

**Angela Duckworth**  
**West Point - September 15, 2016**

-Grit is a hallmark of high achievement in every activity.

-Where else would I go to study psychological excellence? I've studied West Point since 2004.

-People are being naïve if they ignore talent. There absolutely is such thing as talent—there are certainly varying levels of aptitude. *My definition of talent: the ability to improve incredibly fast.*



"That kid gets better faster/easier than the other kids."

-There are two components of high achievers:

1. Consistency of effort over time (perseverance)
2. Consistency of focus/interest over time (passion)

**"The 2 P's"**

-Passion note: It's *passion*, not infatuation. It's an abiding love for something over your entire career.

-Perseverance note: effort exerted even after small failures

-To be a world-class performer, it's not just consistency of effort, but also consistency of focus.

-The best understand that it's a marathon, not a sprint.

-Passion is about not changing your mind about what you truly want.

-The question that has the strongest correlation to someone's "Grit Score"

**I finish whatever I begin 1 (Not at all like me) - 5 (Very much like me)**

-An individual's "Grit Score" is a far better indicator if they're going to make it through "Beast" (a 7-week process that turns West Point enrollees from civilians to cadets) than their "Candidate Score."

-“Beast” is particularly tough for those accepted into West Point because it’s the first time in their lives that they’re not the best. It’s a very trying psychological test.

-West Point = incubator for world class excellence.

-There are two dimensions of a gritty culture:

1. High Challenge (consistently challenging them to do something they cannot)
2. High Support (I believe in you even when you don’t believe in yourself)

-In my studies, the support that really, really gritty cultures offer doesn’t differ much from...love...

-The great coach: “I will support you with deep internal love.”

-In the great cultures, students so deeply trust their coach. That trust is important because at some point the great coach looks at his/her player and says, “I’m challenging you because I know you can do better.”

-I went to Seattle to observe Pete Carroll and the Seahawks and I spent my whole trying to figure out what made his culture so special. When I prompted him, he said, “I don’t know. It’s not one thing, it’s a million things.” At 4 PM on my second day there, he turned to me and said, “The thing I do best is I’m a great...dad. I treat these guys like they’re my kids.”

-Balancing the high support/high challenge aspect is the tough part for a coach. The sweet spot that pays service to each side is the sweet spot where great success lies.

-The great thing about working in college athletics is you’re dealing with individuals at one of the most malleable phases of their life. It is in that age range - right before adulthood - where people search to find/develop a niche.

-How do you spot grit in recruiting?

-You can’t interview for grit. I’m not a huge fan of questionnaires because of the dynamic at play. The applicants aren’t in a position where it helps them to be entirely truthful.

-Things to look for:

- Someone who has been knocked down and gotten back up.
- Someone who arrives early to practice.
- Examine their experience and look for residuals of passion and perseverance.
- Multi-year experiences are big indicator (sticking with something)

-Legendary swimming/diving coach Jeff Huber (Indiana University/US Olympic team) on the characteristics of great walk-ons:

- First to practice
- Last to leave
- Who do they spend their spare time? Who is practicing/thinking when they're on their own?
- Eyes like saucers (wanting to learn)

-Show "Year of the Quarterback - The Brady 6" to your team. Video is available on YouTube and it documents the six quarterbacks drafted ahead of Brady in the 2000 NFL Draft.

- "I want to earn it every day."

-The best ones have a mindset that they're never done.

-The best coaches have the ability to drive home the same message, but to constantly be delivering in a different way.

- Don't make it cliché.
- Pete Carroll says the same thing, but in a different way.
- Same message, but different angles.

-Reaching the talented player who lacks grit: give them examples (role models) of people who are super talented who are never done (basketball has a great one right now in Stephen Curry).

- People's greatest learning occurs with stories and modeling.

-Is grit transferrable from one phase of your life to the next?

- Less transferrable than you'd think.
- Some rare individuals see the pattern and exhibit grit in all walks of life.
- Coaches need to build this bridge ("It's not just for success on the field.")

-Growth mindset > fixed mindset

-The series "Chef's Table" that is available on NetFlix is a great glimpse into the world of high achievement.

Q: "How do you push yourself after you've already received 3 stars?"



A: "Even though there's only 3 stars, I wake up every day and pretend there's a fourth star and that's what I'm chasing."

Michelin awards 0 to 3 stars to a restaurant based on the quality, master of technique, personality, and consistency of the food.)

-The impact the best coaches have on players:

- They're successful under their guidance.
- They're successful off the court (field, rink, etc.)
- They're successful after they leave

-It's not necessarily about the quantity of practice, it's about the quality of that practice. Read Anders Ericsson's book "Peak" to learn about deliberate practice.

-Is grit contagious?

- What's the critical tipping point?
- Pete Carroll: "It's not one thing, it's everything. How we do one thing is how we do everything."
- Selection is a huge part of it (the Seahawks *look* for grit)
- The coach's personality is huge ("I've never met a company who wasn't a long shadow of their leader.")

-Rank/order too heavily emphasized erodes grit

- What's difficult is that there's rank/order that's innate in sports.
- Legendary soccer coach Anson Dorrance (UNC) ranks his players every day ("I only care about the motivation of the ones that play. Mia Hamm wouldn't accept being anything short of #1").
- People react to rank/order differently.

-Book recommendations:

- Win Forever by Pete Carroll
- Talent Code by Daniel Coyle
- Peak by Anders Ericsson
- Mindset by Carol Dweck

-West Point is extremely good at getting people to do the same thing and developing group identity.

-Players being allowed to express their individuality is something this generation is seeking/demanding.

- Individuals feel like they can be themselves.
- They're a part of something bigger than them.