

GRIT

Five Minutes To Thrive

Growing up in Minnesota, in the shadow the 3M World Headquarters – if I thought of **grit** at all, it would have been in reference to sandpaper, 3M’s chief product.

I’m not an abrasives expert, but I know that coarse sandpaper (“grit range” 60-80) is good for rapidly removing large amounts of material, while finer grits (320+) are used for polishing and finishing work. Whether attempting to turn a block of wood into a racecar for my son, or tackle a major life project, I know I’m going to need grit.

But what do sandpaper grit and *psychological* **GRIT** have in common? What can we learn from research on GRIT?

Psychologist Angela Duckworth coined the term GRIT referring to an individual’s:

- (1) **perseverance** combined with
- (2) **passion** for a particular long-term goal

GRIT can be thought of as “stamina to stay the course”. It is strongly correlated with **conscientiousness**, a well-established, **heritable** personality trait that is related to work accomplishment independent of one’s talents or abilities. Perhaps unsurprisingly, studies show that **GRIT and conscientiousness have almost no relationship to intelligence** (I.Q.), one of the best predictors of success.

Critics say GRIT is not a novel concept, and does not predict future success better than conscientiousness. GRIT proponents have been criticized for downplaying environmental obstacles that some students face (e.g. poverty, racism, ineffective teaching). Furthermore, research seems to rule out claims that GRIT can be significantly enhanced over short periods of time. However, developers of brain-training apps and GRIT training programs are undeterred – they emphasize the malleability of GRIT and traits like it for financial reasons.

So, how can we maximize the GRIT we’ve got and build it gradually?

- (1) Embrace challenges – do something hard or frustrating every day, purposely
- (2) Practice persistence in the face of setbacks. Improve a little each day
- (3) Don’t see effort as drudgery, but as the path to mastery
- (4) Decide to learn from the critical feedback you receive
- (5) Find inspiration in the success of others – surround yourself with “gritty” people
- (6) Pursue your interests – find projects that fascinate and sustain you

Have a GRIT week!

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