

My Father

Category: Grit

written by Andrea Eisenberg | January 20, 2025

“Grit” is the word used by our governor in Michigan to describe the hearty Midwesterners who live here.

“Grit” is the motto of the Detroit Lions, a team that has never before been in the Superbowl but that has a chance this year.

But before grit was Grit, there was my father.

He was born and raised in Detroit during the Depression, an only child of an overbearing mother who chose her son’s path before he could have a say. He worked hard in school, winning the *Detroit News* spelling bee at the age of 10. Like many Detroiters, he worked on an assembly line, at the Packard plant, but for him it wasn’t his career. Instead, it was a path to pay for medical school. Luckily, he was bright and enjoyed the academic challenges that came his way. He eventually became an internist, loving to solve the diagnostic dilemmas his patients presented him with. I remember after dinner every night, he would go into his den and study his journals, especially the *New England Journal of Medicine*.

But what makes my father’s grit truly Grit, is how despite the many challenges and pressures from his family, he made good with the life given to him. Who knows if he would have chosen the path of medicine if he’d had his way, but, regardless, he lived up to his oath of caring for patients. He was generous with his time and knowledge, always available when a friend or neighbor called and asked “Hey, Doc, can you help me?” And in his retirement, he truly blossomed with his insatiable thirst for more—more knowledge, more giving, more exploring, more experiences. He returned to college to study history, the arts, and other topics never available to him before. He donated generously to charities. And he traveled the world, learning about other cultures.

My father’s grit wasn’t about surviving harsh winters or growing up poor. It was about taking what life threw at him and making his life and those around him better.

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