

NURTURING A GROWTH MINDSET IN ADULTS



Research by Carol Dweck, Ph.D Professor of Psychology at Stanford is influencing significant movement in many fields including psychology, neuroscience, and education. To summarize her research –she’s found that an individual’s success is not predicated on just talent and abilities but also on how we think about our aspirations/goals and whether we utilize a fixed or growth mindset.

A fixed mindset maintains that all human qualities are innate, you’re born with them or not. Whereas a growth mindset maintains that human qualities are adaptable, things that can be developed or changed overtime.

Dweck’s research has proven that praise is not good for children. Praise can create approval-seeking behavior instead of children with enhanced self-esteem. Dweck has also found that praise can hamper risk-taking. Children who were praised for being smart when they accomplished a task chose easier tasks in the future. They didn’t want to risk making mistakes. On the other hand, children who were “encouraged” for their efforts were willing to choose more challenging tasks when given a choice.

FIXED MINDSET

Intelligence and ability are fixed qualities from birth that cannot be changed significantly.

GROWTH MINDSET

Intelligence and ability can be developed with effort, strategies, and support.

Most people have a combination of both fixed and growth mindsets based on certain abilities. For example you might have a growth mindset about intelligence –you believe that all people have the capacity to learn. At the same time you might also hold a fixed mindset regarding artistic ability –you believe that artistic ability is generally something people are born with or without.

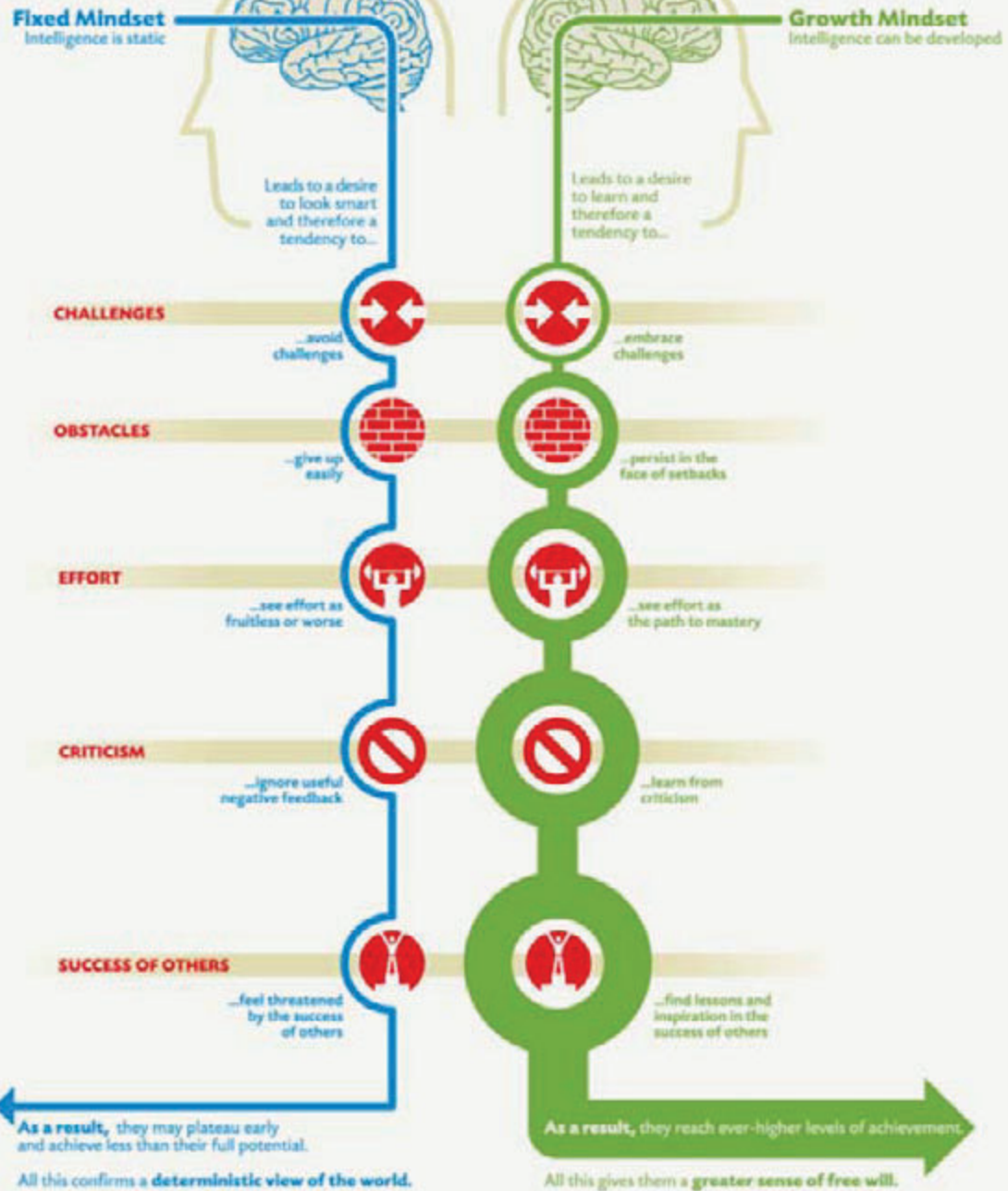
Nurturing a young person’s growth mindset helps them build resilience and internal motivation to persist even in the face of adversity. To develop a young person’s growth mindset we first have to model our own growth mindset. Use the Growth Mindset Quiz included in this packet or [take Dr. Dweck’s online quiz](#) to develop a sense of your own growth and fixed mindsets.

After you’ve completed and scored the quiz or received feedback from Dr. Dweck’s online quiz try the Tips to Building Your Growth Mindset exercise included in this packet. For more information about Dweck’s research and the implications of building a youth’s growth mindset check out the Ted Talk from Eduardo Briceño on the [Power of Belief: Mindset & Success](#)

TWO MINDSETS

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Graphic by
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MINDSET QUIZ



Circle the word(s) that indicate how much you agree with each statement.

1. Intelligence is something people are born with that can't be changed.	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
2. No matter how intelligent you are, you can always be more intelligent.	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
3. You can always substantially change how intelligent you are.	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
4. You are a certain kind of person, and there is not much that can be done to really change that.	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
5. You can always change basic things about the kind of person you are.	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
6. Musical talent can be learned by anyone	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
7. Only a few people will be truly good at sports – you have to be “born with it.”	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
8. Math is much easier to learn if you are male or maybe come from a culture who values math.	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
9. The harder you work at something, the better you will be at it.	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
10. No matter what kind of person you are, you can always change substantially.	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
11. Trying new things is stressful for me and I avoid it.	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
12. Some people are good and kind, and some are not – it's not often that people change.	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
13. I appreciate when people give me feedback about my performance.	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
14. I often get angry when I get negative feedback about my performance.	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
15. All human beings are capable of learning.	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree

16. You can learn new things, but you can't really change how intelligent you are.	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
17. You can do things differently, but the important parts of who you are can't really be changed.	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
18. Human beings are basically good, but sometimes make terrible decisions.	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
19. An important reason why I do my work is that I like to learn new things.	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
20. Truly smart people do not need to try hard.	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Your Overall Mindset Score:				

MINDSET QUIZ SCORING GUIDE



For the questions below, please tally your score. If you answered:

Strongly Agree give yourself 0 points
Agree give yourself 1 point
Disagree give yourself 2 points
Strongly Disagree give yourself 3 points

Question 1 = _____

Question 12 = _____

Question 4 = _____

Question 14 = _____

Question 7 = _____

Question 16 = _____

Question 8 = _____

Question 17 = _____

Question 11 = _____

Question 20 = _____

Your total points for this section: _____

For the questions below, please tally your score. If you answered:

Strongly Agree give yourself 3 points
Agree give yourself 2 points
Disagree give yourself 1 point
Strongly Disagree give yourself 0 points

Question 2 = _____

Question 10 = _____

Question 3 = _____

Question 13 = _____

Question 5 = _____

Question 15 = _____

Question 6 = _____

Question 18 = _____

Question 9 = _____

Question 19 = _____

Your total points for this section: _____

Your total score (add two sections together): _____

Interpreting your score

60-45 points = strong growth mindset
44-34 points = growth mindset with some fixed ideas
33-21 points = fixed mindset with some growth ideas
20-0 points = strong fixed mindset

You can follow the link below to take a mindset quiz online and gain some concrete feedback to help you reflect on your own growth and fixed mindset tendencies.

GROWTH MINDSET RESEARCH



BABIES' BRAINS: Newborn babies have lots of brain cells (called neurons), but the neurons have very few connections, or synapses, between their neurons. By the time they are one year old, toddlers have about 1,000 trillion connections. Then the brain starts to get picky; the connections that are being used the most get stronger, and the ones that are not being used disappear. The connections between cells continue to change throughout life with learning – in other words, we “use it or lose it”.

CLEVER CABBIES: London cab drivers have to memorize the locations of many different places because their streets don't have numbers. They have to keep a “map “ of the city in their heads to find their way around. Researchers measured the size of the hippocampus – the area of the brain that remembers information about places – in London cab drivers, and compared them to other people's. The hippocampus of the average cabbie was bigger, and the longer the cabbie had been on the job, the larger it was. This shows that learning and practicing this skill made that area of their brains grow.

LEARNING LANGUAGES: Most people think that learning a second language once you are an adult is very hard. But researchers had adults use special exercises to practice hearing different sounds from foreign languages. Using a PET scan to measure the activity in the brain, the researchers found that when people did the special exercises, areas of their brain that they had never used before became active, and they improved their ability to understand the new language. This shows that you can retrain your brain and develop new abilities all through your life if you put in effort and use good strategies.

MUSICAL MASTERS: When people play an instrument, they use a special area of the brain in the “motor cortex” to control the movement of their fingers. Researchers found that when people practiced playing musical instruments, the area of their brains that controlled the fingers grew larger! This shows that when you learn and practice a new skill, you can build up the brain.

NEW NEURONS: Scientists used to think that we had a fixed amount of brain cells and that we could never grow new ones. But in the past 20 years, research has shown that the brain actually grows new cells every day. The cells are grown in the hippocampus, an area of the brain that is important for memory, and then travel to other areas of the brain. They also found that the brain grows more new cells when you are learning new information and skills. So, by learning and practicing you actually add new brain cells as well as new connections.

REMARKABLE RATS: Identical rats were raised in two different environments: either a bare cage with food and water, or a cage with lots of toys and exercise equipment to explore. In the bare cages, the “cage potato rats” just ate and drank and laid around, while in the cages full of things to do, the “summer camp rats” were busy exploring and learning, exercising their brains. It turned out that the summer camp rats became smarter than the cage potato rats – they were better at learning new things. Their brains were heavier, too: they had more connections between the neurons. This research shows that mental exercise builds up your brain and makes it smarter. Even old rats got smarter, proving that you're never too old to grow your brain!

TIPS FOR BUILDING A GROWTH MINDSET



Use this activity to help you think about incorporating your own growth mindset into activities where you have a hard time seeing personal improvement. Consider how your attitudes about your own strengths and challenges are influencing messages you share with youth.

Draw a box with 4 squares

In 3 of the boxes, write or draw a skill, or something you are good at.

Singing	Gardening
Riding my bike	

In the 4th box, write or draw something that you don't think you are good at, and would like to improve on.

Singing	Gardening
Riding my bike	<i>Playing chess</i>

I'm good at:

How I developed this skill, ability, etc.

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

I'm good at:

How I developed this skill, ability, etc.

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

I'm good at:

How I developed this skill, ability, etc.

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

I'd like to improve at:

How I can develop this skill, ability, etc.

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.

After doing this exercise, how do you believe you can improve?

In this activity what steps did you take to nurture your own growth mindset?