CULTIVATING A GROWTH MINDSET | TIPSHEET

A "Growth Mindset" is indicated as one of the key factors for success. Among many who possess this mindset, a set of commonalities has emerged—certain perspectives and behaviors they engage in and others they avoid. The list below captures several of the most impactful changes to help you shift your perspective and cultivate a growth mindset.

STOP...

Hiding from your shortcomings

You cannot work to overcome something you aren't first willing to acknowledge and accept. Stop hiding from the truth. No one is perfect. That's a good thing. It's through our imperfections that we come to recognize valuable opportunities for growth—if we are brave enough to admit to and work with them.

Seeing all criticism as negative

Rather than assuming feedback such as "room for improvement" translates to failure or means we aren't "good enough," begin to embrace it for what it really is: a valuable and positive signal alerting us to something important that we might not have noticed otherwise or aspects of our performance we might have overlooked otherwise.

Trying to avoid mistakes

When we try to make people believe we are infallible, we tend to become risk averse. Risks are often required for growth. So, when we fail to take risks, we often fail to push ourselves toward growth. Let yourself mess up now and then. It will increase your capacity for discomfort and allow you to take more risks in the future.

START...

Reframing challenges as opportunities

Rather than shying away from adversity, those with a growth mindset view obstacles and setbacks as valuable avenues for self-improvement and growth. They also embrace the discomfort that often comes with being uncertain and dealing with unfamiliar situations.

Understanding that change is possible

Our brain is malleable; so is our mind. Just because we aren't good at something right now or we struggle with self-defeating thoughts doesn't mean we'll be this way forever. Growth-minded people understand that change is always possible. They also take ownership of their mindset and let it guide them to set new goals.

Valuing the process (and hard work)

It's easy to assume that possessing innate talent and achieving quick results is better than working hard over a long period of time. However, reaching our goals is often more rewarding through hard work and when we view the process of learning itself as the most valuable component to acquiring new skills or knowledge. After all, learning is really "brain training." Just like a muscle, our brain needs to be worked. True results only happen with dedication and time.

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STOP

Seeking approval

When we prioritize approval over learning, we sacrifice our own potential for growth. Growth-oriented people, on the other hand, are more internally motivated and don't rely on validation from others to determine their path or their worth.

Placing the emphasis on talent

Everyone is wired differently. Because of this, it's easy to assume that some people have innate talents what we do not possess. However, truly mastering anything requires hard work. Talent alone is not enough. Being good at something has much more to do with high levels of interest, effort, and dedication. In most cases, talent or "genius" is only possible because of these.

Expecting things to happen quickly

Given the way we share and acquire information about one another, it can seem as though others have magically arrived where they are overnight. But we never see the majority of what it took them to get there and end up expecting our progress to be instantaneous—or at least less of a labor than it calls for. Think realistically about the time and effort it will take to do what you set out to do and rather than trying to learn fast, focus on learning well.

START

Using growth-oriented language

The language we use shapes our perception. Start replacing the word "failing" with the word "learning." Making a mistake or falling short of a goal doesn't mean we've failed; we've just learned what doesn't work. Also, as we make progress, it's easy to associate any sense of struggle with failure. But, we still aren't failing, we simply aren't where we want to be just "yet."

Embracing a sense of purpose

Research has indicated that those with a growth mindset possess a greater sense of purpose. Identify what larger purpose is driving you to learn and grow. As you move forward, keep this purpose and the big picture in mind.

Reflecting and celebrating

Taking time to reflect (daily if possible) on what and how much we've learned helps us retain and more readily use our new knowledge. And when we celebrate our progress, we link positive emotions with learning, helping us to appreciate and embody the growth mindset even more.