

BOOK

Grit: The Power of Passion and Perseverance

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SYNOPSIS/APPLICATION

In a mixture of information and inspiration, Duckworth combines psychological research, anecdotes from sports and business, and life experience to provide practical strategies for accomplishing your life's goals.

QUOTES ABOUT THE IMPORTANCE OF GRIT

"Grit depends on a different kind of hope. It rests on the expectation that our own efforts can improve our future. I have a feeling tomorrow will be better is different from I resolve to make tomorrow better. The hope that gritty people have has nothing to do with luck and everything to do with getting up again."

"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."

"For years, several national surveys have asked: Which is more important to success – talent or effort? Americans are about twice as likely to single out effort. The same is true when you ask Americans about athletic ability. And when asked, 'If you were hiring a new employee, which of the following qualities would you think is most important?' Americans endorse 'being hardworking' nearly five times as often as they endorse."

"Adults who'd earned an MBA, PhD, MD, JD, or another graduate degree were grittier than those who'd only graduated from four-year colleges, who were in turn grittier than those who'd accumulated some college credits but no degree. Interestingly, adults who'd successfully earned degrees from two-year colleges scored slightly higher than graduates of four-year colleges. This puzzled me at first, but I soon learned that the dropout rates at community colleges can be as high as 80 percent. Those who defy the odds are especially gritty."

"Measurements of grit taken months before the final [spelling] competition predicted how well spellers would eventually perform. Put simply, grittier kids went further in competition. How did they do it? By studying many more hours and, also, by competing in more spelling bees."

"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."

QUOTES ABOUT TALENT VS. EFFORT

“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.”

“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.”

“‘Our vanity, our self-love, promotes the cult of the genius,’ Nietzsche said. ‘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.”’ In other words, mythologizing natural talent lets us all off the hook. It lets us relax into the status quo.”

“Talent is how quickly your skills improve when you invest effort. Achievement is what happens when you take your acquired skills and use them.”

QUOTES ABOUT PERSISTANCE

“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.”

“Here’s what science has to say: passion for your work is a little bit of discovery, followed by a lot of development, and then a lifetime of deepening.”

“Across these diverse occupations, grittier adults reported experiencing more flow, not less. In other words, flow and grit go hand in hand.”

“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”

“Make it a habit. By this I mean, figure out when and where you’re most comfortable doing deliberate practice. Once you’ve made your selection, do deliberate practice then and there every day. Why? Because routines are a godsend when it comes to doing something hard. A mountain of research studies, including a few of my own, show that 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.”

“There’s an old Japanese saying: Fall seven, rise eight.”

“A fixed mindset about ability leads to pessimistic explanations of adversity, and that, in turn, leads to both giving up on challenges and avoiding them in the first place. In contrast, 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.”

QUOTES ABOUT MIMICKING GRIT

“There’s a world of difference between imitation and emulation. As we grow older, we develop the capacity to reflect on our actions and pass judgment on what we admire and disdain in others.

“When our parents are loving, respectful, and demanding, we not only follow their example, we revere it. We not only comply with their requests, we understand why they’re making them.”

“Short-term conformity effects are not what excite me about the power of culture to influence grit. Not exactly. What excites me most is the idea that, in the long run, culture has the power to shape our identity. Over time and under the right circumstances, the norms and values of the group to which we belong become our own. We internalize them. We carry them with us. The way we do things around here and why eventually becomes The way I do things and why.”

“The Finns have something they call sisu. It is a compound of bravado and bravery, of ferocity and tenacity, of the ability to keep fighting after most people would have quit, and to fight with the will to win. The Finns translate sisu as “the Finnish spirit” but it is a much more gutful word than that. In the same year, the New York Times ran a feature called “Sisu: A Word That Explains Finland.” A Finn explained his countrymen to the journalist this way: “A typical Finn is an obstinate sort of fellow who believes in getting the better of bad fortune by proving that he can stand worse.”

“You can grow your grit. I see two ways to do so. On your own, you can grow your grit ‘from the inside out’: You can cultivate your interests. You can develop a habit of daily challenge-exceeding-skill practice. You can connect your work to a purpose beyond yourself. And you can learn to hope when all seems lost. You can also grow your grit “from the outside in.” Parents, coaches, teachers, bosses, mentors, friends – developing your personal grit depends critically on other people.”