

Growth Mindset and Mentoring



Carol Dweck *Mindset: The New Psychology of Success*

- Carol Dweck is the pioneer behind the ideas of “growth” and “fixed” mindset. Dweck in her 2007 book, *Mindset*, delineates between these two ideas at great length.
- Focuses on the process of learning rather than the end result.
- The individual has power to change his/her mindset
- Difficulties are seen as challenges to overcome and it fosters an openness to embracing challenges as they're a vehicle for individualized growth

What is Growth Mindset

- Growth Mindset according to Dweck is the idea that “people believe that their most basic abilities can be developed through dedication and hard work—brains and talent are just the starting point. This view creates a love of learning and a resilience that is essential for great accomplishment.”
- It is important to understand that individuals with a growth mindset thrive on challenges and view failures as a springboard for growth and for stretching existing abilities (Pennsylvania Distance School)

In Contrast: Fixed Mindset

- Fixed Mindset, according to Dweck, is the idea that “people believe their basic qualities, like their intelligence or talent, are simply fixed traits. They spend their time documenting their intelligence or talent instead of developing it.”
- In other words, you are born with a certain amount of intelligence or potential, and it can't change. Fixed mindset assumes that our character, intelligence, and creative abilities are static and are unable to change over time.

Growth Mindset Statistically speaking.....

-Researchers studied 10th graders performance on a national achievement test. They found that students were 3x more likely to score in the top 20% on the test, while students with a fixed mindset were 4x more likely to score in the bottom 20% on the test. (Claro, Paunesku, & Dweck)

- In Massachusetts, the average student growth rate is 50%, however students at Fiske Elementary school after 2 years of implementing growth mindset (2012-2014) saw an average student growth rate of 75.5%.

The Benefits of Growth Mindset

- Youth are better equipped to handle adverse situations as they see these situations for an opportunity for personal growth
- Allows for a continued development of talents and skills.
- Promotes lifelong-learning
- Youth will develop a greater capacity of resiliency
- Youth will have Increased self-confidence as they continue to develop a growth mindset
- Allows youth to take the initiative, thus becoming more accountable and responsible.
- Youth are able to see setbacks as a springboard for individual growth

How to Implement Growth Mindset With Your Mentee

- Emphasize the process over the outcome, praise the effort, not the end result.
- Encourage and embrace challenges and healthy risk taking
- Using the word “yet” as a simple way to model growth mindset
- As mentors, we should share our own mistakes and failures with our mentees, as this enables us to build trust with our mentees. Tell personal stories that illustrate the importance of perseverance and resilience. Ask your mentee how they handled a tough situation, what they felt, or how they thought during a time when they failed. (*Mindset Kit*)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=goi-yPI8tlA> (4 min video from PERTS)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NxXQz5dhH3k> (6 min video from PERTS)

Implementing a Growth Mindset with your Mentee (Cont.)

-Use personal examples of when you employed a Growth Mindset. Make sure your examples are relevant to the young person's life and situation. This goes with getting to know your mentee. Once you have a better understanding of who you are mentoring, you can better share relevant struggles you faced.

-Consider identifying something that you'd like to improve on over the course of the year, share that goal with your mentee, and have your mentee identify a goal then make a deal with him or her to work on your goals together.

(Taken from *The Mindset Kit*, a project from Stanford University)