

BUILDING A

GROWTH

MINDSET

**TIPS FOR TACKLING CHALLENGES AND
DEVELOPING CONFIDENCE**

DEAR STUDENT

This booklet is about developing a mindset that will help you become your most confident, capable, positive self.

You might not think that changing your mindset could make that much of a difference—but it really can! With a growth mindset, you can turn obstacles into opportunities and failures into future successes.

Having a growth mindset is a simple concept that can have a big impact on your life!

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FIXED MINDSET

**HAVE YOU EVER SAID,
“I’M NOT GOOD AT THIS”?**

A fixed mindset is the belief that either you are or you aren’t good at something.

Having a fixed mindset means that you believe being good at something is only possible if you have a talent or gift for it. A fixed mindset tells you there are limits to what you can accomplish—and that who you are right now is who you will always be.

EXAMPLES OF FIXED MINDSET THINKING

- ▶ If you aren’t good at something right away, you probably just don’t have a “knack” for it.
- ▶ It’s better to stick with what you know so you don’t fail.
- ▶ Failure is the worst thing that can happen.

Having a fixed mindset can cause you to miss out on a lot of great opportunities. It can make you lack confidence in your ability to succeed, be hesitant to try new things, and afraid to step out of your comfort zone.

A FIXED MINDSET LIMITS YOUR POTENTIAL AND PREVENTS YOU FROM BECOMING THE BEST VERSION OF YOU.

GROWTH MINDSET



A GROWTH MINDSET IS A DIFFERENT WAY OF LOOKING AT LEARNING AND ABILITIES.

With a growth mindset, you can turn the things you feel you can't change into opportunities for growth and discovery!

If you have a growth mindset, you believe that with effort, you can improve your skills and abilities—and that there are no limits to what you can accomplish.

EXAMPLES OF GROWTH MINDSET THINKING

- ▶ Anyone can be good at something as long as they practice and work hard at it.
- ▶ Trying new things and stepping out of your comfort zone helps you learn, grow, and build confidence.
- ▶ Failure can motivate you and help you figure out what you can do differently next time.

HAVING A GROWTH MINDSET MEANS THAT YOU SEE EFFORT AS THE KEY TO SUCCESS—AND THAT YOU'RE NOT AFRAID OF A CHALLENGE.



THE POWER OF YET

“YET” HELPS YOU REMEMBER THAT ANYTHING IS POSSIBLE.

A growth mindset sounds great and all, but what do you actually have to do to develop it?

Take a moment to look at these two sentences.

- ▶ I don't understand it.
- ▶ I don't understand it yet.

So, what's the difference?

The first sentence sounds hopeless. You're done. You just don't understand it. The second sentence sounds hopeful. You're saying that while you don't understand it right now, eventually you WILL.

THIS IS THE POWER OF “YET.”

Once you learn to add the word “yet” to more of your thoughts, all kinds of things become possible. Here are some examples.

“I'm not good at this yet.”

“I can't do it yet.”

“I'm not fast enough yet.”

WHEN YOU ADD THE WORD “YET,” YOU'RE REMINDING YOURSELF TO BE PATIENT, TO STAY HOPEFUL, AND TO KEEP AT IT.

CHALLENGES AS OPPORTUNITIES



HAS ANYONE EVER TOLD YOU THAT ANYTHING WORTH FIGHTING FOR IS NEVER EASY?

When things come easy, you aren't forced to develop your skills or abilities—and you miss out on the satisfaction and pride you only feel when you do something that's hard.

Over the course of your life, you'll face many challenges and tough situations. When you encounter a challenge or are in a tough situation, you can...

complain, whine, get frustrated, or give up.

or

look at it as an opportunity and find a way to succeed.

When you look at challenges as opportunities, you don't give up when something is hard. You get creative, ask for help, and/or try something new. You look inside and find your most determined self.

AFTER YOU'VE PUSHED THROUGH A CHALLENGE ONCE, IT GETS EASIER TO DO IT THE NEXT TIME... UNTIL TURNING CHALLENGES INTO OPPORTUNITIES BECOMES YOUR HABIT!



DEALING WITH CRITICISM

AT SOME POINT, YOU'RE BOUND TO BE CRITICIZED OR JUDGED.

Being criticized or judged negatively is hard. It can make you angry, hurt your feelings, or even make you want to give up altogether.

But what if you learned how to make criticism work FOR you? What if you learned how to take negative feedback and use it to become a more capable, confident version of yourself?

Whether it's a low grade on a test, a coach criticizing your skills, or a friend telling you something about you that you don't like hearing, you can use the criticism to motivate you to study harder, practice more, or become a better friend.

TO MAKE FEEDBACK WORK FOR YOU, ASK YOURSELF..

- ▶ Is the feedback or criticism true?
- ▶ Is the person giving me feedback trying to help or hurt me?
- ▶ How can I make this criticism useful?

Not all criticism is useful, like when it comes from someone who doesn't have your best interests at heart. *But if the criticism is true and comes from someone who cares or is trying to help you, let it sting for a moment, and then let it motivate you to grow.*

VALUE THE PROCESS



**RESULTS ARE IMPORTANT,
BUT SO IS THE JOURNEY YOU
TOOK TO GET THERE.**

PICTURE THIS:

In one class, you get an A on a paper you threw together the night before. In another class, you get an A on a paper you spent a lot of time writing and worked really hard on. Which A means more to you?

When you work hard for something and you succeed, it means much more. And if you think about it, your successes are almost always more about your work and effort than they are about your abilities.

Of course, no matter how hard we try, sometimes we don't get the outcome we want. We don't make the team, get the grade we want, or win the prize. But whether or not things turn out the way you want, if you have a growth mindset you know that what you get out of the process can be just as important and valuable as the outcome (maybe even more).

**WITH A GROWTH MINDSET, YOU VALUE AND
TAKE PRIDE IN WHAT YOU DO, REGARDLESS OF
THE OUTCOME.**

DON'T FEAR FAILURE



FAILURE IS AN OPPORTUNITY TO TRY AGAIN.

To grow, you need to try new things—but whenever you try something new, there's always the risk of failure.

No one likes to fail. It doesn't feel good, it's discouraging, and we all try to avoid it. And that's okay. But the truth is, we all fail sometimes. The important thing is how you respond to failure.

Consider how these people responded to failure:

Michael Jordan was cut from the high school varsity basketball team his sophomore year.

Walt Disney was fired by a newspaper editor because he had "no good ideas"

Thomas Edison made 1,000 unsuccessful attempts at inventing the light bulb.

Whenever you fail at something, take a step back and try to look at the situation objectively. Think about what you can learn from your failure, and use that knowledge to do better next time.

REMEMBER, EVERYONE FAILS SOMETIMES. BUT NOT EVERYONE PICKS THEMSELVES UP AND KEEPS GOING. SET YOURSELF APART, AND VIEW FAILURE AS YOUR MOTIVATION TO TRY AGAIN.

EMBRACE IMPERFECTIONS

“EVERYONE IS DIFFERENT.”
“NO ONE IS PERFECT.”



You’ve heard these sayings before. But how do really feel about the things that make you “different” or “imperfect?”

Do you pretend that you’re okay with your differences and imperfections, when inside you really feel insecure? Or do you genuinely appreciate the qualities that make you different or imperfect, and see them as qualities that make you unique?

Maybe it’s a little of both. And that’s okay.

The truth is, even if it’s hard, embracing your imperfections can go a long way in helping you be a more confident person. It means that you have an honest sense of who you are. It also helps you stay cool and calm when others point out your imperfections—because you’ve already embraced them.

EMBRACING YOUR IMPERFECTIONS DOESN’T MEAN THAT YOU STOP TRYING TO EVOLVE INTO THE BEST VERSION OF YOURSELF. IT JUST MEANS THAT YOU LOVE YOURSELF FOR HOW YOU LOOK AND WHO YOU ARE.



LEARNING FAST IS NOT LEARNING WELL

**LEARNING IS A JOURNEY,
NOT A DESTINATION.**

When you're running a race, faster is better. But when you're trying to learn something, faster isn't better. In fact, when you rush learning, you make it less likely that you learn something well.

Cramming for a test and trying to memorize things isn't learning. It's shoving information into your head temporarily until the test is over—and at that point you'll probably forget most of what you crammed into your head.

Having a growth mindset means valuing **learning** and **understanding** more than getting a grade or a reward. It's taking pride and satisfaction in digging deeper and learning something well.

LEARNING SOMETHING WELL IS A GRADUAL PROCESS AND IT TAKES TIME. SO EVEN IF YOU THINK YOU'RE ALREADY "GOOD" AT SOMETHING, DON'T TAKE THAT AS A SIGN THAT YOU SHOULD STOP TRYING TO GROW AND GET BETTER. KEEP LEARNING AND KEEP GROWING!

TRY IT A DIFFERENT WAY

IF AT FIRST YOU DON'T
SUCCEED, TRY, TRY AGAIN.



When things get hard, it is important to keep trying and not give up. But perhaps it's just as important to try to do things differently.

HERE'S AN EXAMPLE:

John got a low grade on a history test—and he was really upset because he even studied for it. The night before the test, he spent an entire hour looking over the textbook while he was watching TV.

Next week, John has another history test. If he studies the same way, what do you think the result will be?

If John has a growth mindset, he will look at his low test grade and instead of thinking, “I’m just no good at history,” he will look at what he did to prepare for that test and think about what he can do differently. Maybe next week he will study in his room with the TV off, and also study his class notes.

The next time you’re not getting the results you want, whether it involves your grade in a tough class or solving a personal problem, try again, and use what you’ve learned to do things differently.

**“FAILURE IS THE OPPORTUNITY TO BEGIN AGAIN
MORE INTELLIGENTLY.” HENRY FORD**

IT'S ALL IN YOUR HEAD

THERE ARE LOTS OF THINGS YOU CAN'T CONTROL, BUT YOU CAN CONTROL YOUR THOUGHTS.



We're always thinking, even when we're sleeping. These constant thoughts can at times feel negative, confusing, and overwhelming.

**BUT THERE'S GREAT NEWS!
YOU ARE IN CHARGE—NOT YOUR BRAIN.**

You can learn to manage your thoughts, and if you don't like the direction they're taking you, you can choose to think differently.

Having a growth mindset means choosing to create healthy thought habits every day. For example, instead of thinking, *"I can't figure it out,"* you can choose to think, *"I'm smart. I know I can figure this out."*

It isn't always easy. No one is positive and optimistic 100% of the time. And that's okay. You just have to remember that you can change your mindset anytime you want.

There's so much of this world that you have no control over. Sometimes things just happen to you, and this can make you feel helpless. Everyone feels that way from time to time. But the one thing you never have to feel helpless about is your own mind and how you choose to view your world.

REFLECTIONS



HOW'S YOUR MINDSET?

Encouraging messages about building a growth mindset are all well and good, but how can you put them into action? How does all this growth mindset stuff apply to you and your life?

REFLECT ON THE FOLLOWING QUESTIONS:

- ▶ In what ways do you have a fixed mindset? When have you told yourself that you're just not good at something?
- ▶ How can you apply the power of "yet" to your life?
- ▶ When have you had a tough time dealing with criticism? How can you process it differently next time?
- ▶ What are your imperfections? How can you embrace them?
- ▶ What are some challenges in your life that you can reframe as opportunities?

It's okay that the answers to some of these questions aren't easy to come up with. It takes time and effort to develop a growth mindset—but the results can be amazing.

WITH A GROWTH MINDSET, YOU CAN BECOME THE BEST, MOST CAPABLE VERSION OF YOU!



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