Leaders Who Library Book Discussion: *Grit: The Power of Passion and Perseverance* by Angela Duckworth. This was combined with a discussion on Grit lead by Michelle Hamiel. Here are some things we discussed:

- The author didn’t seem to acknowledge that not everyone has the same kind of safety and support system in their lives in order to effectively pursue their passions. Several attendees agreed that it seemed to stem from a “pull yourself up by your bootstraps” narrative and did not consider an intersectional lens.
- The author sees grit as a combination of passion, perseverance, interest and effort. Attendees noted that there was not much focus on talent – for example, someone can be passionate about early childhood literacy, but if they don’t have the talent for presenting children’s programming, they may not be the best choice.
- Everyone has a passion, but that passion may not align with their job. This does not mean, however, that they will not be successful at their job or accomplish good things. This can be where the “growth mindset” comes in, and library leaders can help coach staff through what they need. Everyone learns at their own pace – some people may need extra time. But it is important to see a genuine effort and forward motion from staff.
- Grit requires a clear end goal – and the gritty people able to reach that end goal are not always who you think it’s going to be. This can make interviewing challenging, because you’re only seeing a snapshot of someone. If staff are having trouble reaching that end goal, it may be time to pivot expectations, like finding tasks in their current role to find the quality they are looking for.
- Grit requires a lot of hard work and effort. But that hard work should be put forth because you enjoy the work, not as a means to an end goal. What if you get to that end goal and it doesn’t suit you, because you were so focused on getting there you didn’t evaluate how you felt about the journey? The book focused a lot on how to get to an end goal, but not necessarily where you’re going and why.
- If you’re a true gritty person, nothing discourages you. You set long-term goals and you are always striving to accomplish things that you haven’t accomplished before.
- Gritty people have a “well of grit” -- sometimes your well is depleted, and you feel done with your job or your goals. But you go to bed and get up the next morning continuing to strive to accomplish your goals. That’s grit. We discussed that (public) librarianship can attract gritty people – we all do this job because we love it or feel fulfilled by it even though it can be tiring. We aren’t in it for the money.
- Is having grit luxurious? You have to be in a position to discover your grit. If you aren’t in safe place, you are merely trying to survive, not necessarily accomplish long-term goals. The flip side of grit is grind – just trying to make it through.

**Michelle Hamiel on Grit:**
Michelle Hamiel’s definition of grit is “edginess you have to have so that people don’t take advantage of you.” Grit doesn’t have to do with passion. Sometimes, grit can even be a curse -- constantly challenging things that aren’t right. Michelle believes you can’t train someone to be gritty, but that it is inherent.

Deciding to get up and do your job every day isn’t necessarily gritty. Sometimes that passion is propelled by feeling like you are making a difference with your work – a note of appreciation from a customer, for example.

Sometimes success isn’t just from your own grittiness. Michelle stated much of her success was from others recognizing something in her and pushing her towards opportunities, which is what she wants to do for others now in her current position. If you’re looking to develop leaders, you need to determine what each individual needs for support and success.

If you’re looking to move to the next level, demand resources for yourself – pick your own mentor and sit down and discuss goals and a plan of action.

Don’t let folks box you in or limit you, be willing to speak up and find passion in your job and your assignments.

Reflect on the following questions:
- What do you want from your supervisor?
- What do you do when you’re not in a healthy supervisory relationship?
- What do you have in your life that grounds you?
  - A lot of people make librarianship their life. If we listen to Duckworth, your work is your life. But there needs to be a work/life balance. If you lose your work as you know it (large-scale changes, reassignment, retirement, etc.) will you be able to live?

Division Updates:

Our next meeting is May 13, 2021 where we will discuss Leaders Who Library book club choice *Brazen: Rebel Ladies Who Rocked the World* by Penelope Bagieu followed by a presentation by Dr. Mega Subramaniam about why libraries should conduct strategic, meaningful community engagement in the wake of the pandemic.