



## Predicting and Ensuring Success

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William James, a human performance expert was the first educator to offer a psychology course in the United States. He said, *“Men the world over possess amounts of resources that only exceptional individuals push to their extreme use. We have a habit of inferiority to our full self. Compared to what we ought to be we are only half awake.”*

### **Can we predict and ensure success?**

Abraham Lincoln comes to mind. He was a self-starter and change oriented, driving results rather than just performing activities. Lincoln’s steadfast drive seemed to be harnessed to him as a personal quality. It was genetic. He persevered from teaching himself to read up to teaching himself to be an attorney even though his father had little use for education. Lincoln viewed setbacks, failures and successes in the same category—learning. He predicted and ensured his success through intelligence, and Grit.

Grit is defined as a positive, non-cognitive trait based on one’s desire for a particular long-term goal harnessed to commitment and powerful motivation for achievement. Strong perseverance underlies an unyielding single-minded focus where impediments are viewed as expected, part of the territory. They are to be surmounted.

Grit was recently researched and labeled by [Angela Duckworth](#). She describes Grit as: *“The tendency to sustain interest in and effort toward very long-term goals (Duckworth et al., 2007). Self-control is the voluntary regulation of behavioral, emotional, and attentional impulses in the presence of momentarily gratifying temptations or diversions (Duckworth & Seligman, 2005; Duckworth & Steinberg, in press).”* You can take the Grit Scale assessment [here](#).

The nomenclature for such an effort is words like hardiness, ambition, resilience, unbending, tenacity and ambition. Grit is more related to workhorse accomplishment than intellectual ability but one can easily grasp how when integrated, they (Grit and intellectual ability) would compliment one another to ensure success.

Based on what I experience with clients I think it's an integrated approach that helps predict and ensure success. When I see differing levels of intellect, desire, drive and focus, I realize that no one is 100 times smarter than another. It is more how particular strengths and traits are integrated into the effort to develop.

Early on talent and capacity is latent and often misdiagnosed as lacking altogether. In the book [Mastery: The keys to success and long-term fulfillment](#), author George Leonard interviewed master athletes and they stressed hard work and experience over raw talent.

In his book [The Element: How Finding Your Passion Changes Everything](#), Author Sir Ken Robinson recalls an anecdote about Sir Paul McCartney who was told by his music teacher that he didn't have much talent. George Harrison was in that class too and told something similar. Here was a teacher who had half the Beatles in his class, and missed it! What are we missing in our students?

We are missing what we miss in everyone. Talent and capacity must be developed and to predict and ensure success they need Grit and support.

**Those who do push their limits do things in life that most people won't do and they are ensured to live a life most people can't.**

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