Nicole Anastasi Week Two Reflection: Mindset

For most of my life I’ve operated with a mindset that has held me back. I have limited my own growth and achievements mostly due to fear of failure, I think. I have tried a lot of activities, jobs, people, and places. I always get bored or frustrated, give up and move on. I see now that I have been looking for something that I both enjoy and excel at. I hold on to a myth of myself as a well-adjusted professional who rocketed to the top of her field on talent and some hard work. I have under-valued the process of “becoming.” I have always wanted to find the quick and easy route. But I am learning to embrace, (or at least endure,) the confusion and mistake making, the need to ask others for help. Progress for us mere mortals, comes with persistence and the willingness to “fail” again and again. In the past my ego has been too fragile to withstand that process. But it’s getting better. I like how Randy Pausch talks about a brick wall as being there to give us the opportunity to prove how much we want what lies beyond it. I’m learning that to prove it to myself is more important than to anyone else. I admit that Pausch’s optimism felt excessive at times. I struggle to maintain linkage to hope and positivity day to day, even though the alternative leads only to a pointless dead end. His light-heartedness was unpalatable simply because I wish I was more like him.

I enjoyed Carol Dweck’s talk more. I especially liked the idea of praising wisely. I think we have focused too much on talent and intelligence in the past, and not enough on the process. It was broken down into those who can and those who can’t. Education was competition over collaboration, sorting people out instead of unifying them to solve problems together. I could have benefitted so long ago by valuing hard work, strategies, focus, and perseverance, as Dweck said. Instead of embracing challenges, I have avoided them and lived in a state of fear. Thankfully, every day is an opportunity to create change for ourselves and others.