

## Grit

“Grit is living life like it’s a marathon, not a sprint.” –Angela Duckworth

Our first Resilience Project email last year introduced **Carol Dweck’s theory of fixed vs. growth mindsets. (Quick memory jog: with a *fixed mindset* we believe that intelligence is determined by our genetics, with a *growth mindset* we believe that intelligence is impacted by hard work and willingness to embrace a challenge).** We’ve also written about the work of Martin Seligman and his Positive Psychology movement, focused on building on strengths and understanding the ways in which people can lead happier, more fulfilled lives. Today, we want to introduce you to **Dr. Angela Duckworth, an Associate Professor of Psychology and a colleague of Dr. Seligman’s at the University of Pennsylvania.** She’s received a great deal of attention for her studies on what she calls “grit.”

It’s long been recognized that hard work and persistence pay off. But, despite the fact that most of us were raised on “The Tortoise and the Hare,” we differ dramatically in our stamina for long-term goals. **Gritty individuals, according to Duckworth, “are distinguished by their propensity to maintain effort and interest over years despite failure, adversity, and plateaus in progress.” They are persistent and resilient and *over-*represented amongst highly accomplished scientists, novelists, artists and entrepreneurs.**

Her research suggests that talent and grit are unrelated, or may even be slightly negatively correlated, leading her to hypothesize that **“talented individuals, for whom learning and advancement come easily, have fewer opportunities (or, more aptly, necessities) to develop a resilient approach to failure and setbacks.”**

### How can we be grittier? What can we do to foster grit in our children?

1. Duckworth’s research suggests that possessing a growth mindset (in Dr. Dweck’s terminology) goes a long way toward building grit. A growth mindset seems to contribute to the tendency to sustain effort toward and commitment to goals.
2. There appears to be a strong relationship between grit and an “optimistic explanatory” style. Optimists tend to attribute good events to global and stable causes and bad events to temporary and specific causes. They also rate themselves higher in both grit and life satisfaction, and those two qualities have, in turn, been shown to predict success.

Find your own Grit Score: [sasupenn.qualtrics.com/SE/?SID=SV\\_06f6QSOS2pZW9qR](https://sasupenn.qualtrics.com/SE/?SID=SV_06f6QSOS2pZW9qR)

### Watch Angela Duckworth’s TED Talks:

[www.ted.com/talks/angela\\_lee\\_duckworth\\_the\\_key\\_to\\_success\\_grit.html](https://www.ted.com/talks/angela_lee_duckworth_the_key_to_success_grit.html) (6 min.)

[www.youtube.com/watch?v=qaeFnxSfSC4](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qaeFnxSfSC4) (18 min.)

*The Staples Resilience Project is an ongoing endeavor by the Staples Guidance Department aimed to promote the well-being of our students and foster a positive, inclusive school community.*

[shs.westportps.org/departments/guidance/staples-resilience-project](https://shs.westportps.org/departments/guidance/staples-resilience-project)