

## Grit: The Power of Passion and Perseverance by Angela Duckworth

- They not only had determination, they had direction.
- It was this combination of passion and perseverance that made high achievers special. In a word, they had grit.
- So it's surprising, really, that **talent is no guarantee of grit**. In this book, we'll explore the reasons why.
- Our potential is one thing. What we do with it is quite another.
- Apparently, aptitude did not guarantee achievement. Talent for math was different from excelling in math class.
- I'd been distracted by talent.
- "I did feel bad—I did—but I didn't dwell on it. I knew it was done. I knew I had to focus on what to do next. So I went to my teacher and asked for help. I basically tried to figure out, you know, what I did wrong. What I needed to do differently."
- **During the next several years of teaching, I grew less and less convinced that talent was destiny and more and more intrigued by the returns generated by effort.**
- "The plain fact remains that men the world over possess amounts of resource, which only very exceptional individuals push to their extremes of use.
- Americans endorse "being hardworking" nearly five times as often as they endorse intelligence.
- But when Chia probes attitudes more indirectly, she exposes a bias that tips in exactly the opposite direction: we love naturals.
- What we say we care about may not correspond with what—deep down—we actually believe to be more valuable.
- 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. We may not admit to others this bias for naturals; we may not even admit it to ourselves. But the bias is evident in the choices we make.

- Companies that excel are those that aggressively promote the most talented employees while just as aggressively culling the least talented.
- McDonald points out that the companies highlighted in the original McKinsey report as exemplars of their endorsed strategy didn't do so well in the years after that report was published.
- In my 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.**
- **But another conclusion is that the focus on talent distracts us from something that is at least as important, and that is effort.**
- In the next chapter, I'll argue that, as much as talent counts, **effort counts twice.**

### Chapter 3 EFFORT COUNTS TWICE

- "Superlative performance is really a confluence of dozens of small skills or activities, each one learned or stumbled upon, which have been carefully drilled into habit and then are fitted together in a synthesized whole. There is nothing extraordinary or superhuman in any one of those actions; only the fact that they are done consistently and correctly, and all together, produce excellence.
- **"Yes, but the main thing is that greatness is doable. Greatness is many, many individual feats, and each of them is doable."**
- "With everything perfect," Nietzsche wrote, "we do not ask how it came to be." Instead, "we rejoice in the present fact as though it came out of the ground by magic.
- Mythologizing natural talent lets us all off the hook. It lets us relax into the status quo.
- "Stop reading so much and go think."
- A theory takes a blizzard of facts and observations and explains, in the most basic terms, what the heck is going on.
- **Talent is how quickly your skills improve when you invest effort. Achievement is what happens when you take your acquired skills and use 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
  - Talent x Effort = Skill
  - Skill x Effort = Achievement
- *Will Smith: "The only thing that I see that is distinctly different about me is: I'm not afraid to die on a treadmill. I will not be outworked, period. You might have more talent than me, you might be smarter than me, you might be sexier than me. You might be all of those things. You got it on me in nine categories. But if we get on the treadmill together, there's two things: You're getting off first, or I'm going to die. It's really that simple."*
- "I could do more chins than anyone. And it wasn't because I was very athletic—I wasn't. The reason is that I did a lot of chin-ups. I practiced.
- **Staying on the treadmill is one thing, and I do think it's related to staying true to our commitments even when we're not comfortable. But getting back on the treadmill the next day, eager to try again, is in my view even more reflective of grit. Because when you don't come back the next day—when you permanently turn your back on a commitment—your effort plummets to zero. As a consequence, your skills stop improving, and at the same time, you stop producing anything with whatever skills you have.**
- **As any coach or athlete will tell you, consistency of effort over the long run is everything.**
- Many of us, it seems, quit what we start far too early and far too often. **Even more than the effort a gritty person puts in on a single day, what matters is that they wake up the next day, and the next, ready to get on that treadmill and keep going.**
- I was impressed and said so. But I hastened to add that grit is more about stamina than intensity.
- "Grit isn't just working incredibly hard. That's only part of it."
- Grit is about working on something you care about so much that you're willing to stay loyal to it.
- "Right, it's doing what you love, but not just falling in love—staying in love."
- Grit has two components: passion and perseverance.

- Rather than intensity, what comes up again and again in their remarks is the idea of consistency over time.
- **Enthusiasm is common. Endurance is rare.**
- Pete's philosophy is: Do things better than they have ever been done before.
  - "You've got to have a philosophy."
- I'm happy when I pitch well so I only do things that help me be happy.
- Grit is about holding the same top-level goal for a very long time.
- Their goal hierarchy has a top-level goal but no supporting mid-level or low-level goals.
- "Positive fantasizing."
  - First, you write down a list of twenty-five career goals. Second, you do some soul-searching and circle the five highest-priority goals. Just five. Third, you take a good hard look at the twenty goals you didn't circle. These you avoid at all costs. They're what distract you; they eat away time and energy, taking your eye from the goals that matter more.
- **Any successful person has to decide what to do in part by deciding what not to do.**
- "Improvise, adapt, overcome."
- Degree of strength of will or perseverance.
- Tendency not to abandon tasks in the face of obstacles.
- I can tell you with complete conviction that every human trait is influenced by both genes and experience.
- Some of us are born with genes that make it easier to learn to carry a tune, or dunk a basketball, or solve a quadratic equation. But against intuition, talents are not entirely genetic: the rate at which we develop any skill is also, crucially, a function of experience.
- **There's no single gene for grit, or indeed any other psychological trait.**
- Heritability estimates explain why people differ from the average, but they say nothing about the average itself.

- Grit grows as we figure out our life philosophy, learn to dust ourselves off after rejection and disappointment, and learn to tell the difference between low-level goals that should be abandoned quickly and higher-level goals that demand more tenacity.
- Lectures don't have half the effect of consequences.
- To be gritty is to resist complacency.
- **What ripens passion is the conviction that your work matters.**
- **Imperative that you identify your work as both personally interesting and, at the same time, integrally connected to the well-being of others.**
- Hope is a rising-to-the-occasion kind of perseverance.
- **INTEREST**
  - First, research shows that people are enormously more satisfied with their jobs when they do something that fits their personal interests.
  - Second, people perform better at work when what they do interests them.
  - Worldwide, only 13 percent of adults call themselves "engaged" at work.
  - Nobody is interested in everything, and everyone is interested in something.
  - **So matching your job to what captures your attention and imagination is a good idea.**
- If I'm ever invited to give a commencement speech, I'll begin with the advice to foster a passion. And then I'll spend the rest of my time trying to change young minds about how that actually happens.
- Olympic gold medalist swimmer Rowdy Gaines, for example, told me: "When I was a kid, I loved sports. When I got to high school, I went out for football, baseball, basketball, golf, and tennis, in that order, before I went for swimming. I kept plugging away.
- **Barry thinks that what prevents a lot of young people from developing a serious career interest is unrealistic expectations.**
- A related problem, Barry says, is the mythology that falling in love with a career should be sudden and swift:
  - A first encounter with what might eventually lead to a lifelong passion is exactly that—just the opening scene in a much longer, less dramatic narrative.
  - Passion for your work is a little bit of discovery, followed by a lot of development, and then a lifetime of deepening.

- Interests are triggered by interactions with the outside world.
- Without experimenting, you can't figure out which interests will stick, and which won't.
- Paradoxically, the initial discovery of an interest often goes unnoticed by the discoverer. In other words, when you just start to get interested in something, you may not even realize that's what's happening.
- Initial triggering of a new interest must be followed by subsequent encounters that retrigger your attention—again and again and again.
- Nobody works doggedly on something they don't find intrinsically interesting.
- "Just because you love something doesn't mean you'll be great."
- **So, parents, parents-to-be, and non-parents of all ages, I have a message for you: Before hard work comes play.**
- Developing an interest requires time and energy, and yes, some discipline.
- **Longitudinal studies tracking learners confirm that overbearing parents and teachers erode intrinsic motivation.**
- At the start of an endeavor, we need encouragement and freedom to figure out what we enjoy.
- We need small wins. We need applause.
- It's not important that I understand everything. It's important that I listen.
- To be interesting is, literally, to be different. We are, by our natures, neophiles.
- **If you'd like to follow your passion but haven't yet fostered one, you must begin at the beginning: discovery.**
- Ask yourself a few simple questions: What do I like to think about? Where does my mind wander? What do I really care about? What matters most to me? How do I enjoy spending my time? And, in contrast, what do I find absolutely unbearable?
- **As soon as you have even a general direction in mind, you must trigger your nascent interests. Do this by going out into the world and doing something.**

- Begin with the answers you're surest of and build from there. However ill-defined your interests, there are some things you know you'd hate doing for a living, and some things that seem more promising than others. That's a start.
- Don't be afraid to guess. Like it or not, there's a certain amount of trial and error inherent in the process of interest discovery. **Unlike the answers to crossword puzzles, there isn't just one thing you can do that might develop into a passion. There are many. You don't have to find the "right" one, or even the "best" one—just a direction that feels good.** It can also be difficult to know if something will be a good fit until you try it for a while.
- Don't be afraid to erase an answer that isn't working out.
- After discovery comes development.
- Continue to dig.

## Chapter 7 PRACTICE

- I found that grittier kids at the National Spelling Bee practiced more than their less gritty competitors.
- **As a colleague of mine likes to joke: some people get twenty years of experience, while others get one year of experience . . . twenty times in a row.**
- Continuous improvement. It's a persistent desire to do better.
- Unlike most of us, experts are logging thousands upon thousands of hours of what Ericsson calls **deliberate practice**.
- The type of practice mattered tremendously.
- **Deliberate practice predicted advancing to further rounds in final competition far better than any other kind of preparation.**
- If you judge practice by how much it improves your skill, then deliberate practice has no rival.
- **Spellers rated deliberate practice as significantly more effortful, and significantly less enjoyable, than anything else they did to prepare for competition.**
- Flow is performing at high levels of challenge and yet feeling "effortless," like "you don't have to think about it, you're just doing it."

- Gritty people do more deliberate practice and experience more flow.
- **Deliberate practice is a behavior, and flow is an experience.**
- “It’s because I loved swimming. . . . I had a passion for competing, for the result of training, for the feeling of being in shape, for winning, for traveling, for meeting friends. **I hated practice, but I had an overall passion for swimming.**”
- Mindlessly “going through the motions” without improvement—can be its own form of suffering.
- *Grittier kids reported working harder than other kids when doing deliberate practice but, at the same time, said they enjoyed it more than other kids, too.*
- Each of the **basic requirements of deliberate practice** is unremarkable:
  - **A clearly defined stretch goal**
  - **Full concentration and effort**
  - **Immediate and informative feedback**
  - **Repetition with reflection and refinement**
- Which leads to my second suggestion for getting the most out of deliberate practice: **Make it a habit.**
- **By this I mean, figure out when and where you’re most comfortable doing deliberate practice.**
- **Because routines are a godsend when it comes to doing something hard.**
- **When you have a habit of practicing at the same time and in the same place every day, you hardly have to think about getting started. You just do.**
- “What do these creators have in common?” you’ll find the answer right in the title: daily rituals.
- Getting the most out of deliberate practice is to change the way you experience it.
- By the time children enter kindergarten, they begin to notice that their mistakes inspire certain reactions in grown-ups.
- And what’s the lesson we’re teaching? Embarrassment.
- Elena and Deborah ask teachers to model emotion-free mistake making.



## Chapter 8 PURPOSE

- Interest is one source of passion. **Purpose—the intention to contribute to the well-being of others—is another.**
- The more common sequence is to start out with a relatively self-oriented interest, then learn self-disciplined practice, and, finally, integrate that work with an other-centered purpose.
- They're not just goal-oriented; the nature of their goals is special.
- *However they say it, the message is the same: the long days and evenings of toil, the setbacks and disappointments and struggle, the sacrifice—all this is worth it because, ultimately, their efforts pay dividends to other people.*
- At its core, the idea of purpose is the idea that what we do matters to people other than ourselves.
- In my “grit lexicon,” therefore, purpose means “the intention to contribute to the well-being of others.”
- “Eudaimonic”—in harmony with one’s good (eu) inner spirit (daemon)—and the other “hedonic”—aimed at positive, in-the-moment, inherently self-centered experiences.
- Human beings seek pleasure because, by and large, the things that bring us pleasure are those that increase our chances of survival.
- Because the drive to connect with and serve others also promotes survival.
- Pleasure is moderately important no matter how gritty you are.
- Grittier people are dramatically more motivated than others to seek a meaningful, other-centered life.
- Those fortunate people who do see their work as a calling—as opposed to a job or a career—reliably say “my work makes the world a better place.” I agree.
- How you see your work is more important than your job title.
- They don’t realize they need to play an active role in developing and deepening their interests.

- **“A calling is not some fully formed thing that you find.”**
- You can want to be a top dog and, at the same time, be driven to help others.
- Two years later, young people who’d mentioned both self- and other-oriented motives rated their schoolwork as more personally meaningful than classmates who’d named either motive alone.
- Study of purpose:
  - “In data set after data set,” he told me, “there’s a pattern. Everyone has a spark. And that’s the very beginning of purpose. That spark is something you’re interested in.”
- Purpose requires a second revelation: “I personally can make a difference.”
- You never know who will go on to do good or even great things or become the next great influencer in the world—so treat everyone like they are that person.
- I have three recommendations, each borrowed from one of the purpose researchers mentioned in this chapter.
  - Reflecting on how the work you’re already doing can make a positive contribution to society.
  - Recommends thinking about how, in small but meaningful ways, you can change your current work to enhance its connection to your core values.
  - Recommends finding inspiration in a purposeful role model.
- *“Imagine yourself fifteen years from now. What do you think will be most important to you then?”*

## Chapter 9 HOPE

- **There’s an old Japanese saying: Fall seven, rise eight.**
- I not only tried harder, I tried things I hadn’t done before.
- Proved for the first time that it isn’t suffering that leads to hopelessness. It’s suffering you think you can’t control.
- Additional experiments revealed that suffering without control reliably produces symptoms of clinical depression, including changes
- Optimists habitually search for temporary and specific causes of their suffering, whereas pessimists assume permanent and pervasive causes are to blame.

- Pessimists are more likely to suffer from depression and anxiety.
- Optimists outsell pessimists by 20 to 40 percent.
- **How do grit paragons think about setbacks? Overwhelmingly, I've found that they explain events optimistically.**
- Growing body of scientific evidence that happiness wasn't just the consequence of performing well at work, it might also be an important cause.
- When you keep searching for ways to change your situation for the better, you stand a chance of finding them.
- Why, she asked, did one person grow up to be an optimist and another a pessimist?
- Failure as a cue to try harder rather than as confirmation that they lacked the ability to succeed.
- With a growth mindset, you believe you can learn to do better.
- Growth mindset and grit go together.
- KIPP stands for the Knowledge Is Power Program,
- Life is about challenging yourself and learning to do what you couldn't do before.
- Undermines Growth Mindset and Grit:
  - "You're a natural! I love that."
  - "Well, at least you tried!"
  - "Great job! You're so talented!"
  - "This is hard. Don't feel bad if you can't do it."
  - "Maybe this just isn't your strength. Don't worry—you have other things to contribute."
- Promotes Growth Mindset and Grit:
  - "You're a learner! I love that."
  - "That didn't work. Let's talk about how you approached it and what might work better."
  - "Great job! What's one thing that could have been even better?"
  - "This is hard. Don't feel bad if you can't do it yet."
  - "I have high standards. I'm holding you to them because I know we can reach them together."

- “Children have never been very good at listening to their elders, but they have never failed to imitate them.”
- I used to use the word ‘complacency’ to describe the ones who didn’t work out, but the more I reflect on it, the more I realize that’s not quite it. It’s really a belief that ‘I can’t learn anymore. I am what I am. This is how I do things.
- *The lesson was that, when you have setbacks and failures, you can’t overreact to them. You need to step back, analyze them, and learn from them. But you also need to stay optimistic.*
- In other words, what didn’t kill the young rats, when by their own efforts they could control what was happening, made them stronger for life.
- **If you experience adversity—something pretty potent—that you overcome on your own during your youth, you develop a different way of dealing with adversity later on.**
- It’s important that the adversity be pretty potent. Because these brain areas really have to wire together in some fashion, and that doesn’t happen with just minor inconveniences.
- “That’s right. Just telling somebody they can overcome adversity isn’t enough.”
- Rewiring to happen, you have to activate the control circuitry at the same time as those low-level areas.
- “I worry a lot about kids in poverty. They’re getting a lot of helplessness experiences.”
- “Fragile perfects”
  - Very quickly, it becomes clear that these bright and wonderful people know how to succeed but not how to fail.
- 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.
- My first suggestion in that regard is to update your beliefs about intelligence and talent.
- Practice optimistic self-talk.

- If, reading this chapter, you recognize yourself as an extreme pessimist, my advice is to find a cognitive behavioral therapist.
- You can, in fact, modify your self-talk, and you can learn to not let it interfere with you moving toward your goals.
- One final suggestion for teaching yourself hope: Ask for a helping hand.
- ‘Setbacks don’t discourage me for long. I get back on my feet.’

## **Chapter 10 PARENTING FOR GRIT**

- What can I do to encourage grit in the people I care for?
- “My goal was to teach them discipline.”
- There’s going to be times you don’t want to go, but you’ve got to go.
- First and foremost, there’s no either/or trade-off between supportive parenting.
- Demanding parents earned higher grades in school, were more self-reliant, suffered from less anxiety and depression, and were less likely to engage in delinquent behavior.
- “There are always ways to improve it and getting this feedback is a gift.”
- High expectations in conjunction with unflagging support had on students.
- I’m giving you these comments because I have very high expectations and I know that you can reach them.
- You have nothing to lose by trying.
- If I never try, then I have no chance at all.

## **Chapter 11 THE PLAYING FIELDS OF GRIT**

- When kids are playing sports or music or rehearsing for the school play, they’re both challenged and having fun. There’s no other experience in the lives of young people that reliably provides this combination of challenge and intrinsic motivation.

- Here's an example: After a lackluster passing season his junior year of high school football, future NFL Hall of Famer Steve Young went down to the high school woodshop and fashioned a wooden football with tape for laces. In one end, he screwed in an eye hook and used that to latch the football to a weight machine in the high school gym. Then, gripping the ball, he'd move it back and forth in a passing motion, the added resistance developing his forearms and shoulders. His passing yardage doubled the next year.
- **But only for kids who participate in activities for two years rather than one.**
- What other personal qualities matter?
- **One horse did win, and by a long stretch: follow-through.**
- "The follow-through rating involved evidence of purposeful, continuous commitment to certain types of activities (in high school) versus sporadic efforts in diverse areas."
- Bill only hired programmers who finished what they began.
- **Following through on hard things teaches a young person powerful, transferable lessons.**
- *In our family, we live by the Hard Thing Rule.*
  - This brings me to the second part of the Hard Thing Rule: You can quit. But you can't quit until the season is over, the tuition payment is up, or some other "natural" stopping point has arrived.
  - In other words, you can't quit on a day when your teacher yells at you, or you lose a race, or you have to miss a sleepover because of a recital the next morning. **You can't quit on a bad day.**
  - And, finally, the Hard Thing Rule states that **you get to pick your hard thing.**
  - A fourth requirement will be added: each girl must commit to at least one activity, either something new or the piano and viola they've already started, for at least two years.

## Chapter 12 A CULTURE OF GRIT

- "I will tell you that we're looking for great competitors. That's really where it starts. And that's the guys that really have grit. The mindset that they're always going to succeed, that they've got something to prove. They're resilient; they're not going to let setbacks hold them back. They're not going to be deterred, you know, by challenges and hurdles and things. "
- It's that attitude—we really refer to it as grit.

- 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.
- "The real way to become a great swimmer is to join a great team."
- **"That there's a hard way to get grit and an easy way. The hard way is to do it by yourself. The easy way is to use conformity—the basic human drive to fit in—because if you're around a lot of people who are gritty, you're going to act grittier."**
- Believes in getting the better of bad fortune by proving that he can stand worse.
- Thinking of yourself as someone who is able to overcome tremendous adversity often leads to behavior that confirms that self-conception.
- "Failures are going to happen, and how you deal with them may be the most important thing in whether you succeed."
- The credit belongs to the man who is actually in the arena, whose face is marred by dust and sweat and blood; who strives valiantly; who errs, who comes short again and again, because there is no effort without error and shortcoming; but who does actually strive to do the deeds; who knows great enthusiasms, the great devotions; who spends himself in a worthy cause; who at the best knows in the end the triumph of high achievement, and who at the worst, if he fails, at least fails while daring greatly, so that his place shall never be with those cold and timid souls who neither know victory nor defeat.
- The origin of great leadership begins with the respect of the commander for his subordinates.
- But the magic of culture is that one person's grit can provide a model for others.
- **"Success is never final; failure is never fatal. It's courage that counts."**
- Compete means excellence.
  - It doesn't have anything in its origins about another person losing.
- Two key factors promote excellence in individuals and in teams: "deep and rich support and relentless challenge to improve." When he says that, a lightbulb goes on in my head.
- Supportive and demanding parenting is psychologically wise and encourages children to emulate their parents.

- “One thing we really believe in here is the idea of finishing strong.
- Finishing strong means consistently focusing and doing your absolute best at every moment, from start to finish.
- No whining. No complaining. No excuses
- Always protect the team.