

Greetings!

It's graduation time at schools all over the USA.

One of the most celebrated graduating classes of all time became famous because of a story that's not true.

Say what? Read on...

Mike S.

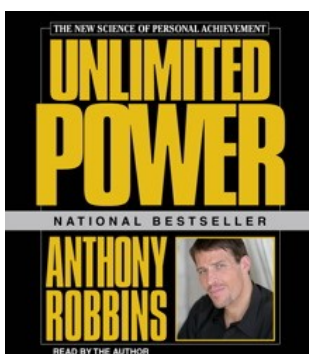
### **The Yale Class of 1953**

One of the most famous stories of goal setting has been a staple among motivational speakers for decades. Cited by Tony Robbins, Zig Ziglar, Brian Tracy, and many others, the story goes like this:

#### **The Power of Written, Specific Goals!**

At graduation, the Yale Class of 1953 was given a questionnaire. They were asked about their career plans and their goals in life. 20 years later, it was found that while many graduates had goals, only 3% had written, specific goals. Then it was found that the 3% with written goals had earned more than the rest of the graduating class combined!

This was certainly a very plausible story. Not only is Yale one of the premier educational institutions in the world, the 1953 class included luminaries such as Robert Gouizeta, CEO of Coca Cola, Wall Street financiers William Donaldson and Dan Lufkin, and Forrest Mars. CEO of Mars Candy.



This story appears on page 199 of Tony Robbin's bestselling book "Unlimited Power", and countless other inspirational books.

Fast Company magazine tried to track down the specifics of the Yale Class of 1953, and found that it was an urban



## UPCOMING EVENTS

**Cloud Conventions**  
**"Meet the Rainmakers"**  
**Virtual**  
**May 11**  
[Event Link](#)

**Spring Varnex**  
**"Never Let a Good Crisis go to Waste"**  
**Virtual**  
**May 26**

**Trans4mers Sales Leadership Group**  
**"Gaining Market Share: Sales Development Plans"**  
**Virtual**  
**June 25**

**CEO Peer Group**  
**"Lead Generation"**  
**Virtual**  
**July 15**

## QUICK LINKS

legend. The Yale University Alumni Office not only had no record of this survey, they emphatically stated that it never happened.



Fast Company contacted Brian Tracy to ask where he heard the story. He said he got it from Tony Robbins. They asked Tony Robbins where he heard the story. He said he got it from Zig Ziglar. They asked Zig Ziglar where he got the information, and he said he heard it from Brian Tracy.

When Fast Company circled back with Brian Tracy and confronted him with the facts, his response was "If it isn't true, it should be".

Fast Company stated "in the annals of personal goal-setting, no story outranks the Yale University Class of 1953". They concluded "If your goal is success, don't consult these gurus".



"If it isn't true, it should be"

Nonetheless, Tracy's response has got to be one of the best excuses I've ever heard. I only wish I'd known about it as a teenager, when this response REALLY could have come in handy.

## "The 10,000 Hour Rule"

Another famous urban legend was popularized by Malcom Gladwell in his book "Outliers". He points out that many world-class performers achieved success only after 10,000 hours of practice. The Beatles, for

[More About Mike](#)

## Fake Testimonials from Real People

### "Stump the Chump"



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**"Carpe Dinero" = Seize the Money.**

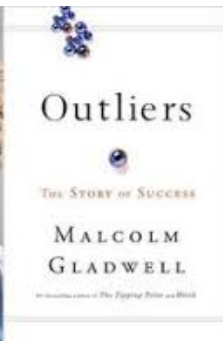
Sincerely,

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example, became "overnight" successes only after they spent 10,000 hours playing bars in Liverpool and Hamburg.



"Overnight Success" in 10,000 Hours

Gladwell cited research from Florida State University professor Anders Ericsson, who studied world class musicians, athletes, and artists. Ericsson wrote that the highest achieving violin students at the Berlin Academy had spent, on average, 10,000 years of practice by the time they were 18 years old,

Despite the popularity of the "10,000 Hour Rule", many people, including Anders Ericsson himself, disputed Gladwell's conclusions.

### **I Didn't Say What I Said**

Ericsson stated while it was true that world class performers practiced more than average performers, it was a specific type of practice that made the difference, and there was nothing magical about 10,000 hours.

Gladwell had picked a round number out of the middle of many years of research, and jumped to an incorrect conclusion. Gladwell and Ericsson even engaged in a public debate on this subject.

### **If it Isn't True, it Should be**

I've got to admit, I fall on the side of these famous speakers and writers. Even if the facts underlying their conclusions are unfounded, there's still a greater truth at work. Goal setting does work magic. Deliberate practice, mastering your craft over 10,000 hours, will undoubtedly lead to extreme, if not world



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As the saying goes, "Don't let facts get in the way of a good story"

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