FIXED MINDSET VS. GROWTH MINDSET

It’s not always the people who start out the smartest who end up the smartest.
- Alfred Binet, inventor of the IQ test

Presented by: Laurie Brown and Michelle Rhodes
Agree or Disagree?

Look at the following statements with regard to *ability to learn*. Do you agree or disagree with each?

- Your ability to learn is something very basic about you that you can’t change very much.
- You can learn new things, but you can’t really change your intelligence.
- Now matter how much intellectual ability you have, you can always change it a bit.
- You really can’t change how intelligent you are.
Agree or Disagree?

Look at the following statements with regard to personality and character. Do you agree or disagree with each?

- You are a certain kind of person and there is not much that can be done to really change that
- No matter what kind of person you are, you can always change substantially
- You can do things differently, but the important parts of you can’t be changed
- You can always change basic things about the kind of person you are
Did you know…

- …that some praise can actually *hinder* school performance?
- …that beliefs about where abilities come from have critical consequences on motivation and achievement?
Mindset is...

- Beliefs about yourself and your most basic qualities
  - Intelligence
  - Talents
  - Personality
- Some believe these traits are givens, and that nothing can change that
- Some believe that these traits can be developed through dedication and effort
Mindset explains...

- Why brains and talent alone don’t bring success
- How intelligence can stand in the way of success
- Why praising intelligence doesn’t foster accomplishment, but jeopardizes it
- How teaching a simple idea about the brain can raise grades and productivity
Fixed vs. Growth Mindset

- “The key [to achievement], isn’t ability; it’s whether you look at ability as something inherent that needs to be demonstrated or as something that can be developed”
- **Fixed mindset** — intelligence is static
- **Growth mindset** — intelligence can be developed
- “You’re smart” vs. “You tried so hard”
Fixed Mindset

- Belief that basic qualities, like intelligence, are fixed traits
- Spend time admiring accomplishments instead of developing further
- Belief that talent alone creates success — without effort

Carol Dweck, professor of psychology at Stanford University
Growth mindset

- Belief that basic abilities can be developed through hard work and effort
- Brains and talent are a starting point to success
- Creates a love of learning and resilience

Carol Dweck, professor of psychology at Stanford University
Why Growth Mindset?

- Video – Carol Dweck on praise
- Kids who have a growth mindset...
  - Embrace challenge
  - 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

Carol Dweck, professor of psychology at Stanford University
Try to picture Thomas Edison as vividly as you can. Think about where he is and what he’s doing. Is he alone? When asked, people say things like this:

“He’s in New Jersey. He’s standing in a white coat in a lab-type room. He’s leaning over a light bulb. Suddenly, it works! [Is he alone?] Yes. He’s kind of a reclusive guy who likes to tinker on his own.”

In truth, the record shows quite a different fellow, working in quite a different way.
What eventually set him apart was his mindset and drive...
Michael Jordan on Failure
How Praise Reinforces a Fixed Mindset

- When we praise children for being naturally gifted or talented; we are telling them that we value them for what comes naturally, not for what they earn through hard work.
- We want to offer them feedback that will encourage them to push their boundaries of achievement.
- We want our children to understand that talent is not nearly as important as practice, hard work, and determination for long-term success.
How Praise Reinforces a Fixed Mindset

- Avoid family labels to assign roles to children
  - “Our organized one”
  - “He’s the one destined for medical school”
  - “The family comedian”

- This sets up unrealistic expectations and makes a child more vulnerable to feelings of inadequacy

- The one without the label has a difficult time establishing their role in the family and career path

- By setting up labels for kids, if they do not have immediate success with something they want to quit
Messages About Success

- Listen for the messages in the following examples:
  - “You learned that so quickly! You’re so smart!”
  - “Look at that drawing. Martha, is he the next Picasso or what?”
  - “You’re so brilliant, you got an A without even studying!”

- If you’re like most parents, you hear these as supportive, esteem-boosting messages. But listen more closely. See if you can hear another message. It’s the message that children hear:
  - “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.”
How Do I Praise Effectively

- Feedback needs to be constructive and informative
- Should be in the form of questions rather than evaluative statements
  - Ex. What did you do to reach that level of performance?
- Research shows children are looking for our feedback that will help them improve
  - Looks like: honest, specific and helpful
  - Doesn’t look like: labels, praising, or scolding
## How Do I Talk To My Child?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>What to Say</th>
<th>What NOT to Say</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>□ Guidance in specific techniques</td>
<td>□ “You need to work harder.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>□ “Wow! You stuck with that until you solved it.”</td>
<td>□ “You are so smart!”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>□ “Show me the strategy you used to get that new skill.”</td>
<td>□ “You have such a great talent.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>□ “Tell me how you were able to overcome that obstacle.”</td>
<td>□ “You are going to rule the world.”</td>
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</table>
How Do I Talk To My Child?

What to Say

- Wow, you got 10 out of 10 right! What strategy did you use to get a perfect score?
- What can you learn from this mistake that will help you do better next time?
- You’re becoming such a good learner.

What NOT to Say

- Wow, you got 10 out of 10 right! You must be really smart at this.
- You’ll do better next time.
- You’re so smart!

Dweck Video
Advice For Kids
People Who Demonstrate a Growth Mindset

- Anyone can be better if they are willing to put in the time and effort.
- Beethoven – deaf and depressed
- Bethanie Hamilton – lost left arm in shark attack
- Doug Flutie – “too short” to play football
- Tom Cruise - dyslexic
Steps to Changing Your Mindset

- Step 1: Learn to hear your fixed mindset voice
- Step 2: Recognize that you have a choice
- Step 3: Talk back to it with a growth mindset voice
- Step 4: Take the growth mindset action
Step 1: Learn to Hear Your Fixed Mindset Voice

- When approaching a challenge you might hear a little voice
  - “What if you fail – you’ll be a failure.”
  - “People will laugh at you.”

- When you face criticism the little voice might think things like...
  - “It’s not my fault.”
  - “You are clearly not capable.”
Step 2: Recognize That You Have a Choice

- Your interpretation of challenges, setbacks and criticism are your choice
- You can view your talents and abilities as fixed
- You can view your talents and abilities as something that can be stretched and expanded with effort and hard work
# Step 3: Talk Back to Yourself with a Growth Mindset Voice

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Fixed Mindset</th>
<th>Growth Mindset</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Are you sure you can do it?</td>
<td>I’m not sure I can do it, but I am going to try.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What if you fail – you’ll be a failure.</td>
<td>If I don’t try, I am already failing.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>It’s not my fault.</td>
<td>I will have to fix this.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>This would have been a breeze if I had any talent.</td>
<td>Even great minds have to put in effort to succeed.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Step 4: Take the Growth Mindset Action

- Keep in mind, the voice you heed is your choice whether you...
  - Take on the challenge
  - Learn from setbacks and try again
  - Hear criticism and act on it
- Practice hearing both voices and acting on the growth mindset
Set of attributes that give people the strength and fortitude to confront overwhelming obstacles

Described as: social, optimistic, energetic, cooperative, inquisitive, helpful, punctual and on-task

Goes beyond self-confidence
How Can We Help?

REMEMBER:

- We must structure opportunities into our children’s day that will enable them to experience feelings of:
  - Competence
  - Belonging
  - Usefulness
  - Potency
  - Optimism

Sagor, Richard: Building Resiliency in Students
Resilience – Key Experiences

- Provide children with authentic evidence of success (competence)
- Show them they are valued members of the community (belonging)
- Reinforce feeling that they have made contributions (usefulness)
- Make them feel empowered (potency)
- Look at the positive side of life (optimism)
Grit Survey

- Respondents were asked a series of questions based on the following scale.

- Very much like me
- Mostly like me
- Somewhat like me
- Not much like me
- Not like me at all
Grit Survey

- New ideas and projects sometimes distract me from previous ones
- Setbacks don't discourage me
- I have been obsessed with a certain idea or project for a short time but later lost interest
- I am a hard worker
- I often set a goal but later choose to pursue a different one
- I have difficulty maintaining my focus on projects that take more than a few months to complete
- I finish whatever I begin
- I am diligent
Study on Grit

- Angela Duckworth – math teacher turned psychology professor at UPenn
- She found that students who worked hard did the best
  - These were not always the “smartest” kids
- Grit is defined by Duckworth as *sticking with things over the long term until you master them*
- Success is a result of grit and conscientiousness, not just IQ.

“Eighty percent of success is showing up.” ~ Woody Allen
Grit Survey Findings

- Found a person’s grit rating was a high predictor of success
  - At the elite United States Military Academy, West Point, a cadet's grit score was the best predictor of success in the rigorous summer training program known as "Beast Barracks." Grit mattered more than intelligence, leadership ability or physical fitness.
  - At the Scripps National Spelling Bee, the grittiest contestants were the most likely to advance to the finals -- at least in part because they studied longer, not because they were smarter or were better spellers.

“Genius is 1% inspiration and 99% perspiration.” ~ Thomas Edison
Getting “Gritty”

- Duckworth believes it is probably innate to personality, but can be learned
- Human qualities have been proven to be partially environmental - even intelligence
- Grit can wax and wane based on experiences
  - A child can be extremely disciplined about basketball, but give up at the slightest math confusion
  - This is why GROWTH mindset is SO important!
- We need to give our children experiences where they will need grit to overcome obstacles
In Summary...

- **Growth mindset** – intelligence and talent can be developed with effort and time

- **Resilience** – the strength and fortitude to overcome an overwhelming obstacle

- **Grit** - sticking with things over the long term until you master them – not giving up

What you need to leave with…

*It’s ok for your child to be frustrated.*

*Don’t let them give up.*

*Prompt them with questions and guide them in the right direction.*

*They may not like it today, but they will be grateful later.* 😊