



WHAT IS MY MINDSET?



What is a mindset?

A mindset is a belief or an attitude that we have about something. Some mindsets are negative (“I am not good at singing”) - but they can also be positive (“I am kind to animals”).

Sometimes, our mindsets are part of the culture and history of where we live, and can even change with time (“Women can’t be doctors!”). Mindsets may be based on stereotypes or generalisations, and not fact - for example, that: “People who wear glasses are smart” or “Boys are better at running than girls”.



How can I change my mindset?

Understanding that we have the ability to think differently about ourselves and those around us can help us to create new opportunities to grow and learn new skills.

Some ways to do this are to:

- Be curious and open-minded in our attitudes.
- Be open to learning new skills, and enjoy the challenge.
- Learn from our failures - they can teach us even more than our successes.
- Focus on the learning process, not just the achievement.
- Remember that the brain is like a muscle - the more we use it, the more it grows
- Always keep trying. Don't give up!

Do I have a 'Fixed Mindset' or a 'Growth Mindset'?

Many people have what Stanford University Professor Carol Dweck calls a ‘**Fixed Mindset**’. People with Fixed Mindsets believe that their talents or intelligence are ‘given’ to them, and can’t be extended or changed. They may see a test result as measuring their actual intelligence rather than simply being a snapshot of their skills at that moment in time. Focusing solely on the end result can make it easy to become discouraged when things seem hard, or don’t go well.



In a 'Growth Mindset', people believe that they can grow and develop their talents through time, effort, and dedication.

This means that we can learn, or get better at, just about any skill that we choose. As we practise a new skill - either a mental one such as learning a language, or a physical one such as basketball - we create new links between synapses in our brains.

As we repeat these skills again and again, we strengthen these connections, and our abilities 'grow'. Sometimes we use this to get better at something we are already skilled at, such as maths; but we can also learn something entirely new to us, such as ice skating.

When we understand that success comes from effort and practise, we can see how important it is to keep going, even when it seems difficult. Sometimes, things may go wrong. We may even fail at something we tried to do. However, having a Growth Mindset means that we can understand that failures or changing circumstances are part of life, and don't necessarily stop us from achieving a goal or from being successful. We can adapt. We have become resilient.



When we have a Growth Mindset, we learn to value hard work in others, as well as in ourselves. We can cope with disappointment, and are able to make new plans to achieve our goals.

Thinking in a Growth Mindset encourages us to be independent thinkers in charge of our own learning, as well as giving us the freedom to enjoy the process of learning itself.

References

Carol Dweck 'Mindset' 2006-2010 Retrieved from <http://mindsetonline.com/> 8 September 2015

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