

The Power And Problem Of Grit

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NPR:

Before she was a psychologist at the University of Pennsylvania, Angela Duckworth was a middle school math teacher. As a rookie teacher, she was surprised when she calculated grades. Some of her sharpest students weren't doing so well, while others who struggled through each lesson were getting A's.

“The thing that was revelatory to me was not that effort matters—everybody knows that effort matters,” Angela told Shankar. “What was revelatory to me was how much it matters.”

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And psychologists find people at the tippy-top of their fields engage with their work differently. You've probably heard of the “10,000 hour rule,” the average number of hours it takes an expert to become an expert. That's based on research by K. Anders Ericsson, who found that experts do an intensive-kind of practice called “deliberate practice.”

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In her interviews with people at the top of their fields, Angela found they describe their work as being imbued with meaning and a desire to help others. She finds they are driven by a purpose beyond the self. This is also what psychologists Amy Wrzesniewski and Barry Schwartz have find in their research. If you haven't heard last week's episode, Shankar talked with Amy about how people find meaning and purpose at work.

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To cultivate hope, Angela points to Stanford Professor Carol Dweck's work on growth mindset, the belief that intelligence isn't fixed but can change over time. Angela also points to her PhD advisor Marty Seligman's work on learned optimism.

Read the whole story: [NPR](#)