



GROWTH MINDSET



Fixed versus growth mindsets

Dr. Carol Dweck, a professor of psychology at Stanford University and author of the book *Mindset: The New Psychology of Success*, studies mindset in children. She believes children are similar to adults in that they have one of two possible mindsets—a **fixed mindset** or a **growth mindset** .

Kids with a fixed mindset believe they're 'smart' or 'dumb', talented at something: painting, music or football, or not. They may believe the world is made of some gifted people, whom the rest admire from the sidelines. Conversely, kids with a growth mindset appreciate anyone can build themselves into anything they want to be. They recognise that people aren't 'smart' or 'dumb', that there are no talented geniuses; only hard-working people who have chosen to take their abilities to the next level.

Her research shows that students' beliefs about intelligence play an important role in their school achievement, engagement, and happiness.

Achievement

Engagement

Happiness

How to praise the right way

One key to coaching mindset beliefs in children lies in how parents and teachers praise and motivate children . "Many of the things we do to motivate our kids are sapping their desire to learn," [says Dweck](#).

It was once thought telling children how smart they are would give them confidence in their abilities, the desire to learn, and the hardiness to withstand difficulty. "The self-esteem movement got it wrong. Praising children's intelligence may boost their confidence for a brief moment, but by fostering the fixed view of intelligence, it makes them afraid of challenges, it makes them lose confidence when tasks become hard, and it leads to plummeting performance in the face of difficulty," explains Dweck.

Research shows that praising the process—children's effort or strategies—creates eagerness for challenges, persistence in the face of difficulty, and enhanced performance. "What we've found in study after study is that ability-praise backfires. Emphasising effort gives a child a variable that they can control. They come to see themselves as in control of their success," Dweck explains, "Emphasising natural intelligence takes it out of the child's control, and it provides no good recipe for responding to a failure."

Carol Dweck's tips for promoting a growth mindset in kids:

- **Help children understand that the brain works like a muscle**, that can only grow through hard work, determination, and lots and lots of practice.
- **Don't tell students they are** smart, gifted, or talented, since this implies that they were born with the knowledge, and does not encourage effort and growth.
- Let children know when they demonstrate **a growth mindset**.
- **Praise the process**. It's effort, hard work, and practice that allow children to achieve their true potential.
- **Don't praise the results**. Test scores and rigid ways of measuring learning and knowledge limit the growth that would otherwise be tapped.
- **Embrace failures and missteps**. Children sometimes learn the most when they fail. Let them know that mistakes are a big part of the learning process. There is nothing like the feeling of struggling through a very difficult problem, only to finally break through and solve it! The harder the problem, the more satisfying it is to find the solution.
- **Encourage participation and collaborative group learning**. Children learn best when they are immersed in a topic and allowed to discuss and advance with their peers.
- **Encourage competency-based learning**. Get kids excited about subject matter by explaining why it is important and how it will help them in the future. The goal should never be to get the 'correct' answer, but to understand the topic at a fundamental, deep level, and want to learn more.

For more information on Carol Dweck and Mindset go to

<http://mindsetonline.com/>

Regards,

Mr Todd Manton

School Counsellor

