



GROWTH MINDSET:

POINTERS FOR PARENTS

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FIXED VERSUS GROWTH MINDSET

What Kind of Mindset Do You Have?



I can learn anything I want to.
When I'm frustrated, I persevere.
I want to challenge myself.
When I fail, I learn.
Tell me I try hard.
If you succeed, I'm inspired.
My effort and attitude determine everything.



I'm either good at it, or I'm not.
When I'm frustrated, I give up.
I don't like to be challenged.
When I fail, I'm no good.
Tell me I'm smart.
If you succeed, I feel threatened.
My abilities determine everything.

FIXED MINDSET THINKING

- A false sense of superiority, undermined by a deep sense of self-doubt
- A fear of failure; refusal to take risks
- A feeling that failure permanently defines you as a loser
- The belief that only untalented, ungifted people have to work for success; the idea that effort somehow reduces you
- A desire to blame others or outside circumstances when things do not go your way
- Being motivated extrinsically by reward and praise from others

GROWTH MINDSET THINKING

- A love for learning and self-improvement
- A desire to be challenged
- A willingness to work for positive results
- A belief that you can control the outcomes in your life with effort and practice
- Seeing mistakes and failures as opportunities to learn
- Emotional resilience
- Being self-motivated
- Instead of being shut down by a problem or challenge, being solution based

GROWTH MINDSET PRINCIPLES

- **INTELLIGENCE CAN BE GROWN**— Everything we know and can do is learned.
- **EFFORT IS MORE IMPORTANT THAN OUTCOME**— Learning to persist using your own, independent strategies is a skill that will be beneficial throughout your life.
- **MISTAKES ARE VALUABLE**— Without mistakes and failure, new learning cannot happen.
- **THE TYPE OF PRAISE WE GIVE IMPACTS ON A CHILD'S MINDSET**— Praising a child's intelligence, ability, or talent sends messages that can encourage a fixed mindset.

HOW CAN WE HELP OUR CHILDREN DEVELOP A GROW MINDSET?

- Praise carefully—not for intelligence but for effort
- Encourage deliberate practice and targeted effort
- Encourage high challenge tasks to grow those brain cells
- Discuss errors, mistakes, and struggles and help your children to see them as opportunities to learn and improve
- Encourage family discussions about mindset and which mindset they (and you?) are choosing to
- Use growth language (see the next slide)

USE EFFORT PRAISE INSTEAD OF INTELLIGENCE PRAISE

Intelligence Praise

- You're so clever at...
- You're so intelligent at...
- You're lucky you're gifted at...and it's easy for you to
- Don't worry if you didn't get a great result. Did you get a better score than... child?
- Ah...you made a mistake, how many times have we told you how to do it? Why can't you get it right the first time?

Effort/Process Praise

- I've noticed the effort you're putting into...
- All of your hard work and practice is resulting in progress in...
- I'm proud of how you tried...to figure out...
- I'm proud of how committed you have been to learning...
- How do you feel about not getting the result you wanted the first time? Are you clear on what you need to do to improve your learning next time?
- You made a mistake; that's okay. We all make mistakes when we're learning something new. What can you learn from it, to improve next time?

USE EFFORT PRAISE INSTEAD OF INTELLIGENCE PRAISE

Intelligence Praise

- You learned that so quickly!
- Aren't you smart!
- Fantastic work—you didn't make any mistakes at all.
- You're a natural at

Effort/Process Praise

- That work is really good. Tell me about it and how you did it.
- I love the product you created. What process did you follow? What skills did you learn?
- Well done! You're learning to ...
- Every time you practice that, you're making the connection in your brain stronger.
- I'm so proud of the effort you put into ...



FAIL =
FIRST
ATTEMPT
IN
LEARNING

EFFORT IS...

The secret to getting smarter. The more targeted effort you put in, the more you'll get out. You can help your children to focus their effort and attention and encourage practice. Explain that learning is a process, and it should have challenges along the way. Regularly recognize effort and overcoming challenges with praise.

DIFFICULTY...

Difficult and challenging tasks give the opportunity for growth. Create excitement with your children as they take on a new challenge and push outside of their comfort zone. Recognize each achievement and point out to them how much they are learning.

MISTAKES...

Mistakes are a great opportunity to get feedback, to learn, and to grow. Help your children to see that mistakes are feedback, not failure. They provide a great opportunity and motivation for growth. Recognize that when they are working outside of their comfort zone, and let them know they are likely to make mistakes that they can learn from.

YET...

YET is a small but empowering word.

YET shifts thinking from a fixed to a growth state instantly.

Use it in conversation with your children when you hear...

- “I can’t do it.” Rephrase and add “Yet.” “You can’t do it yet. Is there anything I can do to help you to figure it out? What have you done so far?”
- “I’m bad at this.” Rephrase and add “Yet.” “You have not found the best way to learn it yet. What have you tried so far? What can you try next?”



10 GROWTH MINDSET TIP FOR PARENTS

MODEL GROWTH MINDSET THINKING

Explain how you deal with challenges and continue to learn. Don't label yourself in a way that demonstrates a fixed mindset e.g. "I'm a terrible cook" or "I've always been bad at math."

ENCOURAGE THEM TO ENJOY LEARNING FOR LEARNING'S SAKE

Tests may give you snapshots of what your child has learned so far, but over-focusing on scores and performance can encourage a fixed mindset. Talk to them about which areas of the curriculum have engaged them and foster their interests in these.

SET HIGH STANDARDS BUT GIVE HELP WHEN IT'S NEEDED

We should have high expectations of children's habits, effort, and ability to grow. Making things too simple in order to give them an "easy win" is counter-productive in the long run. If children need support, for example equipment, materials, or to talk homework through, this help will support their success.

SET REALISTIC GOALS

Be mindful of the goals you set for your children and the messages they may hear. Goals should focus on the growth of a skill or the expanding of knowledge, rather than the end result.

PRESENT FAILURE AS AN OPPORTUNITY TO GROW

Our instinct is to protect our children from the disappointment of failure, but this does not help them to cope with setbacks. Do not allow your child to label himself or herself or shelter your child from the realities of failure by placing the blame on others. Instead ask, “What will you do differently next time?”

HIGHLIGHT THE GROWTH MINDSET OF PEOPLE YOUR CHILD ADMIRES

If your child has a favorite singer, athlete, coach, teacher, etc., find out about their daily habits, goal-setting, and commitment. There are some great videos about famous people who experienced early failures, including Michael Jordan, J.K. Rowling, and Einstein.

PRAISE THE PROCESS

Celebrate the effort, practice, or strategies children have put into something, to help them to see that persevering is worth it. When your child succeeds, talk about the work that went into that success.

TAKE REASONABLE RISKS AND ENCOURAGE YOUR CHILD TO DO SO

Growth mindset is about being a life-long learner. Accepting a certain amount of risk and failure is part of that process. Is there something that you always wanted to try, but you were afraid you would fail? Make a plan to do it, and ask your child to do the same.

PROVIDE HONEST, CONSTRUCTIVE CRITICISM

Try not to focus on your child's shortcomings or past mistakes. Work with your child to identify strategies that would help improve them in an area they find difficult. Comparing children to their peers or siblings, either favorably or unfavorably, can encourage children to think of their abilities as fixed, e.g. "Your brother always has been better at writing."

FIND OUT ABOUT THE BRAIN TOGETHER

Children often are fascinated by brain facts. Learning about the brain's incredible capacity for growth can help them see that their abilities are not predetermined. Try some research in the area of neuroscience.