

# PUBLICATION

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## On My Bookshelf: *Grit, The Secret to Advancement: Stories of Successful Women Lawyers*

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*Grit, The Secret to Advancement*, published by the American Bar Association (ABA) in July 2017, is largely based on The Grit Project, a key initiative of the ABA's Commission on Women in the Profession. The Grit Project seeks to identify the common characteristics of highly successful individuals, particularly leading women in law, and then educate and support those who may not naturally exercise these traits. The Project focuses on two primary traits: grit, defined as perseverance and passion for long-term goals, and growth mindset, defined as the belief that talent can be developed through dedication and hard work, and that perseverance, persistence and effort eventually pay off.

*Grit, The Secret to Advancement* is an easy, enjoyable read; it educates the reader on The Grit Project and the concepts of grit and growth mindset, but also inspires one to apply these principles to achieve a more positive outcome. The book is not only for women lawyers; the content is beneficial for a much broader audience. From the Introduction:

"Grit and growth mindset have the potential to help women navigate their way through the (sometimes overwhelming) obstacles – both personal and professional – that may present themselves along the way. Furthermore, this research provides legal employers, bar associations, law schools, and other entities with additional tools to support women in the workplace and to begin to chip away at the gender gap at the leadership level."

Chapter One defines primary concepts associated with the underlying research, and summarizes the process used and key findings. Subsequent chapters are divided by specific work environments and titled accordingly: Solo Practitioners, Law Firm Lawyers, In-House Lawyers, and Government and Nonprofit Lawyers, respectively. Each begins with a detailed summary of the demographics, followed by a description of the relevant measures of success, and then a summary of the key findings for that group.

The latter chapters each conclude with a collection of letters from women leaders representing that work environment – 47 letters total. These letters are presented in first person and with very little editorial oversight (I can attest to this, as I am honored to have had the opportunity to contribute a letter for Chapter Three, Law Firm Lawyers, in honor of Baker Donelson shareholder and immediate past president of the ABA, [Linda A. Klein](#)). I highly encourage all women, no matter the practice area, industry or career point, to read these letters. The authors come from varied backgrounds, by design, and present differing perspectives on the practice of law and how to succeed in it. But, I also found that the letters present differing perspectives on how to succeed *in life*. It is inspiring to read the personal accounts of these women, the advice presented and the encouraging words of each letter. To have this collection in one work is quite remarkable, and I commend the Commission for taking the initiative to complete such an encouraging and timely project.

The book concludes with a short summary followed by three appendices, including information on what employers can do to nurture, evaluate, encourage and reward grit; resources available through the

Commission's Grit Project; and a summary of the associated science with discussion of some of the factors that have been known to impact female professionals across other industries.

To me, a grit and growth mindset essentially means that you must identify what you want and put in the hard work that it takes to achieve your goals; consider every obstacle an opportunity to grow and overcome; and never, ever give up. I highly recommend *Grit, The Secret to Advancement* for support and daily encouragement.

"There's going to be anxiety about uncertainty and fear about failing, but push yourself to keep going. After all, you'll never know how close you are to succeeding if you quit now."

*Grit, The Secret to Advancement* may be purchased [here](#).