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Carol Dweck

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Transcript of TED Talk: The power of believing you can improve.

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http://www.ted.com/talks/carol dweck the power of believing that you can improve/transcript?language=en

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I heard about a high school in Chicago where students had to pass a certain number of courses to

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graduate, and if they didn't pass a course, they got the grade "Not Yet." And I thought that was fantastic,

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you understand that you're on a learning curve. It gives you a path into the future..

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"Not Yet" also gave me insight into a critical event early in my career, a real turning point. I wanted to

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see how children coped with challenge and difficulty, so I gave 10-year-olds problems that were slightly

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too hard for them. Some of them reacted in a shockingly positive way. They said things like, "I love a

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challenge," or, "You know, I was hoping this would be informative." They understood that their abilities

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could be developed. They had what I call a growth mindset. But other students felt it was tragic,

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catastrophic. From their more fixed mindset perspective, their intelligence had been up for judgment

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and they failed. Instead of luxuriating in the power of yet, they were gripped in the tyranny of now.

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So what do they do next? I'll tell you what they do next. In one study, they told us they would probably

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cheat the next time instead of studying more if they failed a test. In another study, after a failure, they

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Iooked for someone who did worse than they did so they could feel really good about themselves. And

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in study after study, they have run from difficulty. Scientists measured the electrical activity from the

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brains students confronted an error. On the left, you see the fixed mindset students. There's hardly any

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activity. They run from the error. They don't engage with it. But on the right, you have the students with

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the growth mindset, the idea that abilities can be developed. They engage deeply. Their brain is on fire

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with yet. They engage deeply. They process the error. They learn from it and they correct it..

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How are we raising our children? Are we raising them for now instead of yet? Are we raising kids who

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are obsessed with getting A's? Are we raising kids who don't know how to dream big dreams? Their

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biggest goal is getting the next A or the next test score? And are they carrying this need for constant

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validation with them into their future lives? Maybe, because employers are coming to me and

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saying, we have already raised a generation of young workers who can't get through the day without an

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award.

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So what can we do? How can we build that bridge to yet?

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Here are some things we can do. First of all, we can praise wisely, not praising intelligence or talent. That

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has failed. Don't do that anymore. But praising the process that kids engage in: their effort, their

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strategies, their focus, their perseverance, their improvement. This process praise creates kids who are

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hardy and resilient..

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There are other ways to reward yet. We recently teamed up with game scientists from the University of

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Washington to create a new online math game that rewarded yet. In this game, students were rewarded

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but this game rewarded process. And we got more effort, more strategies, more engagement over

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Ionger periods of time, and more perseverance when they hit really, really hard problems.