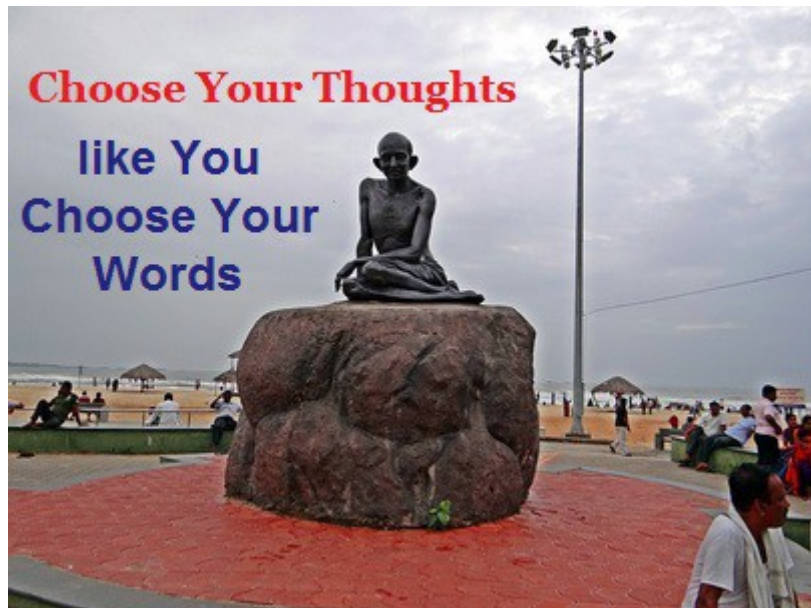


Choose Your Thoughts

'like You Choose Your Words'



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## **Growth Mindset: The Key to Success in All Areas of Life:**

Have you ever noticed how some people just seem to skate right through their academic career while others seem to struggle endlessly? For some of us, academics just don't seem to come as easily as it does to others. Or does it?

Is it possible that intelligence is not necessarily left to the gene pool and there is something you can do about it?

The area of intelligence is measured in several ways – by the academic tests you take, by the grades you receive, and sometimes by a standardized test or an intelligence quotient test. As many people grew up, they adopted the beliefs of the adults around them; believing such things as “he is not as smart as his older brother,” or “she is not as academically inclined, but has musical talent.”

The idea or notion that you can only be either creative or academic is another potential “story” that you may have heard as a youngster. Maybe your big brother got the smart gene, and you got the creative gene. Decades ago, that explanation would suffice. Today, however, we know more and we know better.

In the world of personal development, it is known that your thoughts create your reality. When it comes to success in all areas of your life, there is a new knowledge. That knowledge is that mindset matters. If you can create a reality based on your thoughts, then you can create a life that is successful in all compartments of your life from intelligence to creativity based on the work you do with your mindset.

### ***Changing Your Mind;***

When it comes to mindsets, there are two kinds – a fixed mindset and a growth mindset.

Changing your mind may be viewed as a negative; however, such is not the case.

Changing your mind does not mean:

- * You cannot make up your mind
- * You are indecisive
- * You are out of integrity and don't do what you say you will
- * You are flighty
- * You are unintelligent

Changing your mind, if you will, can assist you in creating a new life. You can change your mind in a positive way.

### ***What Does Changing Your Mind Mean?***

In the world of intelligence, learning, and academics, it means to have a new understanding. That understanding highlights an important psychological factor. When you take on something new, your brain records this new learning endeavour because you have expanded yourself, worked hard and learned something new. There is now a new connection for your brain to recall, which, over time, can actually make you smarter.

You have exercised your brain away from the thought that intelligence is static and that it is a growth process. The more you learn, the more you exercise your brain, the more you grow; therefore, the more you are capable of learning.

In the world of the everyday, have you ever noticed how one negative thing in your early morning routine (such as losing your car keys or spilling your coffee) has the power to set the tone of the entire rest of your day? Does your day continue to spiral downward into a negative cyclone of mishaps and misfortunes the more you focus on that one thing which started your day off poorly?

The next time that happens, take a moment to change your mind. It takes a challenge and plenty of practice, but it is so worth every minute of effort. Exercise your brain. Just like anything else, practice makes perfection. Take a moment to recognize that you are not the only one that things like this happen to. Hundreds of thousands of people around the globe have lost their car keys and spilled their coffee.

They just do not let it 'ruin' the rest of their day.  
Moreover, they don't let it 'rule' the rest of their day.

## ***Change your mind.***

Maybe you needed to run late this particular day because you were going to meet your next big client or the love of your life on the train that day. Perhaps you needed to avoid a big accident. Change your mind and change your life.

The same goes for learning new things. With a growth mindset, you can train your brain to view learning new subjects as a positive experience rather than a negative one.

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How to Change Your Mind in Order to Change Your Life:

Take a Look at Your Own Points of View;

Take some time to evaluate your own points of view. Don't hold back; be completely honest with yourself. Do you have a more negative outlook on life? Do you even get annoyed in the company of others who take on a more positive attitude? Are you so set in your ways, you are unwilling to explore, learn, and re-create your life?

If, you've answered yes to any of these pertinent questions, then there is one more question to ask. Do you wish to take responsibility for using your mindset and do the work to create the most growth you could ever have imagined or hoped for in all areas of your life? Once you have examined your views and thought patterns and beliefs in total honesty, you are ready to move on to the next step.

- \* Is a challenge simply an excuse to quit?
- \* Is a roadblock a way to host a pity party?
- \* Do you procrastinate in order to turn away from perfectionism?
- \* When someone else experiences success, do you feel less than?
- \* Do you view a challenge as something fearful?

Are You Willing to be Open to Something New?

What if you could take a good hard look at those questions and re-create them to show up as positives?

Are you willing to be open to explore new possibilities?

Transformation is yours if you are willing to do the work and walk the walk.

With practice, any new way of being becomes a habit. It's your choice whether you want to have a habit of positive growth or negative decline.

Let's look at how this could potentially work.

A Challenge is a Form of Growth and not an Excuse to Quit;

When faced with a challenge, it is easy to spend time and energy focusing on the challenge itself. The thoughts you think, such as it being too hard or why does this happen to me (also known as "woe is me" syndrome) can easily distract your energy from the task at hand. What would happen if you viewed your challenge as a way to grow and expand?

What if that new responsibility led to more money, a higher position, or a transfer with a promotion? This is how to view your situation from a growth mindset point of view.

Is a Roadblock a Chance to Host a Pity Party?

If you have a deep subconscious belief that "everything bad" happens to you, then the chances are high that you invite roadblocks into your life. Sometimes it's easier to host a 'pity party' than to come up with creative and intelligent resources to solve the problem at hand. What would happen if you viewed a roadblock as an opportunity to use your creativity go around it or under it?

In a growth mindset, this is what you would take on – viewing a roadblock as a way to stretch, grow, and improve rather than something to feel sorry for yourself about and an excuse to quit.

Do You Use Procrastination as a Way to Avoid Perfectionism?

Does the thought of not being good enough haunt you, so you procrastinate? What would happen if you were to approach a project or a challenge as an opportunity to expand your horizons or to re-create yourself as a master at the task at hand? A growth mindset will offer you the opportunity to change your perception, face the task head-on, and take it on with all the vim and vigour you could ever desire.

When Someone Else Experiences Success, - Do You Feel Less Than?

If someone else experiences success, you have a choice. Either you can be happy for them and inspired by them, making you want to strive higher, or you can feel resentful or jealous. Many people choose to allow the success of others make them feel bad about themselves. However, it does not have to be that way.

Individuals with a growth mindset hold the belief that intelligence can be learned and developed and it is not just for the elite few. It is available to anyone with a desire to improve. The brain is trainable.

Do You View a Challenge as Fearful?

When faced with a challenge do you become overwhelmed and debilitated by fear - or do you grasp on tight and face it head on? Your mindset will determine how you handle a challenge and ultimately what the outcome of that challenge will be.

People with a 'growth mindset' know that a challenge is a way of doing things differently, thinking smarter and working harder.

Focus on the Process and not on the Praise:

As a parent, are you tempted to praise your child for every success both big and small? If you look at a new way of fostering a growth mindset, you will

discover that praising the process is more effective. When your child figures something out and does a job well done, encourage and praise how, when and where they figured it out rather than the end goal itself. This encourages learning and growing and teaches children how to come up with creative and intelligent solutions rather than focusing only on the end goal.

Using Constructive Criticism;

Criticism of any kind is thought of in a fixed mindset way, as though it is negative. However, constructive criticism offers a new model and method of teaching by showing what doesn't work and questioning what will work. By offering constructive criticism, it gives them the opportunity to figure out how to fix something in a positive light.

Steps to Developing a Growth Mindset;

- \* Learn
- \* Work Hard
- \* Face Setbacks

Learning;

In a fixed mindset point of view, you will want to learn as much as you can for the sake of looking good. Being intelligent means that you look good and others will be impressed by your intelligence. However, on the other hand, a growth mindset, will curiously and intriguingly inquire, ask questions, and want to learn more.

With a growth mindset, you will want to learn and will be focused on learning rather than perfecting the grade. A fixed mindset might view the A as the end of learning; that the ultimate goal has been reached. A growth mindset has no problem taking on more learning in exchange for the perfect grade.

Hard Work;

In a fixed mindset, it is easy to fall into the trap of believing that if you have to work hard, you are not actually smart. A growth mindset will highlight that hard work and effort equate being the best you can be at something. A growth mindset will re-train your brain to connect to the thought process that hard work and lots of effort will equate to success. The more hard work you do, the more effort you put into something, the more success you'll attain.

The Ability to Face Setbacks;

In a fixed mindset, you might view a setback as an easy way to make an excuse, run the other way, or blame someone or something else. In a growth mindset, you will view a setback as a way to work harder, to spend more time studying, or to take on more organized skills and practices. For example, you may not be so inclined to procrastinate and cram if you get a poor grade rather than simply blaming it on not being as smart as everyone else or a good student.

Now that you see a few differences between a fixed mindset and a growth mindset, you will understand that having a growth mindset is an achievable goal. If you want to opt in for a growth mindset, remember some important tips:

- \* Work hard
- \* Remember to take on perseverance even in struggle
- \* Take on tasks that are more difficult so that you can re-train your brain to succeed
- \* Keep your mind set on learning new things and continuing to do so in an effort to re-set your brain
- \* Highlight what strategies for learning worked for you
- \* Be honest about what strategies for learning did not work for you.

If you are an adult, that's great news. You can take on this advice and these practices and work hard to create a growth mindset. If you are a parent or a teacher, that's even better. You get the opportunity to help grow and shape a child's mind.

What would your child's future look like if you encouraged them to work hard rather than using a label?

What if working hard was rewarding and fun and your child wanted to do more and more over the course of his/her life?

Think about the possibilities. Learning can be fun and rewarding.

As an adult, your child can have a greater earning potential, a possibly better lifestyle and also go on to teach their children the difference between a fixed mindset and a growth mindset.

With a growth mindset, the possibilities are unlimited.

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## **How to Change Your Mind:**

When it comes to changing your mind, do you view that as a negative? In other words, do you have the perception of someone changing his or her mind as being indecisive or weak?

Well, there are several reasons why changing your mind can, in fact, be a positive event.

From childhood, there are many stories we tell ourselves as we absorb the environment around us.

For some of us, we might believe that our siblings are older, wiser, and smarter, and that we simply cannot match up with their intelligence.

For others, there may be a mindset of living small because every time we did not succeed we were praised and accepted anyhow instead of encouraged and motivated to do better. Doing better may have somehow been viewed and interpreted as wrong and unacceptable.

We all want our children to succeed and, as such, we may or may not set the bar too low and not encourage a growth mindset.

We may instill in them that they are set in their ways and there is no chance for growth, (*and by the way, we do this inadvertently*).

## ***Labels;***

Sometimes we are given labels and, all too often, we have no clue that we do not have to accept or even identify with those labels. We may be taught that Johnny is the maths genius while Suzy is the musician in the family – a limiting mindset that is more or less fixed. Did you know that you could change those labels by working harder to be whatever it is you wish to be in the world of academics? ..... How is this possible?

* Start with recognizing that you 'are' capable and have the ability to change your mindset. This is the first step in changing your mind.

* Recognize that you can change your label at any time. All you have to do is choose to do so.

* Next, it's time to get to work. No change comes without work involved.



## **Practices to Take on;**

If you are a parent, there are certain steps you can take in order to facilitate a growth mindset. Start by giving your child a way and a means to reach higher goals rather than labelling them as “not good at maths,” or “better at art.”

* Don't set the bar too high, as unrealistic expectations and goals are not beneficial.

* Don't set the bar too low so that no challenge or growth is initiated.

* Offer constructive criticism in order to have your child reach and grow, which sends the message that they are most certainly capable of doing great things as long as they choose to.

A growth mindset is for everyone.

If you are a teacher or coach, it is better to facilitate growth by motivating rather than labelling or viewing your student or athlete as someone who is, “not as good as” someone else or “not as talented in a certain area or skill.”

* Consider each member of the team as an individual. Seek to discover their weaknesses. In this manner, you can then concentrate on how to challenge them.

* Challenge them to reach greater heights by motivating rather than considering them to be “as is” in any arena.

* Give them the belief that they can and will work hard to achieve greater results; that they can be stretched to grow.

When it comes to changing your mind, you have a choice. Face the areas of your life that are your weakest; avoidance doesn't work, work hard in that area to excel, and never stop learning.



## **Growth Mindset How-To's:**

In order to understand how to take on the practice of creating a growth mindset, first, take a look at the difference between the two mindsets; a fixed mindset and a growth mindset.

### ***A Fixed Mindset;***

A fixed mindset, especially in the area of academics, intelligence, and study dictates that; 'it is what it is' or that; 'the status is fixed', unchangeable and with no room for growth or potential.

### ***A Growth Mindset;***

A growth mindset takes on a different perspective. A growth mindset takes on challenges as a way to expand and grow. It also dictates that there is room for hard work, learning, and achieving.

## ***How to Gain a Growth Mindset;***

### **Exercise Your Way to a Growth Mindset;**

You might be asking, “What does exercise have to do with gaining a growth mindset?” The answer is that there is a different type of exercise you can do. It’s not the physical kind – it’s the mental kind.

When you exercise your brain, you give this muscle a chance to grow and expand over time. If you want to gain a growth mindset, you need to take on new, challenging things. Once your brain sees that it can overcome challenges, taking on more challenges becomes easier over time. Once your mind recognizes you are taking on something new, fear can become minimized and new things will be placed in the part of your brain compartmentalized as something not to be feared.

### ***Work Hard;***

If you have a certain learning capacity and accept that this is your limit, then that will be your limit. However, on the other hand, if you work harder, take on more learning, and then work even harder, you will begin to notice a shift. You will begin to challenge your own status-quo.

The harder you work the more results and rewards you will see. You will shift your mindset to understand that the more effort you put in, the more effort you will get out. It doesn’t have to stop at a certain static place. You can work hard, you can put in more effort, and you can achieve different results.

### ***Stretch Yourself;***

Have you ever heard a point of view or a perception that was astonishing and bold?

Do you sometimes see how other people set the bar a bit higher, try new things, and work harder?

Just because you have to work harder, does not mean you cannot be more successful. Take some time to examine a certain area of your life, such as academically, and see if you can’t think outside the box, enter new territories, and achieve higher goals.

After all, anyone who has made a medical breakthrough or achieved a higher goal has probably done so by working harder, trying new things, and stretching way outside of their comfort zone; and you can too.

## **Do You Fall Into This Trap? *Comparing Yourself to Other People?***

If you are human, you have done it. You compare yourself to other people. The good news is that people out there compare themselves to you and the not-so-good news is that you do it, as well. While neither is of benefit to the other, it is simply part of human nature. It's how we grow, it's how we strive, but unfortunately, it's sometimes an excuse to give up as well.

### ***A Fixed Mindset;***

If we don't have something to compare ourselves to - *you might reason* - then how will we learn to achieve and grow?

Sometimes, when we compare ourselves to others, we have something to gauge our success and failure with and, therefore, a measure of where we can do better and achieve more.

However, for those with a fixed mindset, this does not occur at all. There is actually a reverse method of thinking. That reverse method tells us, since we are not as good as the other person, we might as well just quit. That doesn't work in the world of intelligence however. It is ineffective at best.

Do you ever find yourself viewing someone else's success as only a way to make yourself look bad?

If so, you are not alone in this thought process either.

For some, the success of others equates to highlight their own failures.

Excuses are made such as the other party being luckier or having it easy.

Another excuse is to say everything just comes easily to that person or, even worse, use their success to highlight some other unrelated shortcoming.

What if you could re-train your brain to adopt a mindset of growth?

### ***Growth Mindset;***

On the opposite end of the spectrum is a 'growth mindset'.

You can give yourself the opportunity to change and grow over time as you learn to re-train your brain to a growth mindset.

When you view someone else's success as a way to strive harder, do more, and work harder, you re-train your brain to view this not as an excuse to stay in the status quo, but as a reason to thrive.

If you choose the thought patterns that intelligence can be developed and you can most certainly train your brain to reach higher heights, you will see a radical change in your life. Once you 'get it' that your self-image has nothing to do with failing at something and that this failure is actually a path to higher learning, you will be at ease in your own skin.

Wouldn't that be nice to be at ease in your own skin? If you change your mind, you can re-train your brain to view failure as a stepping-stone to new successes. You will begin to understand failure as a learning tool and not as a way to define your image.

So, the next time you want to compare yourself to someone else, stop and ask yourself if his/her success can highlight inspiration for you. Maybe he/she put a tremendous amount of effort into the realization of dreams and all that hard work paid off. This could be a learning tool for you rather than something viewed as the enemy.

Other people's success could be a way and a means for you to learn, grow, and, most importantly, be inspired.

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Communication and Changing Your Mindset:

Older theories about intelligence dictate to us that we are born a "certain way." We have certain traits that others do not possess, others have certain traits that we do not possess, and that is that. There is no room for growth or expansion.

Our intelligence is 'as it always was' and there is no room for improvement.

However, today we know better. We know that we have the ability to change our mindset and, therefore, improve our capacity for learning in leaps and bounds. No longer is the status-quo necessary. We can grow and strive to achieve more academically and, therefore, in life.

Choose Your Words Carefully;

Each one of us go through our days speaking our mind, saying things without giving it much thought and sometimes even holding things in and not speaking up for ourselves only to berate ourselves later on for doing so. If you take a moment to recognize and record the words you use daily, you may come to realize that the words you choose might 'directly' relate to the mindset you have.

What is a Mindset?

A mindset is the mental attitude you adopt which dictates how you will or will not perceive, react and respond to situations.

Why is it important?

Your mindset can and will determine your whole life from your academic achievements to your career and far beyond.

Why is it Important to Communicate Effectively?

The way you interpret your situation communicates to your brain. When it comes to intelligence, you may have a long-standing belief that you are either one way or another.

For example, you may feel that you are average and are not questioning that old, limiting, and long-standing belief.

It is important to communicate effectively by choosing the thoughts that will change the outcome.

For example, there have been many firsts in your life.

You had to allow your first child get on the bus to go to kindergarten without you there.

The next child it was a little easier and by the third child, if you had one, this task was not as big of a deal as the first time you had to face it.

By communicating to yourself that you can and will get through the many things that life sends your way, you are able to meet and face more and more challenges along the way. More importantly, you get to do it with ease and grace; as long as you communicate to yourself that, you can and are able to do so.

Communication is so much more than the words you speak to yourself; it's also the thoughts you think.

When you challenge yourself and achieve, you reset the communication bar.

You allow yourself to see that not only can you achieve more by learning new things and taking on more challenges, but you also get to see that you can take on a growth mindset instead of a limiting one.



Choose Your Thoughts like You Choose Your Words:

Now that you have examined how choosing your thoughts makes an impact on your growth and potential, you can also take a look at another area in your life. Firstly, however, take a moment to realize that there are two components of whether or not you have a 'fixed' mindset or a 'growth' mindset.

Growing up, you may have been told that you are not as good as someone else in a certain academic subject, sport, or talent. This has been your belief for all of your life. After all, you were told this over and over again. You heard people in your environment from parents to teachers that you were not as good as someone else in a certain area.

On the other hand, you may have been told that you were perfect in a certain subject or area and never really taught to question those parameters. You may think that the bar was set, you reached the goals and that your job is done. This is part of growing up with a fixed mindset.

Secondly are the stories you create as you grow up; you may have judged yourself as someone who is 'not as good' - simply because a statement was made on one occasion. You held onto that belief with no prompting from someone else, yet you continued to carry it into adulthood. Either way, there is no need for blame in either of these situations. As an adult, you are free to re-create your life as you see fit.

Choosing Your Words for Your Self;

When a friend comes to you feeling unaccomplished or less than, you more than likely are an encourager – someone who takes their feelings into consideration and lifts them up. Why not do that for yourself as well. Change your thoughts, change your mind and watch how you talk to yourself as well.

When it comes to yourself, do you beat yourself up, criticize yourself and not give yourself the same break you would give your own friend? Choose kinder words of communicating for yourself and be aware of too much negative self-talk.

A growth mindset allows you to tell yourself that you did not do as well as you had hoped and also speaks to you that you can and will - do better, achieve more.

All this without the negative self-talk that comes along with it.

Choosing Your Worlds for Others;

In the same manner you would want to speak to yourself with kindness and encouragement in order to foster your potential and development, take that opportunity to foster and encourage the development of another.

Instead of making excuses for them, hold them accountable, encourage them to see where they can do better and offer them the possibility of achieving more and doing greater things with their life and with their minds.

When you choose your words carefully, whether to yourself or to others, you make a difference which can then result in making a change.

OK - That's it Folks.

But for a whole lot More!

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