

4. Attitude Activity: Growth Mindset

Carol Dweck is one of the world's leading researchers in the field of motivation and is a professor of psychology at Stanford University. She's developed a theory about our attitude towards learning. She says that people generally fall into two categories: a fixed mindset or growth mindset. Some of the characteristics are shown in the table below.

Fixed mindset	Growth mindset
Feels threatened by the success of others.	Finds lessons and inspiration in the success of others.
Ignores useful feedback.	Learns from criticism.
Sees effort as fruitless or worthless.	Sees effort as the path to mastery.
Gives up easily.	Persists in the face of setbacks.
Avoids challenge.	Embraces challenge.
Desires to look smart.	Desires to learn.

Dweck has developed a questionnaire that helps you to think about your mindset. This can be done here on her mindset website: <http://mindsetonline.com/testyourmindset/step1.php>.

To give you a quick indication of your mindset try the questionnaire below:

	Item	Mostly agree	Mostly disagree
1	Your intelligence is something very basic that you can't change very much.		
2	You can learn new things but you can't really change how intelligent you are.		
3	No matter how much intelligence you have, you can always change it quite a bit.		
4	You can always substantially change how intelligent you are.		

Scoring and Interpretation

Items 1 and 2 are fixed mindset questions and items 3 and 4 are growth mindset questions. Which mindset did you agree with more? You will be a mixture, but most people lean one way or the other about certain things and at certain times.

Final Thoughts

What did you learn about yourself?

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Where do you have fixed mindset thinking and where do you have more of a growth mindset?

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What could you do to change?

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### A quick test

We often find that pupils express their attitudes towards learning through the things they say. We've listed fifteen phrases we've heard pupils tell us before now. Sort them into fixed and growth mindset statements by ticking the appropriate box.

	Fixed Mindset	Growth Mindset
I've never been good at maths.		
I just need to get some more practice in.		
I'm hopeless at this.		
Maybe if I was cleverer this would be achievable.		
This doesn't come naturally to me.		
A couple of hours of intense study and I reckon I can crack this problem.		
I've just not got a brain for English/maths/science.		
I'm going to take a break and come back refreshed. I'll make some progress then.		
I'm not a creative person.		
Let me have another go at this – I'll get better.		
I must have missed something. I just need to go back and check I've got this clear in my head.		
I've not totally understood this yet. I'm going to go over it again.		
I can't do this. I'll never be able to do this.		
This topic is impossible. I'm just going to hope it doesn't come up in the exam.		
_____ is lucky. They're just naturally brilliant at it. I'm not.		

Finally, if you'd like to learn more about growth mindsets, there are some fun videos here: <https://ideas.classdojo.com/b/growth-mindset>.

### Final Thoughts

You're not permanently fixed or growth mindset. In fact, most of us are both at once. Some days, when things go well, we might feel we're improving and growing because of the effort we're putting in. On bad days, we might feel in a fixed mindset state. This is entirely normal. Next time you hit a problem and feel those fixed mindset thoughts coming on, have a look at the phrases above and see if you can borrow one to change your thinking.