

UPDATED EDITION

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# mindset

Changing the way you think to  
fulfil your potential

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and invite it to join us on our growth-mindset journey.

- Ideally, we will learn more and more about how we can help others on their journey, too.

### LEARN AND HELP LEARN

Let's say you've named and tamed your fixed-mindset persona. That's great, but please don't think your journey is complete. For your growth mindset to bear fruit, you need to keep setting goals—goals for growth. Every day presents you with ways to grow and to help the people you care about grow. How can you remember to look for these chances?

First, make a copy of this graphic summary of the two mindsets, which was created by the wonderful Nigel Holmes, and tape it to your mirror. Each morning, use it to remind yourself of the differences between the fixed and growth mindsets. Then, as you contemplate the day in front of you, try to ask yourself these questions. If you have room on your mirror, copy them over and tape them there, too.

In fact, their father applied the growth mindset to *everything*. I'll never forget a conversation we had some years ago. I was single at the time, and he asked me what my plan was for finding a partner. He was aghast when I said I didn't have a plan. "You wouldn't expect your *work* to get done by itself," he said. "Why is this any different?" It was inconceivable to him that you could have a goal and not take steps to make it happen.

In short, the growth mindset lets people—even those who are targets of negative labels—use and develop their minds fully. Their heads are not filled with limiting thoughts, a fragile sense of belonging, and a belief that other people can define them.

### **Grow Your Mindset**

- Think about your hero. Do you think of this person as someone with extraordinary abilities who achieved with little effort?



You can see how the belief that cherished qualities can be developed creates a passion for learning. Why waste time proving over and over how great you are, when you could be getting better? Why hide deficiencies instead of overcoming them? Why look for friends or partners who will just shore up your self-esteem instead of ones who will also challenge you to grow? And why seek out the tried and true, instead of experiences that will stretch you? The passion for stretching yourself and sticking to it, even (or especially) when it's not going well, is the hallmark of the growth mindset. This is the mindset that allows people to thrive during some of the most challenging times in their lives.

### **A VIEW FROM THE TWO MINDSETS**

To give you a better sense of how the two mindsets work, imagine—as vividly as you can—that you are a young adult having a really bad day:

questions 2 and 4 reflect the growth mindset. Which did you agree with more?

Did it differ from your intelligence mindset? It can. Your “intelligence mindset” comes into play when situations involve mental ability.

Your “personality mindset” comes into play in situations that involve your personal qualities—for example, how dependable, cooperative, caring, or socially skilled you are. The fixed mindset makes you concerned with how you’ll be judged; the growth mindset makes you concerned with improving.

Here are some more ways to think about mindsets:

- Think about someone you know who is steeped in the fixed mindset. Think about how they’re always trying to prove

### *Defining Moments*

Even in the growth mindset, failure can be a painful experience. But it doesn't define you. It's a problem to be faced, dealt with, and learned from.

Jim Marshall, former defensive player for the Minnesota Vikings, relates what could easily have made him into a failure. In a game against the San Francisco 49ers, Marshall spotted the football on the ground. He scooped it up and ran for a touchdown as the crowd cheered. But he ran the wrong way. He scored for the wrong team and on national television.

It was the most devastating moment of his life. The shame was overpowering. But during halftime, he thought, "If you make a mistake, you



## IS ARTISTIC ABILITY A GIFT?

Despite the widespread belief that intelligence is born, not made, when we really think about it, it's not so hard to imagine that people can develop their intellectual abilities. The intellect is so multifaceted. You can develop verbal skills or mathematical-scientific skills or logical thinking skills, and so on. But when it comes to artistic ability, it seems more like a God-given gift. For example, people seem to naturally draw well or poorly.

Even I believed this. While some of my friends seemed to draw beautifully with no effort and no training, my drawing ability was arrested in early grade school. Try as I might, my attempts were primitive and disappointing. I was artistic in other ways. I can design, I'm great with colors, I have a subtle sense of composition. Plus I have really good

enough as they are. I mean helping partners, within the relationship, to reach their own goals and fulfill their own potential. This is the growth mindset in action.

### **FRIENDSHIP**

Friendships, like partnerships, are places where we have a chance to enhance each other's development, and to validate each other. Both are important. Friends can give each other the wisdom and courage to make growth-enhancing decisions, and friends can reassure each other of their



fixed-mindset persona and what it does to you. It has a name. What happens now? Educate it. Take it on the journey with you.

The more you become aware of your fixed-mindset triggers, the more you can be on the lookout for the arrival of your persona. If you're on the verge of stepping out of your comfort zone, be ready to greet it when it shows up and warns you to stop. Thank it for its input, but then tell it why you want to take this step and ask it to come along with you: "Look, I know this may not work out, but I'd really like to take a stab at it. Can I count on you to bear with me?"

When you hit a setback, the chances are excellent it's going to show up again. Don't suppress it or ban it. Just let it do its thing. Let it do its song and dance, and when it settles down a bit, talk to it about how you plan to learn from the setback and go forward: "Yes, yes, it's possible that I'm not so good at this (yet), but I think I have an idea of what to do next. Let's just try it."

When you're under pressure and you're afraid your team will let you down, tell them that Duane is in full bloom and ask them what they need from you to do their best work. Try to understand and respect

Remember, as Alex Rodriguez, the baseball player, wisely said: "You either go one way or the other." You might as well be the one deciding the direction.

### THE ROAD AHEAD

Change can be tough, but I've never heard anyone say it wasn't worth it. Maybe they're just rationalizing, the way people who've gone through a painful initiation say it was worth it. But people who've changed can tell you how their lives have been enhanced. They can tell you about things they have now that they wouldn't have had, and ways they feel now that they wouldn't have felt.

Did changing toward a growth mindset solve all my problems? No. But I know that I have a different life because of it—a richer one. And that I'm a more alive, courageous, and open person because of it.

It's for you to decide whether change is right for you now. Maybe it is, maybe it isn't. But either way, keep the growth mindset in your thoughts. Then, when you bump up against obstacles, you can turn to it. It will always be there for you, showing you a path into the future.