Grit – The Power of Passion and Perseverance
Angela Duckworth

Why read this book?

"In this must-read book for anyone striving to succeed, pioneering psychologist Angela Duckworth shows parents, students, educators, athletes, and businesspeople – both seasoned and new – that the secret to outstanding achievement is not talent but a special blend of passion and persistence she calls “grit.”

She shares what she’s learned from interviewing dozens of high achievers – from J.P. Morgan CEO Jamie Dimon to New Yorker cartoon editor Bob Mankoff to Seattle Seahawks coach Pet Carroll." (Front Flap)

Key Quotes

“What we eventually accomplish may depend more on our passion and perseverance than on our innate talent.”

“Our potential is one thing. What we do with it is quite another.’

“Skill is not the same thing as achievement, either. Without effort, your talent is nothing more than your unmet potential. Without effort, your skill is nothing more than what you could have done but didn’t. With effort, talent becomes skill and, at the very same time, effort makes skill productive.” (P. 51)

“High but not the highest intelligence, combined with the greatest degree of persistence, will achieve greater eminence than the highest degree of intelligence with somewhat less persistence.” (P. 78)

“Infants and toddlers spend most of their time trying to do things they can’t, again and again – and yet they don’t seem especially embarrassed or anxious. NO PAIN, NO GAIN is a rule that doesn’t seem to apply to the preschool set.” (P. 141)

“There was always someone who, in one way or another, told me to keep going. I think everyone needs somebody like that, Don’t you?” (P. 195)

“To compete means excellence. Compete comes from the Latin and quite literally means STRIVE TOGETHER. It doesn’t have anything in its origins about another person losing.” (P. 265)
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Part I: What GRIT is and why it matters

- One in five West Point Cadets will drop out before graduation after spending two years to get in.
  - Grit was a greater predictor of graduation than caring for the school, conscientiousness toward studies or feeling of safety.
- They ALL had the potential – what mattered was a “never give-up” attitude.
- After interviewing leaders in many different fields it became apparent that the highly successful had a kind of ferocious determination that played out in two ways – determination and direction:
  - They were unusually resilient and hardworking
  - They knew in a very deep way what it was they wanted
- “The “naturalness bias” is a hidden prejudice against those who’ve achieved what they have because they worked for it, and a hidden preference for those whom we think arrived at their place in life because they’re naturally talented.” (P. 25)
- It’s not that talent is bad – it is good and makes progress quicker but often the critical factor are those that are encouraging you. Are they saying is “this is all you can do” or “who knows what you can do.”
  - “Our vanity, our self-love, promotes the cult of the genius. For if we think of genius as something magical, we are not obliged to compare ourselves and find ourselves lacking…To call someone ‘divine’ means: here there is no need to compete.” (Nietzsche P. 39)
- Talent is great, but TESTS of talent stink. (P. 34)
- \( \text{Talent} \times \text{Effort} = \text{Skill} \)
  \( \text{Skill} \times \text{Effort} = \text{Achievement} \) (P. 42)
  examples: MacKenzie – Pottery; Will Smith – work ethic (P. 46); Treadmill test;
- Eighty percent of success in life is showing up. (Woody Allen)
- GRIT is about working on something you care about so much that you’re willing to stay loyal to it…it’s doing what you love, but not just falling in love – staying in love.” (P. 54)
- ONE top-level goal – “life philosophy” supported by mid-level and low-level goals. (P. 64)
  example: Warren Buffet – write down 25 career goals; circle 5; AVOID those not circled – distractions
  You need ONE internal compass. Ask to what extent do these goals serve a common purpose?
  Bob Mankoff – cartoon editor for the New Yorker; 2,000 rejections.
  Lower level goals can be rejected/changed/swapped out – road blocks happen.

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“GRIT has two components: Passion and Perseverance.
ENTHUSIASM is common. ENDURANCE is rare.”
First comes INTEREST (Passion) – Next comes capacity to PRACTICE (Discipline) – Third is PURPOSE (Conviction) – and finally HOPE which defines every stage.
Part II: Growing GRIT from the inside out

It’s a fact – mega successful people LOVE WHAT THEY DO. We’ve heard it time and time again – FOLLOW YOUR PASSION. You will enjoy what you do; you will be more satisfied and you will generally be happier. And you will do a better job. The thing is that many of us don’t really KNOW what our passion really is. Julia Child spent 40 years discovering what her true passion really was.

“Passion for your work is a little bit of discovery, followed by a lot of development, and then a lifetime of deepening.” (P. 103)

1. We generally only START to gravitate towards our interests around middle school.
2. We don’t discover them through introspection but by exploring and doing.
3. We must experiment.
4. It usually is NOT an AH HA experience – we discover, we explore, we do, and then we develop
5. There usually are supporters providing encouragement.

Grit also requires PRACTICE – Kaizen – continuous improvement; a persistent desire to do better. The very best accumulate 10,000 hours/mature in ten years (where have we heard that before Malcolm Gladwell😊). Also experts practice differently utilizing DELIBERATE PRACTICE). This kind of practice if very demanding.

Flow – a state of complete concentration that leads to a feeling spontaneity (P. 128). Deliberate practice is for preparation, and flow is for performance.

All extraordinary people progressed through three distinct periods of development:

1. Early years – Interest
2. Middle years – Practice
3. Later years – Larger purpose and meaning

“Grittier people are dramatically more motivated than others to seek a meaningful, other-centered life. Higher scores on purpose correlate with higher scores on the Grit Scale. (P. 147) [Story of the brick layer]

Growth mindset vs. Fixed mindset (P. 180) – Students with a growth mindset are significantly grittier than students with a fixed mindset. [Growth mindset ➔ optimistic self-talk ➔ perseverance over adversity].

Deliberate Practice and creating FLOW

1. KNOW THE SCIENCE: BASIC REQUIREMENTS OF DELIBERATE PRACTICE (P.137)
   A. A CLEARLY DEFINED STRETCH GOAL
   B. FULL CONCENTRATION AND EFFORT
   C. IMMEDIATE AND INFORMATIVE FEEDBACK
   D. REPETITION WITH REFLECTION AND REFINEMENT
2. MAKE IT A HABIT – DAILY RITUALS/ROUTINES
3. CHANGE THE WAY YOU EXPERIENCE IT
Part III: Growing GRIT from the outside in

This section deals with the question: What can I do to encourage grit in the people I care for?

It seems there are as many books on parenting as there are parents 😊 from strict unrelenting standards to the permissive “child-centered” approach. While the author cannot offer a clear “scientific” answer, she does have some definite thoughts and suggestions which she uses with her own children.

- Teach them discipline and that they must finish what they start.
- Tough love needs to have an underlying selflessness to work. It’s not about control.
- Children carry within them the seeds of their own future. Their own interests will emerge if we trust them. (P. 209)
- To finish things, you must put the work in.
- There is no either/or trade-off between supportive parenting and demanding parenting. (P. 212)

What matters more than the messages parents aim to deliver are the messages their children receive.

- “If you want to bring forth grit in your child, first ask how much passion and perseverance you have for your own life goals. Then ask yourself how likely it is that your approach to parenting encourages your child to emulate you.” (P216)
- You don’t need to be a parent to make a difference in someone’s life.
“Kids who spend more than a year in extracurriculars are significantly more likely to graduate from college and, as young adults, to volunteer in their communities. The hours per week kids devote to extracurriculars also predict having a job (as opposed to being unemployed as a young adult) and earning more money, but ONLY for kids who participate in activities for two years rather than one.” (P. 226)

- Following through on our commitments while we grow up both requires grit and, at the same time, builds it.
- The Hard Thing Rule
  - Everyone has to do a hard thing – something that requires daily deliberate practice
  - You can quit, but not until the season is over, tuition payment is up, or some other natural stopping point
  - You get to pick your hard thing. Nobody picks it for you

“If you want to be grittier, find a gritty culture and join it. If you’re a leader, and you want the people in your organization to be grittier, create a gritty culture.” (P. 245)

In the long run, culture has the power to shape our identity...The way we do things around here and why eventually becomes THE WAY I DO THINGS AND WHY.

Conclusion

Grit is not everything. We need many things to grow and be the person we want to be. We need character – intrapersonal (strengths of will, heart and mind); interpersonal (gratitude, social intelligence, self-control); intellectual (curiosity and zest).

“To be gritty is to keep putting one foot in front of the other. To be gritty is to hold fast to an interesting and purposeful goal. To be gritty is to invest, day after week after year, in challenging practice. To be gritty is to fall down seven times, and rise eight.” (P. 275)
Our Faculty

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