

Growth Mindsets: A guide for parents

Research by American psychologist Professor Carol Dweck, has shown that how we view ourselves as learners has a huge impact on what we are able to achieve. She suggests that people broadly fall into one of two categories: those with a fixed mindset and those with a growth mindset.

Fixed Mindset ☹️	Growth Mindset 😊
<i>Central belief:</i> We have a predetermined amount of intelligence, skills or talents which cannot be changed.	<i>Central belief:</i> We can develop our abilities, intelligence or talents with persistence, effort and a focus on learning.
Leads to a desire to look clever and therefore a tendency to: <ul style="list-style-type: none">❑ avoid challenges for fear of failure❑ see mistakes and failures as proving you are stupid❑ believe if you have to work for success you are not clever• feel threatened by others' success❑ be motivated by rewards and praise❑ have low resilience and give up easily	Leads to a desire to learn and therefore a tendency to: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• embrace challenges• see mistakes and failures as learning opportunities• believe work hard work (practice and effort) is the path to mastery• be inspired by others' success• be self-motivated• have high resilience and persist even when a task is difficult
<i>Mottos</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Either you're good at something or you're not.• If you're really good at something, you shouldn't need to try.	<i>Mottos</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• No matter how good you are at something, you can always improve.• If you have to try, you must be learning.

Research has shown that children with a growth mindset seek more effective learning strategies, work harder, persevere in the face of setbacks and achieve a higher level of competency.

How can we help our children develop a growth mindset?

Key points for Parents

- Praise carefully - not for intelligence but for effort (i.e. process not outcome)

Intelligence Praise

You're so clever at...

You're so intelligent at...

You're lucky you're gifted at ...
and it's easy for you to..

Don't worry if you didn't get a great
result, did you get a better score
than X child?

Ah...you made a mistake, how many
times have we told you to get it right
first time?

Effort Praise

I've noticed the effort you're putting
into...

All of your hard work and practice is
resulting in progress in....

I'm proud of how committed you have
been to learning...

How do you feel about not getting the
result you wanted first time? Are you
clear on what you need to do to
improve your learning next time?

You made a mistake, that's O.K., we all
make mistakes when we're learning
something new. What can you learn
from it, to improve next time?

- Encourage deliberate practice and targeted effort
- Encourage high challenge tasks to grow those brain cells!
- Discuss errors and mistakes and help your children to see them as opportunities to learn and improve
- Encourage family discussions about mindset and which mindset they (and you?) are choosing to use
- Teach children to think positively and to believe in themselves
- Redefine the meaning of a few ordinary words...

Effort is...

The secret to getting smarter. The more targeted effort you put in, the more you'll get out. You can help your children to focus their effort and attention and encourage them to practise. Regularly recognise this effort with effort praise.

Difficult...

Difficult is... **challenging** - an exciting opportunity for risk-taking and having a go.

Create excitement with your children as they take on a new challenge and push outside their comfort zone. Recognise each achievement and point out to them how much they're learning.

Mistakes...

Mistakes are **learning opportunities**. Help your children to see that mistakes are feedback (not failure). Recognise that when working outside their comfort zone, they are likely to make mistakes that they can learn from.

Yet...

A small and empowering word, "YET" **shifts thinking** from a fixed to a growth state instantly. Use it in conversation with your children.

When you hear... "I can't do it"....

rephrase and add "yet": "You can't do it **yet**, is there anything I can do to help you?"

When you hear... "I'm rubbish at this"...

rephrase and add "yet": "You haven't found the best way to learn it **yet**. What could you do next?"

Remember...

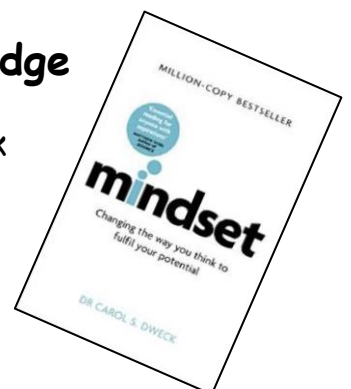
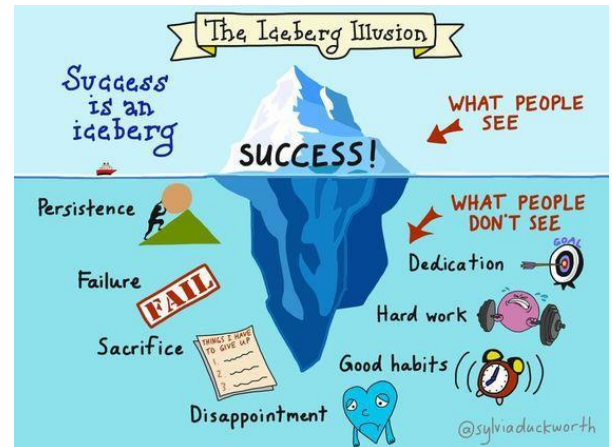
FAIL = First Attempt In Learning

Recommended reading to develop your own knowledge

Mindset: How You Can Fulfil Your Potential by Professor Carol Dweck (Robinson, 2012)

Your Fantastic Elastic Brain by JoAnn Deak, Ph.D.

www.mindsetkit.org/growth-mindset-parents



Tips for cultivating a growth mindset at home

Help children make links to a time when they learned something new that was a challenge

"Do you remember when you couldn't... and now you can?"

"You are getting good at... keep trying"

Reinforce the learning cycle: we make mistakes, practise and improve.

Use the word "YET"

Help children learn from mistakes

Make mistakes in front of your child, have a positive reaction to those mistakes and talk about what can be learned from them.

Encourage your child to have another go if they make a mistake.

Help children learn to hear their own fixed mindset "voice"

Capture and, in a gentle and appropriate way, share their own statements with them. Most children are unaware of this self-talk because it has gone on so long and is subliminal.

- That guy is brilliant; he never tries and he gets it.
- I got it wrong again, I'll never get this.

Help children talk back to negative self-talk with a growth mindset voice (i.e. give them language).

- *I can't do it YET*
- *I am willing to learn new skills to improve, and I know it will be hard at times.*
- *I get better and better with practice this is hard, but will get easier.*
- *Practice makes permanent.*

Model growth mindset at the table

- At breakfast: Ask questions about their opportunities for learning and growth in the coming day or week. What questions do they need answers to? What do they want to learn, practise, and/or get better at today/this week?
- At dinner: Tell your child about a time when you didn't know the answer to a recent question. Who did you ask for help? How did you learn the answer?

Avoid labels and give growth mindset praise

- Don't label yourself in ways that model a "fixed mindset" (e.g., *"I'm a terrible cook...I was never good at maths."*)
- Shift your child's attention to a process that leads to an outcome.
- Praise & value effort, practise, self-correction, and persistence.
"Wow you must have worked really hard..."
"Well done for keeping going..."
- Don't shelter your child from a failed task.
Ask:
"What can you learn from this experience?"
"What could you try differently the next time?"

Get curious about your child's work through questioning

How did you figure that out?

What's another way you could have done that?

How many times did you try before it turned out that way?

What mistakes did you make that taught you something?

What do you plan to do next time?