



Summary of the Book

GRIT (Angela Duckworth)

Summary of the Book: GRIT (by Angela Duckworth)



“What we eventually accomplish may depend more on our passion and perseverance than our innate talent” (Angela Duckworth)

The Book in Three Sentences

1. The secret to outstanding achievement is not talent but **grit**: a special blend of passion and persistence.
2. Grit is about having passion and perseverance for long-term goals
3. Gritty people are able to maintain their determination and motivation over long periods despite experiences with failure and adversity

What is GRIT ?

Grit is the combination of passion (a deep, enduring knowledge of what you want) and perseverance (hard work and resilience). It's about moving in a direction with consistency and endurance, like having a clear inner compass that guides all your decisions and actions.



Why GRIT is important ?

Various research studies have proven that talent and intelligence alone don't predict success. In fact, talent can hinder performance, and aptitude tests tend to be poor measures of true potential. On the other hand, effort (which is sustained by grit) is doubly important. You must put in effort to hone your natural talents into tangible skills through practice and improvement. You must also put in effort to apply those skills to solve real-world problems to attain achievement.

Grit has been found to reliably predict whether military recruits graduate from rigorous elite training programs, whether salespeople stay in their jobs, whether high-school students graduate on schedule and whether adults earn their graduate degrees. Over the years, Duckworth has studied grit

through experiments, empirical research and interviews with “grit paragons” (people who exemplify grit).

In Duckworth’s view, the biggest reason a preoccupation with talent can be harmful is simple: By shining our spotlight on talent, we risk leaving everything else in the shadows. We inadvertently send the message that these other factors—including grit—don’t matter as much as they really do.

In a study of competitive swimmers, Dan Chambliss, writes, “The most dazzling human achievements are, in fact, the aggregate of countless individual elements, each of which is, in sense, ordinary.”

Great things are accomplished by those “people whose thinking is active in one direction, who employ everything as material, who always zealously observe their own inner life and that others, who perceive everywhere models and incentives, who never tire of combining together means available to them”.

Talent—how fast we improve in skill—absolutely matters. But effort factors into the calculations twice, not once. Effort builds skill. At the very same time, effort makes skill productive

Consistency of effort over the long run is everything.

Why Effort is Doubly Important



Grit is about working on something you care about so much that you’re willing to stay loyal to it. It’s not about falling in love; it’s about staying in love.

Enthusiasm is common. Endurance is rare

Hierarchy and alignment of goals

Grit is about holding the same top-level goal (like a compass) for a very long time. In very gritty people, most mid-level and low-level goals are, in some way or another, related to that ultimate goal. In contrast, a lack of grit can come from having less coherent goal structures. When prioritising goals, you must ask, “To what extent do these goals serve a common purpose?” The more they’re part of the same goal hierarchy—important because they then serve the same ultimate concern—the more focused your passion is. Giving up on lower-level goals is not only forgivable, it’s sometimes absolutely necessary. You should give up when one lower-level goal can be swapped for another that is more feasible

Developing Grit

Like every aspect of psychological character, Grit is more plastic than we might think

Research suggests there are “psychological assets” behind Grit. Each of these components can be developed by yourself (from inside-out) or with external help (from outside-in)

- Interest: loving what you do
- Practice: focusing on improvement no matter what
- Purpose: believing strongly that your work matters to yourself and to others. This usually happens only after years of cultivating your interest and honing your abilities from practice; and
- Hope: believing that you can work things out and overcome your challenges. Hope works hand-in-hand with all 3 components above to determine how you respond to failures—if you get up and keep going, or stay down and be defeated

Developing Grit from Inside-out

Contrary to popular belief, our interests, passions and calling are not inborn; they’re cultivated over time. Grit paragons don’t suddenly discover their passion in a magical, fireworks-filled moment, nor do they fall crazily in love with the perfect job. Instead, they spend years exploring different interests before focusing on one area. As they practice and hone their skills, they also develop deeper understanding and appreciation of their craft until it becomes a burning passion and calling.



Discovering your Interests

In the initial stages, most people learn and practice something for fun, not to develop a life-long career. Deep interest emerges with time, and comes from a blend of age, real-life triggers, a period of interest development and support from others.

Deepening Through Practice

Hard work alone isn’t enough. Cognitive psychologist Anders Ericsson found that experts became outstanding not just from lots of practice, but how they practice, i.e. they used deliberate practice.

Developing a Sense of Purpose

Purpose is “the intention to contribute to the well-being of others.” Both gritty and non-gritty people seek short-term pleasures, but gritty people are drastically more likely to also seek contribute to others. They usually spend years developing their skills and interest, before they discover their purpose later in life.

Nurturing Hope

Hope is “the expectation that our own efforts can improve our future”. It helps us to persevere; it gives us the strength to get up each time we fall and to keep going.

Developing Grit from Outside-in

You can also use external help to develop grit in yourself or to nurture grit in others.



Parenting For Grit

Duckworth refers to parenting broadly as the act of nurturing the next generation. Every Grit paragon she interviewed had at least 1 person who, at the right time and in the right way, motivated him/her to push through to the next level.

Providing the Training Ground for Grit

Grit and follow-through have been found to be directly correlated, and follow-through has also been found to be the best predictor of whether young people attain high achievement later in life.

Developing a Culture of Grit

Culture refers to a group's shared norms and values. Our cultures shape our self-identity, worldview and the way we think and act

Finally ...

Grit is vital to the psychology of success and can be developed. However, grit is not the only virtue that's important. Our character is multi-dimensional: it's made up of at least 3 clusters of virtues, all of which affect different outcomes. Grit is one key virtue

- Intrapersonal virtues (e.g. self-control) affect how you manage yourself, and Grit is part of this category

- Interpersonal virtues (e.g. social intelligence, emotional control) affect how you interact with others
- Intellectual virtues (e.g. curiosity) affect how you engage with ideas

The book also gives a simple questionnaire to measure the Grit Scale. It is presented in the next two pages.

References:

- Duckworth, Angela (2016), GRIT: The power of passion and perseverance, Scribner publishing
- GRIT by Angela Duckworth; <https://www.samuelthomasdavies.com/book-summary-psychology/grit/>
- Book summary: GRIT; <https://readinggraphics.com/book-summary-grit-the-power-of-passion-and-perseverance/>

Short Grit Scale

Directions for taking the Grit Scale: Please respond to the following 8 items. Be honest – there are no right or wrong answers!

1. New ideas and projects sometimes distract me from previous ones.*
 - Very much like me
 - Mostly like me
 - Somewhat like me
 - Not much like me
 - Not like me at all

2. Setbacks don't discourage me.
 - Very much like me
 - Mostly like me
 - Somewhat like me
 - Not much like me
 - Not like me at all

3. I have been obsessed with a certain idea or project for a short time but later lost interest.*
 - Very much like me
 - Mostly like me
 - Somewhat like me
 - Not much like me
 - Not like me at all

4. I am a hard worker.
 - Very much like me
 - Mostly like me
 - Somewhat like me
 - Not much like me
 - Not like me at all

5. I often set a goal but later choose to pursue a different one.*
 - Very much like me
 - Mostly like me
 - Somewhat like me
 - Not much like me
 - Not like me at all

6. I have difficulty maintaining my focus on projects that take more than a few months to complete.*
 - Very much like me
 - Mostly like me
 - Somewhat like me
 - Not much like me
 - Not like me at all

7. I finish whatever I begin.
Very much like me
Mostly like me
Somewhat like me
Not much like me
Not like me at all

8. I am diligent.
Very much like me
Mostly like me
Somewhat like me
Not much like me
Not like me at all

Scoring:

1. For questions 2, 4, 7 and 8 assign the following points:
5 = Very much like me
4 = Mostly like me
3 = Somewhat like me
2 = Not much like me
1 = Not like me at all
2. For questions 1, 3, 5 and 6 assign the following points:
1 = Very much like me
2 = Mostly like me
3 = Somewhat like me
4 = Not much like me
5 = Not like me at all

Add up all the points and divide by 8. The maximum score on this scale is 5 (extremely gritty), and the lowest score on this scale is 1 (not at all gritty).

Grit Scale citation

Duckworth, A.L., & Quinn, P.D. (2009). Development and validation of the Short Grit Scale (Grit-S). *Journal of Personality Assessment*, 91, 166-174.
<http://www.sas.upenn.edu/~duckwort/images/Duckworth%20and%20Quinn.pdf>

Duckworth, A.L., Peterson, C., Matthews, M.D., & Kelly, D.R. (2007). Grit: Perseverance and passion for long-term goals. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 9, 1087-1101.
<http://www.sas.upenn.edu/~duckwort/images/Grit%20JPSP.pdf>