

Why Mindset Matters for Your Success By Kendra Cherry

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Could what you believe about yourself impact your success or failure? According to Stanford psychologist Carol Dweck, your beliefs play a pivotal role in what you want and whether you achieve it. Dweck has found that it is your mindset that plays a significant role in determining achievement and success.

What exactly is a mindset?

Mindset refers to whether you believe qualities such as intelligence & talent are fixed or changeable traits.

There are two different types of mindset:

People with a **fixed mindset** believe that these qualities are inborn, fixed, and unchangeable.

Those with a **growth mindset**, on the other hand, believe that these abilities can be developed and strengthened by way of commitment and hard work.

Dweck began her research on this topic by tackling a question: What happens if you give kids a difficult problem to solve? Some children viewed the problem as a challenge and learning experience. Other children felt that it was impossible to solve and that their intelligence was being held up for scrutiny and judgment.

The kids in the first group had growth mindsets. When faced with something difficult, they believed that they could learn and develop the skills they needed to solve it. The second group of kids had fixed mindsets. They believed that there was nothing they could do to tackle a problem that was out of the reach of their knowledge and abilities.

Mindset Formation

Dweck suggests that many people are trained in the two types of mindsets early in life, often through the way they are raised or their experiences in school. Certain characteristics can be assigned to either a fixed or growth mindset.

Fixed Mindsets: Children who are taught that they should look smart instead of loving learning tend to develop a fixed mindset. They become more concerned with how they are being judged and fear that they might not live up to expectations.

Growth Mindsets

Kids who are taught to explore, embrace new experiences, and enjoy challenges are more likely to develop a growth mindset. Rather than seeing mistakes as setbacks, they are willing to try new things and make errors all in the name of learning and achieving their potential.

Dweck notes that having a growth mindset doesn't involve believing that anyone can become anything they want with enough education and effort. Not everyone can become Einstein or Mozart just because they try.

Instead, the growth mindset is about living up to one's possible potential. This potential, however, is never really knowable. Who knows how far a person can go if they set their mind to it? People with a growth mindset believe that the effort that goes into learning and deepening their understanding and talents is well worth all the toil and trouble.

The Impact of Mindset

Your mindset plays a critical role in how you cope with life's challenges. In school, a growth mindset can contribute to greater achievement and increased effort. When facing a problem such as trying to find a

new job, people with growth mindsets show greater resilience. They are more likely to persevere in the face of setbacks while those with fixed mindsets are more liable to give up.

In her book "**Mindset**," Dweck writes that **fixed mindsets** tend to create a need for approval. "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?"

Growth mindsets, on the other hand, result in hunger for learning. A desire to work hard and discover new things. To tackle challenges and grow as a person. When people with a growth mindset try and fail, they tend not to view it as a failure or disappointment. Instead, it is a learning experience that can lead to growth and change.

What Is Your Mindset?

Do you have a fixed or growth mindset? To find out, start by reading the following statements and decide which ones you agree with most:

1. People have a certain amount of intelligence, and there isn't any way to change it.
2. No matter who you are, there isn't much you can do to improve your basic abilities and personality.
3. People are capable of changing who they are.
4. You can learn new things and improve your intelligence.
5. People either have particular talents, or they don't. You can't just acquire talent for things like music, writing, art, or athletics.
6. Studying, working hard, and practicing new skills are all ways to develop new talents and abilities.

If you tend to agree with statements 1, 2, and 5, then you probably have a more fixed mindset.

If you agree with statements 3, and 4, 6, however, then you probably tend to have a growth mindset.

Can You Change Your Mindset?

While people with a fixed mindset might not agree, Dweck suggests that people are capable of changing their mindsets. Parents can also take steps to ensure that their children develop growth mindsets, often through praising efforts rather than focusing solely on results.

For example, instead of telling a child that he is "so smart," a parent might commend the child for their hard work on a project and describe what they like the most about the child's efforts ("I really like how you chose the colours for that picture!").

By focusing on the process rather than the outcome, adults can help kids understand that their efforts, hard work, and dedication can lead to change, learning, and growth both now and in the future.

To learn more about Mindsets check out the following:

Mindset Definition: How Your Mindset Sets the Stage by Mindvalley – 9 minutes read

<https://blog.mindvalley.com/mindset-definition/>

Carol S Dweck – The Growth Mindset – Talks at Google 47.26 minutes

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-71zdXCMU6A>

Carol S Dweck – The power of yet TED Talk 11. 19 minutes

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=J-swZaKN2Ic>

Carol S Dweck – The power of believing you can improve TED Talk 10.25 minutes

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=X0mgOOSpLU>

Carol S Dweck - Developing a Growth Mindset 9.38 minutes

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hiiEeMN7vbQ>