

David Epstein

#1 NYT Bestselling Author of *Range, The Sports Gene*, and now *Inside the Box* & Expert on Human Performance

David Epstein has spent his career investigating—and overturning—our most deeply held assumptions about what makes people and teams perform at their best. His #1 *New York Times* bestseller *Range: Why Generalists Triumph in a Specialized World* has topped recommended book lists from *The Wall Street Journal*, *The Sunday Times*, *Financial Times*, *Forbes*, and *Inc.* He has engaged in a notable “nerd fight of gladiatorial proportions” with Malcolm Gladwell, been featured on *Good Morning America* and *CBS Mornings*, seen his books translated into more than 30 languages, and reached more than 12 million views with his [two TED talks](#).

David's third book, [Inside the Box: How Constraints Make Us Better](#) (May, 2026) expands his relentless, myth-busting pursuit of the secrets of high performance. Building on questions that arose from *Range*, the new book examines how constraints, limitations, and restrictions can actually be catalysts for creativity, collaboration, contentment, resilience, and reinvention in today's rapidly changing business environments. Adam Grant called the book “a masterful case that limits are what set us free.” Gladwell said “I'll never think about my own work the same way again.”

As a speaker, David has inspired global audiences at Amazon, Microsoft, Google, Fidelity, JP Morgan, Deloitte, Gartner, BCG, Procter & Gamble, World 50, Kaiser Permanente, NASA, the U.S. Army, Association for Talent Development, University of Pennsylvania, World Knowledge Forum, and many others with his fascinating presentations on the keys to achieving high performance. Combining surprising data and meticulous research with eye-catching graphics and thought-provoking stories from the

worlds of sports, business, science, and the arts, David overturns previous notions about both team performance and personal development. Audiences gain actionable insights on fostering innovation, building a future-proof career and workforce, confronting change with resilience, navigating disruption, and turning challenges into opportunities.

Speech Topics

The Power of Range: Achieving Success in Any Domain

"David Epstein manages to make me thoroughly enjoy the experience of being told that everything I thought about something was wrong." —Malcolm Gladwell

What if the conventional wisdom on the best path to success — specialize early, focus narrowly, accumulate ten thousand hours — is not just incomplete, but actively misleading?

In this talk based on his #1 *New York Times* bestseller *Range: Why Generalists Triumph in a Specialized World*, David Epstein draws on fascinating research across sports, business, science, and the arts to dismantle the myth that early specialization is the key to high performance. It turns out that athletes who sample different sports are more likely to succeed long-term than those who specialize early, and Nobel laureates are about twenty-two times more likely than their peers to have a serious outside hobby. The world's top forecasters aren't deep domain experts, they're intellectual omnivores who draw on many areas of knowledge.

David makes the case that in most fields — especially those that are complex, unpredictable, and difficult to automate — generalists, not specialists, are primed to excel. They often find

their path late or juggle many interests rather than locking in on one. They're also more creative, more agile, and better able to make connections their specialized peers can't see. In a world that pushes ever-narrower focus, breadth of experience and the ability to think across boundaries are becoming the most undervalued competitive advantages. As AI takes over more routine specialized tasks, the people who can synthesize across domains become more valuable.

Audiences gain a transformed understanding of what drives high performance, and practical takeaways on how to build more adaptable careers, teams, and organizations.

Inside the Box: Why the Right Constraints Are Your Greatest Advantage

What if everything we've been told about unlimited freedom and resources leading to greater creativity and success is wrong? In this revelatory talk based on his third book, *Inside the Box: How Constraints Make Us Better*, David Epstein dismantles one of the most pervasive myths in work and life: that people are most creative, productive, and satisfied when they're most free. Drawing on fascinating research from cognitive psychology and organizational behavior, David reveals a counterintuitive truth: the right constraints can be the most powerful tools you have for focusing a team, unsticking a project, or even figuring out where to apply your effort. Through case studies that range from startling successes (and devastating failures) in Silicon Valley, to singular athletic feats, to creative breakthroughs spanning Theodor Geisel (aka Dr. Seuss) to Apple, David explains why doing more with less isn't just a cliché, it's a strategy.

Through meticulous research and eclectic examples — from the periodic table to Pixar films — David shows why complexity steals clarity, and why organizations with too much freedom and too few

boundaries often fail spectacularly, while those that strategically embrace constraints adapt repeatedly. In an era when AI is removing more constraints than ever — making it easier to produce more, faster, in every direction at once — the ability to design the right boundaries is fast becoming a critical skill.

Audiences walk away with implementable strategies and take-home exercises for identifying the bottlenecks actually limiting their performance, overcoming our hardwired bias to always add more, and designing productive constraints that channel effort where it matters most. Above all, they leave with a fundamental mindset shift: from viewing constraints as obstacles to recognizing them as opportunities to clarify priorities and launch productive exploration.

Range in the Age of AI: Why Breadth, Judgment, and Distinctly Human Skills Matter More Than Ever

Artificial intelligence is rapidly automating tasks that once defined expertise, from coding and data analysis to drafting strategy and writing reports. Understandably, people are asking: How can I stay relevant when machines can do what I was trained to do?

In this timely talk, David Epstein, the #1 New York Times bestselling author of *Range*, reframes the AI conversation away from tools and toward people. Drawing on decades of research into performance in complex, fast-changing environments, David shows why periods of technological upheaval consistently reward adaptable generalists—people with broad experience, strong judgment, and the ability to connect ideas across domains.

Rather than predicting the future of AI, David focuses on what history, data, and organizations already reveal: As technical skills

become cheaper and more automated, human skills—context, creativity, communication, synthesis—become more valuable.

From how to foster cross-domain experience to why "side projects" are signals of future readiness, audiences learn how to build careers and teams that thrive with new tools rather than compete against them, and leave with a grounded, evidence-based framework for navigating uncertainty, without hype, fear-mongering, or claims of technological prophecy.