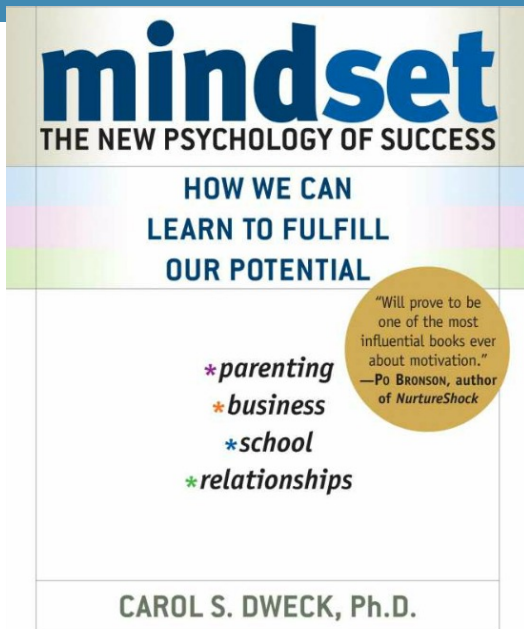


EXECUTIVE BOOK SUMMARY

MINDSET: THE NEW PSYCHOLOGY OF SUCCESS



BRIEF SUMMARY

Psychologist Carol S. Dweck Ph.D. has spent years researching how people think. Specifically, how people think about learning. In her research she discovered that a person's success—their ability to grow, adapt as well as face and tackle challenges—is most impacted by their conceptions of their own intellectual capacity. Dweck describes this belief as a

mindset, a framework in which people understand and respond to the world. Dweck theorizes that there are simply two mindsets, a fixed mindset and a growth mindset. Individuals with a fixed mindset believe that intelligence is an innate and unchanging biological fact. Individuals with a growth mindset believe the opposite; a person's intellect is malleable and capable of changing over time. Those with a fixed mindset tend to limit their opportunities, avoid risk and fear challenge. Those with a growth mindset make the most of their opportunities and seek challenges. But mindsets are not carved in stone, individuals who recognize the importance of mindsets can change from a fixed to a growth mindset.

"The view you adopt for yourself profoundly affects the way you lead your life"

Carol S. Dweck Ph. D

THE MINDSETS

THE FIXED MINDSET:

THE BELIEF THAT INTELLIGENCE IS PREDETERMINED AND UNCHANGING. IT IS A HAVE OR HAVE NOT PROPOSITION.

THE GROWTH MINDSET:

THE BELIEF THAT INTELLIGENCE IS TRANSFORMATIONAL. THROUGH EFFORT ANYTHING CAN BE LEARNED.

WHAT DOES IT MEAN?

	Fixed Mindset	Growth Mindset
Failure	Failure is a confirmation of our abilities and intelligence. I am not smart therefore not successful.	Failure is a predictable outcome on the way to mastery. The possibility of failure is what makes a task worthwhile.
Appearances	The fixed mindset can manifest itself in insecurities and an avoidance of risk. Even in individuals with proven intelligence they may avoid any activity that would put this into dispute. Because intelligence is static and failure confirms a lack of intelligence people with a fixed mindset feel the need to demonstrate their intelligence and hide their deficiencies.	Appearances are less important since they are simply a position on a continuum. A person may appear foolish or uncoordinated or novice but this is merely a step preceding wise, coordinated and expert. People with a growth mindset can handle looking a certain way because they do not feel it will linger, and is sometimes a point of pride knowing where they began to where they may end up.
Effort	The expectation for success is immediate. In the fixed mindset effort can yield little therefore little effort is exerted.	Effort is the prime mover. As long as effort is applied than the expectation of success can be met.

“A person's true potential is unknown (and unknowable)...it's impossible to foresee what can be accomplished with years of passion, toil, and training.”-CAROL S. DWECK PH. D

Observable Mindsets

Much of Carol Dweck's research has occurred within schools and with students. In one particular study she offered four year old students a puzzle they could easily solve. Students were then asked if they wanted to try a harder more challenging puzzle. Students with a fixed mindset opted to continue working with the easy puzzle. Their reasons stemmed from a fear of failure, an aversion to risk and the belief that intelligent students "don't do mistakes". Students with a growth mindset craved a challenge and were not worried about potential long lasting consequences of their failure. They simply wanted to keep trying. Redoing the same easy puzzles would not allow them the opportunity to improve.

The Fixed Mindset at Rest

Dweck presents some dangers of the fixed mindset and she attributes the proliferation of dishonesty on college and university campuses to the fixed mindset. Her research suggests that when a student places a huge importance on the diagnostic characteristics of a single test or paper they are willing to make moral mistakes to uphold a feeling of adequacy or intelligence. The consequences of failure are too grave to entertain.

When students with a fixed mindset graduate they may find that the talents they had previously demonstrated within an institution; writing papers and writing tests do not apply in the real world. Those skills are only partially transferable, they must work hard to adapt to their new surroundings and acquire skills they have not previously exercised. The experiences of Janet Cooke and Stephen Glass demonstrate this point. Both Cooke and Glass were highly recruited reporters who took respected positions for the Washington Post and The New Republic. They accumulated an impressive body of work after only a short amount of time and were the envy of their colleagues. It turned out however most of their sources and stories were fabrications. The pressures to perform and live up to their status as up and coming talents placed a greater importance on their output over the process by which good reporting is learned. They did not feel they had the time to grow and grind in their positions but produce.

"The fixed mindset does not allow people the luxury of becoming. They have to already be."

CAROL S. DWECK PH. D

Click the photo for MJ's HOF acceptance speech.

The Growth Mindset in Motion

Dweck borrows a familiar face to illustrate one of the many heroes of the growth mindset. In addition to Cezanne, General Electric CEO Jack Welch and famous ballerina Marina Semyonova, Dweck uses Michael Jordan's storied history to illustrate the heights the growth mindset can propel believers. Jordan is of course considered the best basketball player to ever play the game. This however was not always the case. As a high school student he was famously cut from the varsity basketball team. Jordan obviously did not give up on basketball and he did not believe this setback ended his career, or settled his assumptions about his abilities. He understood the importance of hard work and did not allow failure to detour his growth. He later made the team and continued to succeed. After winning a college title, being drafted to the NBA and winning three NBA Championships in a row he wanted to try something new. He decided being the best basketball player in the world was too easy and he decided to alter his body and attempt a career as a major league baseball player. He turned his back on the greatest career in basketball history to chase a childhood dream. He did not succeed in his second career in professional sports. He tried out for the Chicago White Sox was demoted to the minor leagues and toiled as a poor fielding occasional power hitter in AA Birmingham. He simply did not care what people thought, he believed in his own abilities and his indomitable will. After a year it was clear from his .202 batting average over 127 games he did not have the stuff baseball demanded. Some may say he quit but Jordan probably realized that baseball like basketball takes a lifetime commitment. At 31 years old he most likely knew the time and effort it would take to make a major league club would be immense. A year removed from the game and with a transformed, heavier body he needed to recondition himself back into basketball shape. His body and game were different from that point. He no longer had the fluidity and agility that propelled him to multiple all defensive teams and scoring titles. The high flying, poster subject was no longer. Instead he reinvented his game into a back to the basket, post up, jump shooting machine and won three more NBA championships. At no point was there any doubt that he could not achieve his goals, the only condition for his success was hard work-failure be damned.



"EVEN GENIUSES HAVE TO WORK HARD FOR THEIR ACHIEVEMENTS. AND WHAT'S SO HEROIC, THEY WOULD SAY, ABOUT HAVING A GIFT? THEY MAY APPRECIATE ENDOWMENT, BUT THEY ADMIRE EFFORT, FOR NO MATTER WHAT YOUR ABILITY IS, EFFORT IS WHAT IGNITES THAT ABILITY AND TURNS IT INTO ACCOMPLISHMENT."

CAROL S. DWECK PH. D

Mindsets: A Cell with a Key

Mindsets are not constant. People can waiver between a fixed and growth mindset. But just like J.I. Joe professed in their cartoon public service announcements, "Knowing is half the battle." When people are aware of the mindsets they have the power to rationalize their fears and assess their interpretations of a situation. If an individual is aware of the fixed and growth mindset they can place themselves within it and consider ways to move out or within that conception. Being of a fixed mindset is not a life sentence, becoming aware of this is step one in a process of changing and growing. This recognition allows progress to be possible. It is also possible for a person with a growth mindset to slip into a fixed mindset. Learning involves the constant reminder that learning is about testing the limits of your abilities and trying to go further. The doubt and pain that are associated with achievement are true for every mindset. Growth is a condition of constant assessment.

What of the Little People? Negotiating Effort and Outcomes

The book is filled with examples of famous people making famous contributions, but what about the people who fail to meet such lofty goals? How do they interpret their achievements? Within a growth mindset the outcome is not important. This is what makes failure palatable. A growth mindset places importance on the journey. What matters is that a challenge has been met and whatever the outcome along the way something positive has occurred. Learning about your limitations is still advantageous, everything provides an opportunity for self-assessment and growth. The fixed mindset places importance on the outcome. Achievement is a product and effort is wasted if it is not gained. In a fixed mindset the goal is to become the best or be on top-it is an extrinsic outcome. In a growth mindset the motivation is intrinsic-doing something you love or becoming a better version of yourself. Growth minded individuals achieve heights through determination and perseverance. Extrinsic reward is an accident of an intrinsic impulse. Take for instance a silver medalist, a person with a fixed mindset may have viewed themselves as a failure for not beating the gold medalist or a success for beating all but the rest of the field. Their conception of their performance is entirely shaped by their surroundings. However if that same person had a growth mindset their efforts would have yielded a better athlete then they were before and provided a way to negotiate their future contribution in the sport. Every effort affects change and produces a means to evaluate ones performance and a path to improvement.

MINDSETS IN SCHOOLS

Mindsets can be established early in life and a child's education and upbringing can cement a growth or fixed conception of ability, intelligence and learning. Teachers can have and promote either mindset. Teachers can establish hierarchies, insecurities and opinions about students that are lasting and damaging. When a student encounters the fixed mindset and inhabits it, they are less likely to offer any effort. They cower from discovery or they intend to prove their superiority to others. The basics of learning are not fulfilled. In a growth mindset students learn the value of criticism and assessment. They are not discouraged by poor outcomes and are pleased by simply making gains over time. They are not stifled by deficiencies but recognize further opportunities for growth. Teaching a growth mindset has become Carol Dweck's mission. She has published countless articles for parents and educators. She has established a website (<http://www.mindsetworks.com/>) that is designed to inform students about their potential and how to unlock it. When students experience direct teaching on the way their brain functions and how their thoughts about learning affect their growth, students have had tremendous empowering results. Sure, all students do not begin at the same starting point, but all students can grow from where they are and there is no real cap as to where they may end up.

MINDSETS IN LEADERSHIP

The growth mindset has a lot to do with framing success and developing purpose. In leadership the terms of success must also be defined, but how should that be characterized? Within this course various styles of leadership have had very different conceptions of success. Some focus on relationships, some focus on output. In the growth mindset leadership is responsible for pushing an organization and individuals towards their potential. This would involve many things but firstly it must involve informing people that it is possible. Stasis is a trick of the mind and can be reasoned away. It shares a component of transformative leadership in that it is focused on change and that change may be unpleasant. Adaptive leadership is also similar in this regard. It is focused on building a stronger workforce by growing the individual. The greatest misstep in leadership in business, sport or organizations is that talent is overvalued. Talent is a starting point. No matter how good someone is, the leader included, improvements can be made. Allowing an individual or organization to rest, arrests the possibility of achieving potential. Seeking progress will produce outcomes that were previously unimagined and create conditions for success.

MINDSETS IN RELATIONSHIPS

Just as the mindsets have a place in education, sport and business it also has a place in personal relationships. It can be related to a spouse, colleague, friend or partner. A fixed mindset in relationships views the terms of a relationship or their own ability to maintain a relationship as unchanging. For instance if a person with a fixed mindset were to have had a relationship end it is likely they may feel they deserve it, they are bad at love, they will never find another person or that they are doomed to repeat this over and over again. There is a clear finality in their assessment and it is usually negative. Patterns can be created because their view of themselves and their ability to affect an outcome is low. A growth mindset however may view the falling out of that same relationship as a learning experience, it may reveal the types of things they need to work on to maintain a relationship, it may reveal something about the type of person they are most compatible with it may also even be a relationship they may again pursue under different conditions. Either way they will not view it as a waste of time or a testament to their horribleness, but as something they can learn from.

IMPORTANT POINTS IN POINT FORM

- SUCCESS CAN ONLY BE TRULY MEASURED IN THE LONG TERM
- SUPERIORITY IS A CONDITION OF THE FIXED MINDSET AND WILL AFFECT HOW EFFORT IS EXERTED AND THE WAY RISK IS ASSESSED
- FAILURE IS A CONDITION OF SUCCESS
- PRAISE AND CRITICISM SHOULD BE CENTERED ON PROCESS, WHAT CAN BE CHANGED IS WHAT SHOULD BE FOCUSED ON
- PRAISE AND CRITICISM CENTERED ON INTELLIGENCE, "YOU ARE SMART", CONFIRM ASPECTS OF THE FIXED MINDSET. BEING OR NOT BEING SOMETHING.
- GROWTH IS THE ULTIMATE GOAL, MEASUREMENTS OF SUCCESS SHOULD BE INDIVIDUAL AND IN REACTION TO WHERE YOU WERE AND WHERE YOU ARE GOING
- MINDSETS CAN BE CHANGED, SIMPLY LEARNING ABOUT THE TWO CAN HAVE A TREMENDOUS IMPACT
- EFFORT AND PROCESS HAVE A GREATER IMPACT ON OUTCOME THAN TALENT OR INTELLIGENCE

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- ALMOST ALL THINGS-TALENTS, CAPACITIES AND COMPETENCIES CAN BE IMPROVED, FOCUS ON HUMAN DEVELOPMENT IS AS IMPORTANT AS SKILLS BASED TRAINING
 - A MINDSET CAN ALTER HOW FAILURE IS PERCEIVED, FIXED MINDSETS SEE IT AS AN AFFIRMATION OF A LIMITATION, GROWTH MINDSETS SEE IT AS A LITMUS FOR PROCESS EFFORT AND APPROACH
 - MINDSETS IMPACT RELATIONSHIPS, BUMPS IN THE ROAD ARE INEVITABLE HOW THEY ARE PERCEIVED AND DEALT WITH MATTER

CRITICISMS

This book is very empowering and something I will certainly bring into my classroom. It provides the means to address a host of issues dealing with student development, effort and evaluation. There is a clear method in her research and countless examples of the benefits and occurrence of these mindsets within prominent individuals. I will absolutely recommend this to all of my colleagues and I have every intention of pursuing sponsorship from my principal, school board and outside organizations to the brain gym membership to access lessons to teaching the growth mindset. I am a believer.

I did however feel that at about the 80th page I have read everything I needed to know (is this the hubris of a fixed mindset?). The book offers such a plethora of examples but they are all ultimately one of two categories, a demonstration of how a fixed mindset limited potential or influenced destructive behaviour or how a growth mindset helped people overcome adversity and make significant improvements. After reading a few I felt I understood the impact of mindsets, everything beyond that was a repetition of the same theme. Dweck transfers these ideas to relationships, education, parenting and sport. These are excellent applications but after reading about the basics of the mindsets it feels unnecessary to delve into each facet. I feel that I could write a chapter on letter carriers. Imagine you just received your mail for the day. It just started to rain. You forgot your raincoat and boots at home. How would you react? If you were in the fixed mindset you might say "I am stupid. I'm no good at this." They may quit or blame their co-worker for switching shifts. If you were in the growth mindset you might think, I need to remember for next time and be prepared for the inevitable. You may also seek a way to fix the issue, by going home and getting your rain gear, stopping by the store to grab something or asking a fellow employee if they have extra gear you could borrow.

FURTHER READING

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