

TABLE OF CONTENTS

PART ONE

GRIT: What Is It? Why Do You Need It?

Preface: Hard Hats, Rope, and Running Shoes	14
Chapter 1: Let the Journey Begin!	17

PART TWO

GRIT: How Do You Get It?

Chapter 2: Getting Along with Others	51
Chapter 3: Responsibility	87
Chapter 4: Integrity	119
Chapter 5: Tenacity	133

PART THREE

GRIT: How Do You Pass It On?

Chapter 6: Passing It on To Others	145
Chapter 7: How to Implement the GOT GRIT? Program in Your School or Classroom.....	157

PASTOR UMBERTO

Tragedy can hit anyone at anytime. One minute we could be whistling a happy tune, and then the next minute we get seriously injured or hear that someone we love just died. How do you cope with tragedy? It is normal to grieve or get angry, but as the saying goes, “Life must go on.” You can choose to give up, blame others, question your faith, or you can face the tragedy and move on.

Let me tell you about a man who had a terrible accident but chose to remain positive. A friend of mine traveled to Costa Rica on a mission trip. He came back with many stories, but the one that caught my attention was about Pastor Umberto. The following comes from a letter my friend sent me while on his mission trip.

While we worked we got to know some of the villagers a little better. It was fun trying to communicate with one another. Everyone was so appreciative of the fact that we had come so far just to do something that would be a blessing to them. It was very humbling. Most humbling and inspiring, however, was the testimony of Pastor Umberto. Umberto, about eight years ago, had a giant tree fall on him up in the mountains. He was pinned in a sitting position for almost four hours before a friend could return with help and enough strength to remove it. As a result, Umberto lost the use of his lower body and has been paralyzed from the waist down ever since. After going through a brief period of depression, God restored his joy and gave him a passion for life that I have never seen in another human being. For years, Umberto used a pulley and a rope (attached to a tree) to hoist himself onto his donkey so he could go and minister to other people. The village is currently raising money to buy him a Suzuki Sidekick that is equipped for someone who is disabled. As I mentioned already, Pastor Umberto is probably the happiest person I ever met. He is always smiling and often shouts out things like, “HALLELUJAH,” just out of the blue.

9 Seek solitude. Sometimes I think one of the best ways to get along better with others is get away from them! Seek solitude on a regular basis. While alone, think of ways you can improve personal relationships.

10 Remember, they may be doing the best they can. Author, Mark I. Rosen notes, “In an encounter with a difficult person, always assume, at least initially, that the person is trying to do the best he or she can and that there is a redeeming explanation for their difficult behavior.” Sometimes the difficult people we meet could be struggling with family, health, or financial issues that we are not aware of. If we knew what they were going through, we would be a bit more patient, considerate, and tolerant. The following letter to *Sun* magazine (June, 2004), written by a nurse, is a perfect example of what I’m talking about.

I thought I was having a pretty good day at work. I knew what to do for my patients, and they seemed appreciative. My hair was behaving, I wasn't eating too much chocolate, and I was treating everyone with kindness—everyone except the new nurse. She just rubbed me the wrong way, with her sad, insecure smile. She was a little too eager, too needy. That evening I overheard the new nurse talking about her struggle to become pregnant. She'd finally had a child at the age of thirty-nine, she told the listener, but the little girl needed heart surgery, and they'd lost her to an infection. By that time, premature menopause had ended the nurse's hope for another child. Sheepishly, I asked the new nurse what the baby's name was. Her face lit up with a mother's love. "Allison. She would be five next month." She pulled out a photograph of a beautiful, bright-eyed little girl. My heart ached with shame, sadness, and awe. "Thank you," I said. What I meant was: "Thank you for teaching me how much I have to learn."

A DOZEN DIFFUSERS*

I believe that anger is an excellent “friend repellent.” People are hesitant to get close to those who are easily angered. As I finish this chapter on getting along with others I offer twelve quick strategies to help young and old get better control of the most dangerous emotion of all. Once anger is under control, friends return, marital relations improve, and there will be fewer problems with co-workers.

1 Sit down. Anger decreases when you sit; it increases when you stand. If you have a conflict with someone, take advice from this Native American saying, “Standing is confrontation, sitting is conversation.”

2 Look up! Don’t look at the person who is fueling your anger. Look up at the ceiling or the sky for at least ten seconds. Believe it or not, your anger loosens its grip.

3 Inhale some pleasant fragrances. Keep some liquid soap or hand lotion close by. Rub the lotion on your hands. The movement of your hands will burn off the extra energy, plus the pleasing odor is calming. The best fragrances are lavender, peach, strawberry, and wintergreen.

4 Practice ‘square breathing.’ A square has four sides. Square breathing involves four steps. 1) Breathe in slowly for four seconds, 2) Hold your breath in for four seconds, 3) Take four seconds to let the air out, 4) Pause for four more seconds before doing or saying anything.

5 Chew sugarless gum. Keep a pack in your purse or pocket. Have a piece and chew your anger away.

6 Look in the mirror. When you are angry, the only one who doesn’t see your “not so pretty face” is you! Find a mirror and take a close look. That should help you simmer.

- ❖ Place information about the program in your parent newsletters.

6 Post gritty quotes throughout the school. Come up with ten quotes about working hard, not giving up, and getting along with others. After a while the students will know them well. Here are a few of my favorite quotes. I use them often in my class lessons.

*If you want something you've never had,
you must do something you've never done.*

(Tom Carr)

*You don't get what you wish for
you get what you work for.*

(Anonymous)

*Responsible people are happy people.
Happy people are responsible people.*

(Marvin Marshall)

It takes grit to be fit.

(Tom Carr)

*The key ingredient in the formula for success
is the ability to get along with others.*

(Theodore Roosevelt)

*The more concerned we become over the things
we can't control, the less we will do
with the things we can control.*

(John Wooden)

To be bored is an insult to oneself.

(Jules Renard)