

# Can Character Be Learned?

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## SUMMARY KEYWORDS

modeling, kids, people, failure, life, grit, thinking, character, parents, angela, struggle, children, structure, fail, bezos, psychology, jackie, watch, talk, aspen ideas

## SPEAKERS

Angela Duckworth, Jackie Bezos, Prudential

- P** Prudential 00:00  
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- J** Jackie Bezos 00:38  
It's Aspen Ideas to go from the Aspen Institute. I'm Tricia Johnson. What happens when a parent or teacher models curiosity, integrity and empathy for a child? psychologist Angela Duckworth says the kid picks up on it. A child even a baby is constantly watching the adults in his life and modeling their behavior.
- A** Angela Duckworth 01:01  
You can model for your kids you know the things that you want and if you are truly kind I think it is very likely that your children will model your kindness and if you are truly forgiving, you know they will you know model that and if you're truly not, then they want

J

Jackie Bezos 01:19

Aspen Ideas to go brings you compelling talks from onstage events hosted by the Aspen Institute. The institute is a nonpartisan forum for values based leadership in the exchange of ideas. Today's discussion is from the Aspen Ideas Festival. It's not just genes that determine the makeup of a person. We learn how to be grateful, vulnerable and fearless by modeling others. Angela Duckworth study self control, perseverance and character. She started character lab, a nonprofit that works to advance the science and practice of character development. And she wrote The New York Times bestseller grit. In her conversation with Jackie Bezos Duckworth talks about the role model she had as a child, how too much structure can be a bad thing and why it's so hard to watch our children fail. Jackie Bezos co founded the Bezos Family Foundation, she advocates for Childhood Development and youth leadership. Here's Bezos. Angela, you didn't start off your life wanting to study character. What did you really think that you were going to do?

A

Angela Duckworth 02:29

I never really actually thought about this word character very seriously until I met these two educators named Dave Levin and Dominic roundoff. But at some point in recent history, we're on a stage somewhere at the Aspen Ideas Festival. And they really liked this word character. I was a psychology graduate student when I met them. And I knew what I was studying, which was grit and also self control and delayed gratification. But I really hadn't thought about this word character very seriously. But they liked it because as educators, they thought about children. And it was a term that Aristotle also used and Martin Luther King and Benjamin Franklin and Maria Montessori, really just to say that, in in the development of a child, we should think about whether they're developing into honest people, kind people and empathic people. And yes, hard working and passionate people and people who can control their tempers when provoked, and all those things they liked this word character, to, to embodied in an all of its resonance. So I have come to love the word character, and I'll just say this, which is that I think other people might call them social, emotional learning competencies. To me, that is a lot of syllables, but fine 21st century skills, soft skills, life skills, I think we're returning to this very, really ancient idea that to develop into our full selves. It's not just our GPA, or LSAT score, but all those things that make us people that we're proud of.

J

Jackie Bezos 04:09

That's very true. I think we had lost sight of who we want to be when we're teenagers. How do we want to show up in the world? Who do we want to be? And I think that the current circumstances which I will not elaborate on, give us more opportunity than ever before, to think about how we want to show up in the world. So Angela, what inspires you about this

work?

A

Angela Duckworth 04:31

I have a vision of, of what could be the case, but is far from the case today. And that vision is inspired by actually particular individuals. So for example, there's this teacher named Jeff Lee, who teaches eighth grade math in Harlem, and he is the best teacher ever. I mean, think of your favorite teacher. That's what Jeff Lee is like. I mean, he's so, so great at bringing out what his kids can do his test scores are phenomenal. And these are kids who are truly 99% from free and reduced price lunch backgrounds from no advantage at all. So there's that. So they've objectively accomplished skills and math that nobody really thought was possible. But that's not why I think that Jeff Lee has a vision of what is possible in education is inspiring to me that it's really that when he goes in there, he thinks about all those things that we listed. I mean, he really intentionally thinks about like, gratitude. Yeah, I know, I'm teaching fractions today. But we're also going to do gratitude, and he does it. And he teaches them that failure is nothing to be afraid of. And he teaches them that sharing, you know, things that are really make you vulnerable, that that's okay. And so in all those ways, you've got this eighth grade teacher who's bringing out the best in his kids, by objective standards, but also by those things, which are very hard to measure even to talk about. And my vision is that this psychologically wise teacher named Jeff Lee, that we could have a psychologically wise teacher in every classroom, in the United States, regardless of zip code. And indeed, that we can have a psychologically wise parent in every home. And you can just use your imagination to think about what this country would be if that happened.

J

Jackie Bezos 06:25

So I thought I'd bring you you know, take you kind of to the labs of some of the, the scientists are doing research on early brain development, and talk to you about what character looks like an infant at the University of Washington, in Washington State, at the Institute for learning and brain sciences, they have been doing a lot of work on early brain development. And they also possess this wonderful piece of equipment, I think they're the only people that have a Magneto encephalography machine. So one of the things that they've been able to do is actually, in real time, see exactly what is happening in that infant toddler brain, during interactions with a mother, or a father or caregiver. Let's picture one of the scientists seeing, you know, being interacting with a newborn child just only hours old. And he's, you know, sticks out his tongue at the baby. If she doesn't know she has a tongue. But she sticks her tongue out at the scientist, Vinny makes an O with his mouth, she makes an O with her mouth. Right? So the right areas are lighting up in her brain to have a conversation with Emily being hours old.

A

Angela Duckworth 07:42

You know, I think that when I imagine this psychologically wise teacher in every classroom, I mean, just in the mind's eye, they're definitely in every classroom, no matter what, zip code. Honestly, when I think of a psychologically wise parent, in every home, you know, who I'm thinking about, right? Like, yeah, like that, like that? I mean, can you just imagine, like, nobody would be mean, I mean, like, everyone would be loved. And, and things would turn out so much better. But I do think that you know, your interest in the earliest days of childhood, you know, one of the things that science is showing is that, you know, for decades, for millennia, we thought that nothing much was going on, when babies were like just sitting there and getting fed, you know, and then sleeping or not sleeping. And actually so much is going on, there isn't a moment of life where children are not learning, there is not a moment in life where they're not imitating there is not a moment in life where they are not generalizing, you know, they're figuring things out. And when they see you talk a certain way, or act a certain way, flinch or not flinch with people, maybe aren't the same color as you maybe have, you know, different social class, everything that you can imagine that you know, you would care about bringing out in your kids they are watching from from the earliest days. And I think this brain science is probably probably sharpening and affirming intuitions that I'm thinking that there are some parents who probably didn't need the neuroscience study because they, on intuition, were kind of great parents. I think a lot of us, myself included, you know, we're improved. When we parent when we actually understand what is going on scientifically, in human development.

J

Jackie Bezos 09:23

How do you think that it is you already alluded to this, but about parents how they model character and have no idea that that is that there, you're being constantly watched?

A

Angela Duckworth 09:33

And it tell you about this science experiment that was run just a year ago by this young woman named Julia Leonard, and it goes like this, you have a 15 month old baby and the baby's in a highchair. And in front of the baby, an experimenter is going to do one of three things. One of their two the babies just watches the experimenter do like kind of like nothing. It's a control group, like you know, experiment, just they're kind of whatever doing stuff adults do. The second group of babies watches the experimenter really struggle with a little toy. It's actually one of those little key chains like carabiner. And like, you know, like, and really struggle and kind of like, obviously struggle. But eventually, the experimenter gets what she wanted to get done. And so the baby gets to watch struggle, eventually followed by triumph. And then the third group of babies gets to watch the experimenter easily solve the little puzzle, right. And so what you find is that these 15 month old babies

generalize from just watching just a couple of minutes of this happen. And when they're given a totally different toy, that requires some struggle, some grit, they're much more likely to persist, and to persist longer when they have watched a role model themselves struggle. And the lesson here, I think, is that so many young people grow up and they watch the the highlight reel on YouTube of, you know, the person they admire, and you know, a musician and athlete, a tech entrepreneur, they see the highlight reel, what they don't see is the struggle. And actually, I think this is not just true of young people, I go out of my way to tell my entire lab, when I get rejected from a scientific journal, I not only tell them that I was rejected, I send around by email, the rejection letter, which usually is like whoever wrote this is a total idiot, they obviously don't understand either psychology or statistics. And then you know, these things can be like 11, single spaced pages of pure venom. And I want them to see someone telling me that I'm a total idiot. And I want them to know that I was kind of a little bit crushed by that, like, it even made me sometimes cry and want them to know that not that I came back and I was no, but like, actually, Angela Duckworth was temporarily devastated. And then I want them to see me bounce back, I want them to see me eventually figure out what was worth while in that criticize criticism and what wasn't. And then, and then, you know, by dint of her effort, and a little bit of luck, you know, end up doing something. And so I think that's the the modeling stories, that we're not modeling invincibility. We're not modeling perfection. We're not modeling highlight reels. But I do think it's helpful as a parent to be intentional in modeling the reality of trying to be a good person and trying to be a great person and how hard it is. But how with struggle, there is hope. You know,



Jackie Bezos 12:40

we have to be human. Sometimes superhuman, I have seen Angela put on a cape occasion.



Angela Duckworth 12:47

Have you seen me cry yet? Yeah. So have you I heard you on the phone. Okay. That was Yeah. Cuz, you know, life's hard.



12:55

It's hard.



Jackie Bezos 12:56

So tell me, we're talking about modeling? How did your parents model characters?

A

Angela Duckworth 13:01

No, my parents grew up in China. And I would say that in some ways, the model was not obvious to me. You know, my dad was a, you know, classic. You know, if you were a rich Chinese guy born in 1932, you know, you might not develop all the character strengths, that we would hope for our own kids. And so my dad was, you know, maybe not an obvious model of all the Character Strengths Jack and I talked about, but I would say that he modeled curiosity and grit for me. So what came out of his mouth was sometimes like, you have to go to Harvard. And you have to be at least a senator. He literally said that once you have to at least be a senator. He certainly not much actually above a senator. But anyway. But in his modeling, right, because modeling isn't just what comes out of your mouth. In fact, it's not what comes out of your mouth, it's what you do. And in the way he lived his life. He was extremely passionate about his work, which was chemistry. And then also he was really curious. So I'll give this example when I went to orgo. And some of you had the pleasure of taking orgo, right, and some of you used to be pre med. And anyway, water under the bridge, but I took orgo in chemistry, in organic chemistry in college. And I remember hearing the click, click, click, click, click of all these multicolored pens, as you know, furiously, you know, students were like trying to take down every possible equation, and that, you know, is like a stenography class, but my dad had modeled what it really meant to be as a scientist is just to think, right, so I didn't take down any notes. I was just really listening to the teachers and then I photocopied the notes of the person next to me. And so that modeling of like really thinking, you know, like my dad was always thinking is so curious. So he modeled grit, and he modeled curiosity. And my mother was in some ways a stereotypical Asian female except for not the tiger mom kind. You know her cultural background had raised her to be, quote unquote, a good wife, you know, extremely obedient, anything my dad wanted when I graduated from college, and she said, you know, Angela, I'm really proud of you, you're ready to be a wife. So she was a product of her generation, as we all are, right? And so she modeled kindness for me, my mother would give you the food off the table. She gave my birthday presents away. She gave all of our birthday presents when she didn't actually buy new ones. So like, that was a lesson, I think. But anyway, I think that when we ask this question, as so many parents email me or call me, I'm like, Oh, you know, the parenting question. You know, it really is the most important thing you can do to model for your kids, you know, the things that you want. And if you are truly kind, I think it is very likely that your children will model your kindness. And if you are truly forgiving, you know, they will, you know, model that. And if you're truly not, then they want, I do want to say something about genetics, because it's not just modeling, when a parent has a child who does the same thing it is, it is not just modeling. And I don't want to ignore genetics, because your DNA that you inherited from

your mom and dad does have an influence on everything about you everything about your political persuasion, whether you enjoy coffee, or you hate the taste of coffee, and your grit, and your curiosity. So I don't want to, you know, say that, you know, we're completely blank slates at birth, because we're not. But I also want to say that a complete understanding of human genetics also tells you that there really is almost nothing except for me bi color. And, you know, things that are really like beyond psychology, that that aren't influenced by modeling by by culture, you know, by being in certain environments versus others.

P

#### Prudential 16:55

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J

#### Jackie Bezos 17:29

So I thought that one of the things that we would do was open this up early for questions, because I think that is much more interesting to hear what you want to know and what you're thinking, make, we have somebody right here. What was profound for me in my childhood is that every day at six o'clock, my mother would run in the kitchen, and come out with the sandwich. And on the stoop would be a homeless person. And she would feed had all these homeless people coming every day to feed. And I think it ingrained in my brain because I'm very passionate about helping children who are underserved. And I to kind of help get them ready to learn to read because I'm working with children who struggle with reading, by telling them you struggle with reading, but I struggle with computers, and that immediately empowers them, and they'll show me the computer. And they'll help me as we get all the teachers to help them. So thank you, you kind of validated it.

A

#### Angela Duckworth 18:36

I think there's two lessons that one is the modeling of vulnerability, which is easier said than done. And also, you know, we give so much to kids, especially kids of privilege. But I think that we should be asking all children to be helpful. You know, what we give so much to them, you know, it's like, oh, now you have another tutor. And like another enrichment program, another wonderful experience, we should be asking them to help, you know, like,

help do stuff. We know whether it's chores, or public service, or really like small things, big things. I'm a huge proponent of all children, when it's legal to have a paid job with a boss, who is not your mom, and not your dad will therefore be quite irate with you if you're late, or if you don't do things the right way. I think kids have so much, especially some kids and I think that actually being asked to do something and to be helpful is actually part of growing up and I think it's missing in the lives of a lot of children who have kind of everything else.



19:39

My question to you on character building.



19:41

What concerns me is in the teenage years all the cyber bullying on social media, how can we create in the schools character development to combat that?



Angela Duckworth 19:52

You know, one of the as a psychologist I will say what what social media does is it makes it possible to have seemingly intimate personal conversations. But without the actual thing that happens when you're with somebody, which is like you've seen see them and you can see their emotion and it's real. So it's both real and not real. At the same time. There's this kind of, you know, veil of anonymity, in some cases, when people are just anonymously doing things on social media, or for the grown up version of this, you know, like really mean Twitter exchanges. Like, I remember just watching Lindsey Vonn and the Olympics, and she said something that was like, you know, her political beliefs. And you can see all the people who tweeted at her, and it's just like, Oh, my gosh, you know, this is kind of grown up cyberbullying. So it happens that at ages that are both young and old, so this, this combination of it being personal, and yet strangely anonymous, and distance is, I think, very dangerous. And I don't know that there's any easy solution. And by the way, technology is obviously not going away, and social media is obviously not going away, either. I guess I would say this, I do think awareness is like, understanding that these things are a problem. And even if you had a conversation with your teenager, and like talking about how, like when you're on somebody's social media platforms, it is it is it feels extremely personal and intimate, and also is like, weirdly, not because you're not in the same room. I mean, my kids follow people they've never met, I find that so weird. It's like, you just like, saw what this kid ate for breakfast. And you know, who are boyfriend, like, you've never met the boyfriend or the kid? But yeah, you know what she had for

breakfast? Six. So odd. So I guess, you know, I don't have a glib, easy answer. But I do think actually starting with, you know, understanding it, and like taking it as an object of interest, and like talking about, you know, the strange psychology of these forums is one place to begin.

J

Jackie Bezos 21:48

Thank you, you mentioned the nature versus nurture. And I'm in an endless discussion sometimes with my wife and three boys of our building character, and what you sense about structure versus freedom for them, because you hear a lot about strength building through structure sometimes. So I'm wondering about that.

A

Angela Duckworth 22:09

So, um, you know, without knowing like how things already are, it's hard for me to give good advice. But I will say this, you know, again, assuming that since we are in this very beautiful context of Aspen, that you are on the more advantaged versus less advantaged side of the socio economic spectrum, I think that a lot of kids who grew up with a lot of affordances have too much structure. You know, it's like, you know, three o'clock, you go to see your tennis coach, and at four o'clock, you have French, and at 5:30, there's a massage, and at six o'clock, we're gonna do yoga, you know, like, and it's all good stuff, but it's so structured. And the reason I don't think that is great as a recipe for development is that, you know, as, as I sometimes put it to educators, you know, at some point, kids have to jump the gearshift. Like, they're not on the passenger seat anymore. And it's their job to steer the car, and maybe an outdated analogy, assuming there's still cars that have actual drivers. But like, you know, I think that with my own kids, I have tried to, you know, like, let them screw up and like, you know, if they didn't have their summer planned, what are you going to do? Are you going to go plan their summer? Or at some point, do you let them just have a boring summer because they never actually got their act together to plan out their summer. And I think some kids get to 18. And they've never had that, and oh, my gosh, now they're 22. And they've never had and guess what, when you're 23, and you've never had mommy or daddy, like structuring like your very perfect life. And that's the first time where you have to do that job. I think it's really hard. I'm a working mom. So my advantage is that I'm so busy that I just can't like structure. My kids lives that much. But but I do think it's a, it's a meta lesson. Kids, of course, need some structure, they need consistency, they need to know that there's food in their refrigerator, and that their parents are going to basically be there for them. But I don't think they need their parents to solve every problem, or to plan every hour. One thing I see is so many parents protect their kids from failing, and they've got to win everything and all this and yet, seems to be building character. You have to be able to accept failure. And as you say, rebound, show some grit

and move forward. Do you have any wisdom on that? Yeah, you know, it's almost cliché to talk about failing forward failing fast, like every tech entrepreneur, not naming names. But in their annual letter, for example, we'll talk about this. You know, but pick your favorite one. Nope. But like, it's true. It's almost cliché in Silicon Valley. And, and, you know, like, if you go to google images, and you type in failure, this is like a bajillion wonderful, exciting quotes, with everything. You know, the reason why big things become clichés, because they're true often. And so the question is more like how, right and why is it so hard to watch our kids fail, and by What is the psychology of failure? I mean, what's the big deal? You know, I asked this question of developmental psychologists because really little kids like super babies, infant, toddlers, they fail all day, you know, I mean, like, even in eating a meal, they feel like 45 times, right? They can't like get the food in their mouth, things break, you know, it's just a disaster, right? But you don't see embarrassment on their faces. And you don't see that like having these like, you know, meta tortured conversations, like, should I try to eat the applesauce next time? I don't know, didn't go so well, last time. Maybe I'll hide my mistakes as though they just like, you know, do it. And the developmental psychologist said they haven't learned to actually be afraid yet. And part of that is, you know, the natural development of emotions like embarrassment, and and that that comes online later. But part of it she thinks is that, you know, right around the age that kids actually go to school, and they enter a context in which they're the right answer. And there's a wrong answer. And also, there's a ton of comparison, right? I mean, you know, kids will look around the class, they kind of know who's doing really well. And they also know who's not doing well, and who got picked first for kickball, and who didn't, and that actually now raises the stakes so much. And that's around the age of five, where kids begin to really fear failure. And for some kids, I think they get over it, and they develop very healthy attitudes toward a failure. You know, if you ask Katie, Lucky's Coach, what makes Katie ledecky extraordinary. He literally said, and he has this in National Geographic, he's like, you know, I think he's gonna make one PowerPoint slide, which is this, like, she is not afraid of failure, and she works her ass off every single practice. And that will be the end of my talk. Because it's not her wingspan. And it is not her stature, though she's a little bit taller than average. You know, it's not like her fast twitch muscles. You know, yes, she has a perfect stroke. But it's because of her approach. Every, every practice. He said not like sometimes, but every practice, Katie ledecky, goes in there desiring failure, pushing herself to the point of failure or setting up challenges that she can't yet do. And so I think the How is, is, is very much bound up with like, why failures so hard? And how Katie ledecky does that, I think, is to have learned from her experience, and probably from some gentle urging and modeling from the people who love her to have learned that actually, it's, it's, it's no big deal. You know, for a lot of kids, especially I call them the fragile perfect, because I do teach at an Ivy League University, and the kids who have never gotten to be, like, ever, for even a marking period, and never got cut from the team, and always been popular. You know, they're the most afraid of failure, because

they have never had it. And so I think, are you I don't want to trip my kids while they're walking. You know, it's like not, you know, planting landmines, but I think we should allow it, we should be, we should be prepared for it, we should be intentional. And we should be ready to have those conversations like God totally sucks that you did not make the belay, you know, core like you didn't make this class is awful, and be empathic, and then like, show them that the world did not come to an end. And then you know, like that, that, you know, again, and again, I think is where those CEOs who you know, write about it, and those wonderful Paragons of grit, who demonstrate I think, actually, that is how they they got to where they are. And first of all, thank



28:19

you, this is such a great session. Jackie, thank you so much for doing this. And Angela, thank you. So both of you just talked about kids being somewhat fragile. And especially once they get to college, having not experienced the kinds of challenge that are struggle or conflict that, you know, maybe an earlier generation might have experienced, they're sort of a different animal on campus. And I'm wondering what the, once they get there, you know, if we have not provided for them, the stuff that you're suggesting that we do provide, if our kids are not that young, and now they're approaching college age, what can we do? And and what do we do about the fact that now, words are considered so challenging and difficult and uncomfortable, and that that civility is being lost? So these are great, big questions. I

A

Angela Duckworth 29:18

will say that my dream course for every university is failure 101 where you would sign up and you would set out to fail, you know, maybe if it were like an easy course you could fail 10 things that semester, but like, if you really want to try the advanced option, you try to fail like 50 things, right? And maybe you could make a list at the beginning like, you know, rush the sorority, try out for this team as this person out, learn how to do like, you know, and I would hope that you would try, of course to succeed, but I love the idea of just you know, you know, in psychology, we actually call this exposure therapy. So when people have phobias, right and and this big, you know, some of you probably have heard experience with this because phobias aren't that uncommon. If somebody has a phobia of spiders, you know, the problem is that they will so arrange their life around avoiding spiders that it never extinguishes the fear. Right? What Jackie was able to do with young Jeff was to extinguish that fear of doing something that you didn't think at all you could do by just exposing him to it. And then he discovers that God's not that bad. And actually, I can use some of my other strengths here. That's what clinical therapists do with phobic patients, you know, they see a picture of a spider, and then, you know, there's a spider on

a tank, and then eventually, you know, actually, like, you know, hold a spider in your hand. But what if we did exposure therapy for failure, with this thing that you had trained your whole life, I mean, if you get to an Ivy League school, or a Stanford or MIT, your whole life, you're trying to succeed and not fail, you're trying to have a perfect GPA. So you can be the valedictorian, you want to perfect a CT score, perfect, perfect, perfect. But I would love there to be failure one on one where the only way to good grade to a good grade is actually by screwing up to expose you to that. And I really wish that for these beautiful, perfect young people that I you know, like, I look at their resumes, and I'm like, this is too perfect. Right? varsity tennis when I was in ninth grade Captain nationally ranked valic. Like everything perfect. Because I really don't think that greatness comes from perfection. And that kind of buffing and polishing that kids are doing with their resumes, that is a really good way to be boring for one thing. And it's a really good way to live your whole life, you know, your whole life being afraid of what could go wrong, instead of trying something that might one time out of 10 Go go? Well,

J

Jackie Bezos 31:39

okay, so I talked a lot about failure. Debbie, do you have any advice for working with youth or youth who have faced repeated failure or because of circumstances have very few resources, haven't had a lot of opportunities for success? So they're on the other spectrum? And so that's the first part. The second part is, is there a point where it's too late to learn grit or to learn character to learn how to bounce back from that?

A

Angela Duckworth 32:05

I mean, partly, you know, Jackie, and I are, I know how we feel, which is that it's never too late. By the way, brain science is on our side, you know, brain plasticity is all across the lifespan. And we have evidence of people actually changing. Usually, by the way, in positive ways, mostly when people develop it is mostly across adulthood, in the direction of good, not bad, notable exceptions, but generally people do grow up and mature in good ways. And here's my my last piece of advice about all this, you know, psychology and of character development failure. You know, I don't want to say that it's like pep talks, or TED Talks, that actually do a lot of the hard work, I think it is actually experience. And here's my specific advice. You know, if you have a kid who has, for example, a learning disability or socio economic disadvantage, and and frankly, their life has been just one set pack one, like bad episode after another, you know, there's a limit to the TED talks and the pep talks, they have to experience small wins. And so I would say your job as the, you know, adult in the room would be like, what can I do to give this kid a small win? You know, what can I do to lay things out in such a way, and I'll end with this science experiment, when you take rats and you put them in cages. And, and if they get exposed

to uncontrollable adversity like shocks that they can't predict, and they can't control, they quickly become helpless and depressed. But if you can just rig the cage as a loving parent would do pardon the metaphor. But if you rig it with a little plastic wheel that they can turn, that turns the shock off, they actually developed into resilient rats who in adulthood are actually much stronger, and much more inured to the effects of adversity. So your job is to create small wins, right? I don't want to coddle your kids, I don't want you to over structure their lives. But if you have a kid who has like zero self esteem, and you can look at their life history and be like, yeah, I can see where that would be your conclusion. You need to structure their life so they can turn a little wheel and make something happen and the turn a little more and makes them put them on that positive virtuous cycle to where they know that they can do something. Angela,



34:21

thank you so much.



Jackie Bezos 34:25

Thank you for coming today. We really appreciate it. Angela Duckworth is a psychology professor at the University of Pennsylvania. She wrote the book grit, the power of passion and perseverance and as a MacArthur Genius. Jackie Bezos is president of the Bezos Family Foundation. She pioneered the Aspen Institute's payza Scholars Program, it sends 30 high school students and their educators to the Aspen Ideas Festival each summer. Their conversation was held on June 26 at the Ideas Festival. Make sure to subscribe to Aspen Ideas to go wherever you listen to podcasts. Follow Aspen Ideas year round on Twitter and Facebook at Aspen Ideas. Today's show was produced by Marcy karvonen and recorded by our team at the Aspen Institute. The Aspen Ideas Festival programming team is Katie Boone, Killeen, breadman. Katie casetta, Libby Franklin, Brett Holly, Jamie Miller and me. Our music is by wonderly. I'm Tricia Johnson. Thanks for joining me.



Prudential 35:47

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