PSP Preparation Essentials Book Report

Grit by: Angela Duckworth

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Grit by Angela Duckworth credits grit as the determining factor in success, as two individuals with similar skillsets will vary in their achievements due to different levels of grit. Grit is comprised of passion and perseverance, both essential for generating and sustaining long term success. In her research Duckworth proves a growth mindset can be leveraged to increase success and presents pivotal mindset shifts to further develop grit.

“Grit” by Angela Duckworth is a psychology book that utilizes scientific data to explain what differentiates high achievers from the average individual. Grits major psychological components include interest, practice, purpose, and hope which can all be developed overtime as grit is not a fixed trait. Each component works together starting with interest as its crucial to be passionate about the work you’re doing to sustain it. She then makes the distinction that “deliberate practice” is done with undivided attention aimed at strengthening specific weaknesses to strengthen overall performance consistently overtime. Purpose allows individuals to endure the laborious time engaging in deliberate practice as it is merely a means to achieving something much greater. Hope is necessary to persevere in the face of disheartening roadblocks and view suffering as temporary on the path to achievement.

Duckworth believes “talent” receives more credit than it deserves and affords individuals an excuse to continue operating below their full potential. So, she sought out a theory on the psychology of achievement and eventually assembled the formulas: talent x effort = skill, and skill x effort = achievement. To quote Duckworth, “effort makes skill productive”, as it counts twice in the pursuit of achievement. There is a cap on how far innate abilities can take you, to achieve meaningful results prolonged effort is essential.

In her research, Duckworth found individuals who developed and maintained focus on a coherent goal structure proved more successful than individuals who held several unrelated mid-level goals. A common behavior in gritty individuals is maintaining focus on minimal “top level” goals for extended time frames; utilizing them as a guide to set meaningful mid and low-level goals. These goal hierarchies serve as tools to stay on track to achieving what one believes is their ultimate purpose, how they can contribute to something greater than themselves. The top-level goal gives individuals a sense of importance and brings meaning to their everyday lives by connecting each task to their deepest values.

To conclude, I found Duckworths developments on the concept of grit to be simply brilliant, she presents topics in a concise manner with a strong psychological foundation of evidence to support them. She does an excellent job encouraging individuals, providing testimonies from several successors (including herself) who found the path to success is rarely linear, and explains how to utilize introspection to uncover where one’s passion lies. Additionally, the book is highly engaging, and topics are presented in an easy to comprehend manner. I would highly recommend “Grit” by Angela Duckworth as a read full of valuable well-informed insights for individuals looking to live more meaningful, successful lives.