

SUPER STRESS SOLUTIONS NEWSLETTER

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TRUE GRIT; DO YOU HAVE IT?

Ever wonder why some people who seem to lack above average intelligence or talents become very successful while others who seem to have it all often fall way short of their potential? Have you often felt you would be more successful if you had higher intelligence, greater physical abilities or opportunities than others you consider to have made it in this world. Actually success has little to do with any of these attributes. Research on the predictions of success have found that grit may turn out to be at least as good as a predictor as talent and intelligence. **Grit** can be described as **tenacity, or the determination to accomplish an ambition over the long term despite inevitable set backs and discouragements.**

Research has proven that intelligence and **grit** are actually two independent entities thus allowing for success and empowerment for those who do not receive favor from the talent gene.

In fact there is evidence to suggest that early childhood prodigies tend not to achieve their potential later on in life because success and mastery comes very easy for them, however when it is necessary to apply determination, sacrifice and staying the course to move up to the next level, prodigies have not learned **true grit** in their formative years of maturation and as a result often fall short.

Louis Terman, a legendary psychologist followed a group of gifted boys from childhood to middle age and found that “**persistence in the accomplishment of ends** was one of the factors that distinguished the most successful from the least”.

Many large scale analysts suggest that a mere 25% of the difference between individuals and job performance can be attributed to I.Q. only. **Personality factors, creativity, fortune (hard work and opportunity)** are said to contribute to the other 75%.

Because **grit** is not an innate attribute but more malleable, flexible and something that can be learned it levels the playing field for those of us who are less gifted. The secret is to understand that grit is a dynamic skill set based upon **perseverance, endurance and hard work**.

The challenge for each of us is to focus on **grit** as being acquired, developed and mastered over time. Here are a few suggestions to improve your **grit** I.Q.

1. **Pursue Your Passions.** Passions are something that is often determined by our DNA (talents and gifts) and opportunity. We all have natural tendencies and the conscious ability to pursue them which is empowering and instills motivation towards our purpose in life. When our **passion becomes our purpose** then we are truly fulfilled in life, but sometimes it takes **grit** to fulfill our passion i.e. changing a job or a relationship.
2. **Develop Discipline.** Passion pulls us towards our natural tendencies but discipline is the ability to refrain from self impulses and external influences that may sabotage productivity and success. **Self discipline is all about short term delayed gratification for a greater long term payoff.** The conscious ability to discipline yourself is a component of grit and will enable you to become a true warrior towards greater success and accomplishments.
3. **Opt In For Optimism.** Optimism is not a trait (personality characteristics) but more a learned way of looking at life in general and more specifically when it comes down to set backs and perceived failures. Optimism allows for someone to envision the final outcome of being successful as opposed to becoming entrenched in the drudgery of carrying on in the face of day to day failures, setbacks and

disappointments. **Optimism** helps promote **perseverance and persistence** by inoculating us from the ravages of emotional and psychological despondency when failure and set backs confront us.

4. **Beyond Balance.** Today there is a lot of emphasis upon promoting balance as the benchmark for success. Although there is merit to this, there are times when grit involves hunkering down, throwing caution to the wind and putting total focus, effort and determination on an achievement. Although it is necessary to respect the laws of nature and not work in a milieu of abuse, there are times it requires sacrifice to rise above and overcome and those who are willing to pay that price usually strive and thrive towards great achievements.
5. **Learn To Cope With Criticism And Disapproval.** Excepting the fact that true **grit** is not within average perimeters and the more you apply it the more it will set you apart from others. Just as prodigies and the truly gifted are unique and above average, so is **grit**. If you are willing to step up and apply **grit** to your endeavors you will likely be set apart and **achieve the right of passage towards success and fulfillment**. However expect to be occasionally ostracized from those who will be jealous and criticism from those who do not accept your ideas, creativity or hard work (especially from those more gifted but less successful). Having the ability to absorb and flow with disapproval and criticism is necessary to continue on and promote your dreams and desires into reality. **Pessimists have an obsession with obstacles; optimists have a passion for possibilities.** The most successful people have usually been met with rejection and or disapproval throughout their successful careers and have persevered despite and sometimes because of criticism. Turn it into possibilities and opportunity and you will have achieved true **grit** in your life.
6. **Focus on effort not just outcomes.** Psychologists and sports coaches alike have found that when there is more emphasis placed upon effort and the process of learning as opposed to just performance outcomes, individuals tend to stay energized over the long haul even in the face of difficulties, frustrations and setbacks. If you can learn to see life as a series of never ending ups and downs upon which you can **learn, adapt and adjust** to as well as strive for greater accomplishments then you will acquire **true grit** and become more successful in life.

How to Worry Effectively

Lets face it worrying is considered a normal part of how one thinks. How many times have you heard it "I'm a worrier" or "I'm worried". This is a normal schema (way of thinking).

Because the brain can think in the past or into the future it has the ability to form thoughts beyond its immediate reality and that is where we can get into trouble when it comes to worrying.

Essentially worrying is a futile attempt to **cope with the unknown, uncertainty and potential threat**. Furthermore, in this sense it's about events that have happened and can't be changed or more so about future events upon which you have little control, if any. Worrying is primarily foreboding which is thinking into the future expecting some ominous outcomes.

Chronic worry is really an **intolerance and/or vigilance of uncertainty** which can be a precursor towards anxiety and depression. Therefore worrying and its impact upon our emotional wellbeing and health cannot be taken lightly. Really worrying is learned therefore it can be unlearned which will provide an opportunity to improve your psychological and emotional wellbeing and enhance your mastery over the present.

Essentially **worrying is an attempt to cope with a forthcoming reality that is uncertain or threatening upon which you try to avoid or prevent from happening**. Also worrying can be used to motivate you or help you avoid potential difficulties in life. Chronic worriers would rather predict and somehow prepare for potential calamities 100% of the time to be wrong 99% of the time, than predict positive outcomes 100% of the time and be surprised 5% of the time.

Some worriers will say they are relieved that the potential concern did not take place yet found some solace in the fact they were prepared just in case. That's like hitting yourself over the head with a hammer just to stop because it feels better. Really there is little if any emotional economy in chronic worrying (spending \$100.00 worth of emotions on 10 cent problems).

Actually worrying is all about the **what if syndrome**. Your emotional brain (see archives on Motivational Mondays) becomes vigilant over potential threats and tries to minimize or prevent the threat from happening. Of course this can lead to chronic anxieties because the rational brain can not establish closure or effectively change what has not or likely will not happen. The emotional brain can not operate in a vacuum so therefore the **what if** becomes an **as if**. Now there is a conviction that the impending event is a forgone conclusion which is actually going to happen, consequently a lot of time and effort is put in place to prepare for the perceived impending event that rarely come to fruition. The challenge is to find ways to minimize worry by promoting a greater sense of control over the present as opposed to foreboding about the future which is essentially out of our control.

Effective Worrying Techniques

1. **Learn to accept** that there is going to be uncertainty, the unknown and the unpredictable. Say its o.k.; there are usually good and misfortune in the universe and I do not need to control it all. Learning to accept and live with ambiguity by constantly reminding yourself this is how the universe works and you might as well learn to accept and flow with it is a great technique for reducing worry.
2. **Realize emotions are not reality.** A lot of worries are instinctive and below the conscious brain therefore what tends to come to the surface are feelings of anxiety, dread and depression. Chronic worry can be perpetuated by the belief that if I feel anxious that validates my fear therefore there really must be something to be concerned about.
3. **Separate what you feel from fact** and realize that they are just emotions and they can not all be trusted specifically when worrying about the future and that its o.k. to flow with them however they can not be used as a barometer for predicting and validating potential threats and perceived uncertainties.
4. **Shift from what ifs to what's and how's.** The worrying brain creates anxiety by staying in the **what if** world. However it becomes futile when there are anticipatory fears and little can be done about them. This can foster a sense of helplessness which if gone unchecked can evolve into **hopelessness and despair**. It's important to know that we are empowered by mastering and gaining a sense of control over our immediate environment. Consequently shifting focus to the rational brain's **what and how** mechanism can be a powerful tool to ward off worry. Once you notice you are thinking what if (feeling anxiety) ask yourself **what's the problem?** Try to identify it in real life concrete terms. Does it actually exist? If no, go no further with this perceived problem. If the problem does actually exist or there is a strong potential for it to evolve ask this next question **is it my problem?** Try to identify if you have any direct or indirect responsibility or accountability to this presumed event. If you say no then go no further give it up, **shift your focus to the here and now**. However if there is a reason to believe that the event has or will actually occur and you have some responsibility or accountability to this potential problem then go to the **how**. **Ask how can I best cope with it or control and minimize any potential damages to myself or others?** Write down any potential problem solving solutions you have and every time you think of this issue refer back to your list of solutions. This will continue to keep your **focus in the present, reduce anxiety and sustain empowerment and self efficacy in your life**.

What to do When the Pressure Comes

Today's modern society places multiple responsibilities upon us therefore requires multiple tasking and an ever increasing sense of time pressures. The more we do the more time sensitive we become. Consequently pressures tend to increase and before we know it there can be an emotional, physical and interpersonal consequence that we were ill prepared for.

Having the ability to know when the pressure is getting to you and what to do about it is critical in effectively managing your life. Here are some effective techniques that have been proven to reduce pressure and help you cope more effectively with stress.

1. **Talk it out.** When something bothers you don't bottle it up. Confide your worry to some levelheaded person you can trust or a therapist. Talking things out helps relieve your strain, helps you to see your worry in a clearer light and often helps you to see what can be done about it.
2. **Escape for a while.** Lose yourself in a movie, book, game, or a brief trip for a change of scene. But, be prepared to come back and deal with your difficulties when you are more composed and energized.
3. **Work off your anger.** If you feel like lashing out at someone who has provoked you, try holding off that impulse for a while. Let it wait until tomorrow. Meanwhile, do something constructive with the pent up energy. Pitch into some physical activity or something constructive you can see for your efforts.
4. **Give in occasionally.** If you find yourself getting into frequent quarrels with people, and feeling obstinate and defiant, remember that's the way frustrated children behave. Stand your ground on what you know is right, but do so calmly and make allowance for the fact that you could turn out to be wrong. If you are flexible and considerate you'll usually find that others will be too.
5. **Do something for others.** If you feel yourself worrying about your own concerns, try doing something for somebody else. This will help displace preoccupied negativity and allow for altruism to give you a positive feeling and a sense that you matter and that you can help make a difference in somebody's life.
6. **Take one thing at a time.** For people under tension, an ordinary work load can sometimes seem unbearable. Take a few of the most urgent tasks and pitch into

them, one at a time, setting aside all the rest for the time being. Once you dispose of these you'll see that what remains is not such a terrible mess after all.

7. **Shun the superman urge.** Some people expect too much from themselves and get into a constant state of worry and anxiety because they think they are not achieving as much as they should. Decide which things you do well and then put your major effort into these. Then, perhaps, come the things you can't do so well. Give them the best of your efforts but don't take yourself to task if you can't achieve the impossible.
8. **Go easy with criticism.** Some people expect too much of others and then feel frustrated, let down, disappointed when another person does not measure up. Remember, each person has their own virtues, their own shortcomings, their own values, their own right to develop as an individual as they see fit. Instead of being critical about the other person's behavior, search out the good points and help them develop those points.
9. **Give the other person a break.** When people are under emotional tension, they often feel that they have to get there first to edge out the other person. Competition is contagious, but so is co-operation. When you give the other person a break, you very often make things much easier for yourself.

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This coaching program offers you the opportunity to work one-on-one with your own coach, Mark Kent. You will receive laser-focused, proven effective techniques designed to improve your health, increase your motivation at home and work, and to empower your life.

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In next month's issue:

- The Expert Mind (Innate or Learned)
- The Power of Laughter .
- The 3 "I's" of Stress Management .

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