



A Guide to Growth Mindset

I have a
GROWTH MINDSET!



Information for Parents

Growth Mindsets

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 😊
<p>Central belief: We have a predetermined amount of intelligence, skills or talents which cannot be changed.</p>	<p>Central belief: We can develop our abilities, intelligence or talents with persistence, effort and a focus on learning.</p>
<p>Leads to a desire to look clever and therefore a tendency to:</p> <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 	<p>Leads to a desire to learn and therefore a tendency to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • embrace challenges • see mistakes and failures as learning opportunities • believe 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
<p>Mottos</p> <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. 	<p>Mottos</p> <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.

Children in school with a 'fixed mindset' are often scared to contribute to class discussions for fear of looking stupid; believe they are going to fail and therefore give up; will not try anything new for fear of getting it wrong; will persevere with the same approach to their learning even when it is not working rather than being creative and finding a different solution.

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.

Professor Dweck's research provides extensive evidence to suggest shifting to a growth mindset is possible over time - 'growing' your brain. Having a growth mindset allows children to stay resilient in the face of setbacks, learn from mistakes and enjoy challenges.

This is what we are aiming to develop in our children across our school.

What can we do to help our children develop a growth mindset?

In school:

Growth Mindset is not a new subject to be taught, but an approach to school and lifelong learning. We are using many ways to develop this culture and positive attitude to learning.

In school we use **formative assessment** strategies to give our children specific, detailed feedback that informs them on their next steps in learning.

We talk about how your **brain** can grow and so you can grow your abilities through practice. Each time we learn something new, your brain is making new connections. As a result, when things are difficult, your brain will grow if you persist through this challenge.

Many classes use **Learning Powers** which are special powers that help us learn, for example:

- Have a go
- Don't give up
- Co-operate
- Be curious
- Concentrate

Some classes have created characters who show different learning powers with a story to help explain the power. When reflecting on their learning, we encourage the children to explain what learning power they have used and how it is helping them to learn

At home:

Hearing a consistent message in this approach is crucial to success, therefore it is important that the same message is heard at home so we would encourage parents to try to engage their children with these themes:

- Praise carefully - not for intelligence but for effort (i.e. process not outcome)
- 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 discussions about mindset and which mindset they (and you?) are choosing to use
- Teach children to think positively and to believe in themselves and...

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... .. 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

10 Growth Mindset Statements

What can I say to myself?

FIXED MINDSET	INSTEAD OF:	TRY THINKING:	GROWTH MINDSET
	I'm not good at this.	1 What am I missing?	
	I'm awesome at this.	2 I'm on the right track.	
	I give up.	3 I'll use some of the strategies we've learned.	
	This is too hard.	4 This may take some time and effort.	
	I can't make this any better.	5 I can always improve so I'll keep trying.	
	I just can't do Math.	6 I'm going to train my brain in Math.	
	I made a mistake.	7 Mistakes help me to learn better.	
	She's so smart. I will never be that smart.	8 I'm going to figure out how she does it.	
	It's good enough.	9 Is it really my best work?	
	Plan "A" didn't work.	10 Good thing the alphabet has 25 more letters!	

(Original source unknown)

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If parents want to give their children a gift, the best thing they can do is to teach their children to love challenges, be intrigued by mistakes, enjoy effort, and keep on learning. That way, their children don't have to be slaves of praise. They will have a lifelong way to build and repair their own confidence."

Carol Dweck

Further Reading

'Mindset: How You Can Fulfil Your Potential' by Carol Dweck

'Growth Mindset Pocket Book' by Hymer and Gershon

'Your Fantastic Elastic Brain' by Jo Ann Deak Ph.D