

Mindset

- ❖ The New Psychology of Success - How We Can Learn to Fulfill Our Potential. Parenting - Business - School - Relationships
- ❖ by Carol S. Dweck, Ph.D.
- ❖ 2008 Ballantine Books Trade Paperback Edition: New York, NY. (\$16.00 U.S.A. \$19.95 Canada - A great deal either way.)
- ❖ Summary by Douglas W. Green, EdD
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A Simple Belief About Yourself

- ❖ The purpose of this book is to help you learn how a simple belief about yourself guides a large part of your life. It permeates every part of your life. Much of what you think about your personality grows out of your “mindset.” Much of what may be preventing you from fulfilling your potential grows out of it. Your true potential is unknown and unknowable. The hand you are dealt is just the starting point for development. If you believe that your qualities are carved in stone (*the fixed mindset*) you must prove yourself over and over. Dweck draws on twenty years of research to show that the view you adopt for yourself profoundly affects the way you lead your life.

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Estimating Your Own Ability

- ❖ Studies show that people with *growth mindsets* tend to be accurate in assessing their own abilities, even if it is unflattering. If you are oriented toward learning, you need accurate information about your current abilities in order to learn effectively. Howard Gardner is quoted as saying that exceptional people have “a special talent for identifying their own strengths and weaknesses.” They also have a special talent for converting life’s setbacks into future successes. Creativity research sees this as the number one ingredient in creative achievement. Dweck’s key message is that you can change your mindset. Mindsets are just beliefs.

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Mindsets and Personality

- ❖ Beyond intelligence, fixed and growth mindsets impact your personality. People with fixed mindsets believe that they are what they are and cannot change. They want to be praised and not challenged. Those with growth mindsets want to get better and are accepting of people who point out their shortcomings. Marriages between different mindsets can fall apart as a result. Top performers in sports are those who constantly push themselves to be better. If you get a thrill from what's easy, you may have a fixed mindset. If you enjoy what is difficult, you may have a growth mindset. You think that becoming is better than being.

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What do the experts know?

- ❖ If you have a fixed mindset, you think that tests and experts can somehow tell you what your potential is. Many accomplished people were thought to have little potential. Dweck lists Jackson Pollock, Marcel Proust, Elvis Presley, Ray Charles, Lucille Ball, and Charles Darwin as examples. Look for students who are energized by criticism. (Doug: My daughter studied fine arts at Pratt Institute in Brooklyn, NY. Every day she had to endure criticism of her work. As a result, she got better and better. After graduating in 2006 she immediately got work in the competitive art industry in New York City and has worked ever since.)

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Jordan Rules

- ❖ Unlike some sports stars, Michael Jordan had to work hard to succeed. He had to struggle and grow as he was not inherently better than others. (Doug: Jordan could not make his high school's varsity basketball team as a sophomore.) If you have a fixed mindset, you let failure be transformed from an action (I failed) to an identity (I am a failure). If you have a growth mindset, failure can be painful, but you don't let it define you. You face it, deal with it, and learn from it.

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Study Harder or Less Hard?

- ❖ In one study, seventh graders told how they would respond to failure. Those with a growth mindset said they would study harder. Those with a fixed mindset said they would study less since they didn't have the ability and didn't want to waste there time. It is effort that ignites the ability that you have. There is a risk, however. Once you start to put in the effort, it robs you of all of your excuses. Think about what you want to look back and say about your life. Then choose your mindset.

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Motivation and Stereotypes

- ❖ Students with a growth mindset tend to take charge of their learning and motivation. Instead of plugging into unthinking memorization, they look for underlying principles. They study to learn, not just ace the test, and this is why they get higher grades. Studies of outstanding achievers shows that their continued motivation, commitment, and network of support took them to the top. They also don't believe that negative stereotypes can hold them back. A growth mindset helps people to see prejudice for what it is - someone else's view of them - and to confront it with their confidence and abilities intact. This is good for women and minorities.

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The Mindset of a Champion

- ❖ In the chapter on sports, Dweck gives many examples of people who made it to the top of their respective games by using the growth mindset to overcome short-term failures. They take charge of the processes that bring success. If you think you're a finished product or you're nobody if you don't win, you have a fixed mindset. Mental toughness and heart are stronger than some of the physical advantages you might have. This helps develop character, which is the ability to dig down and find strength, even when things are going against you. Character grows out of mindset. It can be learned. This allows a champion to raise their level of play when they need to.

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Business Leaders Mindsets

- ❖ Business cultures that worship talent force employees into fixed mindsets. The minute a leader allows himself to become the primary reality people worry about, you have a recipe for mediocrity or worse. Bosses who are controlling and abusive put everyone into a fixed mindset. Instead of learning and growing, people worry about being judged. Successful leaders tend to be self-effacing people who constantly ask questions and confront the most brutal answers. They look failure in the face, even their own, while maintaining faith that they will succeed in the end. They highlight the contributions of others and believe in human development.

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Love and Mindsets

- ❖ Almost everyone, at one time or another, has been in love and has been hurt. People with a fixed mindset feel judged and labeled by rejection. Their number one goal tends to be revenge. People with growth mindsets are more likely to forgive and move on. They do not feel permanently branded. They try to learn something useful about themselves and relationships that they can use in order to have a better experience the next time. The same concepts apply to other relationships like those between parents and children and between friends.

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Messages From Parents and Teachers

- ❖ Words and actions of adults send messages to children that help form their mindset. Messages that say “*you have permanent traits and I am judging them*” build fixed mindsets. Messages that say “*you are a developing person and I am interested in your development*” build growth mindsets. Praising children’s intelligence harms their motivation and their performance. If you tell a child they are smart, they will doubt themselves as soon as anything is difficult or anything goes wrong. Children should be encouraged to enjoy effort, be intrigued by mistakes, and keep on learning. Praise the effort part of any accomplishment. Messages need to honest, but can still be caring. Avoid judgements! Also, don’t assume that children are too young to pick up on mindset messages. They also pass them on to each other.

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Great Teaching/Coaching

- ❖ Great teachers need growth mindsets and must be determined to create growth-minded students. They must be model learners. They have high expectations of all students and constantly show them how they have grown. They let students know that they all have talent, but that more talent can be acquired. “Don’t expect success to come to you. You have to go get it.” They have to care about every student and be warm and accepting at the same time they let students know how they are doing and what the plan is for moving forward. They challenge and nurture at the same time. Coaching can be the same. The best coaches try to instill the idea that you can get a little better every day. As a result, over a period of time you will become a lot better. The best coaches also prepare players for life.

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Changing Mindset: A Workshop

- ❖ If you have a growth mindset, you must believe that mindsets can be changed. The final chapter focuses on changing one's internal monologue from a judging one to a growth-oriented one. Dweck describes a workshop that is now available as animated lessons called *Brainology*. Here is the web site that you can check out. They were nice enough to give me a look and I am impressed. Keep in mind that I have been reviewing kid's software since 1979. <http://www.brainology.us/> This chapter also contains a number of dilemmas that you can work through by yourself or with people you lead.

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Cool Quotes

- ❖ “Not only do genes and environment cooperate as we develop, but genes require input from the environment to work properly.” Gilbert Gottlieb
- ❖ “It’s not always the people who start out the smartest who end up the smartest.” Alfred Binet (Inventor of the IQ Test)
- ❖ “You aren’t failing until you start to blame.” John Wooden
- ❖ “If you walk off the field knowing that you gave everything you had, you will always be a winner.” Mia Hamm
- ❖ “I wish to have as my epitaph: ‘Here lies a man who was wise enough to bring into his service men who knew more than he.’ ” Andrew Carnegie

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What I Left Out

- ❖ Carol Dweck has so many cool stories and examples to support her thesis that it would be impossible to give them justice in the summary. If you purchase this book you can read about the football player who scored for the other team and went on to win and the chief who killed himself. Other stories include Muhammad Ali, Billy Beane of *Moneyball* fame, Michael Jordan, Babe Ruth, and Wilma Rudolph. In the business chapter, she explains how Lou Gerstner of IBM and Jack Welsh of GE exemplify the effectiveness of growth mindsets at the top. In the chapter on relationships Dweck brings in the subject of bullying. Teachers and principals should take special note of this section as well as the entire chapter on parenting, teaching, and coaching. The John Wooden story is very special.

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