

Mindset Worksheet

Much of who you are on a day-to-day basis comes from your *mindset*. Your mindset is the view you have of your qualities and characteristics – where they come from and whether they can *change*.

These following two mindsets represent the extreme ends on either side of a spectrum.

A *fixed mindset* comes from the belief that your qualities are carved in stone – who you are is who you are, period.

Characteristics such as intelligence, personality, and creativity are fixed traits, rather than something that can be developed.

A *growth mindset* comes from the belief that your basic qualities are things you can cultivate through effort. Yes, people differ greatly – in aptitude, talents, interests, or temperaments – but everyone can change and grow through application and experience.

It's very possible to be somewhere in the middle, and to lean a certain way in one area of life, and a different way in other areas. Your views may be different for artistic talent, intelligence, personality, or creativity. Whatever mindset you have in a particular area will guide you in that area.

How does this simple mindset change your behavior?

Having a fixed mindset creates an urgency to prove yourself over and over – criticism is seen as an attack on your character, and to be avoided.

Having a growth mindset encourages learning and effort. If you truly believe you can improve at something, you will be much more driven to learn and practice. Criticism is seen as valuable feedback and openly embraced. The hallmark of the growth mindset is the passion for sticking with it, *especially* when things are *not* going well.

People with the fixed mindset are not simply lacking in confidence, though their confidence may be more fragile and more easily undermined by setbacks and effort. Also, having a growth mindset doesn't mean you have to be working hard all the time. It just means you can develop whatever skills you want to put the time and effort into.

Being aware of your own mindset will be key to changing it!

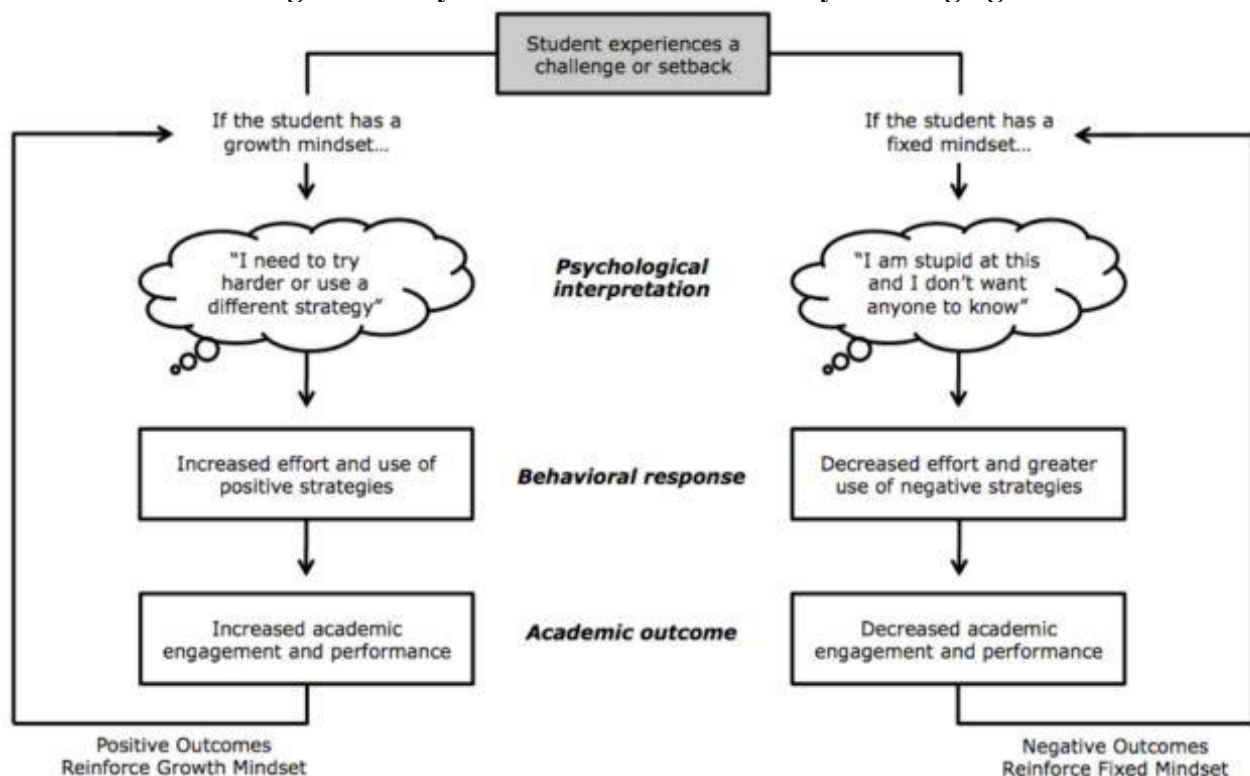


Figure 1. The recursive process for growth mindset versus fixed mindset.



How can you change from a fixed mindset to a growth mindset?

Step 1: Learn to hear your fixed mindset “voice.”

As you hit a setback, the voice might say, “This would have been a snap if you really had talent.” “You see, I told you it was a risk. Now you’ve gone and shown the world how limited you are.” “It’s not too late to back out, make excuses, and try to regain your dignity.”

As you face criticism, you might hear yourself say, “It’s not my fault. It was something or someone else’s fault.” You might feel yourself getting angry at the person who is giving you feedback. “Who do they think they are? I’ll put them in their place.” The other person might be giving you specific, constructive feedback, but you might be hearing them say “I’m really disappointed in you. I thought you were capable but now I see you’re not.”

Give an example of your fixed mindset “voice.”

Step 2: Recognize that you have a choice.

How you interpret challenges, setbacks, and criticism is your choice. You can interpret them in a fixed mindset as signs that your fixed talents or abilities are lacking. Or you can interpret them in a growth mindset as signs that you need to ramp up your strategies and effort, stretch yourself, and expand your abilities. It’s up to you.

So as you face challenges, setbacks, and criticism, listen to the fixed mindset voice and...

Step 3: Talk back to it with a growth mindset “voice.”

As you approach a challenge:

THE FIXED-MINDSET says “Are you sure you can do it? Maybe you don’t have the talent.”

THE GROWTH-MINDSET answers, “I’m not sure I can do it now, but I think I can learn to with time and effort.”

As 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.”

Talk back to what you wrote in Step 1 with a growth mindset.

Step 4: Take the growth mindset action.

Over time, which voice you heed becomes pretty much your choice. Whether you

- take on the challenge wholeheartedly,
- learn from your setbacks and try again
- hear the criticism and act on it is now in your hands.

Practice hearing both voices, and practice acting on the growth mindset. See how you can make it work for you.

What actions can you take that will help you utilize a growth mindset?

Adapted from the College of Business Advisement Center, Georgia Southern University

Sources: <https://alexvermeer.com/why-your-mindset-important/> & <https://mindsetonline.com/changeyourmindset/firststeps/>