

Mindset Part 2: Grit



Image retrieved from [source for grit image](#)

Introduction to Grit

Grit can be defined as your tendency to persist in the face of difficulty and not give up.

We've seen that your mindset affects your tendency to persist and keep trying, so mindset will affect your level of grit. However, like intelligence, grit is NOT fixed. You can, and people often do, become more resilient as they grow older. Resilience and persistence are a part of grit.

Researcher Angela Duckworth has written extensively about grit, and its effect on a person's ability to form, pursue, and achieve goals. Let's hear what she has to say about grit on this 6-minute TED talk.

[TED: Angela Lee Duckworth: Grit: The Power of Passion and Perseverance](#)

Click on the links below to see what she says about grit.

[What is grit, according to Angela Duckworth](#)

[Can one be too gritty?](#)

[Why does Angela Duckworth think some students fail and others succeed?](#)

[According to Angela Duckworth, when is it okay to quit?](#)

On the next page, you will take a Grit questionnaire designed to detect your current level of grit.



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Grit Scale Questionnaire

Here are a number of statements that may or may not apply to you. There are no right or wrong answers, so just answer honestly, considering how you compare to most people. Don't overthink your answers; giving your gut responses leads to a more accurate score. At the end, you'll get a score that reflects how passionate and persevering you see yourself to be.

Place a check in the column that best describes you.

	Very much like me	Mostly like me	Somewhat like me	Not much like me	Not like me at all
1. New ideas and projects sometimes distract me from previous ones.					
2. Setbacks don't discourage me. I don't give up easily.					
3. I often set a goal but later choose to pursue a different one.					
4. I am a hard worker.					
5. I have difficulty maintaining my focus on projects that take more than a few months to complete.					
6. I finish whatever I begin.					
7. My interests change from year to year.					
8. I am diligent. I never give up.					
9. I have been obsessed with a certain idea or project for a short time but later lost interest.					
10. I have overcome setbacks to conquer an important challenge.					
11. I have achieved a goal that took years of work.					
12. I become interested in new pursuits every few months.					

Grit Scale Scoring Rubric

Now score the previous page using the rubric below. For example, on #1, if you chose “Mostly like me,” circle the 2 on line 1 below.

You made only one check mark per line on the previous page, so you should have only one number circled on each line below.

Then add up the four columns and put the sum in the Sub-Total line. Add the four totals together to get a single value for the Grand Total.

Circle the number in the box that matches each answer.

	Very much like me	Mostly like me	Somewhat like me	Not much like me	Not like me at all
1. New ideas and projects sometimes distract me from previous ones.	1	2	3	4	5
2. Setbacks don't discourage me. I don't give up easily.	5	4	3	2	1
3. I often set a goal but later choose to pursue a different one.	1	2	3	4	5
4. I am a hard worker.	5	4	3	2	1
5. I have difficulty maintaining my focus on projects that take more than a few months to complete.	1	2	3	4	5
6. I finish whatever I begin.	5	4	3	2	1
7. My interests change from year to year.	1	2	3	4	5
8. I am diligent. I never give up.	5	4	3	2	1
9. I have been obsessed with a certain idea or project for a short time but later lost interest.	1	2	3	4	5
10. I have overcome setbacks to conquer an important challenge.	5	4	3	2	1
11. I have achieved a goal that took years of work.	5	4	3	2	1
12. I become interested in new pursuits every few months.	1	2	3	4	5
Sub-Total for each column					
Grand Total for all columns combined					
Average (Grand Total / 12)¹					

¹ Adapted from Angela Duckworth's Grit Scale.

So, what if you aren't very gritty.... Can you change that?

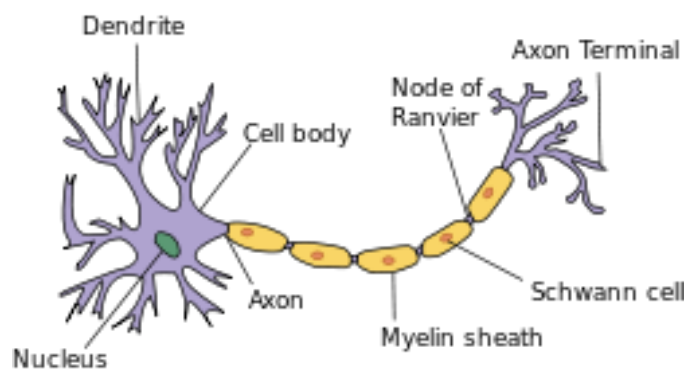
In a word, *yes*.

Let's review a bit about the *Fixed Mindset* versus the *Growth Mindset* by learning a bit of neuroscience.

Understand How the Brain Learns²

The science of learning is backed by a basic understanding of neuroscience. Simply put, the brain is like a muscle. If you exercise it, it gets denser. You exercise the brain through the stages of learning.

In the process of learning, for example, to play a C chord on the guitar, neurons in various parts of the brain begin making new connections. Through repeated practice, these connections get stronger. An insulation called *myelin* builds along the *axon* (the tube that connects neuron to neuron). More myelin means that the signal travels through the neurons faster.



retrieved from [Wikipedia](#)

That is, the more you practice, the stronger your brain gets, and the more automatic whatever you're practicing becomes.

This occurs with all forms of learning whether athletic, artistic, musical, mathematical, and so on. It's simply how the brain learns. And this process doesn't just happen in children. Prior to the late 1990s, the prevailing scientific belief was that the brain develops in childhood and then doesn't change.

² Information adapted from [Scott Jeffrey's website: A Complete Guide to Changing Your Fixed Mindset into a Growth Mindset](#).

Then, neuroplasticity was discovered. In 1998, a study showed that the adult brain is actually capable of growing new brain cells. Neuroplasticity explains how neural pathways are always changing due to our experiences. As long as our brains are functioning properly, we can always learn, improve existing capabilities, and develop new skills. Our brains can grow as we age.

Neuroscience affirms the truth behind the growth mindset.

Change What You Believe About Talent

With a fixed mindset you believe you are either born with talent or not. With a growth mindset, you know this last sentence is false. Talent is cultivated by deliberate practice.

But learning about a growth mindset isn't enough. If you have a fixed mindset, you've probably had it for your entire life. Your mindset is deeply rooted, so you need strategies to uproot it over time....

- Read about grit.
- Talk about grit.
- Share examples and photos of grit or put one on your wall.
- Reframe problems by giving perspective.
- Live grittily. Watch [Randy Pausch's Last Lecture](#). THAT is grit.
- Develop intentional habits.
- ***Acknowledge the sacrifice grit requires.***