

Could you pass the grit test? I did!

It would be easy to see your characteristics as 'flaws' in the wrong eyes and there is nothing quite like adversity to highlight them.

I got two useful days in April – April Fools Day which we spent in breathtaking Buttermere and April 2 at Tarn Hows, Hawkshead, a place that conjures up the magic of Victorian times. Both days doing what I love most – exploring with husband and animals in tow. Then April 3 arrives and whoosh, handless. April – gone. I crashed my bike. Arguably, by my own doing. I would like to see footage. I have been asked endlessly how I landed. Who can say, other than too quickly.

I became such a familiar sight in the Plaster Room that it's inviting me to its Christmas bash. The practicalities of walking around with both hands raised, as if in combat, didn't suit me at all. Both hands had their plaster casts replaced four times in as many weeks and each plaster cast told a story. Both black and rather grimy from my love of open fires. Sooty plaster casts are not nice.

Did my world stop? No, it did not. It didn't occur to me that I may be expected to take convalescence, and in one place – home.

A swift system with seamless efficiency evolved to ensure the show – that's my pilates classes – went on. Everything was so sleekly operated and enveloped in such good-natured kindness that it positively glowed. Mum was a star: she supported my drive to keep going by doing just that – driving and if you can allow me a moment of self-puffery I only missed three days. Can anyone love their work more and be so fortunate?

True grit? I believe so. Scientists say it's now possible to measure. True grit is defined as a trait that shows 'perseverance and passion for long-term goals' a tenacity, not easily distracted and not discouraged by setbacks. See para-



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graph above.

Could you pass the grit test? It can't be faked. There is a physiological response when we are faced with challenge and adversity and it is how you respond that matters. The heart's activity changes in those who have grit. Those with grit have a more efficient cardiovascular coping mechanism. This would require you to be

laboratory tested, but in simplistic terms to be true and gritty, ruffled you are not. Drama is out and calm is in. The show goes on and improbable but true with even more calculated efficiency than before.

Being of average determination does not count. There is nothing average about true grit. Nothing easy-osy will do. A person with true grit does not require even a gentle nudge to stay upright when adversity strikes. No props required. They don't see their behaviour as exceptional but it is. It is natural to them and they know no other way.

This true grit is gaining credence. It is being proposed as a new personality trait. In the same way you may be described as shy. Being described as having true grit will get you far. A gritty person will persist in long-term goals and have self-control which allows that person success even when situations are inevitably tedious.

Perseverance is their middle name if targets are to be reached.

Recognise these traits? Don't allow anyone to give them another less pleasing name. Very soon it will be official and you – yes, you – are nothing but exceptional.

So like a butterfly I emerge from my chrysalis appropriately on the first official day of summer. The sky is blue the sun is shining, the birds are singing and I am embracing it carefully – with both hands.