

A photograph of a man and a child standing in a vast, dry, golden-brown field. The man, on the left, is shirtless and wearing blue jeans, holding a small rock in his right hand raised. The child, on the right, is also shirtless and wearing blue jeans, holding the man's hand. In the background, there are large, rugged mountains with patches of snow under a cloudy sky. A large pink circle is overlaid on the right side of the image, containing text.

Can You Maximise Your Mindset?

BEACON 2.0 Chapter 4
ACCOUNTABILITY Lesson 3

ThriveAbility

“MORE IMPORTANT THAN BELIEVING IN YOUR ABILITIES, IS THE BELIEF YOU CAN IMPROVE”

Professor Carol Dweck

A mindset is a frame of mind, a recurring way of seeing things that reflects your deep beliefs and gives a particular view of yourself and the world. Mindsets are powerful because they dictate our efforts and actions, acting like a guideline we must behave by.

For example Stanford psychology professor Carol Dweck (Dweck & Chiu & Hong, 1995) has found that:

- **Fixed mindsets** are caused by our belief that we are born with certain abilities - like being clever or dumb, good at sport or clumsy - and there's not much we can do to improve upon this. As a result we tend to judge ourselves and others by the outcomes we achieve. This can cause us to avoid challenges confronting, for fear we won't be good enough to deliver the results. Negative feedback is painful to hear because we don't believe we can really improve upon our abilities. Failure feels fatal so we're more inclined to sweep our mistakes under the rug and hope nobody notices.

The problem Dweck has found, is that the constant stress and anxiety of both success and failure causes people with a fixed mindset to eventually plateau and fall short of reaching their true potential. Why? Well, if you have a fixed mindset, you are less hopeful about the future. You have an upper limit, and there's nothing you can do to change it, so why try? You're more likely to miss cues about where you need to make more effort or develop your strengths to move ahead. And when you strike obstacles, you're more likely to give up - feeling helpless and hopeless that you simply don't have the resources required.

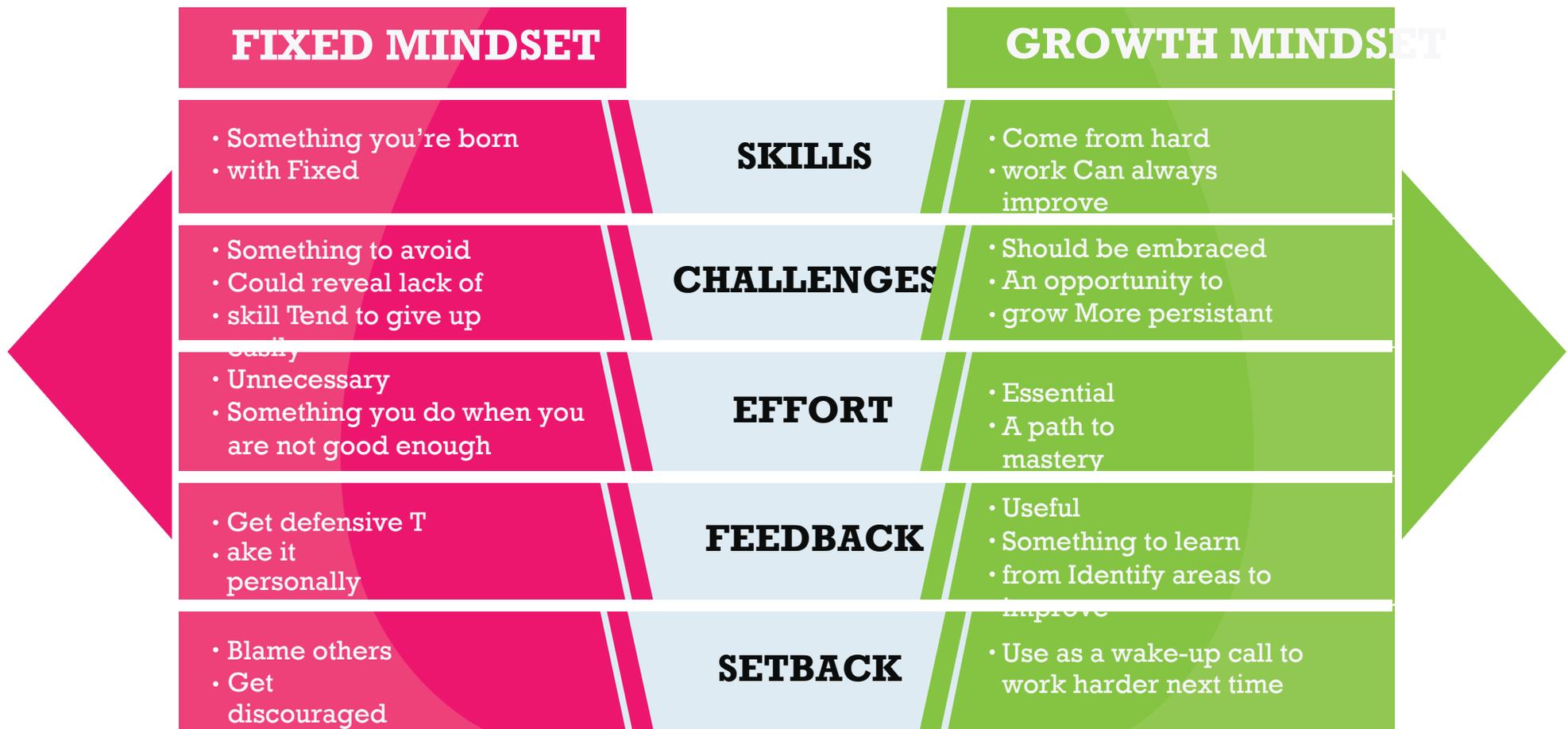
- **Growth mindsets** are caused by our belief that talent and intelligence can be built up with effort and practice to a point of mastery. As a result we're driven by learning, because we believe effort is the measure of a person. We face into new challenges as growth opportunities. Negative feedback is how we learn to keep improving. Failure is a natural part of the improvement process. And to ensure our success, we find the confidence to keep showing up and move beyond our present limitations.

A growth mindset helps you move beyond your present limitations by setting stretch goals and being willing to seek help, enabling you to achieve ever-higher levels of success. It encourages risk, and it supports resilience when we fail.

For most of us, these mindsets are not black and white. For example, you might find that you have a largely fixed mindset when it comes to your work, but you may have a growth mindset at home. Ultimately, Dweck has found that our mindset determines our levels of self-belief, the outcomes we achieve, and our wellbeing.

The good news is that no matter how fixed your mindset might currently be, there are several very simple steps you can take to leverage a growth mindset instead.

WHAT ARE YOUR BELIEFS?



(Dweck, 2006)

WHICH MINDSET SOUNDS MOST LIKE YOU?

| | Fixed | Mixed | Growth |
|---|--|---|--|
| Taking on Challenges | You don't really take on challenges on your own. You feel that challenges are to be avoided. | You might take on challenges when you have some previous experience with success in a related challenge. | You look forward to the next challenge and have long range plans for new challenges. |
| Learning from Mistakes | You see mistakes as failures, as proof that the task is beyond your reach. You may hide mistakes or lie about them. | You may accept mistakes as temporary setbacks, but lack strategies to apply what you learned from the mistakes in order to succeed. | You see mistakes as temporary setbacks, something to be overcome. You reflect about what you learned and apply that learning when revisiting the task. |
| Accepting Feedback and Criticism | You feel threatened by feedback and may avoid it all together. Criticism and constructive feedback are seen as a reason to quit. | You may be motivated by feedback if it is not overly critical or threatening. Who is giving the feedback, the level of difficulty of the task, or their personal feelings might all be factors in your motivation. | You invite and are motivated by feedback and criticism. You apply new strategies as a result of feedback. You think of feedback as being a supportive element in the learning process. |
| Practice and Applying Strategies | You do not practice and avoid practicing when you can. You do not have any strategies for accomplishing the learning goals or tasks, or you apply ineffective strategies. | You practice, but a big setback can make you want to quit. You are more willing to practice things you are already considered "good at." You are open to being given a strategy to meet a challenge, but you rarely apply your own strategies unless it is something you are already "good at." | You enjoy the process of practicing and see it as part of the process of getting good at something. You may create your own practice or study plans. You fluidly use many strategies, think of some of your own strategies, and ask others about their strategies. |
| Perseverance (focus on task) | You have little persistence on learning goals and tasks. You give up at the first sign of struggle. | You may persevere with prompting and support. Unless you are provided strategies for overcoming obstacles, you will stop or give up. | You "stick to it" and have stamina for the task(s). You keep working confidently until the task is complete. |
| Asking Questions | You do not ask questions or do not know which questions to ask, but you can usually say you don't "get it" if asked. | You might ask questions about a portion of the task that you feel you can do. If you perceive it to be out of your ability, you probably won't ask questions. | You ask specific questions, ask questions about your own thinking, and challenge the text, the task and the teacher. |
| Taking Risks | You do not take risks, and if something is too hard you turn in blank work or copied work, if anything at all. You are not engaged in the process/task. | You will take risks if any task is already fairly familiar to you. If not, you will resort to copying or turning in partially completed work. | You begin tasks confidently, risk making errors, and openly share the work you produce. |

“THE VIEW YOU ADOPT FOR YOURSELF PROFOUNDLY AFFECTS THE WAY YOU LEAD YOUR LIFE.”

Professor Carol Dweck

Our brains are sense-making machines and they are happiest when all the pieces of the puzzle fit together. One of the ways we try to fulfill this need is to constantly tell ourselves stories about why something is happening, and what might happen next. It is these stories that shape the way we think, feel and act.

Dweck and her team (Dweck, Mangel & Good, 2004) have found that fixed mindsets create an internal monologue that is focused on judging. Something good leads to strong, positive stories and something bad to a very strong negative story. For example, a good maths test result leads to "I'm a human calculator", and a missed basketball goal to "I'm such a loser".

In contrast growth mindsets create an internal monologue that is focused on learning. They are still sensitive to positive and negative information, but they are attuned to implications and opportunities for learning and constructive action. For example, a good maths test result leads to "The effort I made preparing for that test really paid off", and a missed basketball goal to "I need to practice my lay ups more this week".

Dweck and her colleagues' (Blackwell, Trzesniewski, & Dweck, 2007) research suggests just learning about a growth mindset can cause a big shift in the stories we tell about ourselves and our experiences of life. Instead of expecting ourselves to be the Great Student, the Great Athlete, or the Great Parent, growth mindsets give us the courage to be open to trying, learning and achieving the things that matter most to us. You can cultivate a more growth mindset by:

- **Learning to hear your fixed mindset “voice.”** - As you approach a challenge, you might hear: “Are you sure you can do it? Maybe you're not good enough.” As you hit a setback, the voice might say: “It's not too late to back out, make excuses, and try to regain your dignity.” As you face criticism, you might hear: “It's not my fault. It was something or someone else's fault.” You might feel yourself getting angry at the person who is giving you feedback.
- **Recognising that you have a choice** - How you interpret challenges, setbacks, and criticism is your choice. You can interpret them as signs that your fixed talents or abilities are lacking. Or you can see them as signs that you need to ramp up your strategies and effort, stretch yourself, and expand your abilities. It's up to you.
- **Talking back to it with a growth mindset voice** - As you approach challenges acknowledge: “I'm not sure I can do it now, but I think I can learn to with time and effort.” As you hit setbacks say: “Most successful people had failures along the way.” When you face criticism remember: “If I don't take responsibility, I can't fix it. Let me listen—however painful it is— and learn whatever I can.”
- **Taking the growth mindset action** - Take on the challenge wholeheartedly, learn from your setbacks and try again, hear the criticism and act on it. Your future is now in your hands.
You may just not be there YET!

WHAT CAN I SAY TO MYSELF TO BE MORE GROWTH MINDSET?

What Can I Say To Myself?

| Instead of... | Try thinking.. |
|---|--|
| I'm not good at this. | What am I missing? |
| I'm awesome at this. | I'm on the right track! |
| I give up. | I'll use some of the strategies we've learned. |
| This is too hard. | This may take some time and effort. |
| I can't make this any better. | I can always improve, so I'll keep trying. |
| I just can't do math. | I'm going to train my brain in Math. |
| I made a mistake. | Mistakes help me to learn better. |
| She's so smart. I will never be that smart. | I'm going to figure out how she does it so I can try it! |
| It's good enough. | Is it really my best work? |
| Plan A didn't work. | Good thing the alphabet has 25 more letters! |

HOW CAN WE DEVELOP GROWTH MINDSETS?



Understanding That The Brain Grows

Understanding that the brain is plastic and can develop new capacities with effort and practice makes a big difference in how we deal with mistakes and setbacks and how motivated and persistent we are toward mastery or achieving our goal



Knowing where we want to go

Having a vision of the future as being better than how things are now and believing we can get there, is HOPE. Having Hope means we have clear pathways, toward our goals we are aware of the obstacles and we know what it will take to keep going despite setbacks. Make a Hope Map, keep your vision of the future clear and meaningful and let that vision pull you forward, knowing that you can achieve most things with effort (using your growth mindset)



Embracing Failure and using Self Compassion

Learning that failure is not fatal, but rather, it's often one of our best sources of learning. If you can embrace failure you won't fear taking risks, making mistakes or receiving criticism. Share stories of challenge, set backs and failures with family and friends, learn to laugh at yourself and observe how failure and setbacks are a normal part of learning and improvement.



Encouraging "Not Yet" Stories

Tune into the stories your hear yourself and others telling. When you hear fixed mindset stories that judge the ability to achieve, or not achieve, ask: "Is that true? Could there be a learning opportunity here?" Remind yourself and each other you may not be able to do it YET but with practice and persistence you will move toward it. Start adding YET onto the end of fixed mindset statements. Use a growth mindset, statement "I may not be good enoughYET but I can get there". This indicates the possibility of growth.



Building Grit Find things to be meaningfully interested in, set learning rather than outcome goals, practice deliberately and seek support when you want to give up or quit. Remember, being "gritty" involves a meaningful goal, passion, purpose and hope - deeply believing that achieving your goal will make a better future for you and/or others.

WHAT CAN YOU DO TO MAXIMIZE YOUR MINDSET ?



Watch your

MINDset Next time you are faced with a challenge that stretches you, such as a new role at work, or learning a new skill, try to identify if you are approaching it with a fixed or growth mindset. Write a list of your thoughts, then group them into either “fixed” or “growth” mindset. Once you have made a list, cross off the “fixed” stories, reminding yourself your mindset is just an attitude and you can choose to change it.



Set A Passion goal Or Hopeful Vision For The Future.

Successful people have a ferocious determination and they know in a very deep way what they want. It's their combination of passion and perseverance that makes them high achievers. Do you know what you want? Create a goal for your 1, 3 and 10 year future, then make habits today, to move toward that goal.

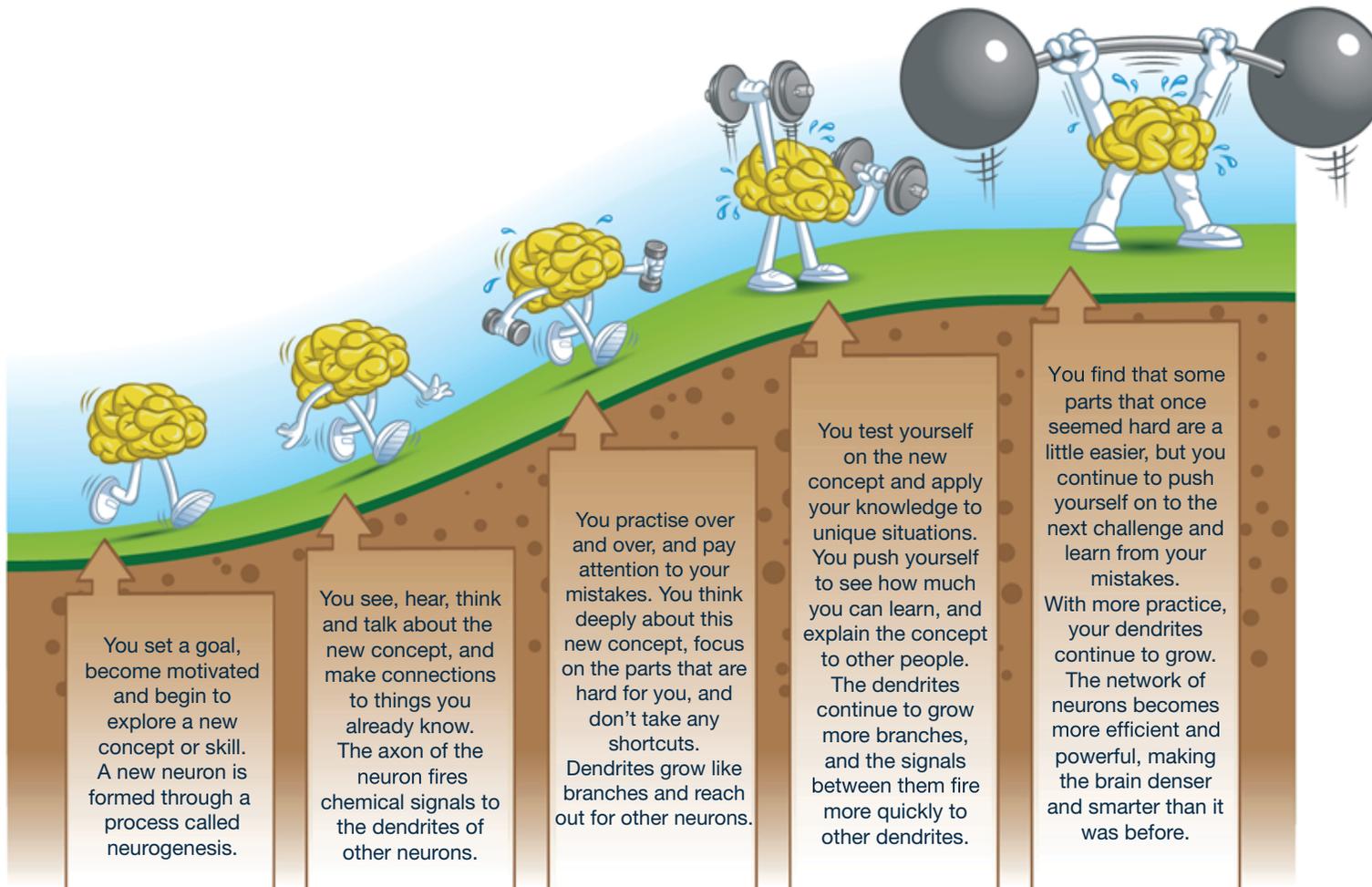


The power of practice

Is there something you would like to do, but believe you can't? Draw up a thirty-day plan to practice the skill for half an hour a day, including ideas and tips from friends and experts. Keep a daily journal or photo diary measuring your progress. When the thirty days are over, reflect on the amount of progress made and visualize what could be achieved with this amount to deliberate practice, over the months and years ahead. Remember, talent is like a muscle that grows with practice.



HOW CAN WE IMPROVE OUR ABILITIES?



My Thriving Accountability Card



Name:

Please write down at least one new habit you'd like to try this week to cultivate more thriving for yourself.

I will hold myself accountable for the following;

This will move me towards my hopes by:

What will I tell myself about why this matters?
