

DO YOU HAVE THE SECRET INGREDIENT OF SUCCESS - GRIT?

Associate Professor Angela Duckworth at the University of Pennsylvania has found highly successful people have a kind of ferocious determination that plays out in two ways: they are unusually resilient and hardworking and they know in a very, very deep way what they want. It's their combination of passion and perseverance that makes them high achievers. In a word they have "grit".

She argues that while talent absolutely matters, it is the effort we make to improve these skills and the effort we make to use these skills productively that shapes our achievements. Without effort, our talents are nothing more than what we could have done, but didn't.

Unfortunately, while enthusiasm is common, endurance is rare. We quit because we're bored, we think the effort isn't worth it, we decide it isn't important enough to us or believe we can't do it so we might as well give up.

Paragons of grit have four things in common;

Passion- while "follow your passion" is a popular theme of advice most of us have no idea where to start. The initial triggering of a new interest must be followed by subsequent encounters that retrigger your attention – again and again. Interest thrives when there is a crew of encouraging supporters (**People**) including parents, teachers, coaches, and peers who provide ongoing stimulation, information and positive feedback.

Duckworth suggests asking a few questions: What do I like to think about? Where does my mind wander? What do I really care about? What matters most to me? How do I enjoy spending my time? And, in contrast, what do I find absolutely unbearable?

Practice - part of perseverance is the constant discipline of trying to do things better. To be gritty is to resist complacency through deliberate practice – the daily effort to set stretch goals for specific skills, to strive to reach this goal, to get immediate and informative feedback on our effort, and to keep trying until we master it. While this experience can be frustrating, uncomfortable and painful, it can also be extremely positive as you see yourself getting better and better.

Purpose - Interest without purpose is nearly impossible to sustain. While most people start out with a relatively self-orientated interest, as they learn self-disciplined practice, they start to appreciate how what they're doing might benefit others. Duckworth suggests that grittier people are dramatically more motivated than others to seek a meaningful, other-centred life. Bill Damon at Stamford suggests purpose is a final answer to the question "Why? Why are you doing this?"

Hope – is a rising-to-the-occasion kind of perseverance so we keep going even when things are difficult, even when we have doubts, even when we get knocked down. Hope is what allows grit to prevail at every step.