

Bill Bennett, *Grit*  
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MY TOPIC THIS EVENING IS “GRIT”. WEBSTER DEFINES “GRIT” AS ‘SMALL PARTICLES OF STONE OR SAND’ OR ‘THE CLENCHING OF TEETH’. ANGELA DUCKWORTH, A PROFESSOR OF PSYCHOLOGY AT U. OF PA. DEFINES “GRIT” DIFFERENTLY. IN HER NEW BOOK, BY THE SAME NAME, DR. DUCKWORTH DEFINES “GRIT” AS “A COMBINATION OF PASSION AND PERSEVERENCE IN PURSUIT OF A LONG TERM GOAL.”

FOR EXAMPLE, MOST PEOPLE WOULD THINK OF JOHN IRVING AS A GIFTED WORDSMITH. IRVING IS THE AUTHOR OF BEST SELLING NOVELS CELEBRATED FOR THEIR CHARLES DICKENS LIKE PLOTS, INCLUDING CIDER HOUSE RULES AND THE WORLD ACCORDING TO GARP. WHAT MAKES HIM UNUSUAL IS . . . IRVING HAS SEVERE DYSLEXIA, WAS A C-MINUS STUDENT, AND ONLY SCORED 475 OUT OF 800 ON HIS S-A-T VERBAL TEST.

ONE MIGHT ASK? HOW THEN, DID IRVING ACHIEVE SUCH A REMARKEDLY SUCCESSFUL CAREER AS A WRITER WITH SUCH LIMITATIONS?? MY ESSAY THIS EVENING EXAMINES THIS QUESTION. . .”WHAT IS UNIQUE ABOUT JOHN IRVING AND OTHERS LIKE HIM”?

DR. DUCKWORTH CONCLUDES FROM HER STUDIES, THE ANSWER IS “GRIT”. HER 2016 NEW YORK TIMES BEST SELLER BOOK DEFINES “GRIT” IN NEW TERMS, “ COMBINING PASSION AND PERSEVERENCE IN PURSUIT OF A LONG TERM GOAL.” HER STUDIES FOCUSED ON WHY SOME PEOPLE HAVE EXTRAORDINARY SUCCESS AND OTHERS DO NOT. IN HER NEW BOOK, SHE TELLS STORIES OF GRITTY EXEMPLARS LIKE IRVING , AND BOB MANKOFF WHO SUBMITTED SOME 2,000 DRAWINGS TO THE NEW YORKER MAGAZINE BEFORE ONE WAS EXCEPTED. GRIT PLAYS A ROLE IN DETERMINING SUCCESS IN ALL ENDEAVORS.

THE ACTOR, WILL SMITH, DESCRIBES HIS DETERMINATION TO SUCCEED THIS WAY, ”IF WE GET ON A TREADMILL TOGETHER, THERE’S TWO THINGS, YOU’RE GETTING OFF FIRST, OR I’M GOING TO DIE”. MOHAMMAD ALI, HAILED AS PERHAPS THE GREATEST ATHLETE OF THE TWENTIETH CENTURY, ALSO HAD “GRIT”. HE ONCE SAID, “I ONLY START COUNTING WHEN IT STARTS HURTING. WHEN I FEEL PAIN, THAT’S WHEN I START COUNTING, BECAUSE THAT’S WHEN IT REALLY MATTERS.”.

THESE ARE UNIQUE QUALITIES I’VE ALSO OBSERVED IN A FEW FRIENDS OF MINE, AND MAY REMIND YOU OF A FEW PEOPLE IN THIS AUDIENCE. ONE OF THEM IS MY GUEST THIS EVENING. CAMERON JAMES WAS AN AVERAGE STUDENT WHO BATTLED DYSLEXIA ALL HIS LIFE. IT DIDN’T PREVENT HIM FROM COMPLETING COLLEGE, BUILDING A SUCCESSFUL MILLS JAMES

PRODUCTIONS, AND RECENTLY BEING CHOSEN BY BUSINESS FIRST AS THE OUTSTANDING CEO IN CENTRAL OHIO IN 2016.

CAMERON'S FATHER, ARTHUR, WAS ALSO A ROLE MODEL AND IS ONE OF THREE "GRITTY PEOPLE" I HAVE CHOSEN TO HIGHLIGHT IN MY ESSAY THIS EVENING. MY FOCUS ON ARTHUR BEGAN TWO YEARS AGO WHEN CAMERON SCHEDULED A PRIVATE TOUR OF THE NEWLY DEDICATED JAMES CANCER HOSPITAL. BEING HIGHLY IMPRESSED, I READ ARTHUR'S BIOGRAPHY CO-AUTHORED BY KIT KAT'S OWN GEORGE PAULSON, ENTITLED "ARTHUR JAMES- SURGEON WITH A DREAM". IT CHRONICLES THE LIFE OF A YOUNG MAN WHO GREW UP IN A COAL MINING TOWN IN APPALACHIA, THE THIRD OF EIGHT CHILDREN OF FIRST GENERATION ITALIAN IMMIGRANTS.

ARTHUR WAS THE FIRST IN HIS FAMILY TO ATTEND COLLEGE. HIS STORY IS ONE OF PASSION AND PERSEVERENCE, THE COMPONENTS PROFESSOR DUCKWORTH DEFINES AS "GRIT". FROM THE TIME ARTHUR STEPPED ON OSU'S CAMPUS, HIS PASSION FOR LEARNING, HIS PERSEVERANCE TO BECOME A PHYSICIAN AND EVENTUALLY SPECIALIZE IN ONCOLOGY, FOLLOWED BY HIS PERSEVERANCE TO FIND CURES FOR CANCER AND CREATE A WORLD CLASS STAND ALONE CANCER RESEARCH AND TREATMENT

CENTER IN CENTRAL OHIO DEFINES HIS 'GRIT'. "GRIT" SEPARATED THIS STUDENT FROM OTHER STUDENTS, THIS MEDICAL SPECIALIST FROM HIS COLLEAGUES.

ARTHUR'S STORY BEGINS IN 1948 WHEN HE RETURNED TO COLUMBUS AFTER WW11. HE WAS KEENLY AWARE THERE WAS NO DESIGNATED CANCER FACILITY BETWEEN NEW YORK AND TEXAS. WITHIN ONLY A FEW YEARS, HE WAS RECOGNIZED AS THE LEADING CANCER SURGEON IN THE AREA. BY 1962, THE PROSPECTS FOR A SEPARATE AND DISTINCTIVE CANCER HOSPITAL IN CENTRAL OHIO HAD BECOME ARTHUR'S LONG TERM GOAL. BUT, WHAT SETS THIS PHYSICIAN APART FROM HIS COLLEAGUES? ALTHOUGH HE SHARED THE SAME PASSION FOR HEALING AND CARING FOR PATIENTS, HE POSSESSED A UNIQUE AND STRONGER COMMITMENT FOR SEPARATING HIS CHOSEN SPECIALTY FROM ALL OTHER TREATMENT AND RESEARCH IN THE OSU MEDICAL COMPLEX.

HE DEFIED MOST OF HIS COLLEAGUES AND DEVOTED FOUR DECADES OF HIS LIFE TO AN INITIATIVE MOST OF HIS COLLEAGUES OPPOSED. IT TOOK DECADES, BUT ARTHUR CONVINCED COLUMBUS LEADERS LIKE LEN IMMKE, DAVE THOMAS, DICK SOLOVE AND GOVERNOR RHODES TO LEAD THE FUND RAISING INITIATIVES FOR THE NEW CANCER HOSPITAL AND RESEARCH CENTER WHICH WERE FIRST DEDICATED IN 1990. TODAY, THE JAMES CANCER HOSPITAL IS THE THIRD LARGEST IN THE U.S BEHIND MD ANDERSON AND SLOAN KETTERING. THE JAMES CANCER FACILITIES EMPLOY MORE THAN 200 ONCOLOGISTS AND 300 CANCER RESEARCHERS. IN 2016, THE

JAMES ADMITTED OVER 13,000 PATIENTS AND RECORDED NEARLY 400,000 OUTPATIENT VISITS FROM 50 STATES AND 36 FOREIGN COUNTRIES. THIS BOY RAISED IN APPALACHIA AND FIRST IN HIS FAMILY TO GRADUATE FROM COLLEGE HAD GRIT AND HAS MADE A LIFE AND DEATH DIFFERENCE IN MANY PEOPLE'S LIVES.

ARTHUR IS THE FIRST OF THREE GRITTY INDIVIDUALS I HAVE SINGLED OUT TO EXEMPLIFY DR.DUCKWORTH'S THESIS. THE SECRET OF ANY OUTSTANDING ACHIEVEMENT IS NOT TALENT OR IQ, INSTEAD, PROFESSOR DUCKWORTH CREDITS "PERSISTENCE" AS MOST RELEVANT. SHE CONCURS WITH NIETZSCHE, "WHAT DOESN'T KILL, MAKES ME STRONGER."

PROFESSOR DUCKWORTH CLAIMS A PERSON CAN BECOME "A PARAGON OF GRIT" BY DEVELOPING AN 'INTEREST' AND ESTABLISHING A LONG TERM GOAL, AS IN THE CASE OF ARTHUR JAMES. THROUGH CONTINUAL 'PERSEVERENCE' AND CONNECTING HIS 'INTEREST' TO OTHER PEOPLE, SHE WOULD AGREE ARTHUR WOULD ACHIEVE SUCCESS, BECAUSE HE HAD PURPOSE, HOPE, AND PASSION.

IN MY NEXT EXAMPLES OF "GRIT", I ELABORATE MORE ON THE SEQUENCE OF EVENTS IN THE LIVES OF MY SUBJECTS. THEIR "GRIT" DIDN'T JUST EVOLVE FROM "INTEREST", FOLLOWED BY "PRACTICE," AS IN THE CASE OF ARTHUR JAMES, OR ATHLETES WHO WANT TO EXCEL AND WIN AN OLYMPIC GOLD MEDAL. THESE NEXT INDIVIDUALS FACED LIFE AND DEATH OPTIONS AT CRITICAL STAGES OF THEIR CAREERS. I CONTEND 'SURVIVAL' WAS ALSO A STRONG COMPONENT IN THEIR MOTIVATION TO SUCCEED. I BELIEVE PROFESSOR DUCKWORTH WOULD CONCLUDE NONE OF MY "PARAGONS OF GRIT" ACHIEVED THEIR GOALS BECAUSE OF "INHERITANCE" OR "GENETICS. SHE WOULD ATTRIBUTE THEIR SUCCESS PRIMARILY TO 'GRIT'.

MY SECOND SELECTION IS NOT AN AMERICAN, BUT IS TRULY A MAN OF "GRIT, HE IS A PERSON OF EXCEPTIONAL CONVICTION AND COMMITMENT TO WHATEVER HE SETS HIS MIND TO ACCOMPLISH. I MET BEN PFEIFER BY RESPONDING TO AN AD IN 1991. BEN HAD ALREADY ESCAPED FROM EAST GERMANY NINE YEARS EARLIER AND MADE HIS WAY TO THE U.S. HE HAD ALREADY EARNED HIS PhD AND MEDICAL DEGREES IN GERMANY, BUT HE HAD TO RE-QUALIFY HIS MEDICAL CREDENTIALS TO PRACTICE ONCOLOGY IN THIS COUNTRY.

BEN PFEIFER AND HIS FAMILY WERE RAISED IN WHAT BECAME COMMUNIST EAST GERMANY AFTER WW11. THE FAMILY HAD BEEN FORCED TO LIVE AND WORK UNDER THE GERMAN DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC AND THIS SUFFICATING EXPERIENCE BECAME INCREASINGLY INTOLERABLE. HIS PROFESSIONAL CAREER AND HIS FAMILY'S LIVES WERE CONTROLLED BY THE

RESTRICTIVE RULES OF THE GDR. IN THE EARLY '80'S, BEN DECIDED HE WOULD ESCAPE FIRST AND THEN REUNITE WITH HIS WIFE AND DAUGHTER TO REBUILD THEIR LIVES IN THE WEST.

HIS PERSEVERENCE TO ESCAPE TO THE OTHER SIDE OF THE IRON CURTAIN INCLUDED A FAILED ATTEMPT TO CROSS THE EAST GERMAN BORDER IN AN ULTRA LIGHT. HE FINALLY SUCCEEDED TO ESCAPE AFTER HE AND HIS SWISS FRIEND, BENNO, DISCOVERED AN ABANDONED 120' IRON HULLED SHIP THE NAZI' USED IN WW11. AFTER SEVERAL WEEKS REBUILDING THE ENGINES, BEN WAS SMUGGLED OUT OF COMMUNIST EAST GERMANY CONFINED FOR OVER 20 HOURS IN THE CLOSED WATER TANK OF THIS SHIP. HE SUCCESSFULLY ESCAPED ACROSS THE BORDER WITH HIS FRIEND BENNO AT THE HELM. LEFT BEHIND WERE BEN'S WIFE AND DAUGHTER. THEY WERE SCHEDULED TO BE SEPARATELY SMUGGLED OUT AFTER HIS ESCAPE. UNFORTUNATELY, HIS FAMILY'S ESCAPE WAS PREVENTED FROM HAPPENING SEVEN YEARS UNTIL THE BERLIN WALL CAME DOWN IN 1989. BEN WAS DEVASTATED, BUT PERSEVERED ALONE WITH HIS MEDICAL PRACTICE IN WEST BERLIN. MEANWHILE, HIS SWISS FRIEND, TOOK THEIR SHIP TO HOLLAND WHERE HE RECONDITIONED THE 19<sup>TH</sup> CENTURY DUTCH SCHOONER. ONCE RESTORED, THE TWO BEN'S PLANNED TO TAKE A YEAR OFF TO SAIL AROUND THE WORLD. BEN'S LONG TERM GOAL, AND PASSION, HOWEVER, WAS TO RE-QUALIFY HIS MEDICAL CREDENTIALS IN THE UNITED STATES AND DEVOTE HIS CAREER TO SAVING PEOPLE'S LIVES.

WE PICK UP BEN'S LIFE IN 1989, AFTER HIS WIFE DIVORCES HIM AND HE HAS RE-STARTED HIS MEDICAL CAREER IN SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA.

HE PASSED ALL THE NECESSARY EXAMS AND IS PREPARED TO START HIS RESIDENCY PROGRAM. HE TOLD ME HIS SENSE OF ACHIEVEMENT WAS MUCH STRONGER HERE, THAN WITH ANY OF THE ACADEMIC TITLES AND CERTIFICATES HE HAD RECEIVED IN GERMANY YEARS BEFORE. BEN WAS STILL WORKING AS A PhD FOR A PRIVATE ENTITY AND SETTING UP A LABORATORY FOR IMMUNE SYSTEM MONITORING AND TREATMENTS FOR CANCER PATIENTS IN CALIFORNIA, WHEN HE RECEIVED AN INVITATION FROM A RESIDENCY PROGRAM IN KENTUCKY.

ON CHRISTMAS EVE, 1990, BEN DROVE FROM CALIFORNIA TO LEXINGTON, KY. TO START HIS SECOND RESIDENCY AT UNIV. OF KY. HE TOLD ME HE HAD TO MOTIVATE HIMSELF DAILY TO ACCEPT TRAINING FROM SOME VERY YOUNG AND INEXPERIENCED ATTENDING PHYSICIANS WHO COULD HAVE ACTUALLY BENEFITTED GREATLY FROM BEING TRAINED BY HIM. WHAT MAINTAINED HIS PERSEVERENCE, WAS THE INCREASING NUMBER OF CANCER PATIENTS WHO CONTACTED HIM FROM ALL OVER THE U.S. HE NEEDED TO WORK EVENINGS AND WEEKENDS TO KEEP UP WITH HIS COMPLEMENTARY ONCOLOGY CONSULTANCY SERVICE. DURING HIS

RESIDENCY, BEN MANAGED TO BRING IN SOME GRANT MONEY TO THE UNIV. OF KY. ANESTHESIOLOGY DEPARTMENT AND BECAME THEIR DIRECTOR OF RESEARCH.

WHILE COMPLETING HIS RESIDENCY, BEN FELL IN LOVE WITH JANICE, THE HEAD OPERATING NURSE, AND THEY DECIDED TO TAKE A YEAR OFF. THE TWO NEWLY WEDS JOINED BEN'S SWISS FRIEND, BENNO, WHO HAD RETIRED TO A FARM IN NEW ZEALAND TO RAISE CATTLE AND SHEEP. AFTER THOROUGH PLANNING FOR THEIR UPCOMING ADVENTURE, BEN AND JANICE, WHO HAD NEVER SAILED BEFORE, PICKED UP THEIR 120' DUTCH SCHOONER, ADELAAR, IN NZ AND SPENT THE COMING YEAR ON BOARD COMPLETING THE CIRCUMNAVIGATION WHICH BENNO AND BEN HAD BEGUN YEARS EARLIER. ANOTHER EXAMPLE OF BEN'S GRIT, HIS STORY OF PASSION AND PERSEVERENCE.

AFTER THEIR YEAR OF SAILING ON THE HIGH SEAS, BEN AND JANICE MOVED TO SWITZERLAND. BEN HAD COMMITTED TO HELP THE MEDICAL DIRECTOR OF THE FAMOUS AESKULAP-KLINIC WITH AN INDEPENDENT EVALUATION OF THEIR COMPLIMENTARY TREATMENT METHODS FOR CANCER PATIENTS. BEN AGREED TO ONLY SIX MONTHS TO REVIEW AND ANALYZE THE HOSPITAL'S CANCER PATIENT RECORDS, AND ADVISE THEM ON HOW TO DO CLINICAL RESEARCH THAT COULD SCIENTIFICALLY DEMONSTRATE THE BENEFIT OF THEIR TREATMENT METHODS. THE SIX MONTHS TURNED INTO TEN YEARS!. BEN TOLD ME HE LEARNED A LOT DURING THIS TIME, NOT ONLY IMPROVING AS A PHYSICIAN, BUT AS A HUMAN BEING."

WITHIN A SHORT TIME, BEN WAS ABLE TO DEVELOP A LARGE OUT-PATIENT CLINIC FOR PATIENTS WITH BREAST AND PROSTATE CANCER, CONSULTING AND TREATING MORE THAN 1,000 NEW PATIENTS EVERY YEAR. DURING THE FIRST COUPLE OF YEARS, HE WAS IN THE CLINIC FROM 7 TO 7 ALMOST EVERY DAY, WEEKENDS OFTEN INCLUDED. WORK DOMINATED HIS LIFE! SOON , THEIR CLINIC BECAME THE LARGEST OUT-PATIENT TREATMENT CENTER FOR PROSTATE CANCER PATIENTS IN SWITZERLAND. BEN SAID HE WAS PROUD, BUT HE DID NOT CARE TOO MUCH ABOUT THIS ACHIEVEMENT- ALL HE WANTED AND NEEDED TO DO WAS FIND THE BEST TREATMENT FOR HIS PATIENTS, THIS WAS, AND REMAINS HIS PASSION TODAY!" BEN TOLD ME, "IT WAS DURING THOSE YEARS, AND AT THIS SMALL HOSPITAL, I REALIZED THE REAL VALUE OF HEALTH AND LIFE."

AESKULAP-KLINIC IS A ONE-OF-ITS-KIND NON PROFIT HOSPITAL IN CENTRAL SWITZERLAND, WELL KNOWN FOR ITS HOLISTIC APPROACH TO HEALTH AND DISEASE.THEIR CLINIC FOR INTEGRATIVE CANCER CARE WAS WITHIN THE HOSPITAL. BEN HAD SEVERAL ONCOLOGISTS WORKING WITH HIM. THEIR TREATMENT PROTOCOLS FOR BREAST AND PROSTATE CANCER

ATTRACTED PATIENTS FROM ALL OVER THE WORLD. MOST OF THEM CAME WITH END STAGE DISEASE, OFTEN TOLD BY THEIR PHYSICIANS THEY HAD ONLY A COUPLE WEEKS TO LIVE.

THROUGH INTENSIVE WORK WITH THOSE PATIENTS, BEN SAYS THEY WERE ABLE TO IMPROVE THEIR TREATMENT PROTOCOLS CONSTANTLY, ACHIEVING BETTER AND BETTER OUTCOMES (PERSEVERENCE). HE TOLD ME, MANY OF HIS EARLY PATIENTS ARE STILL ALIVE TODAY, AFTER 16 YEARS WITH METASTATIC BREAST OR PROSTATE CANCER, DEFYING ALL BAD PROGNOSSES GIVEN BY THEIR PHYSICIANS". BEN HAS SAID, "WHEN I TALK TO THOSE PATIENTS TODAY, I FEEL PROUD AND HAPPY FOR THEM. DID WE ACHIEVE THIS? WERE WE ABLE TO PROLONG THEIR LIVES? NO! – THE PATIENTS DID. THEY TRUSTED ME AND MY COLLEAGUES, THEY LISTENED AND TOOK OUR ADVICE, AND THEY DEFIED THEIR CANCER. SEEING THOSE PATIENTS FROM TIME TO TIME FOR FOLLOW- UP, OR SPEAKING WITH THEM VIA SKYPE, HE REALIZES NOW, IT WAS THESE PATIENTS WHO MADE HIM A "GOOD DOCTOR". "IT WAS A VERY GOOD FEELING!"

TODAY, BEN SAYS, "OUR TREATMENT PROTOCOLS ARE USED BY MANY OF MY COLLEAGUES IN SWITZERLAND AND GERMANY, IN THE MIDDLE EAST, AND IN ASIA. TOGETHER WITH TWO EXCELLENT CONVENTIONAL ONCOLOGISTS, BEN WAS ASKED BY ELSEVIER (ONE OF THE LARGER MEDICAL PUBLISHING HOUSES) TO WORK ON THE FIRST TEXTBOOK FOR INTEGRATIVE ONCOLOGY, WHICH WAS PUBLISHED IN 2006. . . A SMALL ACHIEVEMENT IN AN OTHERWISE RATHER HOSTILE CLIMATE BETWEEN CONVENTIONAL ONCOLOGISTS AND HOLISTIC THINKING DOCTORS. WITH THIS BOOK, BEN SAYS, WE TRIED TO BRIDGE THIS EXISTING GAP, IN HOPE TO BENEFIT OUR PATIENTS.

BEN RECENTLY RESIGNED FROM AESKULAP KLINIC AND STARTED HIS OWN MEDICAL CONSULTANCY COMPANY. HE AND HIS COLLEAGUES PROVIDE SECOND OPINIONS-AND PERSONAL PHYSICIAN SERVICE FOR PATIENTS ALL OVER THE WORLD. BEN SAYS HE IS HAPPY WITH HIS CURRENT SITUATION, STILL LEARNING EVERY DAY AND STILL TRYING TO BE A GOOD DOCTOR FOR HIS PATIENTS.

MY FIRST TWO PARAGONS OF "GRIT" WERE PASSIONATE AND PERSISTENT MALES IN PURSUIT OF TREATMENT AND CURES FOR A DEVASTATING , DESTRUCTIVE DISEASE WHICH CLAIMS THE LIVES OF MILLIONS OF MEN, WOMEN AND CHILDREN ANNUALLY.

MY NEXT PARAGON OF "GRIT" IS A FRIEND WHO SUCCUMBED TO CANCER, DESPITE HER BEST EFFORTS. SARAH IS THE BENEFICIARY OF THE RESEARCH AND TREATMENT ADVANCEMENTS OUR FIRST TWO PARAGONS OF GRIT CONTRIBUTED. SHE PRAISES THEIR PASSION AND PERSEVERENCE.

AT THE SAME TIME SHE DEMONSTRATES HER OWN PASSION AND PERSEVERANCE TO ERADICATE CANCER FROM HER BODY AND SALVAGE HER LIFE. THIS IS HER STORY. . .

SARAH SAYS SHE GREW UP A “HAVE-NOT” AMONGST THE “HAVES” IN BEXLEY. DESPITE FINANCIAL HARDSHIPS, SHE THRIVED AND EARNED A SCHOLARSHIP TO NORTHWESTERN. SHE RETURNED TO COLUMBUS AND WENT TO WORK FOR THE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT AT THE CHAMBER OF COMMERCE. AT THE SAME TIME , SHE EARNED HER MBA FROM FISHER COLLEGE AND HELPED START A SMALL IMPORTING FIRM. IN 2004, SHE LEFT THE CHAMBER TO DEVOTE FULL TIME TO THE IMPORTING FIRM WHERE SHE HAD FORMED BOTH A CLOSE PROFESSIONAL, AND PERSONAL, RELATIONSHIP WITH ITS OWNER.

PROGRESS ON BOTH FRONTS WAS POSITIVE FOR THE FIRST SIX YEARS UNTIL, SARAH’S SISTER, A PEDIATRIC PHYSICIAN AND MOTHER OF THREE WAS DIAGNOSED WITH OVARIAN CANCER. STAGE 3C . SHE FOUND HERSELF IN STEM TO STERN SURGERY AT THE JAMES, FOLLOWED BY A YEAR- AND- A HALF OF CHEMOTHERAPY. SARAH BECAME HER SISTER’S GUARDIAN ANGEL DURING THIS TIME. IT WAS AT THIS STAGE GENETIC TESTING REVEALED HER SISTER HAD THE BRCA1 GENETIC MUTATION. SARAH ALSO TESTED POSITIVE FOR THE SAME GENE MUTATION WHICH REPRESSES THE ABILITY OF CERTAIN TISSUES TO KILL CANCER CELLS. IT ALSO MEANT SARAH AND HER SISTER ARE AT HIGHER RISK OF PANCREATIC, BRAIN, AND MELANOMA CANCERS. SURE ENOUGH.

IN 2013, AFTER HER SISTER COMPLETED HER CHEMOTHERAPY, SARAH UNDERWENT A HYSTERECTOMY AND A OOPHORECTOMY. THIS WAS TO REDUCE HER CHANCES OF OVARIAN CANCER AND BREAST CANCER. IT WAS NOT SUCCESSFUL.

WHILE ADJUSTING TO SYMPTOMS OF SURGICALLY –INDUCED MENOPAUSE, HER BUSINESS WAS FAILING AND HER PERSONAL RELATIONSHIP WAS BECOMING TOXIC AND ABUSIVE. HER HOME, CAREER, FUTURE, FRIENDS AND FINANCES ALL ENTWINED IN A QUAGMIRE. SHE FELT TRAPPED. SHE HAD NOT PROTECTED HERSELF LEGALLY SO SHE WALKED AWAY FROM EVERYTHING. SHE LOST HER HEALTH INSURANCE AND WAS FORCED TO ENROLL IN MEDICAID.

SIX DAYS LATER, FEBRUARY, 2015, SARAH FELT A LUMP. THE ULTRASOUND AND SUBSEQUENT BIOPSY WAS CONFIRMED BY HER NEW DOCTOR TO BE TRIPLE NEGATIVE, THE TUMOR CELLS WERE NOT RESPONSIVE TO HORMONES. A SECOND CLINICAL EXAM IDENTIFIED CANCER IN THE LYMPH NODE, TOO. THAT WAS GAME CHANGING NEWS!

SARAH RACED UP A VERY STEEP LEARNING CURVE (pause) WITH ACCESS TO EMERGING STUDY DATABASES AND CONSULTATIONS WITH DOCTORS FROM SEVERAL SPECIALTIES AND INSTITUTIONS, INCLUDING THE JAMES AND CLEVELAND CLINIC. QUESTIONS WERE: 1) SURGERY OR CHEMO FIRST? 2) WHICH CHEMOTHERAPIES? THERE WAS NO BEST –TREATMENT PATH SUPPORTED BY THE DATA IN CASES LIKE HERS. THE DECISION FELL TO THE PATIENT, WHO IS NOT THE EXPERT.

SHE FACED HER OWN MORTALITY. HARD AS IT WAS, SHE SAID, “NOT HAVING CHILDREN MAKES IT EASIER TO DIE. YOU CAN BE A LESSON WITHOUT CAUSING ANY HARM.”.

SARAH’S TREATMENT BEGAN WITH AN AGGRESSIVE COURSE OF THREE CHEMOTHERAPIES AT THE JAMES. SHE TOLERATED TREATMENT WELL AT FIRST, BUT EVENTUALLY PUSHED HER IMMUNE SYSTEM AND NERVOUS SYSTEM TO THE BRINK. SHE KEPT A BLOG IN THE INTEREST OF HELPING FRIENDS WHO MIGHT FOLLOW THE SAME PATH. AS SOON AS SHE LOST HER HAIR, SHE SCHEDULED A PHOTO SHOOT WITH A FRIEND WHO WAS A PROFESSIONAL PHOTOGRAPHER (show photo from shoot). AFTER CHEMO, SHE UNDERWENT BILATERAL MASTECTOMY WHICH SHOWED THE CHEMOTHERAPY WAS SUCCESSFUL. NO RADIATION WAS REQUIRED. SHE COULD PLAY THAT CARD LATER IF SHE EVER NEEDS TO.

SARAH’S “GRIT” TO DATE WAS TO SURVIVE!! HER PASSION AND PERSEVERANCE WAS TO LIVE A LONGER LIFE! DIFFERENT FROM THE GRIT DEMONSTRATED BY DR’S ARTHUR OR BEN, BUT THERE IS A VERY SYMBIOTIC RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THIS PATIENT AND THESE DOCTORS.

WHILE HEALING FROM THE FIRST SURGERY, SARAH WAS DIAGNOSED WITH SITUATIONAL DEPRESSION AND ANXIETY- NOT UNCOMMON AFTER CHEMO. SHE HAD JUST CHECKED OFF FOUR OF LIFE’S STRESSORS: 1) LOSS OF JOB 2) BREAK UP OF A RELATIONSHIP WITH HER SIGNIFICANT OTHER 3) FINANCIAL BANKRUPTCY 4) LIFE THREATENING CANCER (SHE AND HER SISTER) SARAH WAS GRATEFUL FOR POSITIVE RESULTS, BUT WHEN SHE LOOKED IN THE MIRROR, SHE WAS FACED WITH A BATTERED, BALD, DISFIGURED, BRAIN-PICKLED AND NUMB VERSION OF HERSELF. EVEN MORE LOST TIME AND A LIKELY MUCH SHORTER ROAD- TO PUT HER FINANCIAL, PROFESSIONAL, AND PERSONAL LIVES BACK IN ORDER.

THE NEED FOR PERSEVERANCE HADN’T DISAPPEARED . . .SHE SAW THE MEDICATIONS AS TOOLS TO STILL THE PANIC AND TO HELP HER BEAT THE WILY FOE OF DEPRESSION. BUT THEN ANOTHER SHOE FELL. . . HER SISTER’S HUSBAND WAS DIAGNOSED WITH PROSTATE CANCER, HE HAD SURGERY AND RADIATION.



A WEEK LATER, SARAH WAS BACK TO WORK WHEN HER FATHER HAD A STROKE AND SHE HAD TO REORGANIZE HIS LIFE AT THE SAME TIME, SHE WAS SCHEDULED FOR RECONSTRUCTIVE SURGERY. THIS WOULD LIMIT HER MOBILITY AND STRENGTH. UNEXPECTEDLY, HER FATHER DIED TWO DAYS AFTER HER SURGERY.

AFTER CLOSING HER FATHER'S HOME, SHE FOCUSED ON BUILDING HER SMALL CONSULTING BUSINESS OF HELPING ENTREPRENEURS TO ORGANIZE AND SCALE THEIR BUSINESSES. SHE WAS NOT GIVING UP! MORE PERSISTENCE AND PERSEVERANCE REQUIRED OF SARAH, EVERYDAY.

SARAH CONTINUES TO REBUILD HER MENTAL, PHYSICAL, AND SOCIAL STAMINA- REQUIRING MUCH MORE RECHARGE TIME ALONE, AND SLEEP, THAN SHE DID IN THE PAST. SHE HAS A FEW CLIENTS –WITH WORK THAT TAPS BOTH HER MBA AND NGO SKILLS. SHE RECENTLY MOVED OUT OF HER MOTHER AND STEP-FATHER'S HOME INTO A MODEST APARTMENT.

AT THIS POINT, SARAH'S SISTER HAS CROSSED THE 5 YEAR MILESTONE, WITH NO EVIDENCE OF DISEASE AND SARAH IS JUST TWO YEARS OUT FROM DIAGNOSIS. SARAH'S SISTER HAD BEEN GIVEN A 14% CHANCE OF SURVIVING FIVE YEARS AND SARAH HAS A 84% CHANCE.

SARAH AND HER SISTER NOW HOPE, WITH MORE CONFIDENCE, THEY MAY LOOK TOWARDS LIFE BEYOND FIVE YEARS, AND ARE LOOKING INTO PROGRAMS THROUGH WHICH THE TWO OF THEM CAN TRAVEL MORE OF THE WORLD AND WORK TOGETHER TO HELP EMERGING ECONOMIES- SARAH HELPING MICROBUSINESSES, HER SISTER AS A PEDIATRICIAN.

SARAH'S STORY, AND MANY LIKE IT, CONVINCES ALL OF US HOW VULNERABLE WE ARE TO THIS LIFE THREATENING DISEASE AND THE NEED FOR A CURE. FORTUNATELY, MANY SCIENTISTS SPECULATE THEY WILL STAMP OUT THIS DISEASE IN OUR LIFETIME.

I HAVE CHOSEN THESE THREE VERY SPECIAL INDIVIDUALS THIS EVENING WHO SEEM TO EXEMPLIFY PROFESSOR DUCKWORTH'S THESIS ON 'GRIT'. ALL THREE POSSESS COMMON AND INFLUENTIAL FACTORS. . . " PASSION AND PERSEVERENCE TOWARD A LONG TERM GOAL". IN EACH CASE, IT'S ALSO EASY TO IDENTIFY "PERSISTENCE" IN THEIR PURSUITS.

LET'S TAKE A FEW MINUTES TO REVIEW THE CHALLENGES THESE THREE INDIVIDUALS FACED. . .

ARTHUR JAMES GREW UP IN A SMALL COAL TOWN IN SE OHIO, A FIRST GENERATION AMERICAN, FIRST IN HIS FAMILY TO ATTEND COLLEGE, A PASSION FOR LEARNING, A PASSION FOR HEALING IN HIS NEW MEDICAL SPECIALTY, ONCOLOGY, AND A PERSEVERENCE TO CONVINCING HIS COLLEAGUES AND COMMUNITY LEADERS THERE WAS A CRITICAL NEED FOR A CANCER HOSPITAL AND RESEARCH CENTER IN THIS PART OF THE COUNTRY. HE OVERCAME STRONG OPPOSITION FROM HIS MEDICAL COLLEAGUES, BUT HE PERSEVERED WITH RAISING LARGE SUMS OF MONEY AND COLUMBUS NOW BOASTS THE THIRD LARGEST CANCER HOSPITAL AND RESEARCH FACILITY IN AMERICA. THE SECRET OF SUCCESS WAS PASSION AND PERSEVERENCE. ARTHUR JAMES IS QUOTED AS SAYING, "LEARN EARLY NOT TO LEAVE WORTHWHILE THINGS UNDONE." (show this quote on the screen)

BEN PFEIFER RISKS HIS LIFE, AND THOSE OF HIS FAMILY, TO ESCAPE AN INTOLERABLE COMMUNIST EAST GERMANY, HE RE-ESTABLISHES HIS LIFE AND MEDICAL CAREER, FIRST IN WEST GERMANY, THEN IN THE U.S. ,AND SUBSEQUENTLY IN EUROPE AND ASIA. HE SAILS AROUND THE WORLD WITH ONLY BASIC NAVIGATIONAL SKILLS AFTER RENOVATING A 19<sup>TH</sup> CENTURY DUTCH SCHOONER IN WHO'S WATER TANK HE HAS EARLIER RISKED HIS LIFE, STARTS A NEW FAMILY IN THE U.S., RE-ESTABLISHES HIMSELF IN EUROPE AND ASIA ADVANCING HIS PASSION FOR HOLISTIC CANCER TREATMENTS AND PROTOCOLS, AND PUBLISHES THE FIRST TEXT BOOK IN 2006 INTEGRATING HIS HOLISTIC THINKING WITH CONVENTIONAL TREATMENT. BEN ULTIMATELY ENDS UP WITH A RESIDENCE IN BALI, INDONESIA WHERE TWO FRIENDS AND I JOINED HIM IN 1993 FOR A THREE WEEK SAILING ADVENTURE, ABOARD ADELAAR, ON THE INDIAN OCEAN. TO ME, PERSEVERANCE AND PASSION WERE VERY EVIDENT EVERY DAY IN BEN'S ACCOMPLISHMENTS.

SARAH'S "GRIT" WASN'T ALOT DIFFERENT. AFTER PERSEVERING TO ATTAIN BOTH A BA AND AN MBA , THEN COMMITTING TO HELP BUILD A SUCCESSFUL IMPORT BUSINESS, SHE CONFRONTS A LIFE-CHANGING OBSTACLE , NOT UNLIKE BEN. AND HER PASSION AND PERSEVERENCE TO SURVIVE AND REBUILD HER LIFE, ALSO,NOT UNLIKE BEN.

I BELIEVE DR. DUCKWORTH WOULD AGREE WITH MY EXAMPLES, BUT SHE WOULD ALSO ADD THERE ARE FOUR ADDITIONAL PSYCHOLOGICAL ASSETS THESE THREE PEOPLE LIKELY POSSESSED, "INTEREST", "PRACTICE", "PURPOSE", AND "HOPE". I ORIGINALLY THOUGHT "GENETICS" MIGHT BE A MAJOR FACTOR IN THE LIVES OF MY PARAGONS OF GRIT, BUT AS I STATED EARLIER, DR. DUCKWORTH DOES NOT AGREE.

IF YOU'D LIKE MORE INFORMATION ON "GRIT", I REFER YOU TO ANGELA DUCKWORTH'S BOOK, OR AN INTERVIEW WITH THE AUTHOR BY STEPHEN DUBNER ON FREAKONOMICS. YOU MAY ALSO READ MALCOME GLADWELL, A WRITER FOR THE NEW YORKER, WHO AUTHORED A BEST SELLER, THE "OUTLIER". ANOTHER SOURCE IS LINDA THALER AND ROBIN KOVAL WHO CO-AUTHORED ANOTHER BEST SELLER, "GRIT TO GREAT".

I HOPE YOU ENJOYED MY ESSAY. I'M HAPPY TO ANSWER ANY QUESTIONS.