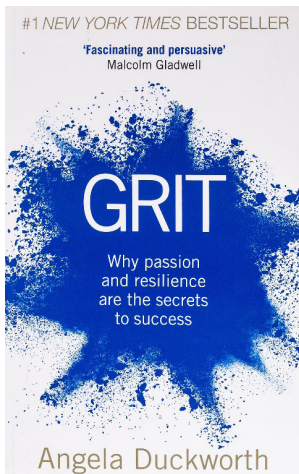


Book Review



Title: Grit: Why Passion and Resilience are the Secrets to Success

Author: Angela Duckworth

Publisher: Penguin Random House, U.K.

Year: 2017

Number of Pages: 333

Reviewed by: Aishath Nasheeda

In a time where the construct of success evolved around talent and innate abilities, Angela Duckworth challenged the world with her book, *Grit: Why Passion and Resilience are the Secrets to Success*, which describes that success does not prevail from talent. However, it has a lot to do with passion and perseverance. In her book, Duckworth brings a plethora of research she has conducted over the years to understand the meaning of true success.

Duckworth's grit is about "a never giving up" attitude. Grit is about being determined to get going when it is hard and not to lose the sense of direction, and this is possible when we are determined to see it through. In other words, grit is about not giving up but keeping going after failure.

Duckworth takes on the nature versus nurture debate from a developmental perspective, with the simple formula: Talent x effort = skills, Skills x effort = achievement. In other words, effort matters most when it comes to success. This debunks the ideology that talent and IQ is the key to success. Duckworth brings in research after research to prove her hypothesis that passion and perseverance make up grit.

Her grit scale allows readers to reflect on their grit level. The scale is based on 5 points, 5 being extremely gritty, and the lowest score 1 being not at all gritty. The questions on the grit scale measure readers' ability to follow through on projects that they have started to conquer setbacks and challenges. What is crucial is that the level of grit one has at one point is subject to change with time and circumstances, proving that grit is not fixed but highly plastic.

On the same note, Duckworth highlights the difference between a gritty person and someone without grit is their life's compass and which helps them to stay focused without losing the sense of direction. For example, if a person is asked about their life's philosophy or what they want to achieve or accomplish? In grit terms, it is asking about their passion. Hence, gritty people find this easier to answer while others stumble on words. Hence, goals in life are what make the difference in terms of becoming gritty.

The book describes three different levels of goals; low, middle, and top-level. Low- and mid-level goals are the concrete and specific goals known as short term to-do lists that mold the individual to reach the top-level goal. Thus, grit is about holding the top-level goal for a more extended period - till one has achieved it. Therefore, goals are the building blocks that provide structure for gritty individuals.

Duckworth's grit conceptualizes four psychological assets developed over a lifetime. We can all strive to have it by cultivating a sense of purpose and meaning by modeling a growth mindset. First comes interest, which is generated simply by enjoying what we do – "I love what I do". Then comes deliberate practice, by devoting time to improve at what we do. The third asset is finding purpose in what we love to do. The sense of purpose is drawn from the motivation to serve others – "my work is important- both to me and others". The final asset is hope, which is not defined as the last stage but is found in every stage, as it is vital in learning to keep going in times of adversity. Hence, a positive mindset leads to optimistic ways of justifying adversity so individuals can persevere through new challenges and move forward with strong convictions.

While parenting for grit is an important chapter, for Duckworth, this chapter is still incomplete as her research with parents was not on grit but parenting. However, she debunks the misunderstanding of "tough love" and proposes that parents can strike a balance between affection and expectations. Furthermore, to encourage grit in children, parents need to adopt a child-centered approach by focusing on the child's interests and hard work and drawing lines on when children can give up on tasks. Similarly, anyone in a child's life can help the child to develop grit. All they need is to make a difference in their life by caring for the individual, knowing what is going on in their life and helping them through that.

All in all, Duckworth's grit is an interesting book for those looking for motivation, inspiration and seeking to become successful. While success looks

effortless and triumphant, behind the joy is hours of a deliberate effort to achieve a goal that was made at its highest level. Besides, grit is not the only aspect, but other traits such as interpersonal, intrapersonal and intellectual dimensions are also important.

“To be gritty is to keep putting one foot in front of the other. To be gritty is to hold fast to an interesting and purposeful goal. To be gritty is to invest, day after week after year, in challenging practice. To be gritty is to fall down seven times and rise eight” (p275).

Reference

Duckworth, A. (2017). *Grit: Why passion and resilience are the secrets to success*. UK: Penguin Random House.