

Grit is One of the Necessary Factors for Success

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Respected provost, Miss Wu and everybody, good morning and good afternoon. My name is Liu Siyu. Today I am very happy to present you the topic about Grit is One of the Necessary Factors for Success. First of all, I will tell you why I chose this topic. Secondly, I will repeat some contents in the lecture of Venerable Chengde to help you understand this topic. Finally, I will give some historical stories and examples to summarize.

I once heard a Ted talk, Dr. Angela Duckworth shared her observations during her tenure as a teacher that the difference between the best and the worst students is not just IQ. The strongest performers did not have strongest IQ scores. Some of her smartest kids are not doing so well. And that inspired her curiosity about the relationship between talent and achievement. After leaving teaching, she became a psychologist. She found that there was a trait that could well predict success. It is not social intelligence, not good looks physical health, and it was not IQ. It was grit. Grit is passion and perseverance for very long-term goals. She said:‘ The data shows very clearly that there are many talented individuals who simply do not follow through on their commitments. In fact, in our data, grit is usually unrelated or even inversely related to measures of talent.’ I have not had perseverance since I was a child. I can often give up to learn that skill after two or three years. Some of them are even shorter. It called summer holiday classes. That is, I study for two months during the summer vacation and then abandon them. However, when I grow up and start to take the initiative to learn, I will find that it was easy to give up or withdraw when I encountered difficulties, which leads to a lot of things I cannot do well. So I really hope I can build up my perseverance.

At the beginning of the lecture, the Venerable Chengde explained the learning attitude we should have. The third point is persistence. The Venerable Chengde said: This is very important, because we should not only have determination, but also perseverance when we study. In the *Book of Taishang Ganying Pian Huibian*, it mentioned that plants such as willow and poplar can sprout at night when plant it in the morning. However, pine and cypress are not like this. Many weeds will affect its growth, and many cattle and sheep will trample it on the ground. But it can stand the test and grow into a thousand year old tree.¹ So do not try to achieve success quickly. If you want to achieve success quickly, you will often fail. In the *Based on 360 passages excerpted from the original compilation of Qunshu Zhiyao*, the first page said: ‘朝華之草，夕而零落；松柏之茂，隆冬不衰。²The flowers that bloom in the morning wither at night, while the pines and cypresses can resist the cold winter’ Therefore, people with real virtue and insight are very taboo to achieve success quickly. So there was a old saying that a person has success in early youth that is a very bad thing. This makes sense. Because if our mentality cannot insist on doing something, but want having achievement as soon as possible, we cannot learn well. So Confucius also reminded us that haste makes waste, and focusing on small profits will make great things fail. Whether we learn a skill or do a thing, if we cannot maintain perseverance, then most things will not be successful. There is an idiom "give up halfway 半途而廢" to describe doing or learning without perseverance, resulting in things not being done successfully and skills not being mastered. Therefore, the original text said that "今世信善者非無人，而堅永者不多得。³", that means there is not no one who believes in good deeds and receives good returns, but there are few people who can persist in doing it for a long time. And fewer people can do not seek

¹ Original text: ‘柳蒲之質。朝種夕發。松柏則不然。困於蓬蒿。厄於牛羊。而後獲千萬年之用。’ *The Book of Taishang Ganying Pian Huibian* 太上感應篇彙編，（Hong Kong: HONG KONG BUDDHIST EDUCATION FOUNDATION LTD. 2013）p.20.

² *Based on 360 passages excerpted from the original compilation of Qunshu Zhiyao* 群書治要 360，（Taiwan: Taiwan NGO Faren Xiyu Xuehui, 2015）p.2.

³ *The Book of Taishang Ganying Pian Huibian* 太上感應篇彙編，p.20.

good returns, and their confidence will not waver. Why are there so few people who can persist? Why? Original text said: 由其略行數事, 間值坎坷, 即謬謂天道難知, 前修頓廢, 所以皆欲速之心誤之也, 故積德而弱者, 福之基。⁴ It means that he has done some good deeds, but encountered some frustrations in the process, he misunderstood the truth and said that the natural law is difficult to understand, which means that his confidence has been shaken. The achievement and virtues that he has practiced before are all denied at once, and he even complains. So the achievement and virtues are nullified. Why is this so? It is because he does not have enough blessings. So the willingness to do, the willingness to persist in doing is a person with good fortune. So people who can understand what the master said have goodness talent, and can persevere doing right things have blessing.

In the *Book of Taishang Ganyingpian*, the last paragraph is: ‘If a person does three good deeds a day and sticks to them for three years, the nature law will surely send him blessings. if a man does three evil deeds a day, then the nature law will surely send him disasters.’⁵ In fact, it is clear from this that we are encouraged to persist in accumulating good deeds every day, so that we can change our destiny. In the *Book of Taishang Ganyingpian*, there were many examples of good deeds that have changed one's destiny, but also many examples of bad deeds that have led to bad results. In addition, in the long history of mankind, all those who have achieved great things do not necessarily have extraordinary talents, but they also have a strong and persistent will. For example, although Confucius' student Zeng Zi was called dullness by his teachers, he insisted on reflecting on himself every day and was very respectful of everyone and everything, and eventually inherited Confucius' mantle. Zeng Guofan, a minister of the Qing Dynasty, was not at all gifted as a child, and was often laughed at as a "foolish person". It is said that he had to read even a very short essay dozens of times before he could recite it. However, Zeng Guofan knew the shame and courage,

⁴ *The Book of Taishang Ganying Pian Huibian* 太上感應篇彙編, p.20.

⁵ Original text: ‘一日有三善, 三年, 天必降之福……一日有三惡, 天必降之禍。’ *Tractate of the Most High One on Actions and Consequences* 太上感應篇, Collected in *Sheng Xue Gen Zhi Gen* 聖學根之根・第六冊, (Taipei: World Book Company, 2016), P.8. Trans. by myself.

studied hard and strived for improvement. Through his unremitting efforts, he finally became a rare personnel in the society at that time. Helen Keller's eyesight and hearing were taken away by her illness as a child, but she eventually became a great educator and writer in the world through the continuous teaching of her teachers and her own diligent study. And we now rely on the daily survival of the electric light, if not because of Edison's persistent creation of inventions, we may still have to light candles to live. Including the many athletes we know now, the best people in all walks of life, relying only on their own talent is far from enough, but also need to persevere to study hard and improve every day, in order to become the best in an industry. In short, if you have talent but no perseverance, then you will not necessarily succeed. If you have perseverance and can persevere in doing good deeds but lack talent, then you will one day succeed, and this success does not mean how much money you can make or how much status you can achieve, but that you can definitely gain the respect of others. Finally find the true meaning of your life.

That is all for my presentation today, thank you for listening.

Bibliography

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