



**RESILIENCE**

*Developing*

**REAL LIFE**

**GRIT**

**RESOURCEFULNESS & ESSENTIALS**



# YOUR SUCCESS STORY



Your success story, like most, will have bumps in the road. Those moments where adversity, tough situations and setbacks challenge your resolve may try to get the better of you. Yet, by developing resilience and grit, you'll be much better-equipped to handle what life tosses your way.

See how you view your own sense of grit by answering 10 quick questions on the Grit Scale at [angeladuckworth.com/grit-scale](http://angeladuckworth.com/grit-scale).

## What Are We Talking About?

### GRIT = Sticking with a Goal

Well-known grit researcher Dr. Angela Lee Duckworth identifies grit as...

- Passion and perseverance for very long-term goals, despite setbacks, screw-ups and slow progress
- Having an ultimate goal you care about so much that it organizes and gives meaning to almost everything you do
- Pursuing something with stamina and a consistency of interest and effort
- A sense of optimism
- Sticking with your future, day in, day out, and working hard toward that future
- Living life like it's a marathon, not a sprint

She also emphasizes that grit is NOT talent, luck or how intensely, for the moment, that you want something. Plus, we may not engage in *all* pursuits with the same passion and perseverance. Being gritty means having passion and perseverance about *something* in your life, whether it's a hobby, an academic pursuit or something else you highly value.

### RESILIENCE = Bouncing Back from Failure and Hard Times

Resilience, according to the Academic Resilience Consortium, includes capacities for...

- Persistence
- Creativity
- Emotional intelligence
- Grit
- Cognitive flexibility
- Agency
- Adapting to change
- Overcoming adversity
- Flourishing and thriving
- Addressing social justice and equity
- Learning from failure and success



The empowering blend of grit and resilience can help you get back up after being knocked down, dust yourself off and dig in anew to work toward your goals. This can-do, will-do mindset takes practice – and will likely involve both successes and missteps. You'll find many people on campus here to support and empower you in this pursuit.

**Resources:** "Grit: The Power of Passion and Perseverance" TED Talk; Academic Resilience Consortium, <https://academicresilience.org>; <http://angeladuckworth.com>





# WHY GRIT & RESILIENCE ARE IMPORTANT



Possessing grit and resilience can be a significant predictor of success in both school and the rest of your life. That's why developing both traits is so very important!

## The Advantages

There are many other advantages to being gritty and resilient, too. It can help you...

- Overcome difficult circumstances such as poverty, discrimination, difficult family situations, stigma, trauma and more
- Raise your hand and participate
- Take risks, such as asking questions, in order to learn more
- Make the most of opportunities
- Stick to your goals rather than leaving them by the wayside when things get tough
- Try new things
- View failure and adversity as necessary steps to learning instead of soul-crushing defeats

Plus, when your resilience and grit factors are well-developed, you're bound to strengthen your...

- **Relationships**
- **Career**
- **Academics**
- **Financial situation**
- **Health**
- **Connections**



## Handling Setbacks

How do you react when things go wrong?  
How do you view setbacks?

By developing your grit and resilience, you'll be able to see setbacks as having purpose, meaning and value. Rather than being devastated when something goes haywire, you'll be able to take wisdom from the situation, answering the question: What did I learn from all of this?

Reacting through a filter of grit and resilience will also provide you with new perspectives, paths and ways to think about things. For instance, say you put in a lot of time and effort to present a campus program. Your committee discussed, planned and implemented what you all believed would be an excellent event. However, on the day of the program, only a handful of your peers showed up.

Rather than throwing up your hands in despair, a resilient, gritty group will examine what went wrong. Did you truly assess student needs or just go with your personal instincts? Was the program presented passively when students might have preferred something more interactive? Might there be ways to use technology to reach more students? Examining new, different pathways demonstrates that you're open to learning from the experience and not willing to be defeated by one setback. This type of positive, resilient response will serve you well throughout your life!



# HOW TO BUILD YOUR GRIT & RESILIENCE



**"You are not born with a fixed amount of resilience. Like a muscle, you can build it up, draw on it when you need it. In that process you will figure out who you really are – and you just might become the very best version of yourself."**

– From Facebook COO Sheryl Sandberg's 2016 UC Berkeley commencement address

It's one thing to *want* to possess grit and resilience – and quite another to build these competencies. How do you go about that?

## How-to Strategies

In order to develop your grit and resilience, it's important to recognize and develop capabilities such as...

- Coping
- Adapting to disruption
- Intellectual agility
- Determination
- An ability to innovate
- Drive
- Perseverance
- Self-reflection
- Overcoming obstacles



## How Do You Do This?

You can...

- Keep your focus on the end goal
- Try not to feel victimized or sorry for yourself
- Take time to reflect in nature and other reflective spots
- Do good for others – and get outside of yourself
- Try new things, even if it means you might make mistakes or fail
- Look at things from a variety of perspectives
- Process negative events as learning opportunities rather than defeats

Resilience and grit are muscles to build through practice and perseverance. Give it a try!

## Emotional Intelligence

A key capability to develop as you become grittier and more resilient is emotional intelligence or EQ (instead of your IQ, which is your intellectual intelligence). EQ refers to the way that you handle your feelings, how you work and get along with others, and your ability to empathize. It's about how you read the signals that people send and react appropriately to them.

The five categories of EQ are:

1. Self-awareness
2. Self-regulation
3. Motivation
4. Empathy
5. Social skills

Source: Psychcentral.com



# CHARACTERISTICS OF RESILIENT/GRITTY PEOPLE



## What Does It Look Like to be Gritty and Resilient?

People with these characteristics often tend to...

- Have classroom and workplace success
- Not let adversity flatten them
- Connect with others
- Engage in their communities
- Not buy in to drama
- Realize that grief is a process – and so is joy
- Choose their responses intentionally, rather than always just reacting
- Seek help when struggling
- Realize they don't have to do it all on their own
- Be self-aware
- Accept what happens with flexibility instead of rigidity
- Not judge themselves too harshly
- Know that there's a difference between who they are and what's causing them trouble at the moment
- Feel empowered
- Take care of their personal needs
- Engage in mindfulness and self-reflection
- Consider various possibilities about what is permanent and what can change
- Reframe from a "glass is half empty" perspective to a "glass is half full" one



## Role Models

Another important way to develop your own resilience and grit is to find role models who are doing it well. Take a look around at the people you know – who might be able to mentor you when it comes to resilience? Who handles life with a can-do, gritty mindset? These are the folks you can ask for advice, mentorship and a very good example.

**G – Go-getter**  
**R – Resilient**  
**I – Intentional**  
**T – Tenacious**



**“Resilient people do not let adversity define them. They find resilience by moving towards a goal beyond themselves, transcending pain and grief by perceiving bad times as a temporary state of affairs... It's possible to strengthen your inner self and your belief in yourself, to define yourself as capable and competent. It's possible to fortify your psyche. It's possible to develop a sense of mastery.”**

– “The Art of Resilience” by Hara Estroff Marano, *Psychology Today*



# THE GROWTH MINDSET



When you embrace challenges rather than fearing failure, that's a gritty response. It doesn't mean you won't make mistakes at times, yet it does mean that you're willing to learn from those missteps. And that growth is worth *much* more than the fear of falling flat on your face.

**A growth mindset** is tied in with resilience and grit because it refers to developing abilities through hard work and dedication – that long view referred to earlier. This type of mindset can help you cultivate good habits, like practice and learning, because you see the possibility that your talents and intellect will grow in the process.

On the flip side, if you stay stuck in a **fixed mindset**, you'll tend to believe that things like your intelligence and your talent are fixed entities, incapable of change. This can lead to worry about your adequacy, causing you to focus on judgment and proving things rather than developing your positive qualities.

## Changing Your Mindset

Carol Dweck, the author of *Mindset*, emphasizes that we have a choice about how we interpret challenges, setbacks and criticism. Making the switch from a fixed to a growth mindset often involves whatever "voice" we pay the most attention to.

For instance, in a fixed mindset, we may interpret criticism, setbacks and challenges "as signs that your fixed talents or abilities are lacking," according to her website. However, in a growth mindset, we may view these things "as signs that you need to ramp up your strategies and effort, stretch yourself, and expand your abilities."

Source: TheMindsetOnline.com

## Pay Attention to Your Voice

**Fixed Mindset:** If you try that and can't do it, people will think you're a failure.

**Growth Mindset:** If I don't try, I'll instantly be a failure.

**Fixed Mindset:** You don't have the smarts or the talent to make that work.

**Growth Mindset:** Perhaps that's the case now, yet trying will help me discover what else I must learn in order to succeed next time around.





# THE RESILIENCE/MENTAL HEALTH CONNECTION



It's important to know that being a resilient, gritty student is NOT about keeping your emotions tightly under wraps and handling every single thing yourself. Truthfully, that just doesn't work. Rather, when you develop resilience and grit, you know that it's *smart* to ask for help and is a true sign of strength. Resilient people recognize when they need help and seek it.

## Campus Support

You can gather support and information from a wide variety of campus resources, such as...

- Group advisors
- Residence life staff
- Coaches
- Counselors
- Spiritual life staff
- Academic advising
- Learning/tutoring center
- Disability support
- Faculty members
- Career services



The faculty and staff working on campus are here because they know, understand and *want* to work with college students. So, take advantage of their care and expertise!



## Learning to Cope

Anxiety is the number one mental health concern among today's students. Developing resilience and grit can help you learn to cope and regulate your emotions so that anxiety – and other conditions – don't prevent you from living a full, fulfilled life.

Resiliency helps students manage pressures they're feeling, soothe themselves and carry on. When things go wrong – as they inevitably will at times – that resilience and grit you've developed can help you bounce forward instead of falling apart.

**"People who live in difficult circumstances need to know that happy endings are possible."**

– Supreme Court Justice Sonia Sotomayor  
in her book *My Beloved World*

**Lack Resilience?** When something goes wrong, you may feel victimized, stuck, overwhelmed or turn to unhealthy coping mechanisms, like alcohol or other drug abuse.

**Have Resilience?** When something goes wrong, you'll be better able to work through it, handle stress in healthy ways and find enjoyment in your life.



# YOUR LIFE STORY



**“It’s your reaction to adversity, not adversity itself that determines how your life’s story will develop.”**

— Dieter F. Uchtdorf

## **How do you want your life story to go?**

Do you want adversity and failure to knock you down for good?

Because they can — if you let them.

Flex those resilience muscles and help them grow. We all have the capability for resilience and grit. The choice is up to you!

## **GRIT = Sticking with a Goal**

## **RESILIENCE = Bouncing Back from Failure and Hard Times**

Your life story will turn out very differently if you choose to work toward becoming a resilient, gritty person. You won’t wallow in your woes, allow yourself to be victimized or let setbacks get the better of you. Instead, you’ll plow ahead with care, optimism and perseverance — seeking help readily when you need it — and be ready for the next success or challenge around the corner.

## **Becoming resilient, however, can be one of the finest gifts that you give yourself.**

It’s about persistence.

And grit.

An ability to adapt to change...

To take risks...

To try new things...

To handle setbacks...

And a willingness to learn from failures as well as successes.

**“No matter how you define success, you will need to be resilient, empowered, authentic, and limber to get there.”**

— Joanie Connell

**“What is grit? Grit is refusing to give up. It’s persistence. It’s making your own luck.”**

— Peter Diamandis

**“Promise me you’ll always remember: You’re braver than you believe, and stronger than you seem, and smarter than you think.”**

— A.A. Milne

**“Persistence and resilience only come from having been given the chance to work through difficult problems.”**

— Gever Tulley