Chapter 13
Developing Gritty Job Seekers: A Need-Supportive Approach to Grit Interventions

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Abstract Optimizing job search performance of unemployed job seekers remains a priority for unemployment researchers and practitioners alike. Grit, as a non-cognitive personality trait, may play an essential role in optimizing job search performance. However, grit is largely ignored in the context of unemployment. This chapter first contends that grit interventions should be developed for and implemented in the unemployment context. Secondly, it proposes practical strategies on how job seekers could develop the psychological conditions of grit (interest, deliberate practice, hope, meaning and purpose). Thirdly, it provides an overview of strategies which could be employed to develop a growth-mindset within the unemployed. Finally, it argues how self-determination theory (SDT) could be used to create a need supportive environment which is important to facilitate the job seeker's adherence to, engagement with grit intervention strategies. In doing so, the chapter contributes to the limited literature on grit interventions, in general, but also more specifically in the unemployment context. It also contributes to incorporating SDT principles in the delivery of grit interventions.

Keywords Grit · Unemployed · Interventions · Growth-mindset

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13.1 Introduction

Ever-increasing trends like digitization, work automation and the mass adoption of artificial intelligence—commonly referred to as the fourth industrial revolution—change the world of work fundamentally (Hirschi, 2018). Not only does it change the nature of work, but it may also result in the elimination of millions of 'traditional' jobs from the labor market (Peters & Jandrić, 2019) and the creation of new occupations and industries (Hirschi, 2018). Unemployment rates may (temporarily) soar as a result of the shift from current (and possibly redundant) jobs to new ways of working with devastating effects on the psychological-, economic-, political- and societal stability of modern economies. Governments and the private sector), therefore, need not only deal with issues relating to job creation but must invest significantly in aiding the unemployed to transition into new jobs.

At the center of this transitioning process is a psychologically vulnerable individual, engaging in a job search process that is challenging, complex, uncertain and that is often filled with obstacles, setbacks, and rejections (McKee-Ryan, Song, Wanberg, & Kinicki, 2005; Paul & Moser, 2009; Van Hooft, 2014; Wanberg, 2012) in a volatile, uncertain, complex and ambiguous (VUCA)[1] world of work. To secure a high-quality job and to escape the psychological costs of unemployment, individuals need to consistently engage in job search activities, despite the ever-increasing hardships and obstacles which they may face in this process. In effect, successful job seekers are likely to be "gritty" (i.e. showing high levels of Grit). Grit is a non-cognitive, psychological strength that encapsulates passion (i.e. consistency of interest) and perseverance (of effort) in the pursuit of long-term goals (Duckworth, Peterson, Matthews, & Kelly, 2007).

Grit is associated with many positive outcomes, including mastery (i.e. performance) and well-being across a variety of domains and population groups (c.f. Credé, Tynan, & Harms, 2017; Datu, Yuen, & Chen, 2017). Individuals who report higher levels of grit are more likely to achieve their goals, can think strategically about failures as learning opportunities, and can seek the necessary resources required to achieve their goals (Park, Yu, Baelen, Tsukayama, & Duckworth, 2018). These individuals are also more likely to report higher levels of emotional-, psychological-, and social well-being (Aswini & Deb, 2017). Consequently, interventions aimed at developing grit can be extremely beneficial but are rarely explored in the literature; despite some researchers arguing that grit is a malleable trait (Duckworth, 2016; Park et al., 2018).

Within the unemployment domain, grit remains mostly unexplored, and interventions to develop gritty job seekers are largely absent. This is unfortunate given that grit may be particularly valuable in adverse, ambiguous and complex situations such as those in which the unemployed find themselves (Credé, 2018). Given that

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[1]The acronym VUCA originated in the U.S. military (Whiteman, 1998).

grit is associated with achievement and goal attainment within the general populous and has shown to improve performance in high-stake environments (Credé et al., 2017), a marginal increase in grit could have very meaningful positive effects for the unemployed. However, empirical research (outside of the primary education system) into the ways in which grit could be developed, is largely lacking within the literature (Rhodes, May, Andrade, & Kavanagh, 2018). Duckworth (2016) made some suggestions as to how grit could be developed through external sources and through internal psychological development and argued that grit can be developed through cultivating interest, discovering or defining purpose, instilling hope, and through deliberate skills practice. Further, some have argued that grit could also be fostered through adopting a growth-mindset (Tang, Wang, Guo, & Salmela-Aro, 2019). Grit is also a function of the environment in which an individual function. A gritty organizational or school culture, tends to foster gritty individuals and groups (Cross, 2014). However, none of which have been applied to, translated for or tested within unemployed populations.

As such, the purpose of this chapter is to explore potential grit-development intervention strategies for the unemployed. Specifically, the aim is to highlight how grit can be developed from the inside out (internal psychological development), and from the outside in (through external sources). Further, the current chapter also discusses ways in which grit interventions should be delivered to create a psychological climate that strengthens the effect of grit interventions while enhancing client adherence and engagement. Through self-determination theory (SDT), we will discuss how grit interventions for the unemployed should be delivered in a need-supportive climate. A climate where individuals experience a true sense of ownership over their thoughts, feelings and behaviors (i.e. autonomy), belonging (i.e. relatedness), and efficacy (i.e. competence). In doing so, the chapter contributes to the limited literature on grit interventions, in general, but also more specifically in the unemployment context.

13.2   Conceptualizing Grit

In 2007, Duckworth and colleagues introduced grit as a non-cognitive (personality) trait that matters for performance (Duckworth et al., 2007). Grit, usually operationalized as a higher-order construct, consists of two lower-order (related) dimensions (Credé et al., 2017; Van Zyl, Olckers, & Roll, 2020): Perseverance (of effort) and passion (i.e. consistency of interest). Gritty individuals, those who possess high levels of grit, work consistently and passionately toward meaningful goals even when faced with adversity or confronted by challenges (Duckworth, 2016; Duckworth et al., 2007). Both passion and perseverance are necessary for performance: mastery requires many hours of deliberate practice and are characterized by initial failures through which an individual should persist (Ericsson, Krampe,

& Tesch-Römer, 1993). If an individual does not persist through obstacles or constantly change their interest/s, it is unlikely that they will engage in a deliberate practice that enables performance (Credé et al., 2017). In an unemployment context, job seekers are faced with multiple challenges (Van Hooft, 2014) such as a mismatch between labour market requirements and experience or skills offered and the financial burden associated with job search. Persistence, hard work, determination and readiness for failure (Datu, Yuen, & Chen, 2018) will be important characteristics to portray in an attempt to find (re)employment. In addition, they would need to remain focused, passionate and should set priorities (Datu et al., 2018) during the arduous job-seeking process.

More recently, researchers levelled criticism against the construct and predictive validity of grit. Meta-analytic findings caution against calculating a total grit score (as a higher-order construct) as the width of the credibility interval indicates that the strength of the relation between the grit facets is moderated and because perseverance is a better predictor of performance than passion (Credé et al., 2017). In response, some authors argued that the critique might stem from limitations in the way grit is measured (Jachimowicz, Wihler, Bailey, & Galinsky, 2018). More specifically, Jachimowicz et al. (2018) argue that the grit scale currently only measures persistence and not passion. This is unfortunate because not only does it not reflect the totality of grit as Duckworth and colleagues originally intended but perseverance requires passion for having its intended beneficial effects (Jachimowicz et al., 2018). That is, immersion transpires when perseverance and passion combine, and immersion leads to the cognitive effort and investment into goals required for performance (Credé et al., 2017; Jachimowicz et al., 2018). So, instead of discarding passion as a facet of grit based on weak meta-analytic relations with performance, passion should be clearly defined, operationalised and measured. To this extent, passion is defined as a "strong feeling toward a personally important value/preference that motivates intentions and behaviors to express that value/ preference" (Jachimowicz et al., 2018, p. 9981). Unemployed individuals can benefit from internalizing their reasons for job searching to the extent that not only the search activity is personally valuable or important, but also employment.

Whereas the original conceptualization and operationalization of grit included two facets, studies in collectivistic contexts suggested that grit should include a third facet: adaptability to ever-changing situations (Datu et al., 2018). Although these authors argue that adaptability is important in collectivistic societies (because the 'self' is highly context-dependent), it may extend to more individualistic societies to counter the criticism levelled at grit—namely, that it comes at a cost. Grit encapsulates the notion that it is the courage to push through the fear of failure, so less gritty individuals tend to change direction to minimize their losses. In contrast, their grittier counterparts continue on their original path despite their losses (Maddi, Matthews, Kelly, Villarreal, & White, 2012). The cost of grit was confirmed in a recent study by Lucas, Gratch, Cheng, and Marsella (2015). So, appreciating changes, a desire for improvement, flexibility of plans, and maintaining harmonious relationships—key indicators of adaptability (Datu et al., 2018)—may play an important role in facilitating healthy perseverance and passion, even more so within unemployment.

Grit's value lies in its relation to several positive outcomes (Park et al., 2018) in addition to performance, but that also enables performance. Grittier individuals engage in attention-absorbing activities and seek meaning and purpose (Hill, Burrow, & Bronk, 2016; Von Culin, Tsukayama, & Duckworth, 2014). They also tend to perceive their abilities as malleable (Hochanadel & Finamore, 2015; West et al., 2016), demonstrate higher levels of self-efficacy (Muenks, Wigfield, Yang, & O'Neal, 2017), and attribute adversity to specific and changeable causes. Grittier individuals also engage in more self-regulated learning (Wolters & Hussain, 2015). They are also less inclined to quit as demonstrated in several contexts (Eskreis-Winkler, Shulman, Beal, & Duckworth, 2014) and reported higher levels of well-being (Disabato, Goodman, & Kashdan, 2019), also on a daily level (Jiang et al., 2019). Given the value of grit, especially in the unemployment domain, interventions should be developed through which grit can be enhanced.

13.3 Developing Gritty Job Seekers

Personality is often regarded as a stable and unchanged trait. However, only about 40% of someone's personality is due to genetic reasons. This means that about 60% of personality variations are ascribed to environmental influences (Vukasović & Bratko, 2015). In other words, one's personality can be changed, shaped, and cultivated to a large extent (Tang et al., 2019). In line with the notion that grit is a malleable personality trait or strength, Duckworth (2016) discussed possible internal psychological (e.g. interest, deliberate practice, purpose, and hope) and external environmental sources (e.g. career counselors, gritty cultures), that can facilitate the development of grit. Additional internal psychological resources (e.g. growth-mindset) also emerged, from empirical studies, as significant determinants of grit.

13.3.1 Cultivating Sustainable Interest

Aiding the unemployed to discover their interest, aspects of their previous work which they enjoyed or tasks which they found engaging is a valuable way in which to develop grit (Duckworth, 2016). In essence, job seekers should be facilitated to discover their passions and empowered to channel their energies to find job opportunities centered around these enduring interests (Weisskirch, 2019). If passion/interest is present, grit will follow (Duckworth, 2016). When there is alignment between interests/passions, and competencies/strengths, individuals are inclined to exert more effort in achieving the goals flowing from such (Van Zyl, Deacon, & Rothmann, 2010).

However, job seekers may not necessarily have many enjoyable options to choose from when searching for a job. Yet, concerted efforts need to be made to (a) determine enduring interests, (b) experimenting with new skills, tasks or work

to discover "new (latent) interests", (c) translating interests into passions through exploration and (d) cultivate passion through active investment in skill development (Duckworth et al., 2007). Cultivating passion is a time and development intensive process which implies that even though an activity may not be pleasurable in the current moment, it doesn't mean that it might not be in the future once the skill is mastered (Duckworth, 2016). Job seekers should develop realistic expectations about interests but also need to understand that interests are the seeds needed to develop a passion (Weisskirch, 2019). Discovering and developing interests into passions, and passions into viable job opportunities, requires hard work, dedication and active effort by the job seeker (Cross, 2014).

Latent interests are triggered by practical exposure, exploration or play, and not by mere self-reflection or introspection. Job seekers need to actively and consciously engage with the world and try "new things" in order to discover their interests (Duckworth et al., 2007). Passion develops from discovering and investing in interests; however, it does require a significant amount of time and hard work (Jin & Kim, 2017). It should be noted that interest does not imply discovering a completely new area of expertise or a new functional skill; it could also be found in domains in which one is already competent. Novelty is different for novices (i.e. seeking new interests) and experts (i.e. seeking nuances in current domains of expertise) (Duckworth, 2016). Job seekers need to not only discover new interests but also need to deepen their understanding of their current strengths (O'Keefe, Dweck, & Walton, 2018). Both should be approached in a systematic and structured manner.

Various individual and environmental primers, interventions or techniques could be employed to aid the job seeker to discover his/her interests and to translate such into passions. Table 13.1 provides some practical guidelines or techniques which could be implemented in this regard.

13.3.2   Deliberate Practice

Grit is not just about discovering an interest or passion; it is also about exerting concerted effort to enhance the level of expertise in a given task/skill/interest/hobby (Wolfe & Patel, 2016). Gritty individuals have an innate drive to hone in on the weaknesses of a given skill, isolate the core mistakes, and actively focus on their improvement. In effect, gritty job seekers embody a persistent desire to develop and adopt a "failure as a learning opportunity" mindset. For example, if a job seeker didn't do well in an interview, he/she would ask for feedback from the organization to determine where he/she could do better the next time around. These job seekers would dissect each failed interview to determine the specific area of concern, develop an active strategy to address such, implement it and engage in repetitive practice to improve. Deliberate practice does not refer to aimless and mindless repetition of a task with the hopes of enhancing performance (i.e. experience does not equate to excellence) (Duckworth et al., 2007).

Table 13.1 Techniques for cultivating interests

Techniques
1. Employ psychometric assessments to discover values, motives, aptitude, strengths and personality preferences and experiment with new activities aligned with these aspects
2. Connect signature strengths to potential domains of work, or fields of interests
3. Listing or exploring tasks and activities which is fun and enjoyable. Determine overarching themes or links between these different types of activities
4. Reflect upon the interests and hobbies of others and determine which you may find interesting 5. Engage in the process of systematic self-reflection on current skills, capabilities, interests or even hobbies to determine which areas could still be improved 6. Discover a niche domain adjacent to your current field of interest and invest time to learn more about it 7. Take up an unpaid internship, or volunteer temporarily in a company which does something subjectively meaningful
8. Attend "free online courses" by reputable institutions through platforms such as Coursera.org
9. Attend free conferences or business meetups relating to domains of interest
10. Find and contract a mentor or a coach
11. Register to participate in social enterprises to be surrounded by gritty individuals who have a passion for a given domain
12. Join social clubs or community-building initiatives hosted by local organisations

Deliberate practice refers to a highly effortful process of purposeful and systematic practice aligned to a desire to improve performance through engaging in specific tasks to overcome current areas of weakness (Miller, Chow, Wampold, & Hubble, 2019). This implies that deliberate practice is not a proverbially pleasurable activity as it requires active effort from job seekers as the desired outcome is beyond his/her current level of skill. This process is painful; it's a challenge, its strenuous and personally stretching. Job seekers should realize that deliberate practice is employed to improve skills, and not to experience flow, pleasure or engagement. Dweck (2012) argued that individuals engaged in deliberate practice should proverbially 'learn to love the burden' of practice and argued that it requires the following:

1. A reasonably developed level of expertise in a given domain or skill, coupled with the motivation needed to improve
2. Clear, well defined, specific, measurable, realistic and attainable goals with clear performance targets
3. A mentor/teacher or coach who could aid in setting clear and specific goals, isolate mistakes and develop activities to aid in enhancing performance
4. Developing skills that have already been mastered by others and that evidence-based practices, training or techniques are available to aid in improving the skill
5. A set (daily) routine and commitment to the process
6. Challenges that are stretching, pushing the individual outside of his/her comfort zone and exceeding current skill levels
7. Active, immediate and constructive feedback from external parties

Fig. 13.1 Deliberate practice model for job seekers

8. Active reflection on progress and performance with a constant refinement of the skill
9. Supporters and encouraging mentors

The conditions for deliberate practice can be clustered into five broad categories (Fig. 13.1). One, job seekers need to set SMART (specific, measurable, attainable, realistic and time-bound) goals associated with the skills or abilities they need to enhance their success of obtaining meaningful employment (Dweck, 2012). These goals need to be aligned to their signature strengths to ensure commitment over time (Van Zyl, Roll, Stander, & Richter, 2020). Job seekers need to perform a gap analyses between their current level of skills/abilities and the level at which they would like to perform (Van Zyl et al., accepted). Two, based on the gap analyses, job seekers need to establish a clear path to bridge the gap between the current and desired state (Oades, Crowe, & Nguyen, 2009). This implies that process of goal attainment needs to be broken down into smaller, sequential steps and tasks which systematically build on one another to achieve the performance goals (Orem, Binkert, & Clancy, 2007). Three, job seekers need to focus on developing the 'right' tasks first (Passmore & Oades, 2015). For example, if a job seeker aims to become a concert pianist, he/she would first need to learn how to read sheet music or notes, before he/she can learn how to hit the right notes, in the correct order and the right time. Four, the job seeker needs to isolate the key moves or areas of active concern and engage in meaningful repetition (Van Zyl, Roll, et al., 2020). Here the focus is on 'micro-skill development' associated with the challenges he/she can't yet meet. Last, the job seeker should actively seek feedback and reflect on his/her performance. Feedback is required to both motivate and empower as well as identify areas of improvement (Duckworth et al., 2007; Dweck, 2012). The type and level of feedback that is being solicited depends on the level of current expertise of the job

seeker. When developing a brand-new skill, an individual requires unconditional support and encouragement to fast track mastery (Peláez, Coo, & Salanova, 2019). However, if a specific level of performance is already present, and the aim is to improve a specific aspect, then critical feedback is required. If a novice gets vital feedback, it would be demotivational, and the probability of quitting increases. If a professional only receive supportive feedback, he/she will become stagnant or even bored (Linley, Woolston, & Biswas-Diener, 2009). Job seekers should ensure that they are surrounded by cheerleaders (those who provide unconditional support), supporters (those who empower and encourage) and encouraging mentors (who will provide critical, yet constructive guidance).

13.3.3 Pursuing Purpose and Discovering Meaning

Where interest and deliberate practice is associated with the discovery and development of skills, abilities and competencies, purpose and meaning relate to how such connects to the proverbial bigger picture (Jordan, Ferris, Hochwarter, & Wright, 2019). From Duckworth's (2016) perspective, understanding how one's life, one's work or one's goals are aligned to the service of others, contributes to feelings of contentment. Also, research revealed that experiencing one's work to be meaningful to others is positively related to happiness, work-related well-being, (Van Wingerden & Van der Stoep, 2017), use of strengths and proactive behavior (e.g. job crafting) (Van Wingerden & Van der Stoep, 2018; Van Wingerden, Van der Stoep, & Poell, 2018). Meaning and purpose provide the fuel required to push through difficult situations and to conquer obstacles hindering goal attainment. In other words, individuals are gritty because they perceive their contributions to add value to the lives and well-being of others (Duckworth, 2016). For job seekers, however, understanding the meaning and purpose of their lives are particularly difficult seeing that basic psychological needs (safety and security) aren't being met (Van Zyl & Stander, 2013). However, research suggests that it is the most important aspect to develop to aid individuals to push through times of high uncertainty and disappear (Martela & Steger, 2016).

Meaning and purpose build greater perseverance and enhances commitment to personal goals. Without having meaningful goals, one might be left without clear targets to persevere towards (Duckworth, 2016; Hill et al., 2016; Tang et al., 2019). Albeit its importance, the experience of purpose and meaning differs between individuals making it the most challenging aspect to develop in job seekers (Van Zyl & Stander, 2019). Meaning and purpose is a deeply subjective experience which actively influences how life, work, struggles and failures are interpreted. Although no generic set of guidelines can be provided to aid job seekers in experiencing meaning during the job searching process, Van Zyl and Stander (2019) provided some general techniques which could be used to develop meaning. These are summarized in Table 13.2.

Table 13.2 Techniques for pursuing purpose and discovering meaning

Techniques
1. Exercise autonomy and the freedom to choose
2. Engage in a cognitive recrafting exercise linking the job-seeking behaviors or the unemployment process to something larger than one-self or a bigger goal
3. Contract a mentor who shows a high level of purpose or advocates his work as a calling
4. Reflect upon the meaningful moments during the job searching process and celebrate the small victories
5. Engage in activities that are aligned to personal strengths, and those which contribute to the wellbeing of others
6. List ways in which the job search process has had a positive impact on the self and others
7. Act as a mentor for someone else
8. Deepen social connections with those in one's network
9. Use employment-crafting strategies as a means to optimize demands and to seek resources

Another essential element associated with crafting meaning is to reframe stories of failures (told as a victim) into stories of triumphs (told as a survivor) (Van Zyl, Motschnig-Pitrik, & Stander, 2016). This aids in reframing the victim mentality and builds an internal locus of control (Van Zyl et al., accepted). Van Zyl et al. (accepted) argued that simple strategies such as "finding 15 positive things about the current negative situation" or "looking for the silver lining" could have significant positive effects on the experience of meaning.

13.3.4   Instilling Hope

Like purpose and meaning, hope aids job seekers to keep faith in difficult times. Hope is created by allowing individuals to (a) set personally meaningful goals, (b) developing multiple pathways to achieve these goals and (c) preparing for possible obstacles (Snyder, 2000; Vela, Lu, Lenz, & Hinojosa, 2015). Duckworth (2016) theorized that an expectation that one has control over one's destiny or that one can create a better future through one's efforts may enhance grit. Not only does hope aid in the development of grit, but it also buffers against the onset of psychopathology and decreases the impact of the long-term psychological suffering associated with being unemployed (Van Zyl et al., 2016).

During unemployment, job seekers may over time develop feelings that they are not in control of the situation, which in effect leads to feelings of hopelessness (Van der Vaart & Van den Broeck, 2019). This type of psychological suffering, coupled with feelings of a lack of control, could lead people to experience depression, helplessness and despair (Seligman, 1972; Wanberg, 2012). Once hope is lost, it's particularly difficult to re-establish (Snyder, 2000). In contrast, when individuals are hopeful, and they feel that they have a sense of control over their lives, they tend to persevere even under the harshest of circumstances (Snyder, 2000). As such, it's important to aid job seekers to develop a hopeful disposition.

Although the first two components of Snyder's Hope Theory (Snyder, 2000), goal setting and goal strategizing, has already been discussed in the preceding sections, the final component "preparing for obstacles" (agency) needs further exploration. A major component of hope is the ability to anticipate and prepare for possible challenges and/or negative outcomes associated with goal attainment. Luthans, Avey, Avolio, Norman, and Combs (2006) argued that if an individual is prepared for possible failures, the potential impact it has on well-being and future performance is largely mitigated. Planning and preparing establish a sense of control over one's destiny. But how can this type of behavior be developed?

Although it's beyond the scope of this chapter to go into depth regarding scenario mapping, strategic planning, decision forecasting, SWOT/SOAR analysis and the like, job seekers need to employ a structured technique to identify the possible obstacles and risks which may lead to failures.[2] Besides these practical forecasting tools, on a psychological level, the job seeker could develop hope through:

1. Developing positive, and optimistic self-talk (Furtner, Sachse, & Exenberger, 2012)
2. Drawing a Hope Map, where high expectations of the future are articulated and clear view of how barriers will be approach in achieving such developed (McQuaid, Niemiec, & Doman, 2018)
3. Guided self-reflection through keeping a hope journal focused on artifacts which provide hope (Crain & Koehn, 2012)
4. Clarifying the meaning job seekers attach to hope and what it means to be hopeful (Van Zyl et al., 2016)
5. Showing a willingness to ask for help before things become too difficult to bear (Van Zyl & Stander, 2019)
6. Praise and celebrate EFFORT and not just successes (Duckworth, 2016)
7. Develop a growth-mindset (Dweck, 2012)

13.3.5 Fostering a Growth-Mindset

The job seeker's mindset is another factor which influences the potential success of his/her job seeking endeavors. Dweck (2012) argued that mindsets encapsulate one's belief about the developmental or fixed nature of the human condition. In her research, Dweck (2012) distinguishes between two types of mindsets: (a) a fixed mindset (i.e. people's talents, behavior and capacity to grow are static and cannot be significantly changed) and (b) a growth-mindset (i.e. individuals have the capacity to grow, develop and change). According to Dweck (1986), people with a growth-mindset tend to have a mastery goal-orientation and view challenges as learning opportunities. They are open to and embrace failures and persists despite difficulties and setbacks. They actively learn and grow from critiques and find lessons in the successes or/victories of others (Stoycheva & Ruskov, 2015). Duckworth (2016)

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[2]For a non-technical primer on these tools, the reader is urged to consult Schoemaker (2004).

Table 13.3 Techniques for fostering a growth-mindset

Techniques
1. Get comfortable with imperfection and embrace uncertainty
2. Reframe failures as learning opportunities
3. Develop and test alternative strategies for approaching re-occurring problems
4. Avoid social-comparison and celebrate the achievements of others
5. Praise one's own effort towards goal achievement
6. Take calculated risks
7. Adopt a positive approach to both self-talk and communication with others (words create worlds)
8. Avoid attaching personal worth to failures in the job-seeking process
9. Learn from critiques
10. Know your current skill limits and don't push yourself till exhaustion
11. Actively request feedback on own growth and job-seeking strategies
12. When reflecting on failures, focus on the process, not on the self
13. Share mistakes and failures openly
14. Challenge own assumptions about personal value and the attributing factors to the unsuccessful job search process
15. Read up on brain plasticity (to help solidify the fact that even intelligence can change over time)

argued that gritty individuals adopt a growth-orientated mindset (Duckworth, 2016) which has subsequently been empirically confirmed (Tang et al., 2019).

Job seekers, therefore, need to actively work on the establishment and maintenance of a growth-mindset to aid them in finding meaningful employment. Hymer and Gershon (2014) provided several practical suggestions on how a growth-mindset can be developed and maintained. These are partially summarized in Table 13.3.

13.4   Need Satisfaction in the Context in which Gritty Job Seekers Are Developed

Grit interacts with situational characteristics to determine success or performance (Credé, 2018; Jordan, Ferris, et al., 2019). In the absence of such characteristics, grit's influence may be nonlinear or nonsignificant (Jordan, Ferris, et al., 2019). One such characteristic is the environment or the climate in which grit is developed (Duckworth, 2016). Van der Vaart and Van den Broeck (2019) argue that unemployment interventions should be delivered in a need-supportive climate—a climate where individuals experience a true sense of ownership over their thoughts, feelings and behaviors (i.e. autonomy), belonging (i.e. relatedness), and efficacy (i.e. competence). Need support is guided by the SDT and, hence, an overview of the theory is provided before illustrating how career counsellors (and significant others) can create a need-supportive psychological climate to in which gritty job seekers can flourish.

13.4.1 Self-Determination Theory

SDT is a prominent theory of motivation that proved to be effective in identifying psychological determinants and the processes through which they affect attitudinal, behavioural and well-being in multiple contexts (Ryan & Deci, 2017), including in the unemployment context (Van der Vaart, Van den Broeck, Rothmann, & De Witte, 2019). SDT holds that the kind of motivation one holds, alongside the amount of motivation, matters for behavioural and well-being outcomes. More specifically, the theory distinguishes between engaging in an activity because one ought to vs engaging in an activity because one considers it valuable or enjoyable (Deci & Ryan, 2000; Ryan & Deci, 2017). The former is referred to as controlled (and means the unemployed search because they have to) whereas the latter is autonomous (and means the unemployed search because it is important or interesting) motivation (Vansteenkiste & Van den Broeck, 2018). Autonomous motivation is self-determined—as the reasons for performing an activity is congruent with the self—and results in more positive attitudinal, behavioural and well-being outcomes as compared to controlled motivation (Deci & Ryan, 2000; Ryan & Deci, 2017). The third category is amotivation—amotivated persons lack the motivation to engage in an activity because they do not value the activity, they see no positive outcomes or resist the activity (Ryan & Deci, 2017; Ryan, Lynch, Vansteenkiste, & Deci, 2011). Amotivation predicts the worst outcomes for individuals (Ryan, Deci, & Grolnick, 1995). In the unemployment context, different kinds of motivation are also associated with differential outcomes in line with theory (Vansteenkiste & Van den Broeck, 2018). Although SDT categorises these different kinds of motivation and posits that it exists on a continuum, researchers acknowledge that they co-exist for behaviour to be multi-determined (Howard, Gagné, Morin, & Forest, 2018; Vansteenkiste & Mouratidis, 2016).

13.4.2 Basic Need Satisfaction

SDT further holds that the development of these different kinds of motivation is influenced by the satisfaction of three basic psychological needs: the need for autonomy, the need for competence and the need for relatedness.[3] The need for autonomy is defined as individuals' inherent desire to act with a sense of choice and volition, that is, to be the author of one's actions and to feel psychologically free (Deci & Ryan, 2000). For example, when feeling satisfied in the need for autonomy,

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[3]In order to be classified as a *psychological* need, a need must consistently promote psychological growth, internalisation, and well-being across different cultures—beyond the variance explained by other proposed needs (Deci & Ryan, 2000). Thus far, empirical research provided evidence for the essential role of the three needs for autonomy, competence and relatedness (Sheldon, Elliot, Kim, & Kasser, 2001).

the unemployed would experience a sense of control over decisions to apply for a job such that their decisions reflect their wishes (Van der Vaart & Van den Broeck, 2019). However, on average, the unemployed may be more prone to low need satisfaction. Their daily activities may feel more like a chain of 'musts' and 'shoulds', undermining their need for autonomy (Vansteenkiste & Van den Broeck, 2018). The need for competence is the desire to feel capable of mastering the environment and to bring about desired outcomes (Deci & Ryan, 2000). Actively seeking out challenges helps people to develop their skills and adapt to complex and changing environments. For example, when they would feel competent, the unemployed experience a sense of confidence and feel capable and energised to pursue an activity (e.g., going for an interview) (Van der Vaart & Van den Broeck, 2019). However, continually facing rejections, the unemployed may experience rather low levels of competence satisfaction (Vansteenkiste & Van den Broeck, 2018). Finally, the need for relatedness is the inherent propensity to feel connected to others, that is, to be a member of a group, to love and care and be loved and cared for (Deci & Ryan, 2000). The need for relatedness is satisfied if people experience a sense of communion and maintain close and intimate relationships. For example, unemployed who would experience a sense of closeness and being connected to those who support them in coping with the frustrations accompanying unemployment would feel related (Van der Vaart & Van den Broeck, 2019). However, after a while, most unemployed feel isolated from external networks and may experience little satisfaction of their need for relatedness (Vansteenkiste & Van den Broeck, 2018).

The three needs are, in turn, influenced by the interpersonal environment in which a person finds themselves (Deci & Ryan, 2000). A need supportive interpersonal environment where individuals experience a true sense of ownership over their thoughts, feelings and behaviours (i.e. autonomy), belonging (i.e. relatedness), and efficacy (i.e. competence) leads to optimal outcomes indirectly via the different kinds of motivation (Deci, Olafsen, & Ryan, 2017; Ryan & Deci, 2017) but also directly (Van den Broeck, Ferris, Chang, & Rosen, 2016). A study by Van Wingerden, Bakker, and Derks (2017) revealed that the satisfaction of the three basic needs predicts employees' proactive behaviour (job crafting). This positive relationship between basic need satisfaction and proactive behaviour may also be relevant to the unemployed. Evidence in the unemployment context supports the importance of providing autonomy and enabling the unemployed to feel competent and a sense of belonging because it influences their motivation, job search behaviours, well-being and re-employment quality (Ellingsen-Dalskau, Morken, Berget, & Pedersen, 2016; Koen, Klehe, Van Vianen, Zikic, & Nauta, 2010; Koen, Van Vianen, Van Hooft, & Klehe, 2016; Van der Vaart et al., 2019). Preliminary evidence also hints at the importance of relatedness and competence in the development of grit. For example, Park et al. (2018) showed that when students perceive their school environment as mastery-oriented, higher levels of grit transpires (Park et al., 2018). Datu et al. (2017) showed that a sense of relatedness is positively associated with grit (Datu, 2017). Duckworth (2016) recommends that significant others strike a balance between being supportive (i.e. being warm and respectful)

and firmly enforcing expectations when developing grit. Taken together, basic need satisfaction potentially boost grit and can be nurtured through interpersonal sources.

13.4.3 Autonomy-Supportive Behaviors

Autonomy-supportive behaviors include (a) acknowledging others' feelings and ideas, (b) providing reasons for rules and expectations, and (c) offering of choice and opportunities for others to take initiative (Mageau et al., 2015; Rocchi, Pelletier, Chueng, & Desmarais, 2017; Williams, Whipp, Jackson, & Dimmock, 2013). Autonomy-supportive counsellors, for example, would give the unemployed as much choice as possible and provide a rationale when necessary.

13.4.4 Competence-Supportive Behaviors

Competence-supportive behaviors include (a) structuring tasks in a way that individuals can expand their knowledge and capabilities (Niemiec & Ryan, 2009), (b) acknowledging improvement, (c) believing in others' abilities to succeed, and (d) providing constructive and valuable feedback (Rocchi et al., 2017; Sheldon & Filak, 2008). Competence-supportive counsellors, for example, would acknowledge the improvement in competency development and provide positive feedback on areas of growth.

13.4.5 Relatedness-Supportive Behaviors

Relatedness-supportive behaviors include (a) showing unconditional positive regard, (b) being warm and empathetic, (c) having a genuine interest in them and their activities (Jones, Armour, & Potrac, 2004; Rocchi et al., 2017). Relatedness-supportive counsellors should not only engage in interactions in a warm, empathic and compassionate way but may also encourage them to seek social support when engaging in activities that are aimed at developing grit.

13.4.6 Grit and Self-Employment

Grit not only matters for job seekers that aim to find employment, but also for those who wish to be self-employed (or entrepreneurs) (Wolfe & Patel, 2016). Authors argue that self-employment and employment are both characterised by goal setting and achievement (Baum & Locke, 2004; Wolfe & Patel, 2016) and for this reason,

grit plays an important role in not only the decision to engage in self-employment or entrepreneurship but also to be a successful entrepreneur (Arco-Tirado, Bojica, Fernández-Martin, & Hoyle, 2019; Wolfe & Patel, 2016). For this reason, and because of the role of self-employment and entrepreneurship in combating unemployment, interventions can be equally beneficial for those wishing to pursue entrepreneurial aspirations instead of employment.

13.5   Conclusion and Future Directions

To reap the benefits of gritty job seekers, stakeholders (i.e. career counsellors, government, organizational psychologists) should actively invest in interventions. However, developing gritty job seekers remain a challenge; even more so in the absence of scientific evidence of grit's benefit in the unemployment context and intervention research in the grit domain. The current chapter theoretically argued the relevance of grit in the unemployment context and provided theoretically grounded ways in which gritty job seekers can be developed. The chapter also illustrated how a need-supportive psychological climate can be created that would enhance the success of grit interventions. Recommendations for future research include intervention studies to determine the effectiveness of these interventions in a variety of countries.

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