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Building Grit

Since the beginning of my career, I knew I wanted a legal education to marry my accounting expertise with my business acumen. So, in the Fall of 2001, I entered Pacific Coast University, School of Law's part-time program. During law school, I was a wife working full-time and a new mom to our daughter. As daunting as this may seem, I was ready for the challenge. School never

came easy for me. However, as a student, I learned to tackle challenges through setting goals, then working to achieve those goals through hard work and commitment. It takes perseverance and passion to rise above challenges, and a long-term goal serves as a light at the end of a seemingly never-ending tunnel.

Angela Duckworth, author and psychology professor at the University of Pennsylvania, defined this willingness to persevere in pursuit of long-term goals as "grit." This definition of grit resonates with me. Based on her studies, she found that grit is an important

predictor of success. When looking at who was successful and who wasn't – it was more about effort than IQ and talent. For successful people, Duckworth found that the journey was just as important as the result. The effort you put toward your goals – perseverance – and your dedication throughout your journey – passion – are what matter. This is good news for all of us. It means if you roll up your sleeves, put in hard work and have passion, you can succeed.

Duckworth also highlighted, which I whole-heartedly believe, that we all have the power to increase our grit, no matter what stage of life we're in. Each one of us has it and can cultivate it. It's about being constantly driven to improve. Success requires commitment to improvement and the ability to overcome challenges and failure. I know my achievements are because of my grit – my sustained focus, hard work and passion.

As we're in another school year with goals small and large, what better time than now, for all of us – students, teachers, parents and mentors – to consider Duckworth's tips:

- model grit
- encourage curiosity and questions
- provide feedback that is supportive and demanding

Let's all encourage each other to build grit and have a successful school year!

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