



Eight Minutes, Not Eight Hours



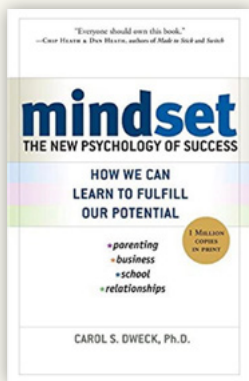
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Mindset

The New Psychology of Success

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In *Mindset: The New Psychology of Success*, Carol Dweck explains how one simple, personal belief guides and permeates every aspect of our lives. Through her research examining how people cope with failures, she uncovers the truth that individuals adopt one of two views for themselves: the “fixed mindset” or the “growth mindset.” The view they adopt profoundly affects the way they lead their lives.

Guided by her psychological research, Dweck uses case studies and prominent biographical figures to demonstrate how people with different mindsets operate and the effect it has on their success. She explains how simple awareness of these mindsets can result in individuals achieving more than they thought possible. In her book, Dweck also includes questions the reader can ask themselves to get on a better path with respect to mindset.

KEY QUOTE

“For thirty years my research has shown that the view you adopt for yourself profoundly affects the way you lead your life” (p. 6).

Key Concepts

The Mindsets. Do you have a fixed mindset, which believes that positive traits are simply “the hand you’re dealt,” or a growth mindset, which is the mindset that embraces learning and believes that positive traits are things you can develop?

Inside the Mindsets. People with a growth mindset are more focused on learning and facing new challenges than looking good to others. “People in a growth mindset don’t just seek challenge, they thrive on it” (p. 21).

The Truth About Ability and Accomplishment. Over the course of time, students who are naturally able but give less effort will fall behind their potential, while less-gifted but high-effort students will begin to surge ahead. Labels – both negative and positive – will adversely affect accomplishment.

Sports: The Mindset of a Champion. Long-term winners, naturally able or not, nurture character and contribute to the growth of the whole team.

Business: Mindset and Leadership. “Consider ways to help your employees develop on the job: Apprenticeships? Workshops? Coaching sessions? Think about how you can start seeing and treating your employees as your collaborators, as a team” (p. 145).

Relationships: Mindsets in Love (or Not). “In every relationship, issues arise. Try to see them from a growth mindset: Problems can be a vehicle for developing greater understanding and intimacy” (p. 175).

Parents, Teachers, and Coaches: Where Do Mindsets Come From? Are you unwittingly communicating a fixed mindset to how those under you perform? “Instead, try to focus on the processes they used – their strategies, effort, or choices” (p. 221).


Changing Mindsets. “Questions to ask yourself to move into a growth mindset: “What are the opportunities for learning and growth today? For myself? For the people around me?” and “When, where, and how will I embark on my plan?” (p. 262).

THE TWO MINDSETS


An individual adopting the fixed mindset believes that his or her qualities are permanent, and he or she will only ever gain a certain level of intellect, develop a certain personality, or have the certain moral character that he or she was “meant” to have. Individuals with a fixed mindset feel a constant urgency to prove themselves. Since they think their traits are fixed, they must show themselves and others that the amount of talent they have is superior to others. “Every situation calls for a confirmation of their intelligence, personality, or character. Every situation is evaluated:

Will I succeed or fail? Will I look smart or dumb? Will I be accepted or rejected? Will I feel like a winner or a loser?” (p. 6).

Individuals adopting the growth mindset believe that their basic qualities are cultivated through effort, strategy, and assistance from others. They believe that a person’s true potential is unknowable and that they can change and develop their initial skills, interests, and temperaments through application and experience. The belief that cherished qualities can be developed creates a passion for learning. This passion allows them to commit to improving, especially when they fail. The growth mindset “allows people to thrive during some of the most challenging times in their lives” (p. 7).



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CHARACTERISTICS OF THE TWO MINDSETS

Individuals with a fixed mindset often blame anything or anyone but themselves for their failures. Because their traits and abilities are fixed, they claim that some outside forces explain why they could not perform or succeed.

Admitting that they caused their own failure would diminish their intelligence, personality, ability, or character. Those with a fixed mindset believe that people who are born with superior traits and abilities don't make mistakes. As a result, they tend to remain conservative in their endeavors instead of challenging and stretching themselves (pp. 15-16).

For example, when John McEnroe lost a tennis match, it was never his fault. "One time he lost a match because he had a fever. One time he had a backache. One time he fell victim to expectations, another time to the tabloids. One time he lost to a friend because the friend was in love and he wasn't. One time he ate too close to the match. One time he was too chunky, another time too thin. One time it was too cold, another time too hot. One time he was undertrained, another time overtrained" (p. 36). Because he consistently failed to admit his own weaknesses, he never trained to improve upon them.

Individuals with a growth mindset view failure as an opportunity to improve. Failure at any given point and time is a moment to expose and understand their weaknesses, and, with some effort and discipline, people can improve their skills and traits.


Those with the growth mindset seek out challenges that can expose their weaknesses – not because they enjoy failure, but because they yearn for learning and improvement (pp. 14-16). Outcomes become less important than the growth-minded individuals' focus on effort and desire to improve.

After the 1998 Masters tournament, Tiger Woods demonstrated a growth-mind set. "[Tiger] Woods was disappointed that he did not repeat his win of the previous year, but he felt good about his top-ten finish." Wood said, "I squeezed the towel dry this week. I'm very proud of the way I hung in there" (p. 99).


HOW INDIVIDUALS DEVELOP MINDSETS

Dweck demonstrates how children with the two mindsets behave in the face of failure through her study of preschoolers. Upon completion of a simple jigsaw puzzle, Dweck offered four-year-olds the choice of redoing the same easy puzzle or choosing a harder one. Children with the fixed mindset chose to redo the easy one and find quick success, while those with the growth mindset responded by choosing the next challenge. The growth-mindset children consistently chose the harder puzzle (p. 16). But how do children develop these mindsets?

Through their words and actions, parents, teachers, and coaches send messages to children, students, or athletes on how to think about themselves. Children are sensitive to and concerned about these messages. "It can be a fixed-mindset message that says: *You have permanent traits, and I'm judging them.* Or it can be a growth-mindset message that says: *You are a developing person, and I am committed to your development*" (p. 176).



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Dweck suggests praising children's efforts as opposed to their talents to encourage a growth mindset. Instead of boosting their self-confidence, giving children lavish praise for their intelligence or talents forces them to become fixated on demonstrating their talent and makes them have thoughts like: "If I don't learn something quickly, I'm not smart. I shouldn't try drawing anything hard or they'll see I'm no Picasso. I'd better quit studying, or they won't think I'm brilliant" (p. 178).

For example, if a child does well on a test, instead of saying, "You're so smart," say, "You really studied for your test and your improvement shows it" (p. 180).

Likewise, when children fail, it is important to enforce that hard work and dedication will lead to their success. "Parents think they can hand children permanent confidence – like a gift – by praising their brains and talent. It doesn't work and instead has the opposite effect" (p.179). Instead, if "parents want to give their children a gift, the best thing they can do is teach their children to love challenges, be intrigued by mistakes, enjoy effort, seek new strategies, and keep on learning" (pp. 179-180).

WINNERS AND LOSERS

Those who carry the fixed mindset with them into adolescence and adulthood begin to associate failure with their social status or standing among their peers. They worry whether their peers will see them as a winner or a loser, and "in the fixed mindset, a loser is forever" (p. 58). Therefore, faced with adversity, particularly during difficult transitions, individuals feel as though challenge threatens to uncover their flaws and turn them from winners to losers, so they tend to try less. This often results in what Dweck refers to as "low-effort syndrome" (p. 58).

MINDSET AND LEADERSHIP IN BUSINESS

Dweck describes several instances where a fixed mindset led to the demise of a successful company. She often focuses on the perspective of the CEO and explains that the fixed mindset can overtake the culture of an organization and result in toxic, overly competitive work environments and failure. Conversely, the growth mindset in business can create a culture of teamwork. Individuals celebrate the success of their colleagues and don't feel threatened when their peers excel.

The culture, business success, and direction of a company are often a reflection of the actions taken and the example set by the CEO of a corporation. For this reason, Dweck explains how CEOs with a fixed mindset can bring about the failure of an entire organization.

When their company experiences difficult obstacles, they feel as though their personal image is under threat.

As Malcolm Gladwell noted about fixed-mindset companies, he said "They will not take a remedial course. They will not stand up to investors and the public and admit that they were wrong. They'd sooner lie" (p. 109). "CEO disease" comes from this desire for others to view them as perfect. Accordingly, these CEOs will avoid failure at all costs by sticking to the safest path instead of taking calculated and necessary risks to propel the business.



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Lee Iacocca demonstrated this “disease” during his time as the head of Chrysler Motors. “He kept bringing out the same car models over and over with only superficial changes. Unfortunately, they were models no one wanted anymore. Meanwhile, Japanese companies were completely rethinking what cars should look like and how they should run. We know how this turned out. The Japanese cars rapidly swept the market” (p. 20).

Successful CEOs embrace failure and know how to learn from it. Even when the stakes are high and company morale is low, CEOs with the growth mindset instill confidence in their company’s stakeholders by understanding the current state of the company, letting the stakeholders know where they intend to take the company, and having an inclusive plan on how to get there. Growth-minded CEOs instill a growth mindset in others through their passion and devotion to personal and company improvement (pp. 132-133).

For example, as CEO of Xerox, Anne Mulcahy told her employees the truth and confronted the fact that the “Xerox business model was not viable and [also explained] how close the company was to running out of money” (p. 132). She knew that admitting the company’s shortcomings would allow Xerox to grow from them. Mulcahy wanted to save Xerox “not for herself or her ego, but for all her people who were stretching themselves to the limit for the company” (pp. 131-132).

ORGANIZATIONAL MINDSET

Dweck maintains that an entire organization can embody one of the two mindsets. She determined this by asking a number of individuals across an organization if they agreed with various statements, such as, “When it comes to being successful, this company seems to believe that people have a certain amount of talent, and they can’t really do much to change it (fixed mindset). This company values natural intelligence and business talent more than any other characteristic (fixed mindset). This company genuinely values the personal development and growth of its employees (growth mindset)” (p. 143).

Importantly, Dweck demonstrates how companies with a “culture of development” (growth mindset) are much more agile than companies with a “culture of genius” (fixed mindset) (p. 142).

Employees in a development culture say that their organization “supports (reasonable) risk-taking, innovation, and creativity. For example, they agreed far more strongly with statements like this: ‘This company genuinely supports risk-taking and will support me even if I fail’” (p. 143-144). In culture-of-genius companies, in addition to feeling less supported in their risk-taking and innovation, employees also state that their “organizations engage in cutthroat or unethical behavior: ‘In this company there is a lot of cheating, taking shortcuts, and cutting corners’” (p. 144).



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HOW TO CHANGE MINDSETS

Dweck claims that simply having awareness of these two mindsets can set individuals on a path to having the growth mindset. However, change won't always come easy. Changing mindsets requires individuals to recognize they have a fixed mindset and to have enough desire to make a change.


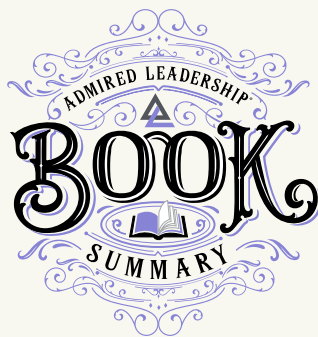
Many people don't want to change, and those with a fixed mindset feel as though, instead of themselves, the world and the people in it have the problem that needs fixing. They continue to say, "It's not my fault, I can't help how I was born." Dweck details how individuals must embrace their fixed mindset and tame it before transitioning into a growth mindset.

Some personal reflections about fixed mindset tendencies can keep each one of us conscious of when we are relying on a fixed mindset. Dweck suggests the following process for staying conscious of and using the growth mindset:


"What are the opportunities for learning and growth today? For myself? For the people around me? As you think of opportunities, form a plan. When, where, and how will I embark on my plan? Inevitably, you will encounter setbacks and obstacles, and when you do, form a new plan" (p. 262).

Going on from this point, Dweck adds, "As you encounter the inevitable obstacles and setbacks, form a new plan and ask yourself the question again: When, where, and how will I act on my new plan?" (p. 262-263).

Dweck, Carol S. (2007). **Mindset: The New Psychology of Success.** Ballantine Books; Reprint, Updated edition (December 26, 2007).



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