

KEEPING MOMENTUM

Develop a Growth Mindset by Momentum Academy member, Isabel Harward



Isabel Harward

Carol S Dweck, Ph.D, professor at Stanford University, discovered in her research into success that whether we achieve our goals or not depends largely on what kind of mindset we have. She distinguishes between a fixed mindset and a growth mindset.

With a fixed mindset you believe that success comes through innate talent and you don't believe that skills and ability can be developed through effort and dedication. You are afraid of taking on challenges and trying out new things because there is a risk of failure and when you fail, you fear that you will be judged by others as not being smart. When setbacks block your way you don't have the resilience to learn and carry on. You probably are more likely to say "I can't do this" and stop trying altogether. This is the mindset that would have you say, "I'm just not the creative type and I never will be, I'm not born that way".

The growth mindset is all about wanting to learn. You know that talent can be developed over time with effort, practice and dedication. You accept setbacks as part of the journey and always ask yourself "What can I learn?" and "What can I do differently". As you're ok with failure you're resilient when things don't go the way you wanted and you continue on your learning journey. You're happy to take on challenges and try things you haven't done before. You're happy to be a beginner and not look smart.

To be successful and achieve your goals it is vital that you adopt a growth mindset. Recent brain research has shown that our brain is 'plastic', it can change and new connections can be formed at any time. It's never too late to rewire your brain for creativity. Science has shown that it is possible but you have to believe that you can.

Carol Dweck identified four steps to develop a growth mindset:

- 1 Listen to your inner voice and recognize when you are in a fixed mindset.
- 2 Recognize that you are free to choose your mindset.
- 3 Get into a dialogue with your fixed mindset, reply to it with a growth mindset (e.g. Respond to "I can't do this!" with "Yes, I might not be able to do it yet but I can learn how to do this with patience and dedication.")
- 4 Then listen to your growth mindset voice and take action.

As children we might have been praised only when we produced good results. It has been shown that for a growth mindset to develop it is important to praise effort and dedication irrespective of the outcome. Therefore, make a commitment to reward yourself for your efforts and your continued dedication to develop and nurture your creativity. Say to yourself "I might not be creative yet but I can learn and learning can be fun."

You can test your current mindset on Carol Dweck's website: <http://bit.ly/mindsettest>

John says: Thanks to Isabel for this excellent intro to Carol Dweck's work on mindset. Check out Isabel's blog 'How to nurture your creativity' for other great posts on the subject of creativity: www.isabelharward.blogspot.co.uk

