



# Managing your Mindset

## What is 'mindset?'

Mindset shapes the life you lead, the actions you take and the future possibilities of the world you live in. Mindset is a set of assumptions, methods or notions held by one or many people or groups of people. A mindset can be so firmly established that it creates a powerful incentive within these people and groups to adopt or accept prior behaviors.

## Two types of mindset

### FIXED MINDSET:

People with a fixed mindset believe their qualities are fixed traits and cannot be changed. People with a fixed mindset tend to always want to appear intelligent because they believe they were born with it. They have a fear of looking "dumb" to others because they do not believe they can redeem themselves once other people look at them as being unintelligent.

Fixed beliefs about you will hold you back from making positive change. If you have a trait that you believe cannot be changed, such as your intelligence, your weight, or your bad habits, you will avoid situations that could possibly be uncomfortable or that you think are useless.

### GROWTH MINDSET:

People with a growth mindset believe that their basic abilities can be developed through dedication and hard work. This creates a love of learning and understanding that with failure comes lessons.

The growth mindset allows people to value what they're doing regardless of the outcome. They're tackling problems, charting new courses, and working on important issues.

## FIXED VS. GROWTH MINDSET

### FIXED MINDSET

intelligence is static

Leads to a desire to look smart and therefore a tendency to...

...avoid challenges

...give up easily

...see effort as fruitless or worse

...ignore useful negative feedback

...feel threatened by the success of others

As a result, they may plateau early and achieve less than their full potential.

All this confirms a deterministic view of the world.



### GROWTH MINDSET

intelligence can be developed

Leads to a desire to learn and therefore a tendency to...

...embrace challenges

...persist in the face of setbacks

...see effort as a path to mastery

...learn from criticism

...find lessons and inspiration in the success of others

As a result, they reach ever-higher levels of achievement.

All this gives them a sense of free will.

## How to change your mindset

The first thing you need to do is be aware of your mindset and your own self-awareness.

### STEP 1: LEARNING TO HEAR YOUR FIXED-MINDSET VOICE

Approaching a new challenge, this voice might say, "Are you sure you can do it?" or "What if you fail?"

After hitting an obstacle, you might hear, "If only you had talent," or "I told you it was too risky."

In the face of criticism, this voice says, "It's not my fault," or "Who do they think they are?"

Life and business coaches often talk about self-sabotage. It is the fixed-mindset voice that undermines so much of what you do; the inner critic that judges your work and you. Your inner critic speaks with a fixed-mindset voice.

### STEP 2: RECOGNIZING THAT YOU HAVE A CHOICE

When that inner critic starts chattering in your ear, there are two different ways you can interrupt that voice.

Challenges, setbacks and criticism can be a sign that you have a fixed talent or ability. Alternatively, they can be a sign that you need to challenge yourself, step up your effort, change your strategies and continue to develop. The key is to shift the framework of the judgement (fixed) into the arena of growth.

### STEP 3: RESPOND WITH A GROWTH MINDSET VOICE.

When you approach challenges, the fixed mindset says, "Are you sure you can do it? Maybe you don't have the talent, experience or knowledge."

The growth mindset answers, "I am not sure I can do it, but I think I can learn in time and with some effort."

Fixed mindset: "What if you fail? Then you're a failure!"

Growth mindset: "Most successful people have had failures along the way."



Real difficulties can be overcome; It is only the imaginary ones that are unconquerable.

— Theodore N.Vail

Step 3 in action:

When you hit a setback...

Fixed mindset: "This would have been easy if you knew what you were doing."

Growth mindset: "I didn't learn how to walk on the first try, let's try it again!"

When you face criticism...

Fixed mindset: "It's not my fault. It was something or someone else's fault."

Growth mindset: "If I don't take responsibility, I can't fix it. Let me listen—however painful it is—and learn whatever I can."

It can be beneficial to write your thoughts out into a journal so you can see the dialogue you are having within yourself. This can help you make a conscious change from a fixed mindset to a growth mindset. It also provides a record of that self-conversation so that you can go back to review and identify your common patterns.

#### STEP 4: GROWTH MINDSET IN ACTION

Once you hear the fixed-mindset voice and respond to it with a growth mindset, you then determine how to take the necessary action that will lead to growth.

This might include taking on a new challenge, learning from setbacks, persisting without exception, adjusting your actions based on feedback and so on.

Questions to activate a growth mindset:

- What can I learn from this?
- What steps can I take to help me succeed?
- Do I know the outcome or goal I'm after?
- What information can I gather? And from where?
- Where can I get constructive feedback?
- If I had a plan to be successful at [blank], what might it look like?
- When will I follow through on my plan?
- Where will I follow through on my plan?
- How will I follow through on my plan?
- What did I learn today?
- What mistake did I make that taught me something?
- Is my current learning strategy working? If not, how can I change it?
- What did I try hard at today?
- What habits must I develop to continue the gains I've achieved?

Your questions determine your focus and greatly influence your reality. In a fixed mindset, your reality is dim and limited, your world is small. The more growth-minded questions you ask, the wider, brighter and larger your world and possibilities become.





## Tips for managing your mindset

- Determine your fixed-mindset triggers. In which situations does your fixed mindset become an issue? (e.g. trying something new, attempting to change a behavior or developing a skill).
- Learn to hear your fixed mindset voice. What does your inner saboteur say to you in an attempt to keep you from putting forth the effort?
- Understand that a fixed mindset stems from fear. It might be a fear of failure, a fear of looking stupid or a fear of being judged, but fear is always what holds you back from reaching more of your potential.
- Welcome the fear. Unacknowledged fear lies behind a fixed mindset. Welcome it. It's just an emotion. If you can stay present with the fear, it will dissipate and stop dominating your thought patterns and reactions.
- Realize you have a choice between fixed and growth mindsets. Mindsets are just beliefs. You can change your mind about your beliefs.
- Refute the fixed-mindset voice with a growth mindset. The fixed mindset is a limited and misinformed viewpoint. Challenge it with your new, growth-mindset knowledge. Journaling is an excellent way to have this inner dialogue.
- Take growth-mindset actions that move you forward in your development. Small, incremental actions are best.
- Stay flexible, pay attention and adapt. If you're not making progress with your effort, this doesn't mean anything about your capabilities. It generally means you need to take a different approach or try a different strategy.