Grit: The Power of Passion and Perseverance

eslvideo.com Quiz by: delaneym

1. What job did Angela Lee Duckworth leave at 27 years old?

○ a.) Teaching

○ b.) Management consulting

○ c.) Psychology

2. What subject did she teach to seventh graders?

○ a.) Science

○ b.) Math

○ c.) English

3. What did Duckworth notice about her best and worst students?

○ a.) They all had high IQ scores.

○ b.) IQ was not the only difference.

○ c.) They all performed equally well.

4. What did Duckworth believe every student could learn?

○ a.) Advanced calculus

○ b.) Seventh grade math

○ c.) Basic reading skills

5. What did Duckworth study after leaving the classroom?

○ a.) Business management

○ b.) Psychology

○ c.) Education policy

6. What characteristic did Duckworth find to predict success?

○ a.) Social intelligence

○ b.) Grit

○ c.) Physical health

7. What is grit defined as?

○ a.) Intelligence and talent

○ b.) Passion and perseverance

○ c.) Luck and opportunity

8. What did Duckworth find about grittier kids in Chicago public schools?

○ a.) They were less likely to graduate.

○ b.) They were more likely to graduate.

○ c.) They had higher IQ scores.

9. What is the best idea Duckworth mentions for building grit?

○ a.) Talent development

○ b.) Growth mindset

○ c.) Strict discipline

10. What does Duckworth say we need to do to help kids become grittier?

○ a.) Test our ideas and measure success.

○ b.) Focus only on talent.

○ c.) Avoid failure at all costs.

Transcript

When I was 27 years old, I left a very demanding job in management consulting for a job that was even more demanding: teaching. I went to teach seventh graders math in the New York City public schools. And like any teacher, I made quizzes and tests. I gave out homework assignments. When the work came back, I calculated grades.

What struck me was that IQ was not the only difference between my best and my worst students. Some of my strongest performers did not have stratospheric IQ scores. Some of my smartest kids weren't doing so well. And that got me thinking. The kinds of things you need to learn in seventh grade math, sure, they're hard: ratios, decimals, the area of a parallelogram. But these concepts are not impossible, and I was firmly convinced that every one of my students could learn the material if they worked hard and long enough.

After several more years of teaching, I came to the conclusion that what we need in education is a much better understanding of students and learning from a motivational perspective, from a psychological perspective. In education, the one thing we know how to measure best is IQ. But what if doing well in school and in life depends on much more than your ability to learn quickly and easily?

So I left the classroom, and I went to graduate school to become a psychologist. I started studying kids and adults in all kinds of super challenging settings, and in every study my question was, who is successful here and why? My research team and I went to West Point Military Academy. We tried to predict which cadets would stay in military training and which would drop out. We went to the National Spelling Bee and tried to predict which children would advance farthest in competition. We studied rookie teachers working in really tough neighborhoods, asking which teachers are still going to be here in teaching by the end of the school year, and of those, who will be the most effective at improving learning outcomes for their students? We partnered with private companies, asking, which of these salespeople is going to keep their jobs? And who's going to earn the most money?

In all those very different contexts, one characteristic emerged as a significant predictor of success. And it wasn't social intelligence. It wasn't good looks, physical health, and it wasn't IQ. It was grit. Grit is passion and perseverance for very long-term goals. Grit is

having stamina. Grit is sticking with your future, day in, day out, not just for the week, not just for the month, but for years, and working really hard to make that future a reality. Grit is living life like it's a marathon, not a sprint.

A few years ago, I started studying grit in the Chicago public schools. I asked thousands of high school juniors to take grit questionnaires, and then waited around more than a year to see who would graduate. Turns out that grittier kids were significantly more likely to graduate, even when I matched them on every characteristic I could measure, things like family income, standardized achievement test scores, even how safe kids felt when they were at school.

So it's not just at West Point or the National Spelling Bee that grit matters. It's also in school, especially for kids at risk for dropping out. To me, the most shocking thing about grit is how little we know, how little science knows, about building it. Every day, parents and teachers ask me, "How do I build grit in kids? What do I do to teach kids a solid work ethic? How do I keep them motivated for the long run?" The honest answer is, I don't know. (Laughter)

What I do know is that talent doesn't make you gritty. Our data show very clearly that there are many talented individuals who simply do not follow through on their commitments. In fact, in our data, grit is usually unrelated or even inversely related to measures of talent.

So far, the best idea I've heard about building grit in kids is something called "growth mindset." This is an idea developed at Stanford University by Carol Dweck, and it is the belief that the ability to learn is not fixed, that it can change with your effort. Dr. Dweck has shown that when kids read and learn about the brain and how it changes and grows in response to challenge, they're much more likely to persevere when they fail, because they don't believe that failure is a permanent condition.

So growth mindset is a great idea for building grit. But we need more. And that's where I'm going to end my remarks, because that's where we are. That's the work that stands before us. We need to take our best ideas, our strongest intuitions, and we need to test them. We need to measure whether we've been successful, and we have to be willing to fail, to be wrong, to start over again with lessons learned. In other words, we need to be gritty about getting our kids grittier. Thank you. (Applause)