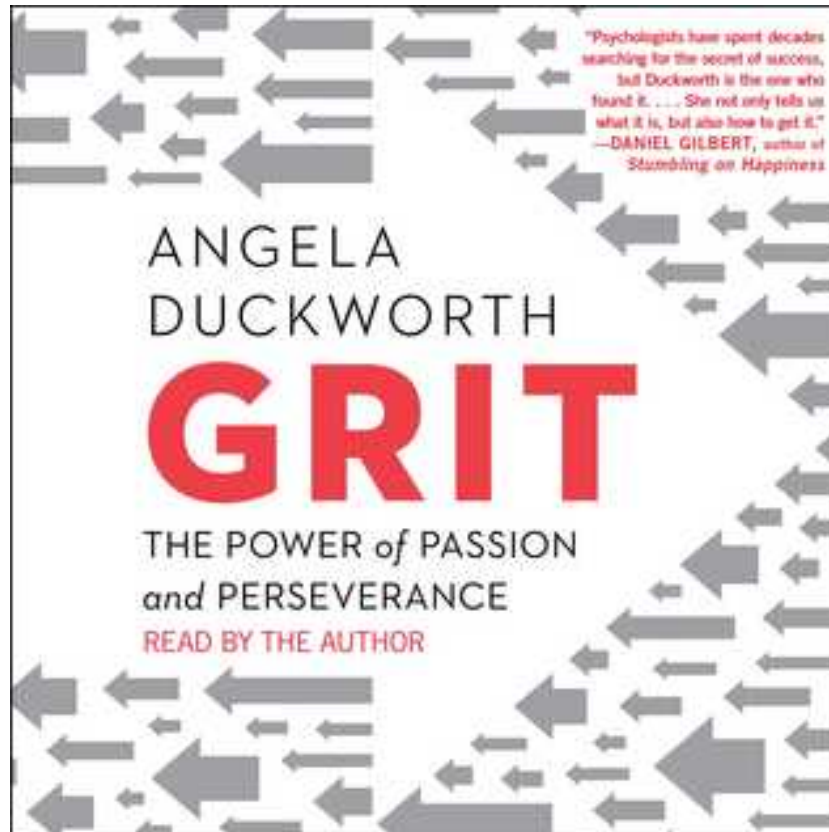


Grit: Passion, Perseverance, and the Science of Success Book PDF Download



By:
Angela Duckworth

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What people Say:

Elliot

I've been a fan of Dr. Duckworth and her research since long before she became famous, so it's hard to overstate my disappointment with this title. The fundamental problem with the book is that instead of writing a popularization aimed at the intellectual/policy market, she decided to cash out with a different type of book aimed at the (larger) self-help/business market. The problem with this approach is that the self-help market doesn't want to learn about limits: they want the secret to success

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At one point, Duckworth tells the story of a waitress who rolled up her sleeves and learned to work every job in the restaurant as needed and got promoted to general manager of the restaurant and now runs a Fortune 500 company. I can tell another story, where a waitress learned to work every job in the restaurant, but management gave the general manager job to the son of the regional vice president. Or the economy went south and the restaurant closed. Or she couldn't give the job anywhere near 100% because her child developed cancer. Or any of the multitude of shitty things that happen in life that are totally beyond any individual's control.

There's no room for my waitress in Duckworth's universe. Duckworth silently defines her out of existence. But in the real world, there are a lot more copies of my waitress than of Duckworth's.

Of course, Duckworth never outright *says* that grit has unlimited power to produce success, or that my waitress's failure to become a Fortune 500 CEO is her own fault. In fact, Duckworth explicitly denies it. But the book is written in such a way that grit without success is presented only as a theoretical possibility, to be noted and then ignored. The message ends up being that anyone can achieve unlimited success by demonstrating enough grit, and if it doesn't work then all you need to do is demonstrate even more grit. Which is exactly what the self-help/business audience wants to hear: people have unlimited power to pull themselves up by their bootstraps, and the people who are at the top of society because they are just better people.

The explicitly-denied-but-much-more-strongly-implied apologia for an imagined meritocracy is further underlined by her fawning portrayal of James Dimon, the CEO of JP Morgan Chase. Dimon's

predictably self-serving claims about his management style and the corporate culture of JP Morgan Chase are taken at face value, with no interrogation at all.

It's quite unfortunate that Duckworth decided to push the presentation of her research in this direction, because her actual research is very good and a popularization that presented her research in a balanced way could have been excellent.

Andrew

It was hard to pay attention to or stick with because most of the chapters seemed the same.

But perhaps I haven't learned enough grittiness yet.

Brandon

Ultimately, there's not much new in this latest entry in the personal improvement genre. I had high hopes for this book, initially believing that it would have new (to me) insights along the lines of what I found in Carol Dweck's book "Mindset" and Charles Duhigg's "The Power of Habit." Sadly, this book falls quite flat with entirely too much repetition of a singular topic.

If you want a tl;dr version of the book, it comes down to this: don't give up. When you are going through hell, keep going.

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If you want a tl;dr version of the book, it comes down to this: don't give up. When you are going through hell, keep going. If you quit, no one will care, and you will always know.

Two of those quotes aren't mine. One is Churchill, the other is Cmdr. John Collins.

Duckworth presents that as an individual, your future success is less gated by innate talent, and more reliant on your ability to see things through. She puts forth that for an individual to develop grit, they must endeavor to partake in an exercise in which they have interest, can practice, have passion, and hope of doing well.

The singular idea of 'grit' is an interesting one to inspect, but this book ends up feeling like more of a pop psychology exercise in self reflection than anything truly profound. She's clearly very wise on her research, but if you are looking for something that is actionable and likely to cause you to change your behaviors, look elsewhere.

Diane

What a fascinating book! I was surprised at how much I enjoyed this research on how important effort and perseverance is in being successful. Duckworth calls this grit, and has tests for measuring how gritty a person is in his or her projects. Her findings are that "natural talent" is helpful, of course, but

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I've heard about grit research in relation to education, and how grittier students tend to do better in school. But grit applies to more than just getting good grades or how many degrees you can earn -- you can think about it in terms of whatever hobby or career you are passionate about.

Duckworth also talks about gritty people feeling as if they have a core mission or purpose to their life, and I was inspired by this chapter to write my own mission, and it's positively affected how I think about my work. I highly recommend this book to those interested in education, psychology or personal growth.

"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."

Jason

This book may be the first to employ the humblebrag as a rhetorical device. Roughly: "My dad always told me I was no genius. Then I won a MacArthur Fellowship 'Genius Grant' on my research showing that hard work is more crucial to success than genius." It's a little boastful, as are the author's numerous references to her Ivy League education and her consultant work with McKinsey (who apparently only hire based on intellect) and, most of all, her namedropping, but it all works well in supporting

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In the process of developing these claims, Duckworth looks at grit-based success in the military, sports, the country of Finland, and, most of all, in the classroom. The best section of the book looks at graduation commencement speech tropes that encourage young people to "do what [they] love" rather than acknowledging that finding what one loves can be a long process. Her approach is anecdotal much like Malcolm Gladwell's in his various mononymous pop psychology works, and the results are similarly enjoyable. There's also useful advice for teachers and parents on how to encourage grit and growth mindsets in children although it does occasionally veer uncomfortably close to Tiger Mom authoritarianism (Note: I'm not referencing Duckworth's Chinese lineage here; she herself invokes Amy Chua at one point in the book).

I do have one gripe with methodology, but I'll allow that this is likely addressed in Duckworth's more academic publications (I'm a lowly state university educated plebeian, after all). In summarizing her findings that predictions of academic success based on talent are less reliable than her own grit scale, she repeatedly uses high school grades and SAT scores to quantify talent, which again is less important to success than resilience and passion. I get it, but I'm not sure that grades and scores aren't themselves potentially measurements of grit rather than talent. Certainly, many people achieve high SAT and ACT scores and great GPAs after working hard, taking practice tests, meeting with private tutors, etc. There's nothing here explaining how this is reconciled, which to me leaves a bit of hole, but it doesn't diminish what is otherwise an informative and enjoyable book.