Career Development: Giving and Receiving Feedback

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Warm-up: Describe a Time When...

… you received feedback from someone on how to improve at something, and it felt good.

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Warm-up: Describe a Time When...

… you received feedback from someone on how to improve at something, and it felt bad or was not helpful.

Agenda

- Developing a growth mindset
- Best practices for giving feedback
- Receiving feedback effectively
- Feedback exercise

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Developing a Growth Mindset

- Growth mindset vs. fixed mindset
- Shift the focus from a fixed mindset of "being good" to a growth mindset of "getting better"
- When possible, give feedback on the process, not the outcome

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Growth vs. Fixed Mindset

Growth mindset:

- "Failure is an opportunity to grow."
- "I can learn to do anything I want."
- "Challenges help me to grow."
- "My effort and attitude determine my abilities."
- "Feedback is constructive."
- "I am inspired by the success of others."
- "I like to try new things."

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TWO MINDSETS
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Graphic by Nigel Holmes
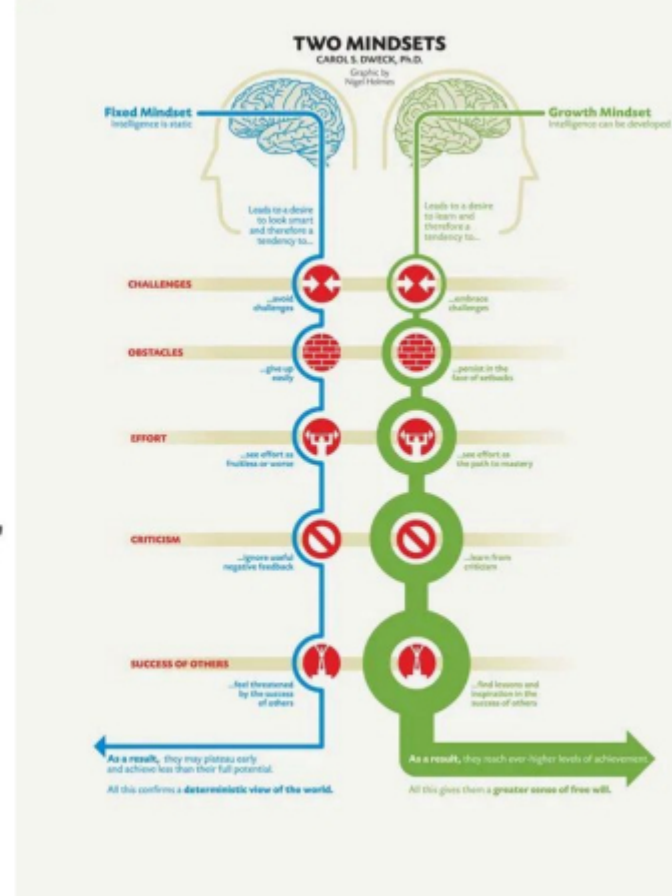
Growth vs. Fixed Mindset

Fixed mindset:

- "Failure is the limit of my abilities."
- "I'm either good at it or I'm not."
- "My abilities are unchanging."
- "I can either do it or I can't."
- "My potential is predetermined."
- "I don't like to be challenged."
- "When I'm frustrated, I give up."
- "Feedback and criticism are personal."
- "I stick to what I know."

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Best Practices for Giving Feedback

DO	DO NOT
Focus on the behavior	Focus on the person
Ground your feedback in observation	Ground your feedback in vagueness
Look toward the future	Dwell on the past
Provide balanced feedback	Deliver entirely critical feedback
Use "I" statements	Use "you" statements

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Example 1

Truly helpful

"I'm impressed you've been so dedicated on moving this project forward quickly. I've noticed, however, that others haven't had a chance to express their ideas. I think the project could benefit from more perspectives, and I recommend creating time for other people to share their thoughts."

Er...not so helpful...

"You're pretty 'Type A.' Don't be so clueless about the rest of us here."

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Example 2

Truly helpful

"Thanks for your hard work on this morning's presentation. I notice your slide deck was packed with a lot of detailed graphs. Admittedly, I tuned out during the calibration plots. Could I suggest condensing it to a few main takeaways?"

Er...not so helpful...

"Your presentation was dry and ineffective. You're losing people while you present."

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Example 3

Truly helpful

"I'm intrigued and compelled by the problem statement in your design doc. I'm having trouble, however, seeing how the main feature of your app addresses the problem statement. I suggest revisiting your original design doc with your team."

Er...not so helpful...

"Your design doc is ok, but in practice, your app leaves a lot to be desired."

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Your Turn!

Imagine you're working with a fellow student on a research project that involves emailing professors to ask them to fill out a survey about their professional paths. Your teammate's email template includes several run-on sentences and sentences with comma splices instead of accurate punctuation.

Turn to the person next to you.
One of you share a helpful piece of feedback for the teammate. The other share unhelpful feedback.

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Giving Feedback Recap

- Kind
- Helpful
- Specific
- Forward-focused
- Observation-based

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Receive Feedback Effectively

- Feedback is a gift; the alternative is silence
- It's natural to get defensive, shut down, or extrapolate when receiving feedback
  - Know your tendencies
  - Try to respond in constructive, healthy ways
- Work to separate the feedback from the person providing it

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Some Helpful Frames for Responding to Feedback

- *"Thank you for the feedback."*
- *"I appreciate your suggestion. Thank you for taking time to make it."*
- *"To clarify my understanding… [ask question about feedback]..?"*
- *"Thank you. I'd like to think about what you've shared with me before I respond. Could I get 10-15 minutes with you tomorrow after I've had some time to think this over?"*
- *"I value your feedback and hadn't thought of it that way. Thank you."*
- … don't forget that you can ask for feedback and should!

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Feedback Exercise

Think of one personal or academic situation where you'd like some feedback or advice, taking 1-2 sentences to describe.

- For **8 minutes**, go around and talk to as many people as you can, in pairs.
  - Person A: "My situation is…< one or two sentences>. How can I do better?"
  - Person B: Offer one bit of feedback. Focus on the future, not on the past.
  - Person A: listen to the idea without judging, shake hands, say thank you.
  - Find a new partner. Repeat!

Feedback Exercise Debrief

- What was this experience like?
- Can you give me one word to describe it?

Looking Ahead

- Our capabilities are not fixed. We're always growing if we work to improve.
- Feedback is a gift.
- Good feedback is kind, helpful, specific, forward-focused, and observation-based.
- Ask, "How can I do better?" Not, "What have I been doing wrong?"
- *insert opportunities for feedback, if relevant*

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Additional Resources

[The Growth Mindset | Carol Dweck | Talks at Google](#)

[Fixed vs. Growth: The Two Basic Mindsets That Shape Our Lives | Brain Pickings](#)

[7 Tips for Giving Constructive Feedback | MasterClass](#)

[How to Give and Receive Compliments at Work](#)

[A Subordinate's Criticism Makes You More Creative](#)

[Carol Dweck | Ted Talks](#)

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Questions?

Questions or comments?

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