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**What Exactly Is The Difference
Between A Fixed Mindset and
Growth Mindset?**

When I turned 11, I decided I was stupid.

You see, I coasted through my first four years of school.

They were a piece of cake! I didn't even have to study that hard. When the report cards came in, I was always top 5 in my class, and I loved it!

I was always praised for my intelligence and talent, and I absolutely bathed in that admiration.

Then, my 5th year of school began, and everything changed, and from my perspective, it changed for the absolute worst!

I realized the curriculum got harder, much much harder than I had expected!

Soon, my performance started to drop, from top 5, to 11th position, to 20th, and eventually to the bottom of the class...

My 6th year of school saw me remaining in one of the last 3 positions in class when the report cards came in... either position 27 or the very last one, which was 30!

Naturally, this solidified the decision that I made about myself the year before, that I was stupid and a complete failure.

My parents became increasingly frustrated with me.

They knew I was smart!

They knew that if I applied myself that I could dominate any subject that I wanted. But their response to my failing grades was far from encouraging.

Obviously I do not begrudge my parents whatsoever for my upbringing. They sacrificed a whole lot for me and my siblings to have a far more superior life than they could ever have dreamed of for themselves.

My problem was that I had a pampered, inflated ego. I believed that my intelligence and talent would get me through life. I thought I was going to glide through it, and that challenges, struggle and effort were not meant for me.

In truth, I was simply lazy and unwilling to be challenged.

So I continued with my losing streak.

During my 7th year of school, I had to repeat the grade simply because of how badly I was doing.

By the time I got to high school, my low self esteem turned to anger and resentment towards myself and everyone around me.

I still felt as though the world owed me something, I felt like life was being unfair to me!

I believed that things were supposed to be easier than this, and that if life was going to be this hard, then I would do the bare minimum to get through it!

It is sad quite honestly... that when my mother recognized my talent for piano as a 6 year old, that she paid for all my piano lessons from that time to the age of 18. She even bought me a piano!!! But I did not take it seriously at all.

I put minimal effort in everything.

When I finally got to university, I carried this very same attitude of entitlement and arrogance about work, and because of that, I failed at an attempt at my first degree.

At the time, I thought it was incredibly hard and impossible for me to get through.

I managed to convince myself that I had made the wrong choice, and that the degree was simply not for me, so I found a way to convince my dear parents that I needed to switch to something I felt was better suited to my capabilities

In other words, I was not ready for the challenge, I simply did not want to apply myself and I wanted an easy way out.

My parents obliged me, and I enrolled for a B. IS In information Science which was a 3 year degree.

Instead of doing that degree for 3 years, I did it for 4.

I spent 5 years in university when I was actually supposed to spend 3.

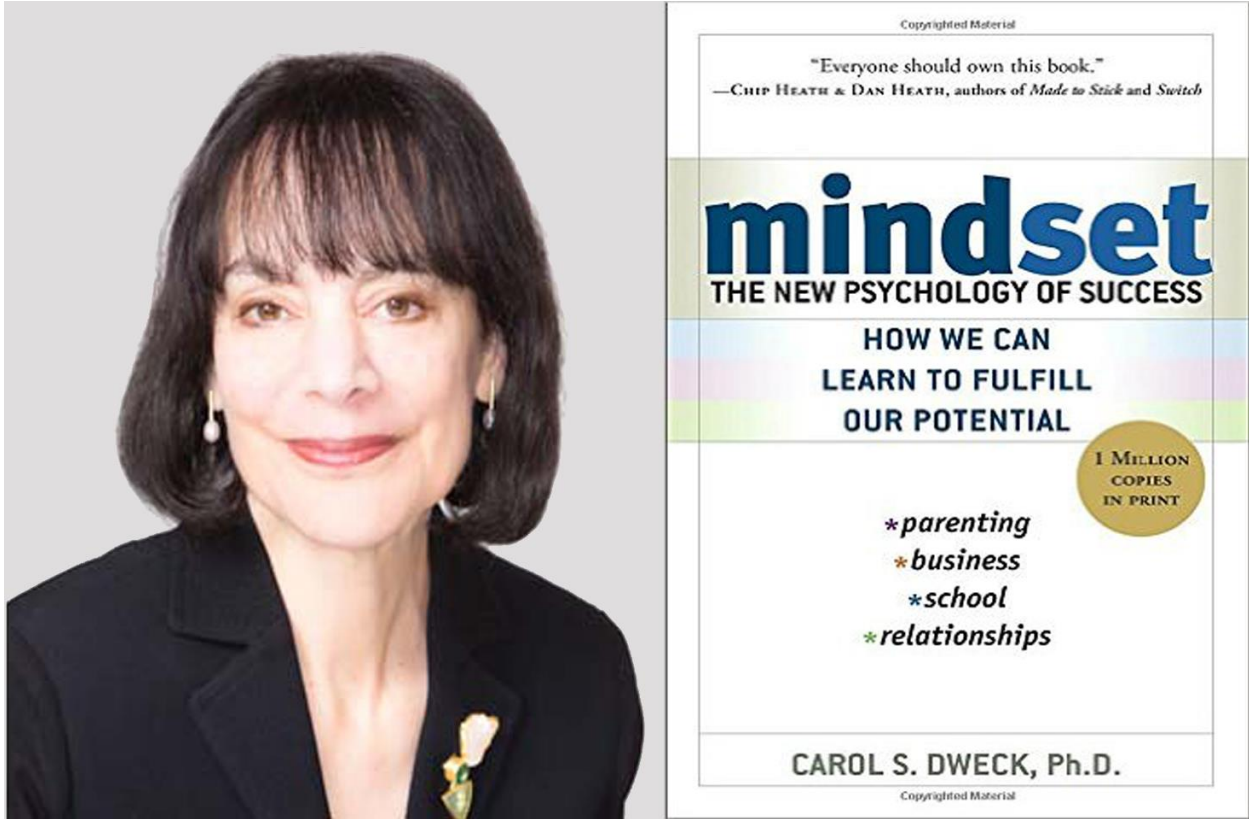
I wasted time and my parents' money.

I never gave myself a chance to work. I was always running away from it and idling away precious hours that I could have used to become a first class student!

Honestly, if I was given the chance to re-do the last 19 years of my life, I would take it in a heartbeat!

But seeing as we never get these kinds of do-overs, I will use my experience to help you understand why your mindset is either your biggest deterrent, or your biggest helper!

This past Saturday I was watching a super inspiring video on YouTube on a very transformative individual, a Professor by the name of Carol Dweck.



She wrote an incredible book titled “Mindset: The New Psychology of Success.”

This is a book I encourage every single one of you to read, in order to understand yourself better.

So the rest of this article will be about helping you understand

- the two different kinds of mindsets,
- how they help/hinder you, and
- what you can do to change your mindset for the better!

Carol Dweck teaches us that there are two kinds of mindsets:

- 1. The Fixed Mindset and**
- 2. The Growth Mindset.**

The definition of a Fixed Mindset is: *“someone who believes that their basic abilities, their intelligence, their talents are just fixed traits. They have a certain amount, and that’s that, and then their goal becomes to look smart all the time and never look dumb.”*

The definition of a Growth Mindset: *“someone who believes that their most basic abilities can be developed through dedication and hard work – brains and talent are just the starting point.”*

Now with these two definitions, you can clearly see what mindset I fell under growing up, and you can also clearly see where you fall under yourself!

Below are examples of how people conduct themselves with a fixed mindset vs. how people conduct themselves with a growth mindset:



FIXED MINDSET

Believe that they are the way they are (however this doesn't mean they do not have the desire to become better)

Avoid putting themselves in challenging situations and if they are in them, they do not embrace them

Do not like criticism or being corrected at all

Feel threatened by other's success

Do not like putting in effort. See it as fruitless or worse



GROWTH MINDSET

Have a desire to learn and improve because they believe the brain is like a muscle, and intelligence can be developed

Takes on challenges and is more interested in learning and stretching themselves

They see criticism as a form of learning and good feedback for their growth.

Are inspired by the success of others and seek to find lessons from it.

See effort as a necessity to grow and master useful skills.

NB: I am not doing this to simply point out your flaws and show you how that there are others who think and do things better than you.

I am doing this to show you, and me, that there are areas in our lives that we must identify that we have fixed attitudes about, and we can start to gradually change in order to have significantly better lives.

I admit, as I was putting together this article, that there are still areas of my personality that are deeply rooted in a fixed mindset.

- *I am still threatened by other people's success, and I have to continuously train myself not to feel inadequate about it.*
- *Even though I have experienced a marked improvement, I still have issues with constructive criticism*
- *While I understand the value of effort, I only put in enough, and I perform even worse when I do not feel I am getting the kind of positive feedback and attention I expect.*

So what are the most significant steps that we can take to change ourselves from a fixed to a growth mindset?

Carol Dweck suggests **4 very effective steps** we can start taking today!

Step 1. Learn To Hear Your Fixed Mindset “Voice”

Listen to your negative self talk when you are faced with a challenging situation. If you find this voice telling you things like: *“there is no point in doing this because you’re not that intelligent” “You’re going to embarrass yourself and look stupid, so just keep your dignity and don’t even try!”*

Then when you do actually make an attempt at the thing that challenges you, it say *“See? I told you not to do it! Now you have shown the world how incapable you are!”*

Take the next 2-3 weeks to really listen to this fixed mindset voice, and even better, start journaling what these voices say.

The more you shed light on them, the more you expose them, and the less power they have to control the way you think and feel about challenging situations!

Step 2: Recognize That You Have A Choice

Carol Dweck says “how you interpret challenges, setbacks and criticism is your choice!”

You have the option of either looking at a struggle with a fixed attitude and all you are doing is allowing the possibility of failure to measure how much you can do or how far you can go, or

You can choose to

- *interpret your challenges and setbacks in the form of cultivating strategies to solve and transcend them,*
- *choosing to increase your work ethic in your pursuit to get to the destination of your goals and*
- *having the focus and persistence to keep at it until you master your abilities!*

Step 3. Talk Back To Your Fixed Mindset Voice With A Growth Mindset!

I also call this becoming your own defense lawyer against your negative self talk.

Sometimes I have to think out loud in response to what my mind tells me when I either want to take on a new challenge, or I am deep in the throes of the struggle!

When I wanted to start this Push Factor brand, there was one dominant fixed mindset voice that kept nagging me...

My fixed mindset said "who are you take this on? You are not qualified, you don't have the skills to do it! There are many people more qualified than you!"

My growth mindset responded: "who am I NOT to take this on? I may not have all the skills and qualifications but waiting for someone else to do it is equivalent to me believing that I am

totally incapable of doing it, and I do not believe that! I have to do this! Besides, there are certain people who are looking for this message and will only take it to heart in the tone and voice of how I deliver it. I have a service to do, and I will do it!"

Step 4: Take The Growth Mindset Action

The truth is that no matter how hard you try, the fixed mindset cannot be destroyed.

You will have moments of doubt, there will be times when you simply want to quit, and there will be times when you follow through on what your old mindset tells you.

The wonderful thing about the growth mindset is that this is all part of the process of becoming a better human being, which is recognizing what is no longer helpful in your life, and building the muscle of growth that will ultimately carry you through to who you want to be and where you want to go.

So on a daily basis, be mindful of what your fixed mindset/your negative self talk is telling you, and choose instead, to take action towards your growth!

Like all new habits, it takes time, practice and effort but I hope this article helps you understand how important it is to adapt a growth mindset!