

TRUE GRIT:

HARD TO COME BY, BUT WORTH THE EFFORT



"Your child is far more likely to be struck by lightning than to be kidnapped by a stranger," explained Rick Lawrence. "And they're as likely to experience a violent assault by a stranger in your home as they are to be hit by a tornado." Though the chances of abduction and intrusion are extremely small, parents devote considerable time and energy to preventing them. Based partly on what we hear on the news, we view safety as our top priority. But is that view helping us raise our kids?

PIN's April presentation featured author Rick Lawrence, who spoke about the importance of raising kids with "grit," which is simply the ability to persevere and overcome adversity.

"The unintended consequence of our obsession with safety is that we're destroying grit in our kids," declared Lawrence.

"Our most important job is to intentionally develop grit in our kids because we cannot control their ability to be safe.

What we *can* do is build strength in them, so that whatever happens to them, they'll be able to persevere."

"The goal is to develop strength that will serve our kids their entire lives."

Lawrence's views are founded in recent research conducted by Angela Lee Duckworth, J. Bryan Sexton, and others. Their work has been aimed at identifying the qualities that help kids succeed in life, regardless of their circumstances and environment.

"We are the most affluent culture in the history of the world, and are therefore able to remove hardships from our kids' lives as never before," said Lawrence. "As a result, there's never been a generation of kids that lacks grit as much as today's," he stated. "Kids today are less able to stand on their own two feet, and that leads to depression." Lawrence's solution involves introducing intentional, purposeful hardship into our children's lives. "The goal is to develop strength that will serve our kids their entire lives," he said. Lawrence's ideas include:

1. **Do hard things.** Talk to your kids about "hard" being good, and tell them why that's true. On a whiteboard, list one hard thing for each family member to do every week.
2. **Name your kids by their strengths, not their accomplishments.** We're stronger when we base our identity in the truth of who we are. Look for strength in your kids and reflect that back to them. Emphasize the effort & strength, not results.
3. **Change from empathy to compassion.** That means not going into the pit with them, but calling them out. Move from cheap respect (e.g., trophies for everyone) to earned respect; from "You can't" to "You can!" When you see an accomplishment, ask what went into it.
4. **Automate less, experience more.** Switch from watching stuff to playing stuff, from indoor to outdoor, from sitting to standing, from standing to walking, from walking to running or pedaling; from receiving things to producing things; from automated answers to figuring problems out.

For more about Grit, visit RickLawrence.com. Download the podcast at www.PINccsd.org.

PIN's Annual Brunch on 5/3 will feature author Dr. Kristen Race on ***From Surviving to Thriving: Brain-Based Mindfulness Strategies to Reduce Stress***. The Brunch will be at Cherry Creek Presbyterian Church, 10150 E. Belleview Ave., Englewood. \$5 suggested donation at the door. Join us! *By Bobbie Turner, PIN Publicity.*