnotized me into believing myself one of the world's greatest skateboarders, awakened me with a hefty dose of adrenaline and took me directly to this spot, I still couldn't land this trick with Luan's stylish, natural execution.

Well, maybe this sci-fi scenario would work, like the scene in The Matrix when Neo is programmed to know kung-fu.



But let's abandon this example and conclude that Luan is a natural skateboarder and I am not, and nothing will ever change that.

I'm certain I love skateboarding at least 95% as much as Luan does (I give him the additional 5% because it must feel amazing to be that good).

It's one of my top passions in life, yet to pursue skateboarding as my livelihood would be an awful mistake.

Every time I watch skateboarding, every time I skateboard, I'm reminded that I'm terrible at something I love.

And, while being terrible is frustrating, I kind of love it.

When you're terrible, there's no pressure, no chance of wasted potential.

When you're terrible, you're only competing with yourself. You set the parameters of what it takes to win and your only job is to have fun while improving (or not improving) at your own pace.

Conversely, there is tremendous pressure in being talented.

When you're talented, you have the potential to be great.

As Spiderman's Uncle Ben reminds us, "With great power comes great responsibility."



That's where this quote originated, right?

When you're talented, you have to make a difficult decision.

Do you aspire to greatness or ignore your potential?

From this decision there are three possibilities:

1. *Try and succeed.*
2. *Try and fail.*
3. *Regret not trying.*

For some people there's likely a fourth option – *don't regret not trying* – but I'm not capable of that and I'm going to pretend you aren't either.

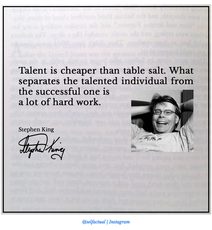
I'll pretend we both crave #1, so how do we guarantee success at our respective talents?

According to legendary author Stephen King, "Talent is cheaper than table salt. What separates the talented individual from the successful one is a lot of hard work."

Aha! A simple equation: *talent + hard work = success*.

This is obvious, right?

Right, but "hard work" is easier said than done.



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This is why being terrible is great.

When you're terrible, you do major work for minor results. You fail repeatedly. You feel frustrated and embarrassed but you keep trying anyway.

In your fervent pursuit of mediocrity, you gain invaluable humility and work ethic.

When you're terrible, you notice the naturals getting great results with little effort. You feel admiration and jealousy. You think, "With my passion, if I had their talent, nothing could stop me from achieving greatness."

Now turn this judgment on yourself.

You are this person to someone else.

Will they admire your dedication or will they spectate in frustration as you squander your abilities?



We all have passions and we all have talents, and in the special places where these two intersect, we have the potential for greatness.

I've given thousands of hours to skateboarding. I've bled, I've bruised, I've looked foolish.

Countless times I've sacrificed my time, body, and ego for the dopamine rush of small victories – victories that mean nothing to the world and everything to me.

Skateboarding is my perspective. It's my resilience. It's my adrenaline. It isn't a place where my passions and talents align, but it's taught me how lucky I am for the places they do.



PATRICK WILTSE

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