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DISCOVERING TRUE 'GRIT'

If you've ever been told you won't succeed because you lack talent, bring a copy of "Grit" to your next meeting.

While teaching high school math, author Angela Duckworth noticed some of her highest-achieving students weren't the ones with the highest IQs, while some of her "smartest" students weren't doing all that well in class. "Why?" she wondered. She followed her curiosity to Penn State's psychology program. There, she studied several demographics, including cadets at West Point, young teachers, and sales representatives. After numerous psychological studies, Duckworth discovered that "grit" was the common denominator in successful people.

Duckworth defines grit as "passion and perseverance for very long-term goals." People who display grit don't start a project and abandon it a month later. They devote

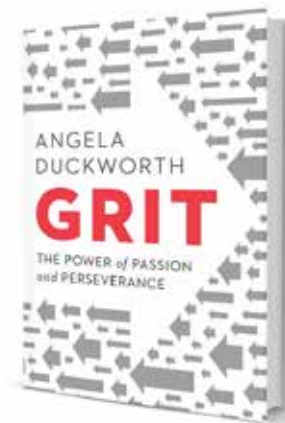
themselves to an overarching goal that drives everything they do. She explained that someone who practices grit goes through life like a marathon, not a sprint.

Perhaps most instructive is Duckworth's equation (she was a math teacher, after all):

Talent x effort = skill. Skill x effort = achievement.

"Effort counts twice" could be the battle cry of grit. Gritty people are willing to put in the extra effort to achieve their goals, and that's what helps them reach their goals if they don't have innate talent.

While this provides a strong case that those born with grit will succeed, grit doesn't factor luck and opportunity into the equation, something that Duckworth is transparent about in her book. She says those who aren't born with grit can develop it in four simple steps.



First, identify an interest that can blossom into a passion. Second, practice that passion, a lot. Third, develop the belief that your passion has purpose. While it's not an overnight transformation, these guidelines can at least give us hope, which is the fourth step: Hold on to hope that you can succeed.

Our biggest takeaway from "Grit"? Look at failures as milestones on the journey to success. Getting gritty means failing and learning from it. Any of us can get gritty if we're willing to put in a little elbow grease.

GOING FOR GOLD

THIS YEAR, WE'RE ATTENDING THE OLYMPICS!

As you read this, there's a good chance I'm in South Korea for the 2018 Winter Olympics! You may remember that my eldest daughter, Shelley, is a schoolteacher for the Department of Defense. She's been teaching third grade on a base in Seoul, South Korea for some time, and it just so happens South Korea is hosting the XXIII Olympic Winter Games.

My daughter scored tickets to a speed skating event, ice dancing, and the women's figure skating finales. My wife is a huge fan of ice skating, so that last one was a must-have. Shelley also got tickets for the U.S. vs. Russia hockey game two days before it was announced that Russia would be barred from competing. Don't worry, she got a refund. Once Shelley had the tickets, I booked our flight to South Korea. The whole trip was my wife's Christmas gift, and when I surprised her on Christmas Day, she couldn't have been more excited.

Our family loves the Olympics, and especially the Winter Olympics. Watching gives you a reason to sit in front of the TV and not feel guilty about it. Plus, there's a certain sense of patriotism. It's incredible to see athletes from across the globe come together to compete, but there's no denying it's fun to see our red, white, and blue colors at the top of the podium.

A lot of broadcasts will share an athlete's personal story and show the challenges they've overcome. You start to feel like you know them in a way and you want to see them win even more. It's exciting to watch an athlete compete when you know all the struggles they've faced and how far they have come. Sometimes they don't win — they might not even place — but no one can say they failed. They made it to the Olympics! That incredible feat alone is worth being proud of.



"Getting to sit in the stadium during the Olympics will be awesome, and I'm excited I get to visit South Korea again to spend time with my daughter."

Getting to sit in the stadium during the Olympics will be awesome, and I'm excited I get to visit South Korea again to spend time with my daughter. I had a lot of fun when we visited last spring. Apart from the crazy neighbor to the north, the trip was nothing but good times. Getting to know the culture, history, and people of South Korea was a great experience. Shelley is planning on being transferred to Germany or some other European country soon, so I never thought I would go back.

When I realized the Winter Olympics were in PyeongChang, just two hours away from Seoul, I knew I couldn't let this opportunity pass us by.

For years, we have watched televised broadcasts of the Olympics, and like most people, my wife and I have talked about how fun it would be to attend in person. Who thinks they will actually have the opportunity to go? We're so excited to be there to cheer for the incredible athletes. Our seats in the arena are pretty great, too. If you happen to catch the women's figure skating finales on TV, keep an eye out for me in the audience. **DELETE THIS SENTENCE ... REPLACE WITH MINE. I'll be wearing a bright orange sweater.**

I will be the one "decked out" in the USA bling!

Train West
P.S. Go, Team U.S.A.!

WHAT YOU CAN LEARN FROM THE KING OF CUSTOMER SERVICE

What happens when an internet personality complains about your company? If you're Amazon, you make sure the next time they talk about you, they're singing your praises.

ScreenJunkies News is a popular YouTube channel dedicated to media and pop culture. In early November of 2017, the channel streamed a panel discussion that focused on comments from Amazon's CEO, Jeff Bezos, who said he wanted to pursue video content that would appeal to a broader audience. One of the panelists, Dan Murrell, quipped that he'd rather Bezos make sure the DVD racks he ordered from Amazon arrived on time.

This off-the-cuff complaint garnered laughter from the other panelists. They chimed in with their own comments on Amazon's delivery practices, and one panelist brought up third-party couriers' inability to find Murrell's leasing office. When the panel moved on to other topics, Murrell's Amazon comments were seemingly forgotten — that is, until two days later when ScreenJunkies News streamed another video, during which Murrell shared his experience with a customer service representative who reached out to him.

After seeing the first video, the representative said they wanted to rectify the situation. They personally checked that Murrell's most recent order, a bookshelf, was scheduled to be delivered on time, and they gave Murrell the opportunity to air his grievances about third-party couriers. During the panel discussion, Murrell mentioned that he'd never seen the movie "Lawrence of Arabia," and the representative told him that Amazon had sent him a Blu-ray copy of the film, free of charge. Also, \$100 was added to Murrell's Amazon account.

This response may seem over the top for a YouTube joke, but Amazon's model works. Last year, Jeff Bezos became the richest person in the world, surpassing Bill Gates. The key to Amazon's success? Don't wait for complaints. If a package is late, Amazon sends the client a new delivery date. Amazon's Kindle Fire tablet includes a Mayday Button, which encourages customers to contact around-the-clock support the moment they feel frustrated. And, by reaching out after seeing Murrell's complaints, Amazon is no longer the company that can't deliver a DVD rack on time.

Now, to Murrell, the other panelists, and the channel's 1.5 million subscribers, Amazon is the company that makes things right. Who wouldn't want to do business with a company that takes care of them?



Brunch Is Served

Finding Breakfast No Matter the Time of Day



As my work allows me to travel, I am able to indulge in new and different experiences wherever I go. Sometimes my travels bring me to an amazing restaurant here in Texas. If you're like me and always keeping your eye out for a good meal, I have just the suggestion for you. Especially for anyone who loves to have breakfast no matter what time of day it is, I recommend heading over to Ellen's.

Founded in 2012 by Joe Groves, chef Russell Mertz, and partner Andrew Chooljian, Ellen's has become a hit in the past six years. When the restaurant first popped up, the main goal of the founders was — and still is — to provide excellent home cooked meals. And they do just that. The name Ellen's was inspired by Joe Groves' mother, and the restaurant aims to follow in her footsteps. Everyone who enters Ellen's is treated like family and welcomed with open arms. I felt quite at home the moment I stepped through the door!

I couldn't help but notice the slogan above me when I first entered: "It's Brunch O'Clock Somewhere!" Along with its homey atmosphere, Ellen's strives to provide the best brunch you can find in Dallas. Breakfast all day, every day? Sign me up. I managed to try their signature brunch entree, grits benedict. It's cheesy grits loaded with tomatoes, bacon, and spinach, topped off with poached eggs. The dish has been one of my favorites ever since!

Sometimes, however, I find myself in more of a rush in my travels than I'd like to be, and I don't always have the opportunity to stop by Ellen's. In moments like these, I turn to their online ordering system. When I'm passing through Dallas and those loaded grits sound too good to pass up, I'll go on their website and order my meal just how I want it. Whether it's for delivery or pickup, the service is quick, reliable, and delectable.

If I were you, I wouldn't miss a chance to stop for brunch in Dallas, no matter what time of day. Swing over to Ellen's for its friendly atmosphere and top quality Southern cuisine.



THE ACCIDENTAL TERRARIUM

Is Your AHU Hiding Undiscovered Life?

When a tenant starts to complain about the indoor air quality of a building, the first thing your IAQ expert will do is examine the air handler units (AHU) in the complaint area. It's easy to mistake an AHU as clean as a whistle based on outward appearances, but inside the AHU, an entire ecosystem can thrive. There are a number of factors that can result in a colorful and fuzzy environment within your AHU — and such an environment can lead to contaminants causing problems with the local air quality.

Here are some components your maintenance team needs to look at when cleaning your AHU.

Fan assembly — The fan housing tends to be cleaned regularly, but the fan blades? Not so much. Dirty blades can be the source of excess particles in the indoor air.

Coil surface — When dust and dirt make it past the filter system, they can become impacted on the coil. This results in bacteria, which manifests as a black or slimy discoloration on the surface of the coil. Needless to say, this shouldn't be present.

Drain pans — It's important to check that an AHU's condensate drain pans are actually draining properly. When water is allowed to sit in one spot, it stagnates, leading to bacterial growth. Flushing out drain pans regularly and applying antimicrobial tablets can prevent this.

Internal insulation — Insulation near the coil is a serious concern. When water is thrown off the coil, this insulation can become wet, making it a prime habitat for mold to grow freely. When cleaning an AHU, maintenance should always check for discoloration and evidence of moisture on the internal insulation surface.



These are not the only ways an unclean AHU can negatively affect your building's IAQ, but they are the most common. Instructing your team to practice regular maintenance of AHUs by turning off the unit and opening access doors is important for maintaining IAQ. With proper maintenance, many concerns can be prevented, and you can ensure your AHU is not the source of IAQ problems should tenants start to complain.



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