



# Parenting for Prevention: Mindset

## What is mindset?



Mindsets are our beliefs about ourselves. They are beliefs about our basic traits - our intelligence, our talents, and our personality. Our mindsets define how we view these qualities ... are they fixed throughout our lifetime or can they change and develop with effort and practice? Understanding the difference between a fixed mindset and a growth mindset (and learning how to practice a growth mindset) opens up the possibility for us to learn more about ourselves and how to foster positive, creative, solution-focused thinking in our children.

### Fixed Mindset vs. Growth Mindset

#### Fixed Mindset

Individuals with a fixed mindset believe their basic qualities, like intelligence or talent, are fixed traits. They focus on proving their abilities rather than developing them. They believe that talent alone, without effort, leads to success.

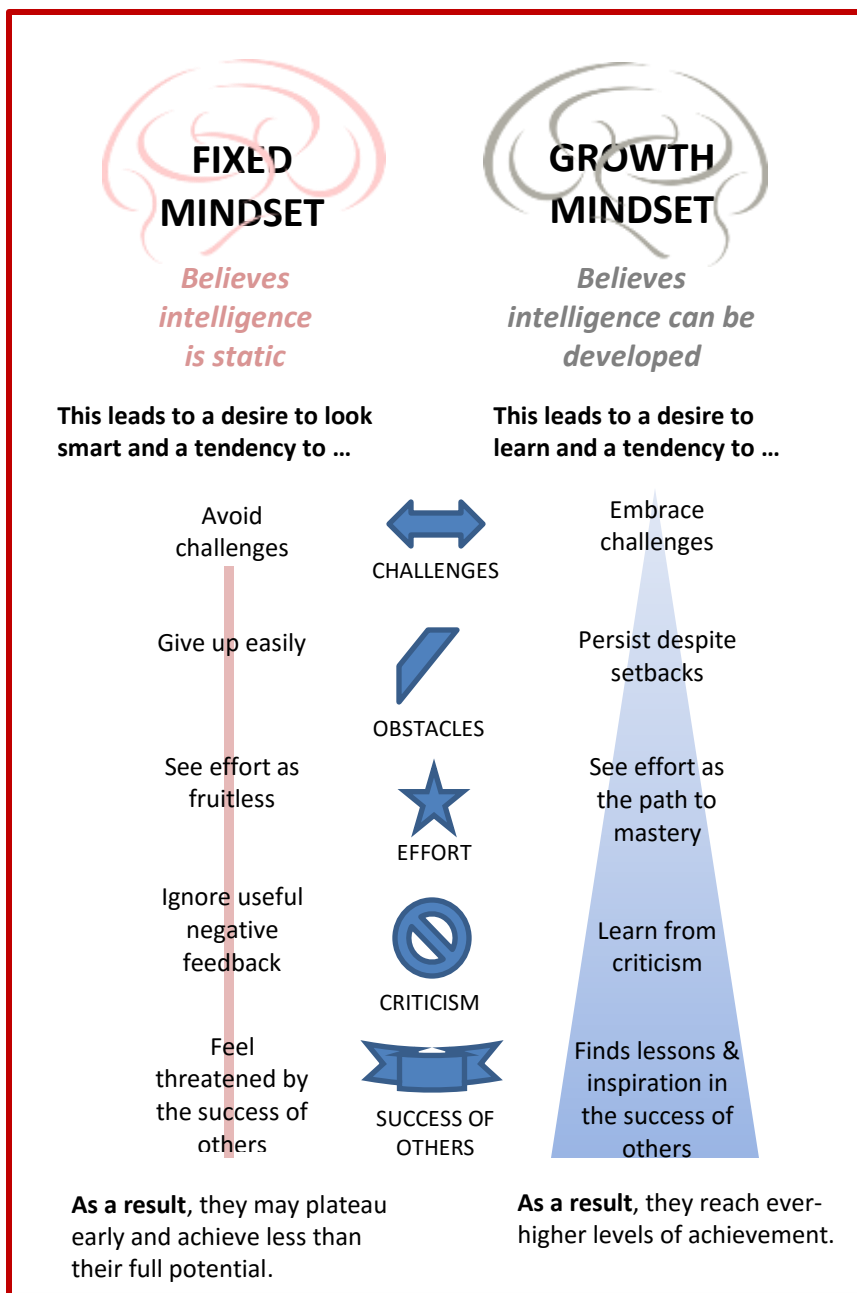
#### Growth Mindset

Individuals with a growth mindset believe that all of their abilities can mature and develop through practice. They develop a love of learning and resilience essential for success.

### Failure Can Equal Success!

Children with a fixed mindset believe that if they fail a test, they must not be smart. Or if they didn't come in first place, they are not a good dancer, singer, or athlete. They often quit or stop trying, fearing failure, thus never allowing themselves the chance to succeed.

Children with a growth mindset view failure as part of learning and an opportunity to learn from mistakes, to keep practicing their skill, or to try a new way to achieve their goal. They learn to become problem-solvers and can see failure as a path to success.



## Through the Ages

*A fixed mindset is a barrier for reaching ones full potential. Parents can help their children develop a growth mindset by helping them view challenges in a different way. Because people with a growth mindset believe that intelligence and talents can be developed, there are no limits for each child to reach his or her full potential.*

### Communicating with your Child Ages 2-3

ENCOURAGE THESE GROWTH MINDSET SKILLS: If your child says "I can't", teach them to add "yet" and say ...

- I am trying, I am learning
- I can't catch the ball yet

### Communicating with your Child Ages 4-5

ENCOURAGE THESE GROWTH MINDSET SKILLS: If your child says "Reading is boring", ask them ...

- What kind of books would be exciting to read?
- Can you draw a picture about the book you are reading?

### Communicating with your Child Ages 6-12

ENCOURAGE THESE GROWTH MINDSET SKILLS: If your child says "I'm terrible at math. I'm not smart.", help them say ...

- I didn't do well on the math test, but I can ask the teacher for help
- The homework was hard, but I can keep trying until I figure it out or understand

### Communication with your Child Ages 13-18

ENCOURAGE THESE GROWTH MINDSET SKILLS: If your child says "I'm an excellent soccer player, but I'm quitting team because the coach won't put me on the field.", help them to see ...

- I need to show up for practice and try hard because I'm part of a team who needs to work together to be successful
- The coach tells me I need to work on my passing, I can practice improving that part of my game

## Growth Mindset Communication Tips for Parents

*Believe it or not – some traditional words of encouragement actually contribute to a fixed mindset and a fear of failing. Try using growth mindset language to encourage learning, practice and passion.*

Instead of "You are so smart!" say "Your science project shows that you are learning a lot in biology."

Instead of "You're a natural at basketball" say "Your commitment to practicing has made you a confident foul-shooter."

Instead of "You're such a good dancer" say "You look very happy when you are dancing."

## RESOURCES

Information included on this tip sheet was adapted from **Mindset: The New Psychology of Success**, by Carol. S. Dweck, Ph. D.

Mindset: The New Psychology of Success

<http://mindsetonline.com/index.html>

Education Week

<http://www.edweek.org/ew/articles/2015/09/23/carol-dweck-revisits-the-growth-mindset.html>

U.S. News & World Report

<http://www.usnews.com/news/articles/2015/11/23/teachers-parents-often-misuse-growth-mindset-research-carol-dweck-says>

KQED Mind/Shift

<http://www2.kqed.org/mindshift/2015/11/16/growth-mindset-clearing-up-some-common-confusions/>

YouTube: Growth Mindset Video (great for kids!)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EIVUqovv1EE>

YouTube: Carol Dweck "Developing a Growth Mindset"

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hiiEeMN7vbQ>

**My brain grows when I learn something new!**

**I am not a math person ...YET!**

**I finished the puzzle because I worked on it until I found the clues to solve it!**



**WE HAVE A GROWTH MINDSET!**

*Parenting for Prevention is a Decisions at Every Turn Coalition educational series for parents and other caring adults to increase awareness and knowledge about important youth issues and to encourage dialogue about making healthy choices.*

Please visit <http://www.AshlandDecisions.org/parent-tip-sheets.html> for our complete library of tip sheets.

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