Grit and Resilience: Key Components of Personal and Family Growth

(A Working Paper)

Brian Ashton
Brigham Young University - Idaho
Rexburg, Idaho
1. Introduction
2. Resilience & Grit Defined
3. Cultivating Resilience
4. Cultivating Grit
5. Questions
Deeply Significant Learning about Resilience & Grit:

- Correct Principles
- Research Based
- Has Staying Power
- Provide Application Tools

JOY

2 Nephi 2:25 - Adam fell that men might be; and men are, that they might have joy.
Why Do We Need Grit & Resilience?

Grit
Can help us achieve long-term goals

Resilience
Can help us deal with the stress and challenges of life

Similar skills – Different Context
Resilience

• The capability of a strained body to recover its size and shape after deformation caused especially by compressive stress


• An ability to recover from or adjust easily to misfortune or change


Psychological Resilience

• A person’s tendency to cope with stress and adversity


• “Bouncing back” (Rutter, 2008)

• Posttraumatic Growth or ‘Steeling Effects’ (Rutter, 2008)

PASSION

+  

PERSEVERANCE

FOR LONG TERM GOALS

(Duckworth, Peterson, Matthews, & Kelly 2007)
What does resilience look like in action?

Click on the YouTube Video (above). View the first two minutes.
What is Resilience?

When we CHOOSE to face our challenges, hard choices, weaknesses, or our own fears and insecurities . . .

. . . DESPITE not knowing the outcome.
“Many things in life are beyond our control – our eye color, our race, the drought in the Midwest. But there is a vast, unclaimed territory of actions over which we can take control – or cede control to others or to fate. These actions involve the way we lead our lives, how we deal with other people, how we earn our living – all aspects of existence in which we normally have some degree of choice.

The way we think about this realm of life can actually diminish or enlarge the control we have over it. *Our thoughts are not merely reactions to events; they change what ensues.*

- Martin Seligman (Learned Optimism, pg. 15-16)

2 Nephi 2:27 – Wherefore, men are free according to the flesh; and all things are given them which are expedient unto man. And they are free to choose liberty and eternal life, through the great Mediator of all men, or to choose captivity and death, according to the captivity and power of the devil; for he seeketh that all men might be miserable like unto himself.

Tool #2 – Growth Mindset

Examine Your Mindset:
“Mindsets are beliefs – beliefs about yourself and your most basic qualities. Think about your intelligence, your talents, your personality. Are these qualities simply fixed traits, carved in stone and that’s that? Or are they things you can cultivate throughout your life.”

- Carol Dweck Ph.D. Professor of Psychology, Stanford University,

Fixed Mindset
Your intelligence, personality, character, and basic qualities are fixed traits.

Growth Mindset
Your intelligence, personality, character, and basic qualities can be developed through dedication and effort.
**Fixed Mindset**

Your intelligence, personality, character, and basic qualities are fixed traits.

**Outcomes:**

- We spend time comparing instead of developing
- Creates the belief that talent generates success
- Creates a need to prove yourself
- Each situation is measured by – *Will I succeed or fail? Will I look smart or dumb? Will I be accepted or rejected? Will I feel like a winner or a loser?*
- *We view the world by label (smart vs. dumb; likeable vs. unlikeable; athletic vs. A spaz; spiritual vs.*
Growth Mindset

Your Intelligence, personality, character, and basic qualities can be developed through dedication and effort.

Outcomes:

- Failure and mistakes do not define you, they simply become opportunities to learn and grow.
- Intelligence, character, even our personality traits can be developed through effort.
- You do not have to prove your intelligence, your character, or talent level to others.

Growth Mindset:

“Yes, I really did just do that, BUT . . . I CAN GROW!!!”
What are other possible outcomes of believing we can grow and develop?
What areas of your life would be impacted if you simply live by the belief that you can grow?
In what areas of your life do you have fixed mindsets?
What could you let go of in your life if you simply live by the belief that you can grow?
What does the concept of ‘I Can Grow’ have to do with the plan of our Heavenly Father?

“We have all seen a toddler learn to walk. He takes a small step and totters. He falls. Do we scold such an attempt? Of course not. What father would punish a toddler for stumbling? We encourage, we applaud, and we praise because with every small step, the child is becoming more like his parents. . . . Compared to the perfection of God, we mortals are scarcely more than awkward, faltering toddlers. But our loving Heavenly Father wants us to become more like Him, and, dear brethren, that should be our eternal goal too. God understands that we get there not in an instant but by taking one step at a time. . . . I believe in a Heavenly Father who is loving and caring and who rejoices in our every effort to stand tall and walk toward Him. Even when we stumble, He urges us not to be discouraged—never to give up or flee our allotted field of service—but to take courage, find our faith, and keep trying.”


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Praising Children – Messages about Success & Failure

- Don’t stress – Your kids are going to be okay!
- Process and Growth vs. Talent and Intelligence

**Praising Talent & Intelligence:**

- “You learned that so quickly! You’re so smart!”
- “Look at that drawing. Is he the next Picasso or what?”
- “You’re so brilliant, you got an A without even studying!”

*(Dweck, pp. 174-175)*

**Possible Hidden Messages:**

- “If I don’t learn something quickly, I’m not smart.”
- “I shouldn’t try drawing anything hard or they’ll see I’m no Picasso.”
- “I’d better quit studying or they won’t think I’m brilliant.”

*(Dweck, pp. 174-175)*

Doom Loop Thoughts -

• Cognitive Behavioral Therapy:
  o Automatic Thoughts
  o Thinking Errors (Branch & Wilson, 2010)

• They Create behaviors that are the opposite of Resiliency. Behaviors that are -
  o Self-destructive
  o Isolating and mood-depressing
  o Avoidant. (Branch & Wilson, 2010)
Spot Your Doom Loop Thinking

1. Catastrophizing
2. All-or-Nothing Thinking
3. Predicting Possible Outcomes (a.k.a. analysis paralysis)
4. Mind-Reading
5. Emotional Reasoning
6. Overgeneralizing – “Global Conclusions”
7. Labelling – People and Events
9. Mental Filtering/Disqualifying the Positive
10. Personalizing

Track Your Own Thoughts

- Keep a Notepad
- 3+ Days
- 2 Columns - Generally Positive vs. Generally Negative
- Is there a pattern? What triggers your doom loop thoughts?
"Ordinary happiness depends on happenstance.

Joy is that extraordinary happiness that is independent of what happens to us. Good luck can make us happy, but it cannot give us lasting joy. The root of joy is gratefulness. We tend to misunderstand the link between joy and gratefulness. We notice that joyful people are grateful and suppose that they are grateful for their joy. But the reverse is true: their joy springs from gratefulness. If one has all the good luck in the world, but takes it for granted, it will not give one joy. Yet even bad luck will give joy to those who manage to be grateful for it.

We hold the key to lasting happiness in our own hands. For it is not joy that makes us grateful; it is gratitude that makes us joyful."

(David Steindl-Rast, Gratefulness, 1984)
Tool #6 Mindfulness & Stress Reduction

- Learning to be aware of and process our Emotions
- Our emotions are Real
  - Validation of others emotions
  - Vital to Relationships
- Harmful Stress
- Meditation and Stress reducing exercises
  - Best/Worst Case Scenarios
  - Muscle/Mental relaxation
Tool #7 – Enjoy the Journey

Which quadrant do you find yourself in?

Future

- **Rat Race**: Sacrifice present enjoyment to be happy in the future. “No-pain-no-gain.”
  Destinational Happiness.

- **Happiness**: Present & Future Benefit
  Enjoy the Journey

Present

- **Nihilism**: Chained to the Past
  Resigned to present unhappiness and expect same in future.
  “Learned Helplessness”

- **Hedonism**: Seeks pleasure and avoids pain.
  Effort = pain
  Line in the moment despite future consequences

“Happier” Tal Ben-Shahur, 2012
Happiness

Pleasure

Meaning
Consider Happiness and Joy

Merriam-Webster Definition (online):

• **Happiness** – “a state of well being; a pleasurable or satisfying experience.”
• **Joy** – “a feeling of great happiness; the emotion evoked by well-being, success, or good fortune or by the prospect of possessing what one desires.”

**So . . . What is happiness?**

• How do YOU define happiness? Is it different than Joy?
• Reflect on times when you have experienced happiness?
Other Resources on Resilience

American Psychology Association
“10 Ways to Build Resilience”

1. Make Connections
2. Avoid seeing crises as insurmountable problems
3. Accept that change is a part of living
4. Move toward your goals
5. Take decisive actions
6. Look for opportunities for self-discovery
7. Nurture a positive view of yourself
8. Keep things in perspective
9. Maintain a hopeful outlook
10. Take care of yourself