

## **Expert system**

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Since starting this blog, I've received several requests for career advice. I am most heartened and humbled by these requests, especially when they come from young people just starting out. I've responded as best I can and tried to offer specific advice, but it's very hard to be specific when the task is so grand.

But here are some pieces of advice that I can offer, which although not specific, may be interpreted into something useful.

On becoming an expert

The path to becoming an expert is never clear. The way to think about it is this: Ask your parents what it was that they did to make you a great son or daughter. Most parents don't have a clear map on how to build a family. Building great families, careers or businesses are similar empirical endeavors in that it takes constant trial and error and infinite patience.

Similarly, ask an athlete what is the formula for athleticism. It's has something to do with talent but more than likely it's constant practice and attention to detail. Most overnight successes took a lifetime of preparation.

On getting the motivation to practice

In all cases, the path to greatness lies in passion. Without passion there is never the energy to continue doing something when there is no clear benefit in sight. Passion is a relation of faith so many who have faith find it easier to have passion and vice versa. If you have neither for the task at hand, you need to look for something else to do.

On communication

Understanding and communication are inter-twined in many ways. Usually, if you cannot communicate something effectively, it's likely you haven't understood it completely. Likewise, if your understanding is weak it's because you have not communicated enough. Practice one and the other will get better.

On learning

Formal learning if not sufficient but it is something you should seek as much as possible. Think of a degree program like a language class. As someone said once, gain a new language and gain a new soul.

If you passionately practice, learn and communicate, expertise just follows.