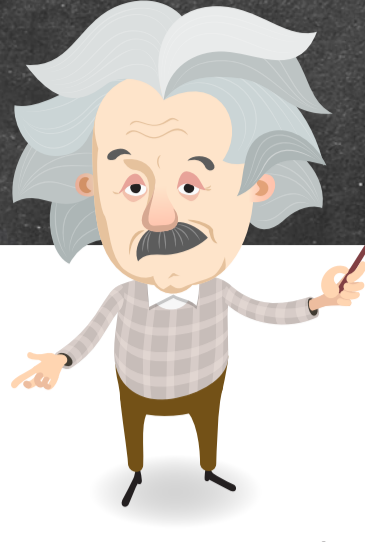
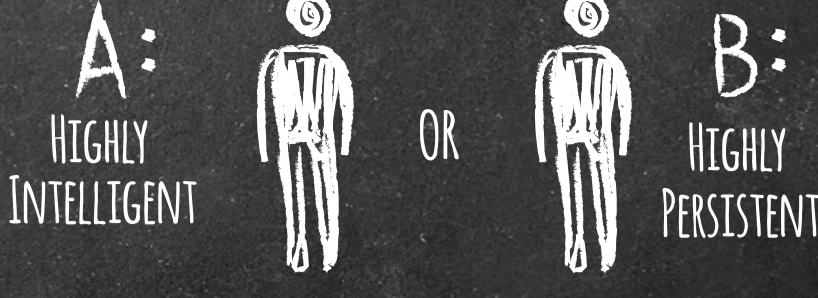


"It's not that I'm so smart, it's just that I stay with problems longer."
- Albert Einstein

IMAGINE THAT YOU HAVE TWO CANDIDATES FOR A JOB

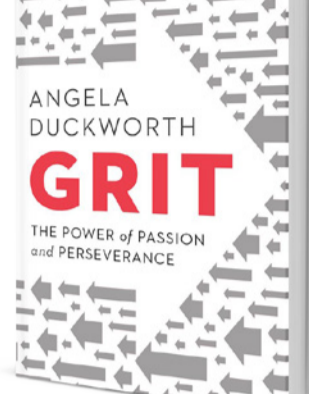


If you know nothing else about either candidate, whom would you select?

An increasing body of evidence suggests that you'd be better off with candidate B. Obviously we trust that you'll find out a lot more about both candidates before making a decision. But there's a strong case to be made for prioritizing persistence as a hire-worthy quality.

You don't have to take our word for it.

Angela Duckworth, PhD, penned a bestselling book on the topic: *Grit: The Power of Passion and Perseverance*. The MacArthur fellow knows her stuff. She posits—and backs up—the notion that talent and intelligence aren't necessarily predictors of success, and that people with "grit" are poised to outperform their better-on-paper counterparts.



"We have to be willing to fail, to be wrong, to start over again with lessons learned."

- ANGELA LEE DUCKWORTH

TED

Grit might be described as stick-to-it-iveness, passion, persistence, perseverance. You might recognize it as simply effort.

According to Duckworth, talent (and we're including "intelligence" in the "talent" bucket) is fine, but it's useless on its own.

Consider these equations:

TALENT x EFFORT = SKILL

SKILL x EFFORT = ACHIEVEMENT

So talent doesn't equal achievement.
Skill doesn't equal achievement.

But throw effort into the mix, and you've got a recipe for success. And Duckworth believes that effort is such a powerful force that it can go a long way to compensating for less-than-optimal levels of talent.

Gritty people work hard. They won't bail when the going gets tough. Gritty people are willing to, as Einstein said in the opening quote, stay with a problem longer. Gritty people don't assume that things are going to be easy, so they don't get discouraged if there's a setback. There's a certain humility inherent in grit—and a whole lot of productivity.

If you're thinking, "This sounds like the kind of person I want on my team," you're probably right. You might also be thinking that this is the kind of person you want to be.

Some people are simply born gritty. You can probably think of someone who fits this description. Perhaps he or she has been knocked down and keeps getting back up and pushing further, overcoming obstacles and defying the odds. These are the bootstrappers, the hustlers, and the grinders. These are the folks you want on your side in the Zombie apocalypse—or the end-of-fiscal-year crunch.

NO MATTER HOW YOU FEEL GET UP DRESS UP SHOW UP AND NEVER GIVE UP



But what about those of us for whom grit isn't a default setting?

Don't despair. Duckworth says that grit can be learned. That means you can cultivate it in yourself. It also means that you can cultivate grit in employees who have potential but might need the extra push. (Hint: If you have an existing employee who isn't naturally gritty but is serious about wanting to develop grit, that's probably someone who is worthy of your investment. If you have a talented slacker with no interest in developing grit, we hope we don't have to tell you what to do with him or her.)

Ready to develop grit?

Duckworth breaks grit into four central components:



For starters, it'll be a lot more difficult to develop grit if you're apathetic about everything. You need to care. Passion can't be faked. If you're trying to be grittier at work, you don't necessarily have to be passionate about every aspect of your job, **but you do need to find something that sparks your interest.**

Once interest is in place, **practice** comes into play. Grit isn't a one-time act. By definition, it's a long-term commitment. It's about **constantly challenging yourself to achieve goals, and when you hit a goal, you raise the bar higher.**

This practice is exhausting and very difficult to commit to unless you have an overarching sense of purpose driving your actions. What's it all for? If you're trying to develop grit in order to train for a 5K, ask yourself: Is the 5K really your primary purpose? Or is it about getting healthier so you can chase after your kids and be alive to meet your grandchildren? **A strong sense of purpose can keep you on track—and get you back on track if you slip.**

Finally, Duckworth says grittiness requires that you maintain a sense of hope. **Hope is why gritty people can get knocked down and get back up again.** Hope is why gritty people can persist even when the payoff isn't immediately evident.

Next steps:

If you're really interested in developing grit, we recommend taking two steps right away:

First, find out where you're starting from.

In her book, Duckworth details an assessment that reveals where you stand on her grit scale. (You can find the assessment on the Internet.)



Second, find yourself a support network.

Specifically, it can be helpful to find a gritty mentor who will both encourage you and hold you accountable.



YOU MADE IT THROUGH THIS ENTIRE POST. HOW GRITTY OF YOU!

We'll reward you with these three key take-aways:

When hiring, prioritize grittiness.

If you aren't gritty but want to be, you can develop grit.

You can cultivate grit in your employees—but they must be willing participants.



We know a whole lot of gritty people who also happen to be experts in finance for small- and medium-size businesses. Let us know if we can facilitate an introduction.

612-816-6007 or visit owlbookkeepingandcfo.com

Owl Believes Two Things About Small Business Money:

- > It should be stable and secure.
- > There should be more of it.