

Fixed Mindset Intelligence is static

Leads to a desire to look smart
and therefore a tendency to ...

People who hold a Fixed Mindset believe that “we are the way we are”, but that does not mean that they have less desire than anyone else for a positive self-image. So of course they want to perform well and appear to be smart.

... avoid challenges

A challenge, by definition, is hard and success is not assured. So rather than risk failing and negatively impacting their self-image, Fixed Mindset individuals will often avoid challenges and stick to what they already know they can do well.

... give up easily when faced with obstacles

This same thinking applies to obstacles. The difference is that challenges are things that they can decide whether to face while obstacles are external forces that get in their way.

... see effort as fruitless or worse

Fixed Mindset individuals ask themselves, “What’s the point of working hard and making efforts if afterwards I might still be on square one?” Their worldview tells them that effort is an unpleasant thing that does not really pay dividends, and so the smart thing to do is for them to avoid it as much as possible.

... ignore criticism or useful negative feedback

The Fixed Mindset logically leads people to believe that any criticism of their capabilities is criticism of them as a person. Useful negative feedback is ignored, in the best of cases, and taken as an insult the rest of the time. This usually discourages people who are around a Fixed Mindset individual and, after a while, they stop giving any negative feedback. This further isolates that person from external influences that could generate some change.

... feel threatened by the success of others

Fixed Mindset individuals see the success of others as benchmarks against which they will look bad. When others succeed, they will try to convince themselves, and the people around them, that the success was due to either luck (because almost everything is due to luck in the Fixed Mindset world), or to objectionable actions. They may try to tarnish the success of others by bringing up things completely unrelated, (“Yes, but did you know about her ...”).

All this confirms a deterministic view of the world.

As a result, they may plateau early and
achieve less than their full potential.

Fixed mindset individuals do not reach their fullest potential and their beliefs feed on themselves, forming negative feedback loops. They don’t change or improve much of the time, if ever, and so for them this confirms that “we are the way we are”.





Growth Mindset

Intelligence can be developed

Leads to a desire to learn and therefore a tendency to ...

If you hold a Growth Mindset, you believe that intelligence can be developed, that the brain can be grown and strengthened, like a muscle that can be trained. This leads to your desire to improve.

... embrace challenges

And how do you improve?

First you embrace challenges because you know you'll come out stronger on the other side.

... persist in the face of setbacks

Similarly, obstacles or external setbacks do not discourage you. Your self-image is not tied to your success or how you will look to others. Failure is an opportunity to learn and so, whatever happens, you will win.

... see effort as the path to mastery

As a Growth Mindset individual, you see effort as necessary to grow and master useful skills and knowledge; you do not view effort as something useless or to be avoided. You are not turned away by fears that you might make an attempt, or even work hard, and that failure is possible.

... learn from criticism

Criticism and negative feedback are sources of information. That doesn't mean that all criticism is worth integrating or that nothing is ever to be taken personally. As a Growth Mindset individual, you know that you can continue change and improve, so negative feedback is not perceived as being directly about you as a person but rather about the current state of your abilities.

... find lessons and inspiration in the success of others

You see the success of others as sources of inspiration, information opportunities to learn. Growth mindset individuals do not view success as a competitive, zero-sum game with others.

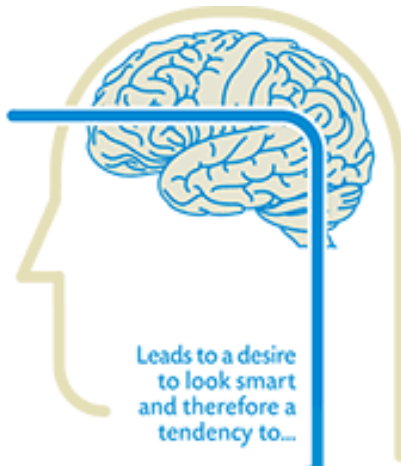
As a result, you reach ever-higher
levels of achievement.

All this gives you a greater sense of free will.

As a Growth Mindset individual, you note your improvements and this creates positive feedback loops that encourage you to continue learning and improving.

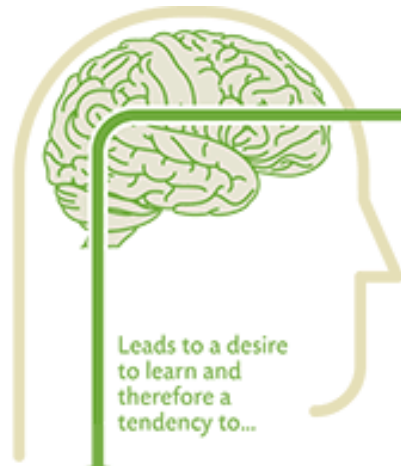
Most people do not have a 100% Growth Mindset or a 100% Fixed Mindset; most of us have some of both. The good news is that it is possible to change your worldview from Fixed Mindset to Growth Mindset. Carol Dweck's research indicates that both children and adults can be taught to change their mindsets.

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CHALLENGES

...avoid challenges



...embrace challenges



OBSTACLES

...give up easily



...persist in the face of setbacks



EFFORT

...see effort as fruitless or worse



...see effort as the path to mastery



CRITICISM

...ignore useful negative feedback



...learn from criticism



SUCCESS OF OTHERS

...feel threatened by the success of others



...find lessons and inspiration in the success of others



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