

Sharon's Story

Sharon was an international student at Bath Spa University. She did the 'Empowers' programme for Black, Caribbean, Asian and Arab heritage students

I felt completely out of place in Bath. It is so different from home. There was hardly anyone who looked like me. I couldn't find anyone to talk to, especially about how difficult I was finding it.

I wasn't enjoying my uni experience at all. I felt I was just passing time, like I was a spectator looking on and not participating. All I had was the day-to-day routine of getting up, going to class, doing the work and coming home again. I couldn't see how it would ever get better. I really didn't feel I belonged.

But after Grit I felt heard, I felt seen. I began to believe in myself. Grit showed me that I can do anything, be anything. It is up to me: only I can make it possible.

I've tried new things, things I'd thought I'd never try. I've put myself outside my comfort zone. Before Grit I couldn't even have imagined being a leader. I would have said "no, it's just not possible." Now I'm part of the leadership of the Afro-Caribbean Society, managing events. I've never done anything like this before and that is down to Grit.

Through Grit I saw that I have skills I didn't know I had like planning, listening, like communicating. And I've got the confidence to use them. I've even started my own business.

I'm really enjoying my studies now. Before I would sit in classes or seminars and when the tutor said something I didn't understand I would stay quiet. Now I speak up. I say "I don't understand." I get the tutor to explain. I'm much more assertive. And now I'm getting better grades!

Grit is something you really want to be part of. I've found my inner self, my true self. I've found real self at university and I'm helping other people who are feeling the same as I was. I'm showing them how you can create a different university experience, one that works for you.