

Gritty Community

By Preston Pouteaux

Note: Thank you for downloading one of our 13 Ways Syndicated Articles! We have included a boilerplate about the author and 13 Ways at the end of each article. When publishing the article content below please ensure that the boilerplate information is included.

There are times when we want to quit. These are the moments where we wonder if we can take another step in our relationships, projects, work, or family responsibilities. Perhaps the passion is lost, the good feelings are few and far between, or we just cannot see another way around our problems. We call these moments “dark nights of the soul” and they can certainly feel very dark. Sometimes these challenges test our resolve and we buckle under the weight.

Yet often when I look back through the story of my life I notice that the hard times were often those moments that increased the tensile strength of my character. I had to make hard decisions to stick it out, find new support, welcome fresh wisdom, and open my life to new possibilities, faith, and trust. All of this became the foundation that supported me when I needed to know I was not alone.

Getting through the hard stuff of life with hard work and perseverance is called grit. It is a vital character quality that gives us the focus we need when the going gets tough. It is a quality we can teach and exemplify to our kids. Our three year old daughter has had a hard time getting her hair brushed after a bath. She would cry and complain whenever we would sit her down and start working the knots of her hair. So my wife taught her to say, “I got this! I got this!” every time she would feel the tug of the hair brush. Now, more than a few times, we’ve heard her whispering to herself while carrying heavy things around the house, “I got this! I got this!”

Yet grit is more than an individualistic character quality. We may celebrate this trait in athletes or entrepreneurs, and we make heroes out of self-made stars. However the truth is that real transformative grit is shaped in community. It is shaped in the hard times, but often when we are surrounded by others who encourage us along. When we are at our limit and another person comes along to remind us that we are valuable and loved, that’s when we find the resolve to take the next step. In our home, it took the support of a loving mother to teach a toddler that she can get through her challenge. “I got this!” is a mantra born out of a caring family - one that has each other’s back. It takes community to bring out the best in us.

In our neighbourhoods and in our city we face a mountain of challenges. Job loss, rocky marriages, family hardships, and anxiety are just the start of those difficulties looming in our community. As we face these, will we do so together or alone? Will we discover that friends and neighbours are waiting to encourage us along and help us find the way through? Could we become a ‘Gritty Community’ that steps into the challenges each of us bear?

May we never buckle under the weight of anxiety because no one was there to help us carry the burden. May we never underestimate the power of our words and actions to help others face difficulties. And may we become the grittiest city shaped by the kindest neighbours. For as Margaret Wheatley once said so wisely, “Whatever the problem, community is the answer.”

*This syndicated content is provided by Preston Pouteaux, author of *The Bees of Rainbow Falls*, on behalf of 13 Ways, a company with a mission to push communities to face their challenges to find their unique path to success. For more information visit www.13ways.ca, or we can start the conversation at info@13ways.ca.*