

**1-Sentence-Summary:** *Grit* describes what creates outstanding achievements, based on science, interviews with high achievers from various fields and the personal history of success of the author, Angela Duckworth, uncovering that achievement isn't reserved for the talented only, but for those with passion and perseverance.

**Read in:** 4 minutes

**Favorite quote from the author:**



When I hear the word grit, I always have the same image in mind immediately. A soldier has to crawl through the mud, barbed wire around him, and due to the heavy rain, he suddenly gets stuck and can't move. But then, in a moment of almost angry defiance, he grits his teeth, pulls his foot out of the mud and crawls onward.

I'm sure it's no coincidence the expression "to grit one's teeth" lends itself to the title of this book, the word as a noun means courage, perseverance and fortitude. Angela Duckworth needs a lot of it herself, coming from a family in which her father often criticized her for her "lack of genius." However, her work in psychology, which led her through Harvard, Oxford and the University of Pennsylvania, making her a 2013 MacArthur "Genius" Fellow – ironic?

No. She just knew that perseverance and passion drive effort, and effort drives achievement. That's *Grit* and that's what you'll learn about today in these 3 lessons:

1. Even though we say hard work is more important than talent, we still believe the opposite deep down.
2. Effort has a much, much bigger impact on achievement than talent.
3. Combine small, low-level, daily goals with a larger vision to stay consistently motivated.

Ready to become that soldier, that person who's willing to go on, long after others have quit? Then let's get gritty!

## Lesson 1: When we say we think hard work trumps talent, we usually just bullshit ourselves.

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If I approached you on the street and said: "We're conducting a study and would like your opinion. What's more important: hard work or talent?" you'd probably say "hard work." It's what you think you believe. It's what you *want* to believe.

And it's also what 66% of people say when they're asked this question. They want to believe it too. But when it gets hard, when the other guy gets the promotion, when the third business idea fails, do you *really* hold on to that belief? Or do you maybe think, deep down, you don't have enough talent after all?

In 2011, Chia-Jung Tsay made a shocking discovery. She studied that last question by giving music experts two written descriptions of a "naturally talented" and a "hard-working, striving" musician and then letting them listen to a recording of the musician performing.

The majority of the experts ended up preferring the piece by the "natural." The kicker is that on both occasions, the exact same recording was played.

**We like to tell ourselves that we believe in hard work more than in talent. But we don't really mean it.**

## Lesson 2: The impact effort has on achievement is exponentially greater than talent.

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The funny thing is, we have no reason to. Because if you said that hard work trumps talent and really believed it, you'd be right.

After looking at successful people across a wide range of disciplines, from politicians to athletes to writers, Angela set up a set of two equations, which simplify the way talent and effort are related, to make it clear how much more important effort is.

In order to achieve something, you first need the right skill to be able to even start working towards the achievement. However, once you have it, you still need to use and apply the skill for a long time in order to actually *get* there. With a certain amount (or lack) of talent, your starting points for those two "movements" then become:

1. **Talent x Effort = Skill.**
2. **Skill x Effort = Achievement.**

Your first bit of talent, combined with effort increases your skill level. Your increasing skill, multiplied by effort, leads to achievement.

That means **effort counts twice**. Once for skill and once for achievement. But that doesn't mean it's twice as important. If you substitute the skill equation into the achievement equation, you end up with:

Talent x Effort x Effort = Achievement, which means that **Talent x Effort<sup>2</sup> = Achievement**. Your effort is exponentially more important than how talented you are. That could be a factor of 2, 7, 10, or 500.

Regardless of how big the difference is though, there always will be one, and that's what's important to remember.

## Lesson 3: You can stay consistently motivated by combining small, low-level, daily goals with a larger vision.

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Okay, but a lot of effort means you'll have to invest a lot of time and stay motivated for the long haul. How do you do that?

According to Angela, with a combination of two things:

1. **A large vision, a big dream**, something greater that's meaningful to you and that can inspire you for a long time.
2. **Small, achievable, daily goals**, to help you get wins, make progress and stay motivated.

One without the other is meaningless. Do I want Four Minute Books to be a huge, global brand, with bookstores all around the world? Sure, but thinking about that every day gets depressing.

Only if I focus on doing nothing but publishing a summary, every single day, do I feel happy with my achievement and am motivated to show up yet another day.

Small daily goals, big scary dreams – not one or the other – have both, okay?

## Grit Review

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The only caveat I have about Grit is that you should be very cautious about the big dream you pick. There is something to be said for quitting as a strategy, but once you've quit the wrong things, go all in on grit. Great book!

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## What else can you learn from the blinks?

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- What Tom Seaver's small, daily goal was, that allowed him to be a Major League

baseball player for 20 years

- Why it's important to stay realistic when picking your career
- How to avoid being stuck on autopilot during practice and making the same mistakes over and over
- The difference between finding your calling and just bringing your purpose to work
- How teachers and parents can make children successful in the future
- Which country has its own word for grit and makes it part of its culture

## **Who would I recommend the Grit summary to?**

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The 15 year old star of the high school basketball team, the 25 year old struggling entrepreneur, and anyone who complains about their work regularly.