

Counseling Corner: Practicing Grit

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Why does grit matter?

One way to think about grit is to consider what grit isn't. Grit isn't talent. Grit isn't luck. Grit isn't how intensely, for the moment you want something.

Instead, grit is about having a goal you care about so much that it organizes and gives meaning to almost everything you do. And grit is holding steadfast to that goal over time. Even when you fall down. Even when you mess up. Even when progress toward that goal is halting or slow.

Talent and luck can lead to success. But talent and luck are no guarantee of grit. And in the very long run, grit may matter as least as much, if not more, to what you achieve.

What does grit look like?

Students with grit might

- Develop and deepening their interests
- Stick with commitments, even when it's difficult
- Not quit a sport in the middle of the season
- Revise an essay repeatedly
- Ask other people for feedback about how they can improve

Try these tips to foster grit in your child:

1. **Encourage Effort**- Share a situation that required you to confront a challenge. If your child knows how you overcame a struggle, it will help them to build confidence to do the same. Then, acknowledge their efforts when they show grit. Be specific: Instead of just saying "Good job!" try, "Your daily practice at the pool paid off when you nailed the dive at the swim meet."
2. **Jump the Bumps**- Help your child learn to handle setbacks by making "stretch" goals for themselves. For example, if they received a poor English grade, they might work toward better

grades on essays. Their “stretches” could be to improve their thesis statements, to include more evidence to support their points, and to spend 15 minutes each night writing in a journal. Achieving tougher goals will give them grit to keep going further (Scholastic, 2018).

