



# REFLECTIONS



## Grit versus Talent

Would you rather be talented, or be tough? It's an interesting question.

The all-stars and peak performers we see on social media seem to have a lot of talent, and many of them do. ***But having the resolve to continue under any circumstance can be much more valuable, and can be applied to all areas of life.***

As we heard from Dr Keith Keating on Episode 27 of the Dauntless podcast- grit and resiliency have been absolutely critical to his success. He described how his journey has been rooted in a commitment to learning, growing and simply-figuring things out. He doesn't view himself as unusually "talented," rather- he is able to dig deep on any concept or goal, and figure out the steps to achieve that goal. He is relentless in his pursuit of knowledge or a skill, and he simply does not give up until he hits that target.

His final advice was to "never give up, and never stop learning."

So, going back to the question: would you rather be talented, or be tough?

### **Talent has advantages, but is often overrated:**

1. **Talent can make the journey easier.** If you have talent for a particular area, such as music, you'll have an easier time making progress. The journey is smoother and faster.
2. **Talent is insufficient.** Talent doesn't eliminate the need for practice. Talent without practice is no more valuable than not having the talent in the first place. The high-performers you see on social media have both talent **and** years of intense practice.
3. **Talent isn't a choice.** You can't choose to have a particular talent. You either have it or you don't. Ideally, your interests and talents are in alignment.
4. **Talent is only necessary at the highest levels.** Can you be the world's greatest pianist or golfer without talent? Probably not. But you can achieve

extraordinary goals playing the piano or playing golf without much talent provided you work hard enough and long enough.

This is not to imply that talent is “bad.” In fact- there’s nothing wrong with being talented. The more talent, the better. But talent isn’t enough to ensure success. ***It only determines the extreme upper limits of your success.*** It also makes progress easier and faster.

**But grit can be enough to ensure success in all areas of life:**

1. **Grit is enough to achieve 99% of your goals.** Forget about talent. If you have the ability to persist and maintain a positive attitude, you can be successful at almost anything.
2. **Anyone can have grit. *Grit is the result of a certain way of thinking and viewing the world.*** You can choose your beliefs and your thoughts. Therefore, you can have grit. Start today. Make yourself do something that you don’t want to do, like clean out your desk or purge your unneeded emails. Be tough and get it done.
3. **Grit begets grit.** Developing grit is like building your biceps. Your ability to demonstrate resolve grows with practice. Make yourself do something each day that’s unappealing.
4. **Grit is calming.** That might seem counterintuitive, but it’s true. When you have determination, you don’t have any choices to make. You simply keep moving forward. Constant self-questioning is stressful and exhausting. When you only have a single choice, life is simpler. Having too many choices creates anxiety.

Grit is among the most important attributes to possess. ***Grit can overcome a lack of talent in most situations.*** Unless you need to be in the top 0.25% of something, talent is irrelevant. It only makes the journey a little easier.

Grit versus talent, which is better? The amount of grit you possess is more relevant than the amount of talent you possess. Talent is nice to have. It’s like having a sports car instead of a new economy sedan. Both will take you to the same place. One just takes longer.

***But all the talent in the world is useless if it isn’t applied diligently. The ability to persist during any challenge is the key to long-term success.***

Take control of your beliefs on success, and your perspective on life. Believe that persistence is more important than talent. Hopefully, you have some of both. If you can only have one, grit is much more valuable.