

GRIT: THE POWER OF PASSION AND PERSEVERANCE

An Executive Book Summary by Lane Bryksa

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Who is Angela Duckworth?

Angela Duckworth is co-founder and CEO of Character Lab, a nonprofit that uses psychological science to help children thrive. Duckworth holds a degree in neuroscience and psychology. She is currently a distinguished professor at the University of Pennsylvania, faculty co-director of the Penn-Wharton Behaviour Change for Good Initiative, and faculty co-director of Wharton People Analytics. Duckworth has received many awards for her contributions to K-12 education and her TED Talk is among the most viewed of all time. Duckworth has a #1 New York Times Best Seller in her book "Grit: The Power of Passion and Perseverance".

Chapter One: "Showing Up"

ANGELA DUCKWORTH

Refusing to quit is one of the most integral parts of "grit". No matter how hard the task at hand may become, a "gritty" person will always continue to push themselves for greatness.

Duckworth shares her experience with the West Point cadets to help solidify this definition of "grit". The cadets have quite the gruelling process in order to be selected as a West Point Cadet. They have the highest marks on their SATs and ACTs and they have endured training to pass their physical requirements.

There is approximately a total of 14,000 applicants to apply for the prestigious opportunity to become a West Point Cadet. Out of all the applicants, there is only about 1,200 of these total applicants that get selected and enrolled in the program. Even with this very tough competition, after these 1,200 are selected, one in five of them are projected to drop out.

To help calculate why this strange phenomenon was happening, Angela Duckworth developed the "grit scale". The scale was designed to rate the level of perseverance and passion of an individual.

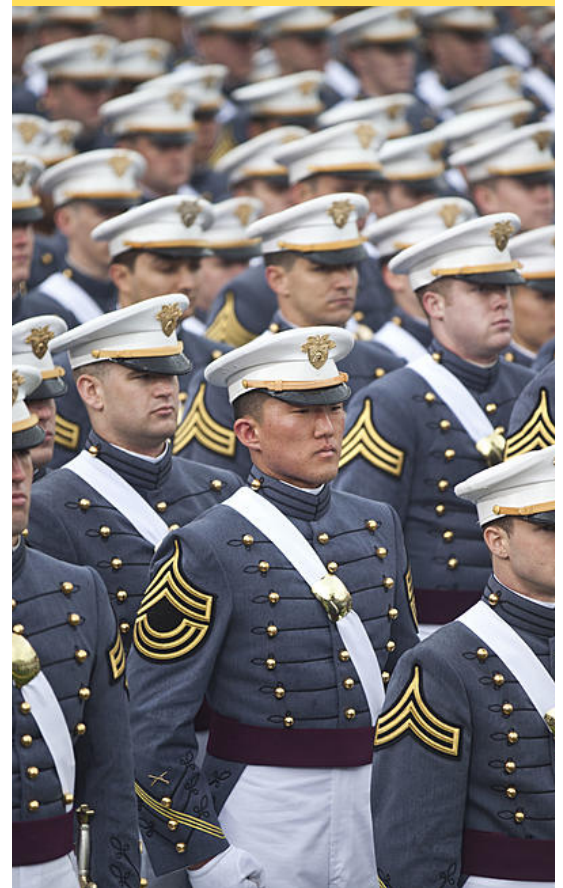
In 2004, the West Point Cadets adopted and implemented Angela's "grit scale" and it was determined those cadets with the "grittiest" answers were the ones to stick around. It was also apparent that those cadets with the least "gritty" answers were often the ones that left the very tough commitment it took to be a part of the program,

"West Point
Cadets"

"Grit Scale"

"Direct
Correlation"

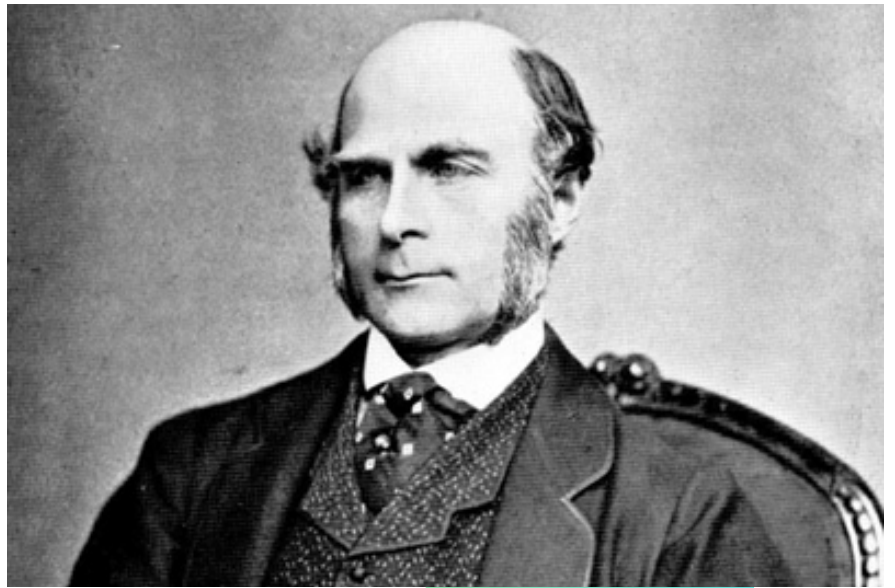
WEST POINT CADETS



"Francis Dalton"

"Striving"

"Inner-city math teacher"



Chapter Two: "Distracted by Talent"

ANGELA DUCKWORTH

Exploring many early literature pieces on what makes people successful, it leads Duckworth to share a paper from 1869. The paper was written by Francis Galton (half cousin to Charles Darwin) and mainly discussed the main characteristics of high achievers. Some of these characteristics included ability, zeal and capacity for hard labour.

Duckworth's main point in sharing these early writings was that this idea of "grit" really was not new at all. Instead, we have focused more on the gifted or talented, rather than the people that strived for greatness.

Angela first noticed the importance of striving when she left her job at a global consulting firm to teach math to inner-city students. Angela began to see that students that were less naturally gifted with math, were achieving higher grades. She began to wonder why this was the case and began to study this. What she was able to determine was that the students who were high achieving, showed up every day, stayed focused, and prepared. If the students did not understand something at first, they kept on trying or sought help until they got it.



Chapter Three: "Effort Counts Twice"

ANGELA DUCKWORTH

Duckworth believes that we have a subconscious bias that favours talent and intellect. By using these attributes as a predecessor to success, we are under looking the significance of effort. With this underemphasis of effort, we also don't value a bunch of other small ordinary skills that can result in success.

Duckworth examines a study of competitive swimmers by Dan Chambliss. After six years of evaluating these swimmers, Chambliss was able to come to the conclusion that all these swimmers had means and access to swimming pools and coaches. Aside from these huge qualities, these swimmers also had one other attribute that lead to them being so successful and this was the thousands of hours that these swimmers spent practicing.

This lead Duckworth to the notion that aside from a few physical attributes that made these swimmers extraordinary at their sport, anyone that had "grit" could have the potential to achieve greatness.

Effort is ultimately something that not only builds a skill, but it also makes that skill more productive. In the case of the swimmers, their effort over the six year study helped them develop their natural skill. Also, that effort has made their natural skill way more productive.

"Underlook"

"Dan
Chambliss"

"Effort & Skill
Development"

COMPETTIVE SWIMMERS



"Hard work
does not equal
grit"

"Sample Grit
Scale
Questions"

"Perseverance
& Passion"

Chapter Four: "How Gritty Are You?"

ANGELA DUCKWORTH

Grit cannot just be confused with working hard on developing a skill or working on a project. It is about stamina. We need to understand that there are no short cuts to achieving excellence.

In order to become "gritty" with something involving business, academia, a profession, etc. a person must first fall in love with it and completely commit yourself to becoming better at it. A person must also stay in love with it. You cannot commit yourself to something for a year and expect to be the best, you have to understand and embrace the ups and downs of whatever you are trying to achieve.

During this chapter, Duckworth also manages to give readers a sample of her "grit scale" where she asks us to rate the following statements by a number of one to five:

"New ideas and projects sometimes distract me from previous ones"

"I am a hard worker"

"I have overcome setbacks to conquer an important challenge"

Duckworth introduces the idea of understanding our own beliefs of the two components of "grit" with passion and perseverance. She shares that most of us usually score higher on the perseverance questions. Duckworth goes on to explain that you cannot have perseverance without also having some passion.

I do not mind difficulties, as long as they are new difficulties.

~ Ruskin Bond

WISEFAMOUSQUOTES.COM

Chapter Five: "Grit Grows"

ANGELA DUCKWORTH

Naturally, every single human inherits traits from their parents that ultimately will lead to a certain skill set. With those skills, nurture and love is needed in order for those natural traits to be developed.

To help understand how these traits develop in humans, scientists have been studying fraternal twins for years. They have been using many different studies to help determine how these traits are inherited from generation to generation.

Duckworth's "grit scale" was used in a study with more than 2,000 pairs of teenage twins from the United Kingdom. Based on the results from the research, Duckworth was able to conclude that "grit" was mainly developed due to experience and wasn't an inheritable trait. This means that essentially everyone has the opportunity to develop "grit".

Duckworth also shares that age is also not a limiting factor. People generally become more caring, confident, conscientious, and calm with life experience. So it can be said that once people find a purpose, they can begin their "grit" development. As long as you don't become complacent, you too can develop your "grit".

"Trait inheritance"

"Twins"

"Don't become complacent"



"Great achievers"

"Personal Interests"

"Gallup Poll"



Chapter Six: "Interest"

ANGELA DUCKWORTH

All the great achievers that we know in our life all have one thing in common, passion. These are the people who have found their calling in life and feel as if they never work a day in their life. They may also say how they are absolutely thrilled to wake up every morning and go to their work.

Unfortunately, Duckworth says that many of us are forced or guided in our lives to find a safe and stable job. These jobs do not always fit our personal interests. Duckworth mentions that people who find a job that matches their personal interests are more likely to be motivated or satisfied within their occupation. For example, people who love dealing with people may not be best suited with a safe and well paying office job.

According to a 2014 "Gallup Poll" two-thirds of adults are missing the interest part of their jobs. As Duckworth mentions, a critical part of developing "grit" is that a person has to be interested. People may often feel caught in a rut because they are too far into a profession and it isn't immediately obvious what our passions are.



Chapter Seven: "Practice"

ANGELA DUCKWORTH

Duckworth shares that whether you are a PGA golfer, or national spelling bee winner, generally speaking those types of people stick with their passions longer than others.

However, Duckworth mentions that it is not only the hard work and perseverance of those people that help them achieve greatness. We all know people who partake in a task for a long period of time, yet still continue to be mediocre. Take for an example a recreation hockey player. Although a hockey player might play hockey for many years, this doesn't mean that naturally they will get better. The determining factor in creating "grit" in a person, is the desire to always get better.

Duckworth shares the Japanese term "kaizen" to help further her point. It basically means "continuous improvement". Successful people have a never ending positive desire to want to better themselves.

If one is trying to better themselves, the trick is to not just log long hours. The hours that are being logged need to be deliberate and purposeful. A person can develop by setting goals and keeping track of their particular performance.

KAI ZEN
改善
Change for Good

"Desire"

"Kaizen"

"Goal Setting"



"Alex Grit"

"Lemonade"

"Three Stages to Grit"

The Early Years
Interest is sparked

The Early Years
Focused Practice

The Later Years
Purpose in world

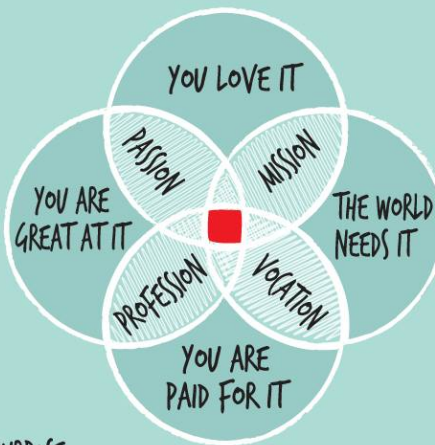
Chapter Eight: "Purpose"

ANGELA DUCKWORTH

Duckworth says that purpose is the second part of passion. Purpose means doing something with intent and with the idea that it is to help others.

Duckworth shares the story of Alex Grit as someone who had purpose in her journey. Alex was diagnosed with neuroblastoma at a young age and she spent her childhood in and out of hospitals. She had a dream of creating a lemonade stand when she was out of the hospital to help other sick kids. To her credit, she started her lemonade stand and was able to raise over \$2,000 the first year. To date her lemonade stands have now raised over \$100 million dollars.

Duckworth shares that Alex had "grit" through her story and explains developing "grit" as happening in three phases. The "early years" is when an interest is sparked. The "middle years" is when they focus on a particular practice. Finally, the "later years" is when "gritty" people have now discovered a purpose or a meaning. The last stage generally is when people have developed a sense that their role is somehow beneficial to the world.



■ -PURPOSE

**FALL
DOWN
SEVEN
TIMES**



**STAND
UP EIGHT**

Chapter Nine: "Hope"

ANGELA DUCKWORTH

In order for a person to have "grit" they must inherently believe that their own contributions can one day improve the future. In other words, a person must have a belief that tomorrow will be better. Duckworth introduces the Japanese proverb "Fall seven, rise eight" to help depict this.

Opposite of the hopeful "gritty" person, pessimists will often believe that things will never get better. People with this type of mindset will turn minor setbacks into huge problems.

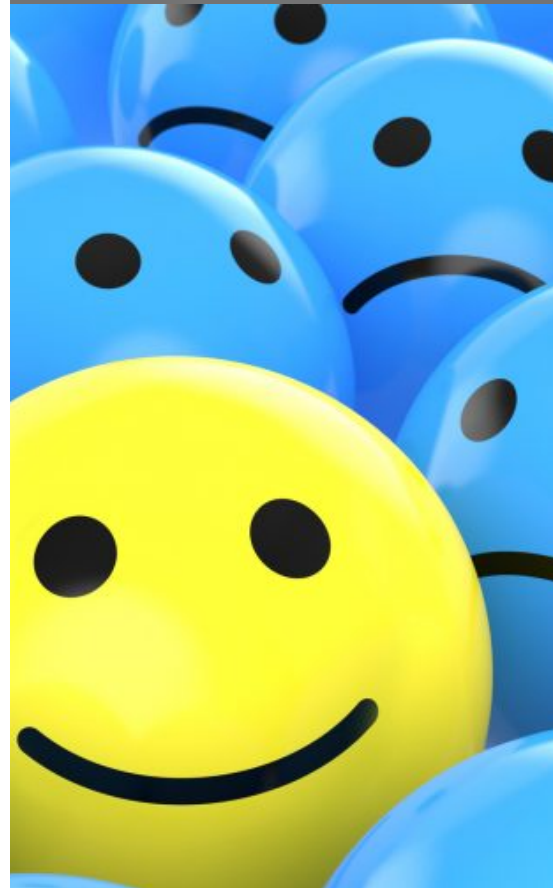
The "gritty" hopeful person will say things like "I mismanaged my time" or "I didn't give my best effort". By doing this, they are helping assess the situation and figure out why they were not successful. They have also painted the picture that the reasons why they were not successful can be fixed, The problem was a temporary fallback that can be surmounted.

It is important for one to carry a sense of optimism as it is an essential component to the perseverance part of "grit".

"Fall seven,
rise eight"

"Pessimist"

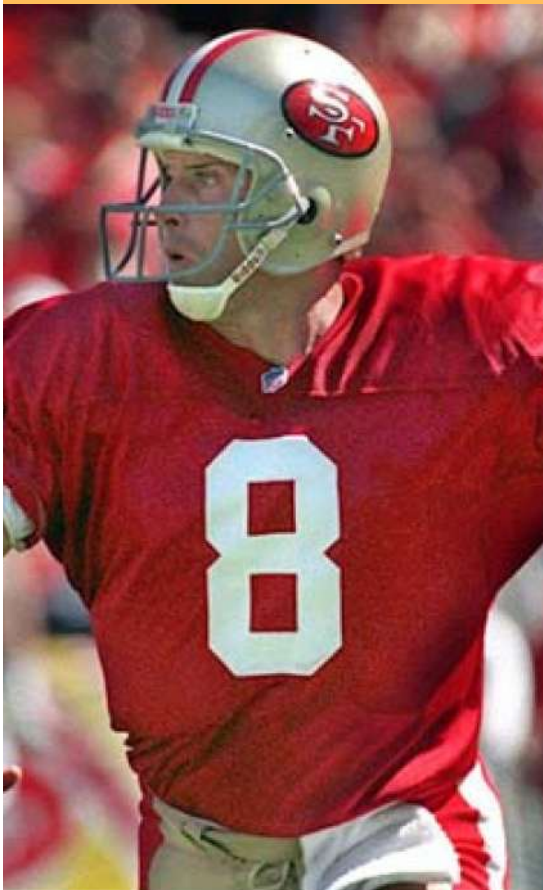
"Optimism is
essential"



"Parents
Role"

"Steve Young"

"Good Habits"



Chapter Ten: "Parenting for Grit"

ANGELA DUCKWORTH

Duckworth shares that it may seem that "grit" can only be developed through our internal growth as we become more experienced in life. In fact, Duckworth says that parents can play a vital role at the initial development of "grit" in their children.

Families have the unique opportunity to instill such values as interest, hope, purpose and practice. Duckworth communicates this message through the story of San Francisco 49er quarterback Steve Young who credits his success to his father and mother who would never let him give up.

It was during Steve Young's college days where Steve wanted to leave college. The main reason was for his struggles at the quarterback position, a position in which he had seen so much success that ultimately lead him to being recruited. When Steve told his father he wanted to quit, he got a shocking message in return. His dad told him that if he was going to quit college, that he was not going to be welcome to come back and live with his family at home.

Steve's father may have come across quite aggressive, but he raised his children with the same standards that he lived in his own life. His belief was that you finish what you start and to Steve's fortune, Steve took his fathers advice and ended up making a career in the National Football League. Steve's dad uniquely and without coddling has demonstrated a supportive parenting tactic that allowed him to be in tune with his child's needs. In order to develop "grit", parents need to guide their children's success. Allowing children to give up is reinforcing and could create a negative habit which could impact a person for the duration of their life.



Chapter Eleven: "The Playing Fields of Grit"

ANGELA DUCKWORTH

It is important for all people to understand that "grit" is greatly enhanced in those children who participate in extra-curricular activities. It is important that the extra-curricular be somewhat supportive and demanding of expectations for a child. These extracurriculars can be anything from sport, arts, to working on the school yearbook. Anything that requires commitment and practice.

Duckworth shared that all her studies was the reason why she signed up her daughter for ballet classes. Activities like the one she signed her daughter up for create the opportunity to develop interest, practice, purpose, and hope. Associated with these extracurriculars is the positive aspects such as better grades, self-esteem, and good-behaviour.

Any parent that has the opportunity should sign their child up for an extracurricular as soon as they are of the appropriate age.

"Enhance
grit"

"Daughter in
Ballet"

"Positive
Aspects"



"Surrounded
by Grit"

"Seahawks"

"Contagious"

Recipe for Team Grit:

- Contagious optimism
- Connected relationships
- Commitment to each other
- Caring and sacrifice
- A bigger purpose

Chapter Twelve: "Culture of Grit"

ANGELA DUCKWORTH

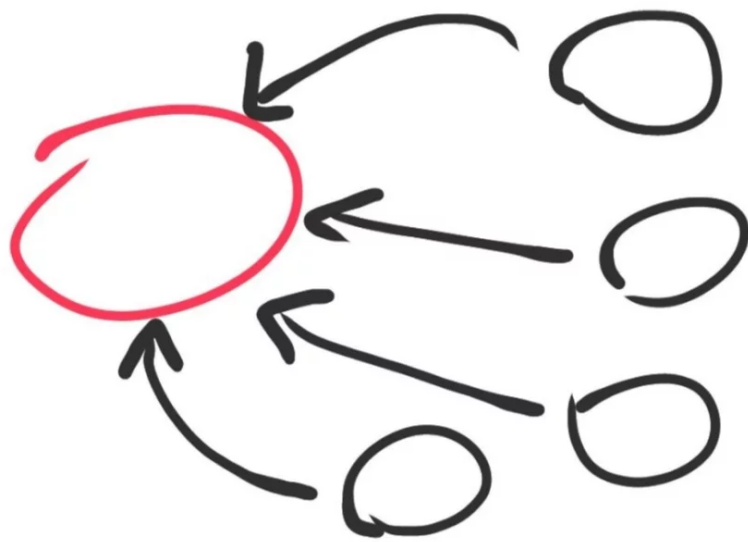


Duckworth says that the people which we surround ourselves with ultimately impact our "grittiness". If you surround yourselves with people who often give up when the going gets tough, you most likely will end up that way as well.

Duckworth shares the story of the Seattle Seahawks and Head Coach Pete Carroll. Carroll has deliberately gone out and set standards to build a culture of "grit" within his locker room. The coach believes that if he can build this trait amongst his players, it will be a bit of a snowball effect and ultimately create a very determined football club.

This is the same for businesses, schools, etc. If you are looking to build your own "grit", find a culture where everyone drives one another and everyone is working towards becoming a great competitor.

Conversely, the hardest way to build "grit" is by yourself. "Grittiness" is contagious.



CONCLUSION

LANE BRYKSA

Our lives have been so set on trying to achieve or be recognized through natural talent in which many of us feel as if we are failures because we do not have these traits.

Over the course of a lifetime we can use our passion and perseverance as stepping stones to achieve life-long goals. By focusing on our interests, deliberate practice and our commitment to a higher purpose, our individual "grit" can flourish. We can utilize our parents, friends, coaches, teammates, to help foster our "grit" extrinsically. By surrounding ourselves with people that are like minded and "gritty" we can share our optimism to help cultivate "grit" within others as well.

Although, I have not realized the definitions behind what I have developed through my life with football, this book has opened my eyes. I have made so many connections to my own life by reading this book and I can see the patterns in how my life has become more "gritty". To this day, I believe "grit" is a trait that will make people successful and I hope that I can help foster a culture of "grit" in the schools that I will be working in.

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

-Angela Duckworth

