

MONTA VISTA ATHLETICS

CHARACTER LAB

SESSION 2.1, 29 SEPTEMBER 2025

# INTRODUCTION TO GRIT



# COACH KIRK FLATOW



- Master of Applied Positive Psychology (MAPP) University of Pennsylvania
- MBA University of Chicago
- BS Santa Clara University
  
- USA Track & Field Level 3 Coach
- International Association of Athletic Federations (IAAF) Level 5 Coach
  
- Monta Vista High School, Head Cross and Track coach since 2011 (29 seasons)
- Johns Hopkins University, Assistant Track Coach 2024
- San Lorenzo Valley High School, Volunteer Cross and Track Coach 2009-2010
- Leukemia-Lymphoma Society, Team in Training Marathon Coach 2008-2010
  
- Senior Vice President, Licensing & Business Development, Tessera Technologies
- President, Novera Optics
- President, Broadband Access Networking Division, Harmonic Lightwaves
- Vice President, North American Sales, Flextronics
- Co-Founder, nCHIP Technologies
- Consultant, Bain & Company

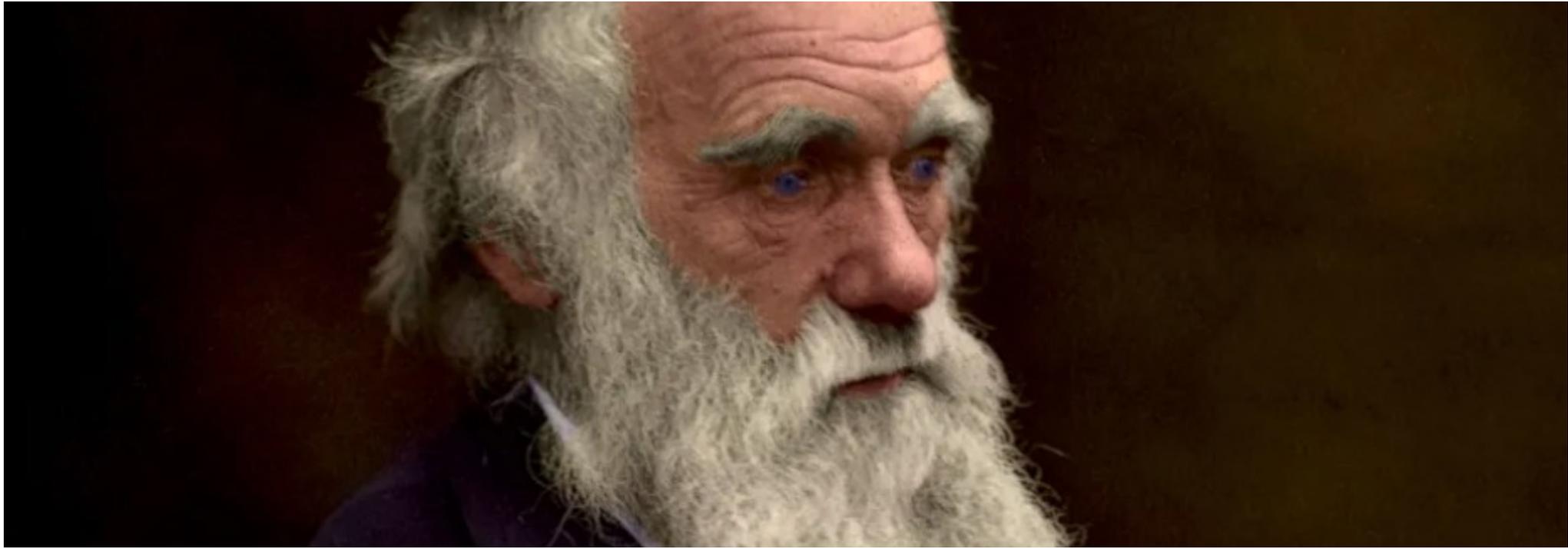
HOW  
WOULD  
YOU  
DESCRIBE  
GRIT?



[https://youtu.be/doqS35FfcUE?si=\\_\\_-x5WacCEdSgngg](https://youtu.be/doqS35FfcUE?si=__-x5WacCEdSgngg)



WHAT DO HIGH ACHIEVERS  
HAVE IN COMMON?



I have always maintained that...men did not differ much in intellect, only in zeal and hard work.”

-Charles Darwin



CATHARINE  
COX MILES  
STANFORD  
STUDY OF 301  
“GENIOUSES”

- The tendency not to abandon tasks from mere changeability.
- Not seeking something fresh for the sake of novelty.
- Not simply looking for a change.
- The tendency not to abandon tasks in the face of obstacles.
- **Perseverance.**
- **Tenacity.**
- **Doggedness.**



# ANGELA DUCKWORTH AND GRIT





**Grit** is the  
passion and  
perseverance  
for long-term  
goals.

*~Angela  
Duckworth*

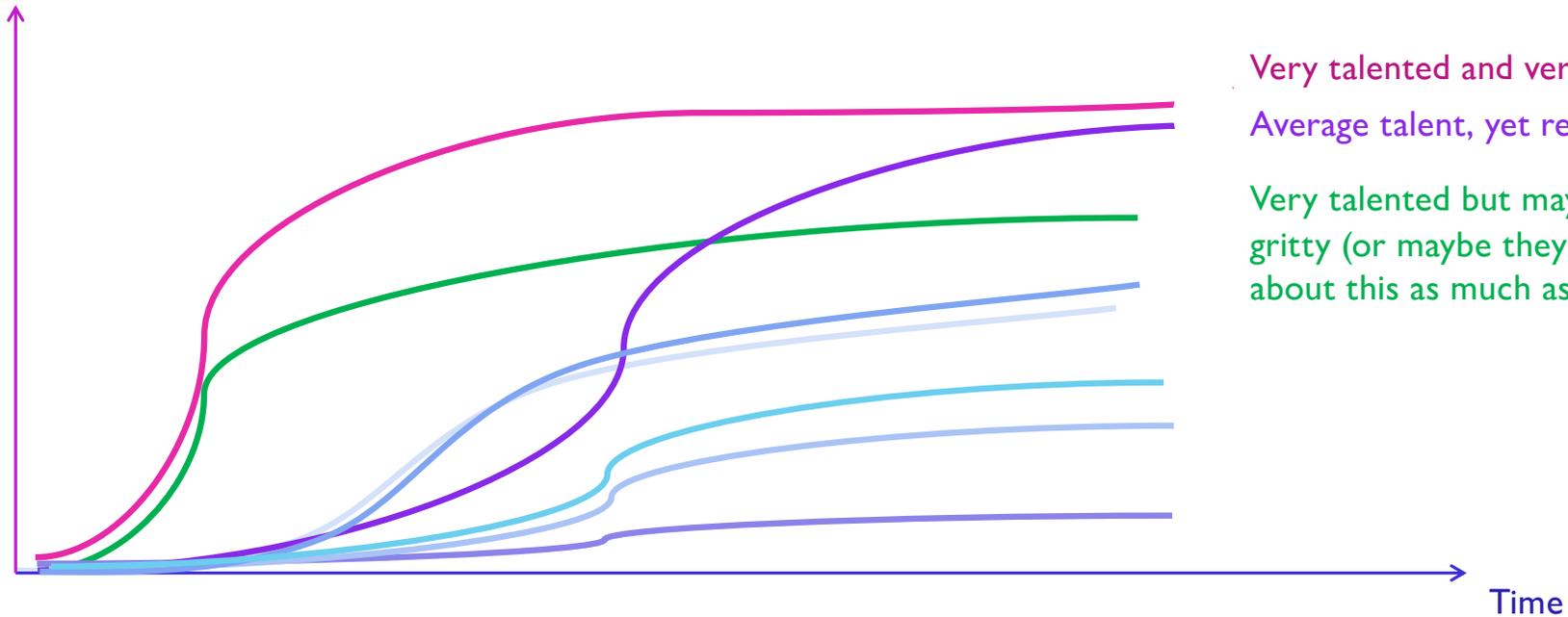


## **T A L E N T**

Talent is a natural aptitude that enables an individual to perform a task or activity with relative ease.

# WHAT ROLE DOES TALENT PLAY?

Skill level



Very talented and very gritty

Average talent, yet really, really gritty

Very talented but maybe not quite as gritty (or maybe they just don't care about this as much as the others)

**TALENT AFFECTS THE RATE OF SKILL ACQUISITION**

# WHAT ROLE DOES TALENT PLAY?



**TALENT AFFECTS THE RATE OF SKILL ACQUISITION**



**TALENT MATTERS, BUT  
PASSION AND  
PERSEVERANCE MAKE  
AS MUCH OR MORE OF A  
DIFFERENCE**



**GRITTY  
TRAITS**

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Pursuing a passion over long periods of time.

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Willingness to practice the hard parts of a skill, as well as the fun parts.

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No short cuts; instead, a belief that skill can be developed by sustained effort.



## SELF - ASSESSMENT

### WHERE ARE WE NOW?

- Angela has some detailed surveys used to measure grit
- Used at the U.S. military academy, new teacher studies, athletics, spelling bees.
- You can find some on-line too.
- This is a two-question survey she used in her UPenn class.

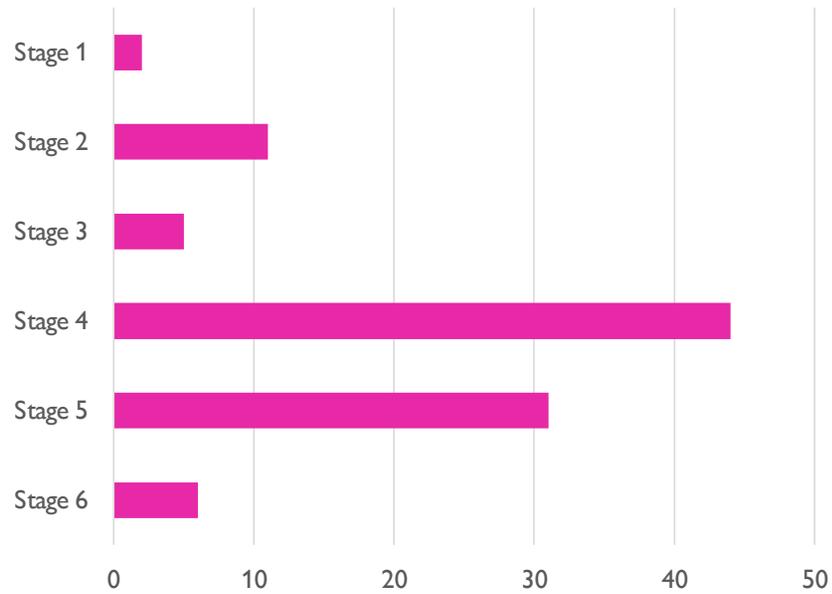
**PASSION  
RUBRIC**  
CHOOSE THE  
STAGE YOU FEEL  
YOU ARE IN  
RIGHT NOW

Stage 1: I am equally interested in pretty much everything but not especially committed to any one interest.	
Stage 2: I have 2 or 3 emerging interests but am unsure how to figure out which one to pursue.	
Stage 3: I am actively figuring out what my interests are by trying one or more of them out in some way.	
Stage 4: I have an interest that I am pursuing, voluntarily devoting more than three hours of “free time” each week.	
Stage 5: I have an interest that is not only enjoyable but also aligns with my personal values.	
Stage 6: I have an interest that is central to my identity. What I do is important to who I am right now.	

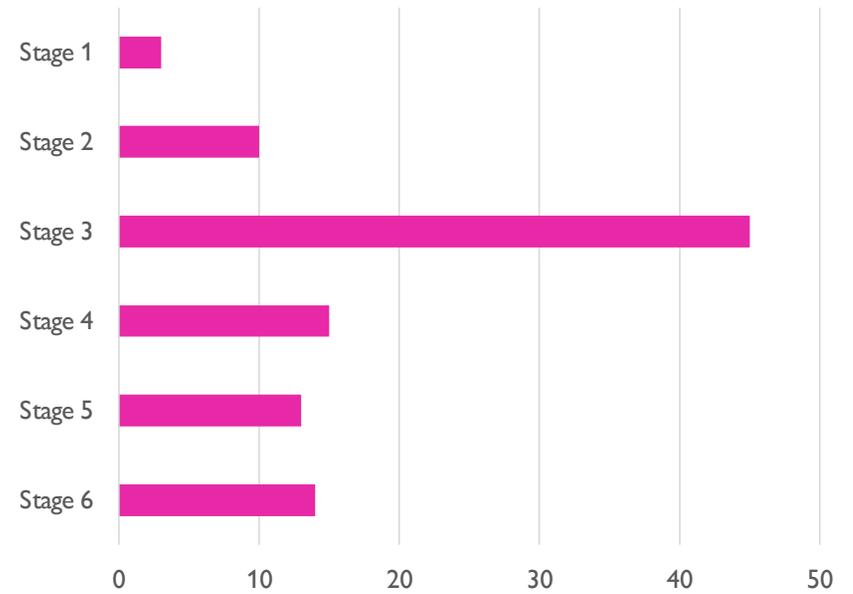
PERSEVERANCE  
RUBRIC  
CHOOSE THE  
STAGE YOU FEEL  
YOU ARE IN  
RIGHT NOW

Stage 1: Other people would tell you that I sometimes fail to do what is explicitly asked of me.	
Stage 2: Other people would tell you that I accomplish pretty much everything that is explicitly asked of me.	
Stage 3: Other people would tell you that I always accomplish what is explicitly asked of me.	
Stage 4: Other people would tell you that I hold myself to a standard that higher than what is explicitly asked of me.	
Stage 5: Other people would tell you that I not only hold myself to a standard that is higher than what is explicitly asked of me, I also actively seek feedback on how to improve.	
Stage 6: Other people would tell you that I have an unquenchable thirst to master whatever I do so that I not only hold myself to a standard that is higher than what is explicitly asked of me, but it also manifests itself as actively seeking mastery.	

Perseverance

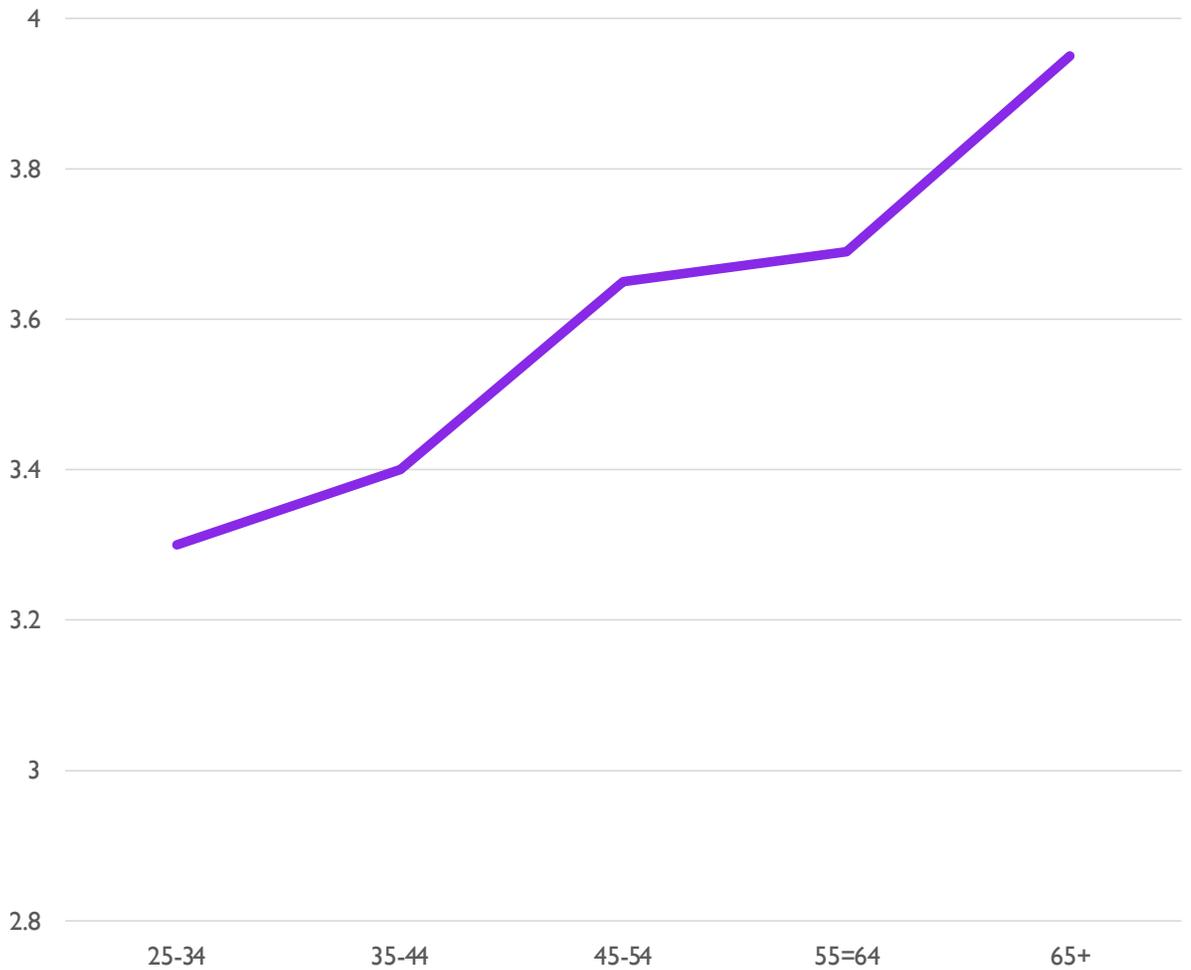


Passion



**UNIVERSITY OF PENNSYLVANIA  
DR DUCKWORTH CLASS RESPONSES**

# AVERAGE GRIT LEVELS BY AGE





**MOST OF US  
WILL BECOME  
GRITTIER AS  
WE AGE... THIS  
CLASS IS  
INTENDED TO  
ACCELERATE  
THE PROCESS**

- Knowledge
- Intentionality



## **SOME GRIT FAQS**

**WHY DOES GRIT  
EVEN MATTER? I  
MEAN...**

**YOLO, COACH.**



## **SOME GRIT FAQS**

**WHY DOES GRIT  
EVEN MATTER? I  
MEAN...**

**YOLO, COACH.**

**ACHIEVEMENTS/  
ACCOMPLISHMENTS  
ARE AN IMPORTANT  
PART OF LIFE  
SATISFACTION AND  
PERSONAL  
HAPPINESS.**



## **SOME GRIT FAQS**

**WHY DOES GRIT  
EVEN MATTER? I  
MEAN...**

**YOLO, COACH.**

**GRIT CAN  
CONTRIBUTE TO  
MANY PARTS OF  
OVERALL LIFE  
SATISFACTION:  
ENGAGEMENT WITH  
ACTIVITIES, OUR  
RELATIONSHIPS,  
MEANING, AND  
ACHIEVEMENTS.**

# SOME GRIT FAQS

IF I QUIT  
SOMETHING, DOES  
THAT MEAN I AM NOT  
GRITTY?



# SOME GRIT FAQS

IF I QUIT SOMETHING,  
DOES THAT MEAN I AM  
NOT GRITTY?

NO (OR, NOT NECESSARILY)!

ESPECIALLY AT YOUR AGE,  
YOU SHOULD BE SAMPLING.

GIVE NEW ACTIVITIES AND  
CHALLENGES A FAIR TRY  
AND QUIT AT A NATURAL  
STOPPING POINT (FOR  
EXAMPLE, THE END OF A  
SEASON OR A CLASS).

GRIT IS NOT SLAVISH  
DEVOTION TO A GOAL; YOU  
CAN CHANGE YOUR MIND.



# SOME GRIT FAQS

DOES GRIT MEAN  
FOCUSING ON ONLY  
ONE THING?



# SOME GRIT FAQS

DOES GRIT MEAN  
FOCUSING ON ONLY ONE  
THING?

NOT NECESSARILY,  
ESPECIALLY AT YOUR AGE.  
YOU NEED TO BE  
SAMPLING. AND YOU HAVE  
SCHOOL.

HOWEVER... SPREADING  
YOURSELF TOO THIN CAN  
MEAN YOU DON'T GIVE  
ANY ONE THING A FAIR  
TRY (DEBATE BECOMES AN  
EXCUSE FOR CROSS COUNTRY  
WHICH IS AN EXCUSE FOR  
JOURNALISM WHICH IS WHY MY  
MATH GRADE WAS...).

ACADEMICS, ATHLETICS,  
AND ONE MORE THING AT  
A TIME MIGHT BE PLENTY



A young woman with dark hair, wearing a purple Asics tank top and a white headband, is smiling and looking towards the camera. She is surrounded by a crowd of people, some wearing athletic gear. The background is slightly blurred, showing other people in various colors like green, blue, and black. The overall scene suggests a sports event or a group of athletes.

# SOME GRIT FAQS

CAN MY GRIT LEVEL  
CHANGE?



# SOME GRIT FAQS

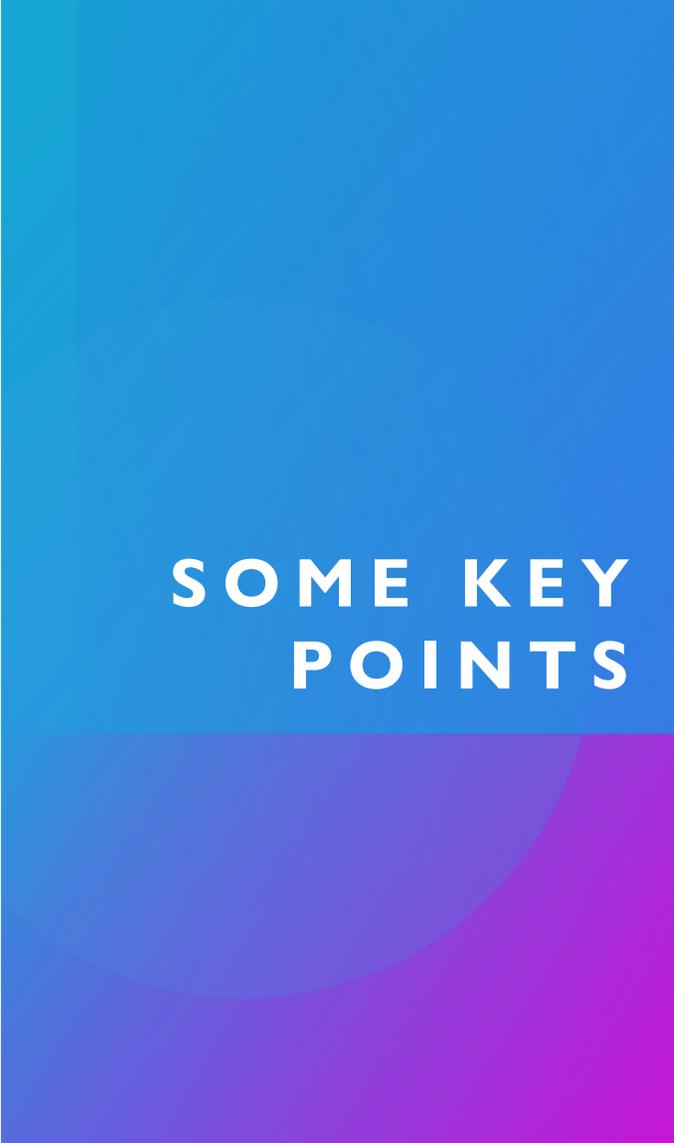
CAN MY GRIT LEVEL CHANGE?

ABSOLUTELY!

OUR GRIT LEVELS TEND TO  
INCREASE WITH AGE (BUT NOT  
ALWAYS)

WE CAN CHOOSE TO BE  
GRITTIER AND TO NURTURE  
OUR GRIT—FOR INSTANCE, BY  
JOINING A GRITTY TEAM.  
INTENTIONALITY MATTERS.

asics



## SOME KEY POINTS

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Grit was defined as the combination of sustained passion and perseverance for long term goals.

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You are still exploring your interests. It is OK to sample. Grit is not slavish devotion to a goal.

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Grit is malleable. All of us have the potential to develop world-class grit.

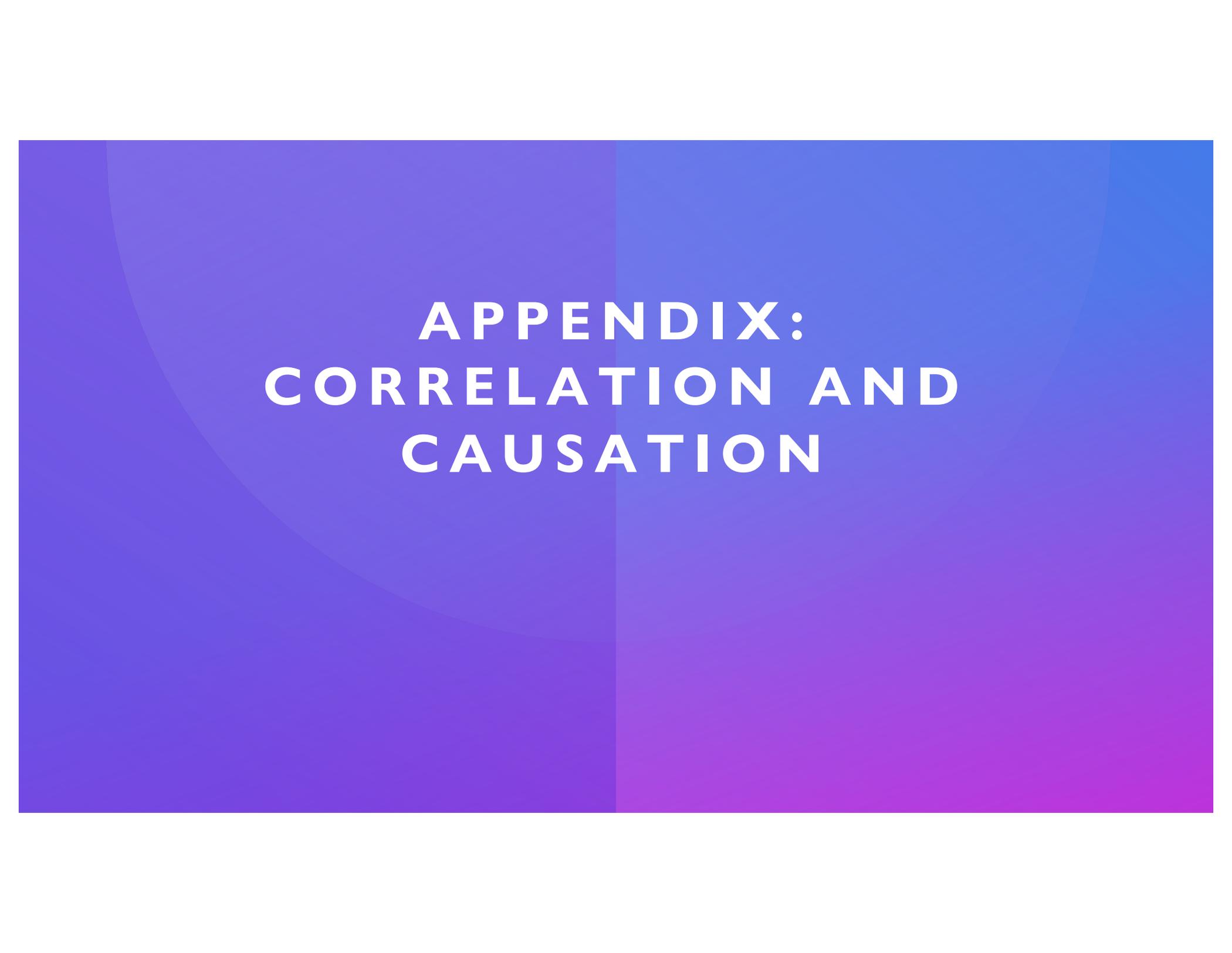


**TALENT MATTERS, BUT  
PASSION AND  
PERSEVERANCE MAKE  
AS MUCH OR MORE OF A  
DIFFERENCE**



## **THAT'S PLENTY FOR DAY ONE! HOUSEKEEPING**

- What did you like/didn't like?
- What can I do more of?
- Start time for future classes

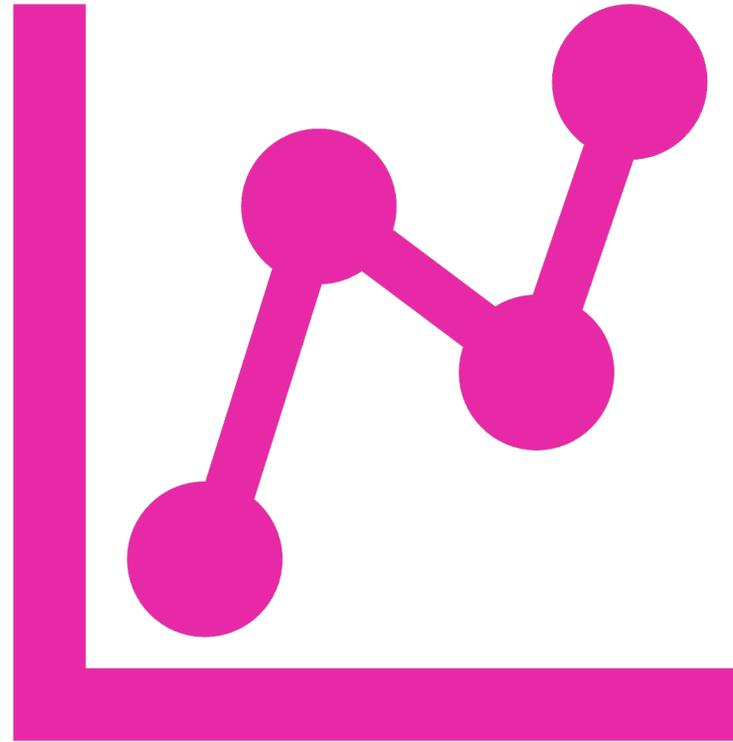


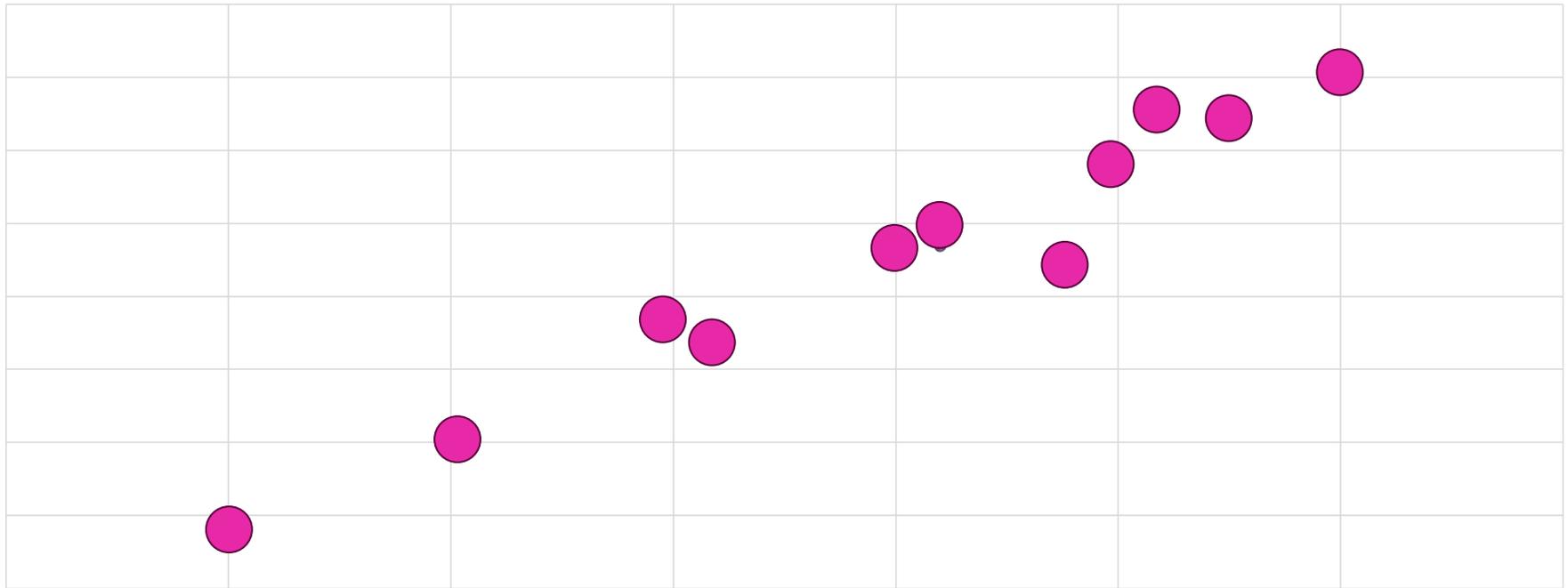
**APPENDIX:  
CORRELATION AND  
CAUSATION**

Angela  
Duckworth's  
research shows  
that talent and  
grit **are not**  
correlated...  
but that grit and  
achievement  
**are** correlated.

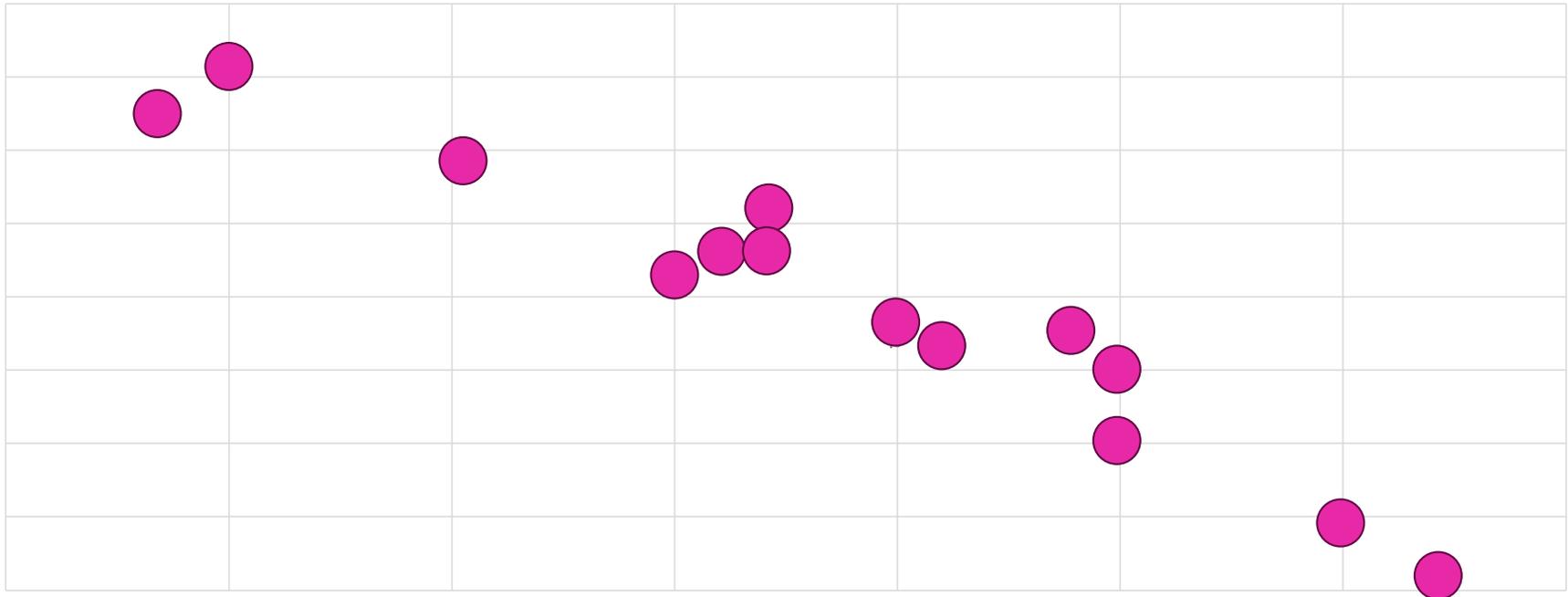


WHAT IS A  
CORRELATION?





**A POSITIVE CORRELATION MEANS TWO  
VARIABLES MOVE IN THE SAME DIRECTION**



**NEGATIVE CORRELATION MEANS TWO  
VARIABLES MOVE IN THE OPPOSITE  
DIRECTION**

Talent



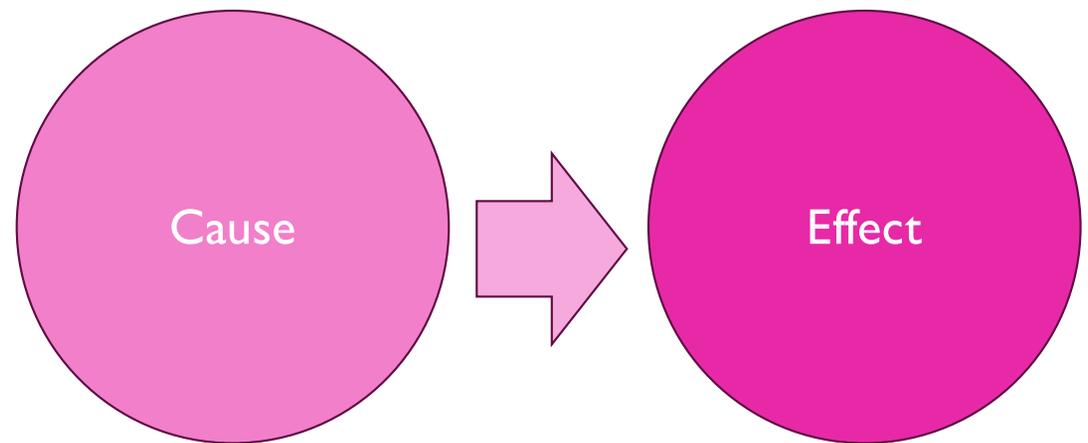
**NO CORRELATION MEANS TWO VARIABLES DO NOT MOVE TOGETHER (E.G. TALENT AND GRIT)**

Achievement



**ANGELA HAS FOUND THAT GRIT AND ACHIEVEMENT ARE POSITIVELY CORRELATED**

WHAT IS A  
CAUSAL  
RELATIONSHIP?



WHAT IS A  
CAUSAL  
RELATIONSHIP?

