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Achieve More with G.R.I.T By Dr Lynda Wee

What are exceptional achievers made of?

When Angela Duckworth examined the reason behind why some individuals accomplish more than others, she discovered that it was not just the most natural talents that made the difference, but rather an “extra something” that motivated these individuals to work harder than the rest.

Exceptional achievers do suffer when working hard on a challenge that exceeds their skills. Not knowing the solution, they feel overwhelmed and confused. In spite of the natural human aversion to uncertainty, instead of quitting, they choose to stay on course, gut it out and evolve. Despite their agony, they are able to sustain their interest and find novelty in their work.

She summed up that “extra something” as grit. It is all about the passion, perseverance and stamina that realise one’s dreams to reality.

A quick check with the Merriam-Webster dictionary defines grit as the firmness of character; indomitable spirit. It is about concentrated and sustained hard work that one has to practise in order to achieve exceptional results. Reflect on **G.R.I.T** to assess your level of grit.

1. Growth Mindset

People with grit see learning as a continuous journey, never a destination. They never stop learning. They are constantly aware, attentive and absorbing in their surroundings. They equip themselves with learning-to-learn skills for continuous development.

2. Resilience

Full of tenacity, people with grit develop a capacity to work hard, adapt in the face of temptation, distraction and defeat, as well as persist through the setbacks. They possess a “*I’ll prove you wrong*” reflex that emerges when others tell them that they cannot do something.

They do not dwell on their failures or what others think of them. They see failures as formative steps and the source of valuable lessons for higher achievement. When the going gets tough, the tough gets going. When faced with challenges, they rise, wipe the dust off and get down to work once again.

“It is not the critic who counts; not the man who points out how the strong man stumbles, or where the doer of deeds could have done better. The credit belongs to the man who is actually in the arena, whose face is marred by dust and sweat and blood; who strived valiantly; who errs, who comes again and again, because there is no effort without error and shortcoming; but who does actually strive to do the deeds; who knows great enthusiasms, the great devotions; who spends himself in a worthy cause; who at the best knows in the end the triumph of high achievement, and who at the worst, if he fails, at least fails while daring greatly.”

Theodore Roosevelt

3. Innovative

People with grit want to unleash their potential, live meaningfully and make

positive contributions. They identify their core purpose by finding something they truly care about.

They seek innovative solutions. They surround themselves with people who give them honest feedback, and then practise until they achieve. Despite no one following after them, they will still choose to lead and maintain their resolve. This is especially so when the innovative ideas often attract objections from people who have yet to understand.

4. Think long term

In the famous Stanford Marshmallow Experiment, children-respondents were empowered to make their own choice namely: either to eat a marshmallow now or hold out for another 15 minutes for a larger reward of 2 marshmallows. The experiment revealed that respondents who were able to hold out for an additional 15 minutes experienced better outcomes in life such as higher education scores, greater career successes and lower body mass indices.

This suggests that people who choose to delay gratification with much patience are more successful. They think long term. They know their core purpose and stick with outcomes that matter. Hence, they invest the time and effort needed whilst foregoing instant gratification.

With grit, exceptional achievers always believe that everything will eventually be alright. If it is not, then it is not yet the end.