

Mindset

by Sophia



WHAT'S COVERED

By the end of this session, you will be able to: define mindset and understand the differences between a fixed mindset and a growth mindset, explain how mindset is created and its influence, and understand the differences between personal praise and process praise. These topics break down as follows:

1. Mindset

Mindset is defined as a belief that tailors the manner in which we handle circumstances. Such an orientation can impact our ability to identify opportunities or can ensnare us into an attitude of self-defeat. Psychologist Carol Dweck (2007) discussed two basic types of mindsets—fixed and growth. A **fixed mindset** is one in which abilities are believed to be innate and unchangeable. A **growth mindset** is one in which abilities are viewed as changeable through effort and tenacity.

Research conducted by Dweck shows mindset to be created in childhood and influenced by two primary factors: praising and labeling. It is believed that providing a child with **personal praise** (ex. admiring talent, labeling a child as “gifted,” etc.) promotes a fixed mindset. It conveys a message that talent does or does not exist and that this cannot be altered. **Process praise** stresses the importance of effort in achieving a goal. Success is rooted in the strategy employed and the determination used—each of which are controllable factors that can be developed and improved over time. Focus should be placed on the overall process rather than the outcome.

➞ **EXAMPLE** A child has struggled with learning how to swim. After weeks of practice, they have shown significant improvement. Personal Praise: “I knew you could do it! You are good at swimming!”
Process Praise: “You worked so hard these past few weeks. I am so proud of your effort.”



TERMS TO KNOW

Mindset

A belief that affects how one handles a situation.

Fixed Mindset

A mindset which believes abilities are innate and unchangeable.

Growth Mindset

A mindset which believes that abilities are changeable through effort.

Personal Praise

Personal Praise

Encouragement that stresses innate talent over effort and supports a fixed mindset.

Process Praise

Encouragement that stresses effort over innate talent and supports a growth mindset.

2. The Influence of Mindset

One's mindset holds a crucial role in how you approach challenges in life. The childhood presence of a growth mindset encourages hard work, a desire for learning, and discovery. This often results in adult perseverance as obstacles are viewed as opportunities for growth. A fixed mindset would lead to non-resilience resulting in defeatist attitudes.

3. Adjusting a Fixed Mindset

Dweck believes it is possible to change a fixed mindset. She provides the following guidelines:

- Focus on the journey. Recognize the value of the overall journey rather than concentrate on the end result. Essential learning can be missed along the way.
- Incorporate “yet.” Struggle is a part of the process. Incorporation of this term lets you know that you are still mastering the skill and can overcome the obstacle.
- Pay attention to your words and thoughts. Build a growth mindset by replacing negative thought processes with positive ones.
- Take on challenges. Embrace the challenge. Growth results from making mistakes and learning from them.



SUMMARY

In this tutorial, you learned about Carol Dweck's concept of fixed and growth **mindsets**.

Fixed mindsets describe people who believe their abilities are innate and can't be changed through learning or training. This type of mindset can emerge from personal praise. Growth mindsets describe people who view their abilities as something they can shape through effort and tenacity. Process praise can help avoid establishing fixed mindsets.

Mindset can influence how an individual approaches challenges that emerge. Dweck suggests ways to **adjust from a fixed mindset** to a growth mindset to provide people with ways to address challenges in life.

Good luck in your learning!

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