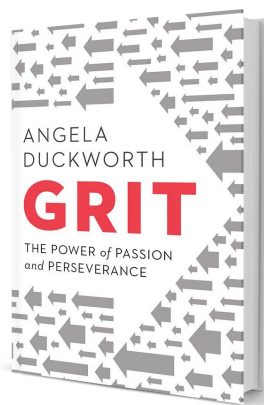


Smart Summaries break down important books, texts and other educational resources into an easy-to-read synopsis and provides busy education professionals with ideas to help develop greater leadership skills, intellect and innovation within classrooms and educational systems.

## The Book



**Date of Creation:**  
May 19, 2017

**Title:**  
*GRIT The Power of Passion and Perseverance*  
Author: Angela Duckworth  
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ISBN: 978-1-5-11-1110-5

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[Author Video](#)

[A Song for Inspiring Grit](#)

- Be Interested
- Deliberately Practice
- Be Purposeful
- Have Hope

## At a Glance

With commitment and encouragement grit grows.

Effort is a key indicator for success. Results will vary, but working through adversity drives success.

Find purpose in your work and life and you'll be grittier.

Having a growth mindset and being optimistic are key drivers.

Gritty people in your life make you gritty.

The gritty are never bored.

## Introduction

GRIT, by Angela Duckworth, is the ultimate guide to changing your own behavior in order to change your life and influence others. Duckworth weaves a formula for growing grit through a wonderful narrative that combines real life stories with research. Her focus on the characteristics of relevant people in professional sports, the military, schools and business make the text a quick read. In fact, it is a text that you'll need to read twice. Once for the concept and a second time for the immediately applicable strategies that school systems and parents can employ to support the growth of all kids. A grit mindset in a classroom or home can change the direction of another person immediately. Grit grows from optimism and Duckworth will show you how to encourage everyone around you to become perseverant and stronger as a result of the key behaviors and concepts she details throughout her text.

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

## Chapter Review

### CHAPTER 1: Showing Up

**KEY QUOTE:** *"In sum, no matter the domain, the highly successful had a kind of ferocious determination that played out in two ways. First, these exemplars were unusually resilient and hardworking. Second, they knew in a very, very deep way what it was they wanted. They not only had determination, they had direction."*

- People who demonstrate great levels of perseverance and a "never give up" attitude find success.
- Those in life who are accomplished demonstrate high levels of perseverance.
- "Talent is no guarantee of grit."
- GRIT is a better indicator of success for Chicago Public School students than ownership, conscientiousness or safety.
- No matter the scenario, whether it be military school or spelling bees, those who commit, practice and endure find success.

### CHAPTER 2: Distracted by Talent

**KEY QUOTE:** *"The focus on talent distracts us from something that is at least as important, and that is effort."*

- In the 19th century a study of high achievement identified three qualities: "demonstration of unusual ability, in combination with exceptional zeal and the capacity for hard labor."
- Most Americans believe that talent outweighs effort.
- Effort matters. Your ability to drive beyond expectations and motivate yourself to practice makes you gritty.
- One quality is the ability to stick with a question, look at it from many angles and drive beyond the obvious.
- Gritty people do not take the path of least resistance.
- Too many people are "obsessed" with talent and see it as the greatest indicator of success.

### CHAPTER 3: Effort Counts Twice

**KEY QUOTE:** *"If we overemphasize talent, we underemphasize everything else."*

- Formula:
  - Talent x effort = skill
  - Skill x effort = achievement
- Defined: "Talent is how quick your skills improve when you invest effort. Achievement is what happens when you take your acquired skills and use them."
- One conclusion of one of the longest known studies from Harvard is that "when it comes to how we fare in the marathon of life, effort counts tremendously."
- Perseverance is one quality, another is being able to go back to a difficult task that you may have given up on.
- Not going back to something kills your skill development and you stop getting better. Going back and trying again to accomplish the task improves your skills.
- "Talent you have naturally. Skill is only developed by hours and hours and hours of beating on your craft."
- "With effort, talent becomes skill and, at the very same time, effort makes skill productive."

### CHAPTER 4: How Gritty Are You?

**KEY QUOTE:** *"Grit is about working on something you care about so much you're willing to stay loyal to it."*

- Find out your grittiness: Take the GRIT scale: <https://angeladuckworth.com/grit-scale/>
- "There are two components to grit: passion and perseverance."
- A grit strategy is to have clear and defined goals. A main or overarching goal that is achieved through the accomplishment of micro-goals.

### CHAPTER 4: Continued.....How Gritty Are You?

- Grit is a behavior exemplified by maintaining the same overarching goal for a long time.
- Goals come with conflict and disappointment. Driving past these emotions and keeping your eye on the outcome demonstrate grit.
- The Green Berets have a motto that demonstrates grit behavior: "improvise, adapt, overcome."
- Managing the levels of goals in order to achieve the main goal is a necessary evil. There are unforeseen obstacles and sometimes goals at the micro level need to be abandoned. That is not failure, it is the realization that in order to achieve the expected outcome there will be failure and you need to stop driving towards something that is not working in order to move forward.
- "People with high degrees of persistence combined with intelligence will outperform those with high intelligence and less persistence."

**"Optimistic teachers were grittier and happier, and grit and happiness, in turn, explained why optimistic teachers got their students to achieve more during the school year."**

### CHAPTER 5: Grit Grows

**KEY QUOTE:** *"Over time, we learn life lessons we don't forget, and we adapt in response to the growing demands of our circumstances. Eventually, new ways of thinking and acting become habitual."*

- Your grit level is defined by both your genetics and your experiences.
- Skills are developed based upon experiences
- The environment we grow up in matters.
- Being around gritty people makes you grittier.
- We grit with age.
- Wisdom is gained from experiences, and the more you push past your own limits the more perseverance you grow.
- The gritty are never bored.
- Your generation impacts your grit as does your age.
- There are four psychological assets:
  - Interest
  - Practice
  - Purpose
  - Hope
- "At various points, in big ways and small, we get knocked down. If we stay down, grit loses. If we get up, grit wins."

### CHAPTER 6: Interest

**KEY QUOTE:** *"Overbearing parents and teachers erode intrinsic motivation. Kids whose parents let them make their own choices about what they like are more likely to develop interests later identified as passions."*

- People enjoy greater levels of satisfaction in their work if it aligns with their interests.
- Never give up looking for your passions.
- "Passion for your work is a little bit of discovery, followed by a lot of development, and then a lifetime of deepening."
- Middle school is when children historically begin to gravitate towards their career interests.
- Interests are developed by "interactions with the outside world." Life experiences drive interest.

**Model Grit! "Children have never been very good at listening to their elders, but they have never failed to imitate them."**

## Chapter Review

### CHAPTER 6: Continued.....Interest

- Interests grow when there is encouragement from all the key people in your life: "parents, teachers, coaches, relatives and peers."
- Grit is fed by interest; interest is built through encouragement and positive reinforcement.
- Interest is developed by play and experimentation - "triggering and retriggering" the excitement that initially sparked the interest.
- Take risks to develop interest.

### CHAPTER 7: Practice

**KEY QUOTE:** "Students can change the way they think about practice and achievement. Teach them the strategies for deliberate practice."

- Your interests need to be practiced. Not for hours, or days, but weeks and months. Malcolm Gladwell's 10,000 hour rule!
- People who are passionate practice and focus on building their weaknesses.
- The process is:
  - Stretch goal
  - Deliberate practice
  - Reflection
  - Feedback
  - Mastery
- All of our abilities can be broken down into specific components and those components can be practiced.
- Deliberate practice is developing "skills where challenges exceed skill." It is purposely focusing on your weaknesses and practicing the skills in order to grow.
- Gritty people experience "flow." A feeling of effortlessness that occurs during a difficult task. Flow is acquired when your "challenge is in balance with your skills."
- "Flow and grit go hand in hand."

### CHAPTER 8: Purpose

**KEY QUOTE:** "Purpose is a tremendously powerful source of motivation."

- "Purpose is the intention to contribute to the well-being of others."
- "The desire to connect is as basic a human need as our appetite for pleasure."
- Motivation is fueled by a sense of purpose. Motivation is a grit driver.
- A new take on an old measure of purpose: three teachers are asked, 'What are you doing today?'
  1. I'm going to work. (a job)
  2. I'm teaching a class. (a career)
  3. I'm changing the world. (a calling)
- Purpose is the answer to the simple question: Why?
- Find a role model who has great purpose and observe.
- Connect your work to your values.
- Make your work matter to you and others.
- Look for ways to make your work match your interests and increase the purpose of your commitments.

### CHAPTER 9: Hope

**KEY QUOTE:** "Whether you think you can or think you can't - you're right."

- "There is an old Japanese saying: Fall seven, rise eight."
- Perpetual pessimists have a negative mindset in most situations and make mountains out of molehills for routine problems.
- Optimists are continually searching for reasons and solutions - fueling hope.
- Pessimists suffer from more depression and die younger.
- A teacher's level of optimism directly impacts the performance of his/her students.
- Having a growth mindset is a hope driver and grit behavior.
- Hope is encouraged or discouraged by mindset.
- Carol Dweck's work on mindset defines hope behaviors and identifies the strategies to grow optimism and hope.
- When you err, is it an opportunity for improvement in which you model hope or do you fail to grow and see the good in the second chance?

"Exemplars of grit grew up not just imitating their parents but also emulating them."

### CHAPTER 9: Continued....Hope

- Too many coddled young adults lack hope as a result of being perfect in the eyes of so many and having failed to fail in life without the support of a parent. Let them fail, fall and recover.
- "A growth mindset leads to optimistic ways of explaining adversity and that, in turn, leads to perseverance and seeking out new challenges that will ultimately make you even stronger."
- "When seeking to grow your own hope, seek the help and support of others, practice self-talk and look at it from multiple perspectives."
- Use the wisdom of all around you.

### CHAPTER 10: Parenting for Grit

**KEY QUOTE:** "One of the major discoveries of parenting research is that what matters more than the messages parents aim to deliver are the messages their children receive."

- Modeling and expectations are critical.
- Parents need to set the stage and expect the children to be themselves, make their own decisions and demonstrate grit.
- Tough love.
- "Children must be loved and accepted, but then, without complications, they must be taught."
- Grit families put family first and focused on the children.
- "As much as children need freedom, they also need limits."
- Supportive + Demanding = Wise Parenting
- It is instinctive for a child to imitate their parents.
- "When our parents are loving, respectful and demanding, we not only follow their example, we revere it."
- Not all paragons of grit have great parents, but they do have one person in their life who models grit and many times that is a teacher.
- Teacher feedback and encouragement increases student achievement and grows grit.

### CHAPTER 11: The Playing Fields of Grit

**KEY QUOTE:** "Kids who spend more than a year in an extracurricular are significantly more likely to graduate from college and, as young adults, to volunteer in their communities."

- Students who follow through and demonstrate commitment are more likely to demonstrate indicators of success later in life.
- Teachers who were committed to extracurricular activities in college are more likely to demonstrate grit in their career and stay in teaching.
- Children in poverty need a decent childhood in order to find success.
- You can learn to be industrious.
- High standards and follow through on expectations builds grit character.
- The "Hard Thing Rule" and steps for your family:
  1. Everyone in the family has to commit to do one hard thing.
  2. You can quit, only after the season or commitment is completed.
  3. You get to pick whatever the hard thing is you're going to do.
- Every family should practice the rules of the "hard thing."





## CHAPTER 12: A Culture of Grit

**KEY QUOTE:** "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."

- Environment influences your perseverance and grit.
- Birds of a feather flock together and grit begets grit!
- Classrooms, schools and systems can be gritty and cause a expectation of grit behavior.
- The Finnish have a word for grit: *sisu* (see-sue). Roughly translated, it means having "the passion to accomplish a particular top level goal and the perseverance to follow through."
- Finns with *sisu* have the "ability to keep fighting after most people would have quit, and to fight with the will to win." It is a defining trait of Finnish culture.
- Systems, schools, businesses and families can create a culture by identifying, positively reinforcing and expecting gritty characteristics.
  - "We don't quit around here."
  - "We don't give up on kids."
  - "We fight for the best."
  - "We don't whine."
- Grit attitude: "The true joy in life is to be a force of fortune instead of a feverish, selfish little clod of ailments and grievances complaining that the world will not devote itself to making you happy." - George Bernard Shaw

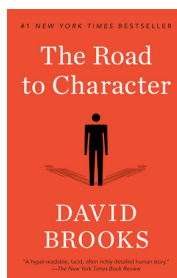
## Conclusion:

- Grit can grow from the inside of you. Find interests, develop habits to challenge yourself and deliberately practice.
- You can grow your grit from the outside if you have the right people in your sphere of influence: "parents, coaches, teachers, bosses, mentors and friends."

## Lessons

Have you:

- Developed strategies to encourage grit?
- Established expectations and followed through on them?
- Created opportunities to reflect upon failure?
- Encouraged a growth mindset?
- Designed deliberate practice routines or processes?
- Modeled grit?



**If you liked Grit, you'd like... The Road to Character!**

[Author Site](#)

### Rating Scale

Classroom	★	★	★	★	★
Leadership	★	★	★	★	★
Motivation	★	★	★	★	★
Parents	★	★	★	★	★
Personal Development	★	★	★	★	★
Schools and Systems	★	★	★	★	★
Teaching	★	★	★	★	★

## Notable and Quotable

**"Following through on commitments both requires grit and builds it."**

## Ted's Take

In a world where it is too often the case that parents feel an overwhelming urge to "save" their children while at the same time there is a growing population of children with no one to save them, GRIT, seems to have fallen from the heavens. Everyone in the "kid" business, at every level, needs to read Duckworth's text. The key strategies and stories make this a quick and applicable way to promote success in everyone. Optimism trumps all other attitudes, behaviors and actions. The lessons from Grit would be a great way to start out a school year or as a study for parents at early elementary. I would encourage school leaders to develop cultures of grit and pull from this summary and the text the key ways to support kids and colleagues on the journey of life.

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## About Ted Neitzke

Ted Neitzke is the Chief Educational Officer and Agency Administrator for CESA 6, a non-profit cooperative that serves 40 public school districts in Wisconsin. Ted is an advocate for children and public education. He believes that everyone in a school is a servant leader. "A leader is anyone who has influence over another person." This, Neitzke believes, "makes all of us leaders." These Smart Summaries are his way of helping pay-it-forward for the leaders in the classrooms and schools. "Not everyone has time to read or search for great texts that will help them develop as learners, leaders or innovators and these briefs help to increase personal intelligence and support the strategies necessary to help leaders in the 21st century educational world. Ted Neitzke has been a superintendent, assistant superintendent, principal, assistant principal, high school and middle school teacher and, while in high school, was an aide in a summer school program for students with significant disabilities. He is the father of two and is married to Megan, a 7th grade teacher in a public school. Ted is the son of a kindergarten teacher and is surrounded by relatives who are leading classrooms and systems.