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**GROWTH MINDSET**

Children need to be prepared for an ever-changing world. The teaching of mindsets builds resilience and a desire to learn, to challenge themselves and to encourage others – all of which are necessary for children’s success both at school and for their future.

The notion of a growth mindset (Dweck 2000) has become an accessible concept to describe the way learners need to feel about themselves and their abilities, in order to be successful learners. Research over many years has highlighted that we all differ as learners, being mostly fixed or mostly growth, and differing in different situations. The table below highlights the differences between the two mindsets.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Fixed Mindset  (performance orientation) | Growth Mindset  (learning orientation) |
| Intelligence is static.  I must look clever! | Intelligence is expandable.  I want to learn more! |
| Avoids challenges | Embraces challenges |
| Gives up easily | Persists in the face of setbacks |
| Sees effort as pointless | Sees effort as the way |
| Ignores useful criticism | Learns from criticism |
| Likely to plateau early and achieve less than full potential | Reaches ever higher levels of achievement |

This 10-minute talk is titled "The power of believing that you can improve" and it's been viewed over 6 million times! This talk is a great introduction to Carol Dweck and her growth mindset theory.

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In summary, people with a fixed mindset believe that intelligence and ability are fixed – something that we are born with and that we can’t really do anything about. People with a growth mindset believe that intelligence and ability can be developed through persistence, effort, learning from our mistakes and trying different strategies.

Unfortunately, the underlying drive in the British education system in recent decades, with its focus on results and direct comparisons, could well have encouraged this type of thinking in many pupils and their parents. Babies and young children are excited to learn on their own terms, but as soon as children become able to compare themselves with others, many become more focused on performance (results) rather than effort. This attitude can also be common amongst parents, who are often extremely keen to know things such as spelling test results and book levels and to make comparisons with other children.

However, research shows that humans’ brains have a quality known as ‘neuroplasticity’ – in other words, it is actually possible to learn new things and make new connections between the neurons in our brains, even as we progress through into adulthood. People who innately recognise this fact tend to bounce back quickly from failures and setbacks and are more likely to explore how they can get better at doing something. They are described as having a ‘growth’ mindset; they do not define themselves by the outcomes of tasks but by the effort put in.

The Growth Mindset approach reinforces the Secrets of Success which are at the very core of our school culture.  Chris Quigley is a well-regarded specialist in primary education, leading figure in educational research, publishing and curriculum design who summarises this approach by simply stating that “Let your chid know success is a choice, not luck.”

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