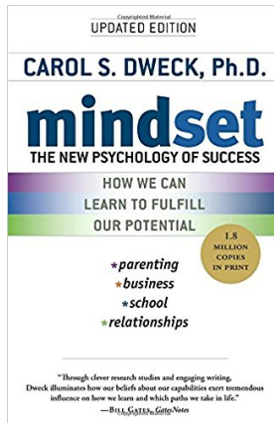


# MINDSET FOR SUCCESS

*“For twenty years, my research has shown that the view you adopt of yourself profoundly affects the way you lead your life.” – Professor Carol Dweck*



In her book, **MINDSET – THE NEW PSYCHOLOGY OF SUCCESS**, Dr. Carol Dweck and her Stanford University colleagues’ research has found a very simple belief about ourselves that guides and permeates nearly every part of our lives.

This belief limits our potential or enables our success. It often marks the difference between excellence and mediocrity. It influences our self-awareness, our self-esteem, our creativity, our ability to face challenges, our resilience to setbacks, our levels of depression, and our ability to productively engage in change, among other things.

Mindsets. The stories we tell and the things we believe about ourselves that can either stop change from happening or allow innovation and new skills to flourish. It’s all up to us.

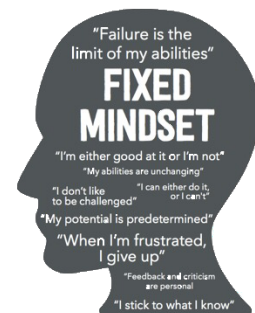
## THE FIXED AND GROWTH MINDSETS

Dr. Dweck posits that much of who you are on a day-to-day basis comes from your mindset, which she defines as the view you have of your qualities and characteristics.

Her research has shown that we tend to have predisposed beliefs about whether personal qualities such as intellect or talent are fixed traits or are capable of changing.

Dweck defines these differing mindsets as:

Those with a **FIXED MINDSET** believe that one’s capacities are carved in stone. Characteristics such as intelligence, personality, and creativity are fixed traits, rather than something that can be developed. Those with this mindset believe there’s only a certain amount of ability given, and their goal is to document their intelligence or talents, rather than develop them over time.



Taken and adapted from Alex Vermeer’s summary, Bookshelf Notes. <https://alexvermeer.com/why-your-mindset-important/>



Conversely, those with a **GROWTH MINDSET** believe that your basic qualities are things you can cultivate through effort. While acknowledging people differ greatly – in aptitude, talents, interests, or temperaments – there is a belief that everyone can change and grow through application

and experience. The emphasis of the growth mindset is that brains and talent are simply a starting point, and through practice and hard work, development and change is possible, creating life-long learning and increased resilience.

While these descriptions reflect extremes, Dweck points out that it's very possible to be somewhere in the middle and to embrace one mindset over another in certain areas of life. Your beliefs on your own ability to grow and develop may differ for artistic talent, intelligence, personality, or creativity respectively.

**So, how does mindset impact your behavior?** Those with a predominantly fixed mindset have a goal of not failing. They avoid opportunities where their “fixed” abilities might not prove successful, and therefore, they don't develop or grow. Dweck cites that the fixed mindset “creates an urgency to prove yourself over and over. If you have only a certain amount of intelligence, a certain personality, and a certain moral character — well, then you'd better prove that you have a healthy dose of them. It simply wouldn't do to look or feel deficient in these most basic characteristics.”

Dweck goes on to say, “I've seen so many people with this one consuming goal of proving themselves — in the classroom, in their careers, and in their relationships. Every situation calls for a confirmation of their intelligence, personality, or character. Every situation is evaluated: *Will I succeed or fail? Will I look smart or dumb? Will I be accepted or rejected? Will I feel like a winner or a loser?*”

Likewise, with a fixed mindset, criticism is seen as an attack and to be avoided, if possible. Since furthering your capabilities is not an option, risk and innovation – moments of possible failure – are to be minimized.

On the other hand, having a growth mindset welcomes learning and effort. If you truly believe you can improve at something, you will be much more driven to learn and practice. Criticism is seen as valuable feedback and openly embraced to be put into action. The hallmark of the growth mindset is the passion for sticking with it, especially when things are not going well.

Again, Dweck says, “Although people may differ in every which way — in their initial talents and aptitudes, interests, or temperaments — everyone can change and grow through application and experience.

Do people with this (growth) mindset believe that anyone can be anything, that anyone with proper motivation or education can become Einstein or Beethoven? No, but they believe that a person's true potential is unknown (and unknowable); that it's impossible to foresee what can be accomplished with years of passion, toil, and training.”

In short, Dweck discovered that the growth mindset creates a passion for learning rather than the fixed mindset's hunger for approval.

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### THE RESEARCH SAYS...SMALL BELIEF, BIG INFLUENCE

Dr. Dweck's body of research supports the findings on the impact of mindset, and even has data looking at how children begin to evidence preference for "fixed" or "growth" early on.

In a study done with Dr. Claudia Mueller, children were asked to do a simple puzzle. Once finished, some of the children were given positive reinforcement, saying, "That's a really good score. You must be smart at this." This was fixed mindset praise, highlighting the fixed trait of intelligence.

Other children were told, "That's a really good score. You must have tried really hard." This reflected growth mindset praise focusing on process.

Dweck says, "Next, we offered these four-year-olds a choice: They could redo an easy jigsaw puzzle or they could try a harder one." Even at this tender age, the children who'd received the fixed mindset praise stuck with the safer puzzle. Dweck reports, "They told us, kids who are born smart 'don't make mistakes.' "

Conversely, the kids receiving the growth mindset feedback welcomed the harder challenge, finding a safer puzzle to be boring. They were excited about a more complex exercise and looked upon struggle and possible failure with excitement, knowing they would better themselves through their efforts.

After that, Dweck and Mueller gave all the children a hard puzzle, wanting to see how their performance would be impacted when confronted with difficulty. Then, directly following the more challenging puzzle, all the children were asked to return to the easy puzzle they'd begun with initially.

The children who'd displayed a more fixed mindset did significantly worse when returning to the original easy puzzle, while those who'd received growth mindset praise did notably better. Likewise, using the "honor system," the children were asked to report their scores. Dweck and Mueller discovered those who'd received fixed mindset praise lied about their performance three times more than those with the growth mindset.



Being aware of your mindset is absolutely critical if you're interested in changing it.

And you can change it.

Dr. Dweck and her colleagues suggest that to make a positive shift in your mindset, you first must "skyrocket your self-awareness" to know when your fixed mindset is holding sway. Dweck advises the following:

- Accept the fact **we all have both mindsets**. It's part of being human.
- Deepen your self-awareness by identifying those places where your "**Fixed Mindset**" comes **forward** and that voice emerges assuring you that can't – Is the trigger deadlines? Criticism? Failure? Disagreement? Begin to change the conversation.
- Create a **new compelling belief** about change.
- Actively **reframe failure** as a chance to **learn and grow**.
- Become a **curious learner** – **check your certainty** at the door
- Recommit to **tenacity**.
- Look for **inspiration** around you – it's **not a competition**.

In summary, it's important to remember:

- Neuroscience offers concrete evidence the brain can become more capable through neuroplasticity.
- You can learn about how to develop your abilities with deliberate and intentional practice.
- Always listen for your fixed mindset voice. And, if you hear it say, "I can't do it," add the word "yet."



## Change Agility: Fixed Versus Growth Mindset

### Fixed Mindset

Resisting disruption and change can prevent learning and hinder performance



My potential is predetermined

Setbacks are failures and the limit of our abilities

We stick to what we know

**Organizations** with a growth mindset provide their employees with structural support aligning them with the organization's processes and systems.

**Leaders** with a growth mindset sponsor, communicate and lead the change. They are the behavioral and cultural architects.

**Managers** with a growth mindset see the potential for employees to develop new skills and behaviors to adopt the change.

**Employees** with a growth mindset tend to embrace and be the advocates of change, keen to adopt the new skills and behaviors.

### Growth Mindset

Embracing disruption and change to increase organizational learning and performance



Effort and attitude determine success

Setbacks are opportunities to learn and develop

We continually try new things

Enabling Change

Using a Growth Mindset to Increase Change Agility

Adapted from A2B Advisory Consulting

