

In life and baseball, people love 'The Naturals'

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Credit: Ludvig Hedenborg from Pexels

(Medical Xpress)—As baseball playoffs begin this week, Yale psychologists have a prediction: Your favorite player is likely to be a natural talent rather than someone who worked hard for success. And it definitely won't be somebody who took performance-enhancing drugs.

Studies of adults and children as young as five-years old reveal a strong preference for individuals for whom intelligence, good looks or physical talents come naturally over those who succeed because of hard work, medication, or who were offered bribes.

"People have a bias for the natural," said Kristi Lockhart, associate research scientist in psychology and senior author of a study showing this effect published in a recent issue of the journal *Developmental Psychology*.

A look at the riveting competition in 1961 between two New York Yankee teammates striving to beat Babe Ruth's home run record illustrates the principle.

"People loved Mickey Mantle, who was loaded with natural talent, but not so much Roger Maris, who worked hard for his achievement," Lockhart said. "But they would like Maris a lot more than someone who used performance-enhancing drugs."

Lockhart said this principle also holds for personality traits. People preferred those with a naturally sunny disposition over those who achieved happiness through use of medication or who worked hard to be happy because their parents paid them to do so.

The findings help explain why some people tend to downplay the amount of effort they exert to achieve success. They want others to believe their

positive traits developed naturally.

Provided by Yale University

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