True Grit and a Growth Mindset: The Secrets of Success for Women Lawyers
True Grit and a Growth Mindset
The Secrets of Success for Women Lawyers
Introducing The Grit Project
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- Director of Legal Recruiting & Professional Development at Sullivan & Cromwell LLP
- Ed.D, University of Pennsylvania
Agenda for Today

• Introduction
• The Research on Grit & Mindset
• The Lawyer’s Perspective
• Practical Application: 2-3 Scenarios
• How We Can Improve These Traits
• Conclusion & Next Steps
“The differences between expert performers and normal adults are not immutable, that is, due to genetically prescribed talent. Instead, these differences reflect a life-long period of deliberate effort to improve performance.”

-K. Anders Ericsson
The Secret of Success

The Grit Project

Grit

Mindset

Success
What is Mindset?

• Mindsets are beliefs about yourself and your most basic qualities.
  • Am I intelligent?
  • Am I brave?
  • Am I strong?

• Fixed mindset vs. growth mindset
The Science of Mindset

• A couple of examples of how mindset works:
  • Junior high school math students
  • Female graduate students
How Do You Compare?

• Average mindset score for women in BigLaw:
  • 44 points out of 80 (an average of 2.75 on a scale of 1 to 5)

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Points Value</th>
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<td>Strong Growth Mindset</td>
<td>61-80</td>
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<tr>
<td>Growth Mindset, Some Fixed Ideas</td>
<td>41-60</td>
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<tr>
<td>Fixed Mindset, Some Growth Ideas</td>
<td>21-40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strong Fixed Mindset</td>
<td>0-20</td>
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• Mindset scores tended to be lower than grit scores.
Some of Our Growth Mindset Experiences
What does it mean to be gritty?

- *Behavioral persistence* in the face of adversity
- *Sustained, passionate pursuit* of goals
  - Passion doesn’t always precede grit.
Grit and Success

- Teach for America (GPA, SAT, effectiveness)
- Sales (commission, retention)
- The National Spelling Bee (deliberate practice)
# How Do You Compare?

## The Grit Project

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Decile</th>
<th>Men (N = 4,169)</th>
<th>Women (N = 6,972)</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>2.5</td>
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<td>7</td>
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<td><strong>Women Lawyers in BigLaw</strong></td>
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<td><strong>3.94</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>8</td>
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<td>10</td>
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<td>5</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Mean (SD)</strong></td>
<td><strong>3.37 (0.66)</strong></td>
<td><strong>3.43 (0.68)</strong></td>
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Grit in the Legal Setting: Some of Our Gritty Experiences
Hogan’s 2013 Study

- The Non-Cognitive Traits that Impact Female Success in BigLaw
  - Random sampling of AmLaw 200 Firms
  - Mixed methods approach

- Limitations of the data
  - Self-report
  - Considers only those who are still in the game
  - Not longitudinal
• Women lawyers are pretty gritty!

• Grit is related to a number of measures of success in BigLaw and most significantly to billable hours and quality of work.

• Grit seems to be a precursor to BigLaw success rather than an outcome of BigLaw success.

• Grit is largely monotonic (meaning that people tend to get grittier over time).
What We Know About Women Lawyers and Mindset

• Many highly successful female lawyers display growth mindset characteristics when dealing with challenging situations.
  • But there is significant room for improvement for women lawyers generally.
Practical Application

Working Through Some Real-World Scenarios

(Videos)
How Can We Improve These Traits?

• Learn how to handle and learn from failure.
• Learn how to receive criticism.
• Learn how to give criticism (praise efforts, not outcomes).
• Be realistically optimistic.
• Identify your passions.
• Provide meaning and context for assignments.
How Can We Improve These Traits?

• Specialize.
• Don’t assume that you can’t do it.
• Try on a growth mindset.
• Educate your lawyers.
• Spread the word!
Program Toolkit

- Program Agenda
- PowerPoint Slides
- Core Reading & Handouts
- Library of Scenarios & Discussion Guide
- Speakers Bureau
- Bibliography

Now available online at no cost
ambar.org/grit
Thank you for joining us today, and please help us spread the word!

For more information and to download the Toolkit, visit the ABA Commission on Women in the Profession website at ambar.org/grit.
Program Evaluation

Please stay online…
The program evaluation link will appear shortly.
Click on the link to take the program evaluation.