

PTS 😊

The PTS Guide to...  
Growth Mindset

# Introduction

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Welcome to the Growth Mindset Guide from PTS and mindset expert Ross McWilliam. Over the four parts of the guide Ross will be taking us through an introduction to growth mindset in primary schools.

We hope that you find this guide useful. Over to Ross...

By now, most schools will be aware of the concept of Growth Mindset (GM). Equally, many schools may well have implemented aspects of GM either across classroom teaching or via school specific cross curricular methods. Some may well have a whole school approach that involves parents and outside agencies. Wherever you are on the awareness and implementation of GM, this guide will provide thoughts that may help you along the way.

Within this four-part guide, I will detail the key considerations of implementing a GM policy with some practical tips about what schools can do at pupil level, classroom/cross curricular level, and a whole school approach. A successful GM strategy will actively involve all key stakeholders including outside agencies/partners, parents and staff.

A strategic school GM policy will allow for regular 'tweaks' in the performance and review of the strategy, whilst still allowing the involvement of key stakeholders. Indeed, a healthy GM strategy may well evolve into a real ownership by all the key stakeholders.

Specifically, this four-part guide will focus on:

**Part 1:** A combination of concepts and ideas to allow pupils to find their own definitions of GM, what GM means to them, and how they can identify and improve it.

**Part 2:** The value of intrinsic and extrinsic rewards, along with specific praise and feedback language to be used. Identification of measures to record progress in terms of attendance, rewards and sanctions, grades, school/class attitude.

**Part 3:** A whole school strategy that caters for key stakeholders of parents and staff, and how to monitor progress at school and at home.

**Part 4:** Consideration must also be given to those pupils who may have difficulty initially accessing GM and those who might need more support as they encounter barriers to learning on their GM journey.

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# Part 1

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## What Growth Mindset Means to 'Me'

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Resistance can often be met when anything new is put on the agenda, as most people don't like change. There may be preconceptions of what GM means and assumptions that it takes more effort, time and resources in an already busy school schedule. One of the secrets to implementing a successful GM programme is to not only clearly define what it means, but to demonstrate how it could positively affect all aspects of school life and beyond, for all the key stakeholders of pupils, parents and staff.

The concept of mindset was engineered by Carol Dweck after decades of researching achievement and success. Her research was able to prove that the way we think, and therefore behave, has a massive impact on learning and attitude. She classified mindset into Growth or Fixed. In a Fixed Mindset people believe their intelligence and talents are fixed traits, set at birth and there is little you can do to improve these qualities.

In a Growth Mindset, people believe they can improve their intelligence and talents through purposeful effort, accepting guidance and support, and dedication to improvement without comparison to others. People with a Growth Mindset believe that anything is possible over time. Dweck also stated that there were some people (15%) who have both fixed and growth mindset qualities. Crucially, those who possess a GM have a happier and more successful life. There is actually evidence to support this claim!

### First Steps

A useful first step for pupils would be to talk about the development of the qualities of intelligence and talent. Personally, I would start this off with a pre-definition of intelligence and talent.

To me, intelligence or talent are polarised and loaded words. Children as well as adults, when asked 'Are you intelligent?', often immediately answer either yes or no. Perhaps this has been inculcated into their lives by various people complimenting them (or not). As we will find out in Part 2 of the guide, praise and feedback, even if well intentioned, can have covert and overt negative effects on personal development.

What we need to develop is our meaning of intelligence and talent, i.e. that these can mean many things beyond being able to pass exams, (which is simply a 'snap shot' in time using a particular form of measurement). Its definition should include the five GM components of:

1. No negative self-bias in working out challenging situations (I can't do maths, I am rubbish at school).
2. Taking a risk with learning using a trial and error approach (with teacher support to create a positive learning environment where learning is the whole class priority and nobody is belittled for a silly question or wrong answer). I often say 'there are no wrong questions in Ross's world!'
3. Getting support, guidance and feedback from others.
4. Using purposeful effort and perseverance/resilience to find a solution.
5. Not comparing with others or fearing judgement.

## Success-Not-Yet

Carol Dweck uses the term 'not yet' to describe someone who does not quite reach a required measured standard. So rather than seeing a fail on a maths test, it should rather be seen as not passing yet. All it needs is the key GM components applied over time.

A phrase I have coined is 'success-not-yet' which means rather than saying failure, it's just going to take a little more time using the 5 GM components. Putting it even more simply for KS2 pupils...

'If you don't give up, it can't be failure, it's just 'success-not-yet.'

The method of reinforcing this message can take many formats. Firstly, I would use current news media stories to identify where GM has been demonstrated using the 5 GM method. The 2016 Rio Olympics might be a useful starting point for talent examples.

## Olympian Mindset

For example, ask pupils to find stories of athletes who have developed their GM to either be successful in medalling, or simply by just being at the Olympics. Using the 2016 Rio Paralympics may very well allow pupils to uncover some additional astonishing GM stories!

Cyclist Becky James was a keen young cyclist. But her career only really started to take off when she was identified as having potential to succeed at a higher level, but it was only potential at this stage. With guidance and support from British Cycling, along with her determination, she started to achieve success, but also only after finding out which event suited her ability best. She had to overcome many 'success-not yet' races and had to battle glandular fever, and even had a cancer scare!

In terms of Paralympic, or simple wins over adversity examples, there are numerous instances where a GM attitude has triumphed. Cases such as Ellie Simmonds, Jonnie Peacock, Alvin Law, Rick Hansen, et al can be found on the internet, even used as starter projects to identify what GM talent development really means.

Further examples of talent GM can be found by looking at the early careers of 'failures' such as:

- The Beatles pop group approached the Decca recording company and were refused a contract...'we don't like their sound and guitar music is on the way out'
- Celebrated drawing artist and winner of 22 Academy Awards Walt Disney was fired by several newspapers as his ideas lacked substance and were not original
- World famous actor Tom Cruise would never make it as an actor as he was too short and dyslexic
- Author JK Rowling whose Harry Potter books were rejected by over 30 publishers

## More Inspiration

For more academic or intelligence-based GM examples, we need look no further than these examples:

- Nobel prize winner Albert Einstein who wasn't able to speak until he was 4 years old and his teachers told him he would never amount to much.
- Light Bulb inventor Thomas Edison was told he was too stupid to learn anything and should go into something that his pleasant personality might be better suited to!
- Entrepreneur Richard Branson who lost his entire savings four times before his innovative ideas and actions helped him become a billionaire.
- Norman Larsen the creator of WD 40.

## Relevant Role Models

There are countless examples of both talent and intelligence GM stories. However, the real secret is to use examples or role models not only specific to the needs/inspiration of the child (talent or academic), but specific to their contemporary world i.e. their real-world relevance.

This might take on slightly less orthodox examples such as the struggles and success of Eminem, Demi Lovato, Lionel Messi, Lizzy Yarnold. At the younger end of KS2 the inspirational role models may even come from cartoons depicting the struggles and success of characters such as Elsa from Frozen, or Carl and Ellie from Up.

## Defining Growth Mindset

Once the concept of GM is better understood, the next step would be to ask pupils to create their own definition of what GM means to them. Once this ownership of GM is accomplished, the next task is to identify model GM behaviours/statements and non-model FM behaviours/statements. Younger children often learn what the right response is by comparing to the wrong opposite response i.e. the non-model approach.

The following model/non model exercise can be done with many pupils at the higher end of KS2, but may need to be simplified for the lower end. Alternatively, lower end KS2 may be all about feedback, praise and a simple set of GM definitions which is featured in part 2.

# Growth Mindsets

The essence of growth mindset revolves around five words; Challenge, Effort, Practice, Feedback and Resilience.

### Challenge 1

Can you put the words in the middle into either the growth mindset or fixed mindset boxes?



- How smart am I looking?
- Learn at all costs
- Love mistakes
- Need constant praise
- Love a challenge
- Practice makes perfect
- Constructive feedback is my friend
- Give up quickly if not successful
- Resilient
- Worried about reputation
- Fear of failure
- Success not yet
- Effort
- Think of solutions



### Challenge 2

Can you add your own growth and fixed mindset words or sayings? How about five of each?

## Note

Above I have taken the five GM concepts and made them into the five words of Challenge, Effort, Practice, Feedback, Resilience.

From a teacher's viewpoint, it is important to keep it simple, but not simplistic. Therefore, by all means let pupils think in these simple terms, but use your skills to reference and demonstrate negative self-bias, fear of being judged, extra effort is a good thing, etc. Just refer back to the full 5GM list.

## Effort and Feedback

Another common error in implementing 5 GM is to simply tell pupils to work harder i.e. more effort. Sometimes when pupils are met with this one-dimensional response it can be a trigger to 'go back into their shell', get distracted or even keep plodding on until all motivation is used up. This is where specific guidance or feedback is needed either by the teacher, peers, self or a combination of sources.

The following table is adapted from a book by Barry Hymer and Mike Gershon (2014) which looks at effort feedback. I use this adapted table to help self and peer assessment in terms of effort. A fun way is for paired pupils to self-assess first and then ask a peer to assess them! Again, for lower end KS2 you may wish to simplify words based on your knowledge of your pupils.

Criteria	When did I do this?	Score 1-5 (1 low 5 high)
I worked in a challenging way and pushed my thinking		
I had no fear of being judged		
I was resilient and kept going when things got difficult. This could be distractions, energy, past lessons, negative memories		
I demonstrated no fear of failure		
I kept practising, used effort and found flow		
I accepted feedback and was patient		
I worked as a team		

Finally, using the same principles outlined by Hymer and Gershon, there are excellent examples of how to use metacognition feedback (thinking about thinking) which are ideal for higher end KS2 in terms of getting pupils to use prompt thinking boxes to obtain better outcomes.

In essence GM is all about uncovering potential to discover talent. We can now start this process by using the guidance above.

# Part 2

## Measuring, Rewarding and Giving Feedback

### Intrinsic and Extrinsic Rewards

Carol Dweck is quite clear on the concept of rewards. All learning must ultimately be based on learning for learning's sake. This can be put into context/relevance for individual pupils by using aspirational goal setting.

I believe, though, that there is merit in reward schemes, especially for pupils who have difficulty accessing a Growth Mindset attitude, i.e. low self-esteem, learning or SEN needs, as well as attendance or behaviour issues. To make pupils more intrinsically motivated, extrinsic rewards, such as stickers and certificates, should be used alongside aspirations and role models, as well as support from parents.

### Specific Praise and Feedback

Avoid giving 'person-orientated praise' i.e. 'I'm proud of you,' or 'you're good at this.' This assumes that success is due to set personal attributes and teaches pupils to interpret difficulties in terms of their personal weaknesses.

When praise is person-orientated in terms of 'you're great' or 'that's brilliant', it gives the person little information about the task, how they tackled it, or how they can improve. Crucially, it can also put them on a dangerous pedestal of 'I'm the best...and I don't want to lose this good label now!'

Rather, give *process-orientated praise*. This focuses on the process required for success. For example, praise their effort, challenge (metacognition), resilience, etc. as this emphasises striving for success. Feedback should be given in terms of needing more or different components of GM, i.e. Challenge, Effort, Practice, Feedback, Resilience.

### Future Based Feedback

Hymer & Gershon (2014) state that feedback and praise should be information, future and behaviour based. This may well be a simple yet effective way of allowing pupils (and peer evaluation) to be used in a classic GM way.

<b>Information</b> I.e. You need to...	<b>Judgement</b> I.e. That is a weak answer
<b>Future</b> I.e. The next time try...	<b>Past</b> I.e. You failed that...
<b>Behaviour</b> I.e. Did you really challenge yourself there...	<b>Ability</b> I.e. You're an A grade pupil, you're clever

Mary Cai Ricci (2014) has been an effective classroom practitioner for over 30 years and she subscribes to simple non-model and model statements:

Do Not Say	Do Say
You are really athletic!	You work really hard and pay attention when you're on the pitch
You are so smart!	You work hard at school and it shows!
Your drawing is wonderful, you are my little artist!	I can see you have been practising your drawings - what a great improvement!
You are a great dancer - you could be a Strictly dancer!	Keep practising and taking guidance/feedback and you will see great results!
You always get good grades and that makes me happy	When you work hard it really shows in your grades. You should be proud of yourself. We are proud of you!

Finally, language and metaphor are crucial in achieving a GM message. For example, state the problem as a challenge, or an opportunity to learn and to stretch yourself, rather than as a weakness. Metaphors can be a journey of learning. The journey starts with one small step; how do you eat an elephant? One bite at a time! Ideally, try to allow pupils the opportunity to create their own metaphors (cross-curricular English) so they own their learning.

### Identifying ways to measure and record progress

One measure of Growth Mindset has been widely adopted and adapted from Carol Dweck. It is based on 4 very similar questions (some adaptations include 20 questions). There is a spectrum ranging from 0, which shows a fixed mindset, to 16, which is a growth mindset. This can be used pre, mid and post growth mindset coaching, for self or peer evaluation.



1. Your intelligence is something you can't really change  
Strongly Agree - Agree - Neutral - Disagree - Strongly Disagree

2. You can learn new things but can't really change how intelligent you are  
Strongly Agree - Agree - Neutral - Disagree - Strongly Disagree

3. No matter how much intelligence you have, you can always change it quite a bit  
Strongly Agree - Agree - Neutral - Disagree - Strongly Disagree

4. You can change substantially how intelligent you are  
Strongly Agree - Agree - Neutral - Disagree - Strongly Disagree

**Scores:**

1. Strongly Agree 0, Agree 1, Neutral 2, Disagree 3, Strongly Disagree 4

2. Strongly Agree 0, Agree 1, Neutral 2, Disagree 3, Strongly Disagree 4

3. Strongly Agree 4, Agree 3, Neutral 2, Disagree 1, Strongly Disagree 0

4. Strongly Agree 4, Agree 3, Neutral 2, Disagree 1, Strongly Disagree 0

Add up your score and place yourself along the line:

0-----4-----8-----12-----16

FM

GM

Similarly, Angela Duckworth (2007) talks about the concept of grit and how we must demonstrate this quality over years, not months. Learning and success are a marathon, not a sprint, and careful praise is needed. But, crucially, how do we unlock what motivates a young person to learn and make progress?

Duckworth and associates have created a GRIT test which measures resilience, a key component of GM. This scale can be accessed online and provides a valid test of mindset resilience which can be used in a pre, mid and post coaching state. Equally, and even more simply, I have created a 5 Question Resilience Challenge:

Choose one response from each box:

Yes, I won't let setbacks get me down

No, I let setbacks get me down

Yes, I am a hard worker but know my limits

No, I am not a hard worker and sometimes can't be bothered

Yes, I can overcome problems

No, I can't overcome problems

Yes, I can finish whatever I start

No, I can't finish whatever I start

Yes, I have achieved some goals

No, I have not achieved some goals

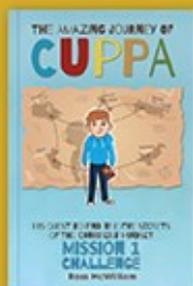
Each yes equates to 20% and the maximum total is 100%.

### Barriers to Growth Mindset

For those pupils who are having difficulty accessing a GM state, then there may well be barriers associated with self-esteem, confidence, negative peer or home influence, and aspirations. I have created the CUPPA Challenge which uses 10 simple questions to assess confidence (age appropriate 10-12). Find out more about CUPPA [here](#).

Beyond these measures, your school could also consider other measures based upon attendance (improved), rewards (increased number), sanctions (decreased number/severity), grades (higher) school/class attitude (appropriate indicators).

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# Part 3

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## A Whole School Strategy

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### A Whole School Strategy that Works for Pupils, Parents and Staff

Integration of key stakeholders is crucial if any sustained 'success gains' are to be achieved, i.e. higher grades, better attendance and behaviour, greater development of lifelong non-cognitive skills (including thinking strategies and resilience) and increased parental support.

So, how can we engage the key stakeholders?

#### Staff

Overlook the needs of staff at your peril! The secret is to not only get staff onside, but to be able to demonstrate the benefits of Growth Mindset to pupils, and also to themselves. There are various ways to start this planning process – here are some examples:

1. Ask for volunteers for a cross school working party on GM. The aim is to review current GM thinking and evidence of success gains. A simple SWOT analysis will yield tangible benefits to the school, but will allow for individual differences and needs.
2. Share their findings with all staff to iron out theoretical and logistical issues.
3. It may be a good idea to see GM policy in another nearby school and see the impact it has had on the success gains.
4. There may be a reasonable need to pilot GM across a nominated department or year group, perhaps with a targeted focus group. This will allow for changes and improvements on a smaller scale before roll out across the whole school.
5. This may be the point that parents are informed of the pilot, and perhaps asked for their views. Ownership by parents is key and they should be at the centre of GM change, perhaps with their own GM support group.
6. The GM programme needs to be reviewed consistently with all key stakeholders against the nominated success gains.
7. To raise the profile of GM amongst staff, staff mentors can be appointed to facilitate learning and start liaison with parents.

#### Pupils

1. As with staff, it may be a good idea to ask for GM volunteers. Older pupils' involvement would also be a good starting point, especially if a mentor system is eventually incorporated.
2. Raise the internal profile of the group by holding meetings in the school boardroom with a combination of within school time and outside school time meetings.
3. As with staff, guide pupils to identify the benefits of a GM approach. Crucially ask for their ideas, especially about implementation and potential barriers.
4. Once a provisional plan is agreed, perhaps take this to further pupil groups to canvass wider feedback, and gain buy in.

5. Maybe start off with an Enrichment Day/Carousel delivery using some of the ideas already mentioned.

## Parents

There is no one way to engage parents. The best starting place is to list what the school already does and then create a wish list with a central involvement from parents. Prompts could be:

- Where communications take place
- Setting their own agenda (ownership)
- Simple home GM language and feedback wordage
- Presence at Parents' Evenings
- Year 6 transition

## Implementation Across School

The first task is to agree and clarify the Pupil 5GM so that everyone knows what is involved (from understanding the 5 areas and then 'drilling down' to understand how each can be implemented).

### Pupil 5GM

1. No negative self-bias in working out challenging situations
2. Taking a risk with learning, using a trial and error approach
3. Getting support, guidance and feedback from others
4. Using purposeful effort and resilience to find a solution
5. Not comparing to others, or fearing being judged

## Visualising Growth Mindset

A visual GM presence, not only makes an impact, but is a constant reminder for pupils and staff. One good idea is TV and classroom displays of posters, logos or mottos, where space is identified for pupil contributions to 'grow' the displays. Common pupil areas such as entrance halls, assembly halls and dining areas are ideal to displays, for example, Hawkley Hall High School in Wigan has quality framed pictures and images in the school dining areas.

There could even be weekly department/class 'changeable' noticeboards where news items are shared, featuring specific GM news examples. For example:

- For PE and SEN, articles about Rio Olympics and Paralympics
- For English, news about J K Rowling's latest projects
- For Business Studies, articles about Richard Branson's activities

Contributions from both pupils and staff should be encouraged.

A phrase I use often is 'Success Comes In Cans'; this could be a school slogan on its own or to collectively group the ideas above.

### More Ways to Get Pupils Involved

Mindset Mentors - This is an excellent idea that allows pupil ownership and allows mentors to take responsibility for facilitating school GM.

Prefect Systems – The selection for this role is built upon various factors particular to each school. However, GM can be built into the job specification, or even adopt GM Prefects!

Role Models – This could comprise various role model school visitors who tell their stories of success and achievement within a GM context.

Former Pupils – These can create a connection and real relevance for current school pupils i.e. if they can do it, so can I.

### School Policy

Your school GM journey may well be reflected in the school policy! Hymer & Gershon (2014 pg 103 - adapted) call this a 'find and replace' exercise where FM language is replaced (or at least added to) with GM language and GM objectives.

FM Overtones	GM Overtones
Intelligent, more able, highly able	Skills, more skilled, highly skilled
Level data	Not yet or success-not-yet
Gifted and talented (policy)	High achieving as a result of non-cognitive skills
Results, grades, performance data	Learning and progression in Pupil 5GM

### How to monitor progress at school and at home

Buy in from pupils may be a continual challenge as the benefits of GM may not be as immediately gratifying for some! Awareness and identification of short- and longer-term positive change is crucial. Examples of this could be:

- A reward system that caters for all abilities. GM can be integrated into existing reward systems or be a stand-alone project. One example is KASH = Knowledge, Attitude, Skills, Habits. Knowledge could be grades and academically focussed, but Attitude and Skills could be a series of GM actions recognised by staff during class, school or extracurricular. Habits are the Pupil 5GM demonstrated over time.
- Class Pings are a simple yet effective way to get class buy-in. Covertly or overtly quickly, GM points are scored by the class for GM language and demonstration of Pupil 5GM. Targets are set which should be incremental but realistic (high expectations is GM territory). I have known teachers to ring a bell when a point or ping is scored!
- School GM recording and tracking should ideally be integrated into existing feedback systems to reduce workload and to be seen as an integral, rather than a bolt-on, activity. Collating the GM feedback is a task in itself, but it can be integrated into existing reward systems. Collecting evidence can be done both overtly and covertly, but always look for immediate feedback i.e. during or at the end of each class.
- Pupil Diaries – Pupils taking ownership of their learning (by identifying and recording) and GM is very effective. Their recordings can be counter signed by staff/parents. This could even be peer marked.
- Gantt Chart Pupil 5GM/Non-Cognitive Skills - These charts can be used to measure progress over time. Weeks could be dedicated to each of the Pupil 5GM.

# Part 4

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## Overcoming Barriers

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### Pupils

Having delivered mindset training for a few years now, I have seen and recorded fabulous progress in many schools. Yet amidst this progress, there will always be pockets of conscious and sub-conscious resistance. This could range from a pupil's self-perception i.e. I am no good at Maths, I'm not as quick to answer as the others, I need to practice this over and over again before I get it. This resistance could also be manifested subconsciously i.e. learned helplessness, where over time they have developed negative or fixed mindset traits. Pupils may also use attribution theory, i.e. that it was out of their control, or that they have poor role models resulting in lower, or no, aspiration.

To counteract these inherent negative behaviours and limiting beliefs, a pre growth mindset approach may be necessary to build up their belief in their own abilities, and that they can achieve success. These pupils need to accept that this learning journey may take time, i.e. success not yet.

*From the pupil's perspective, the acquisition of a confident mindset is paramount to being able to access a growth mindset.* The ability to believe in themselves, to demonstrate a resilience to keep going, to value their own opinions, counterbalance these against others, to be able to put their hands up to answer or even ask a question, are all crucial facets of a confident mindset. Having seen first-hand this lack of self-belief and worth in pupils, I devised an acronym that identified 5 aspects to achieving a confident mindset:

CUPPA = Challenge, Uniqueness, Positivity, Perception, Action

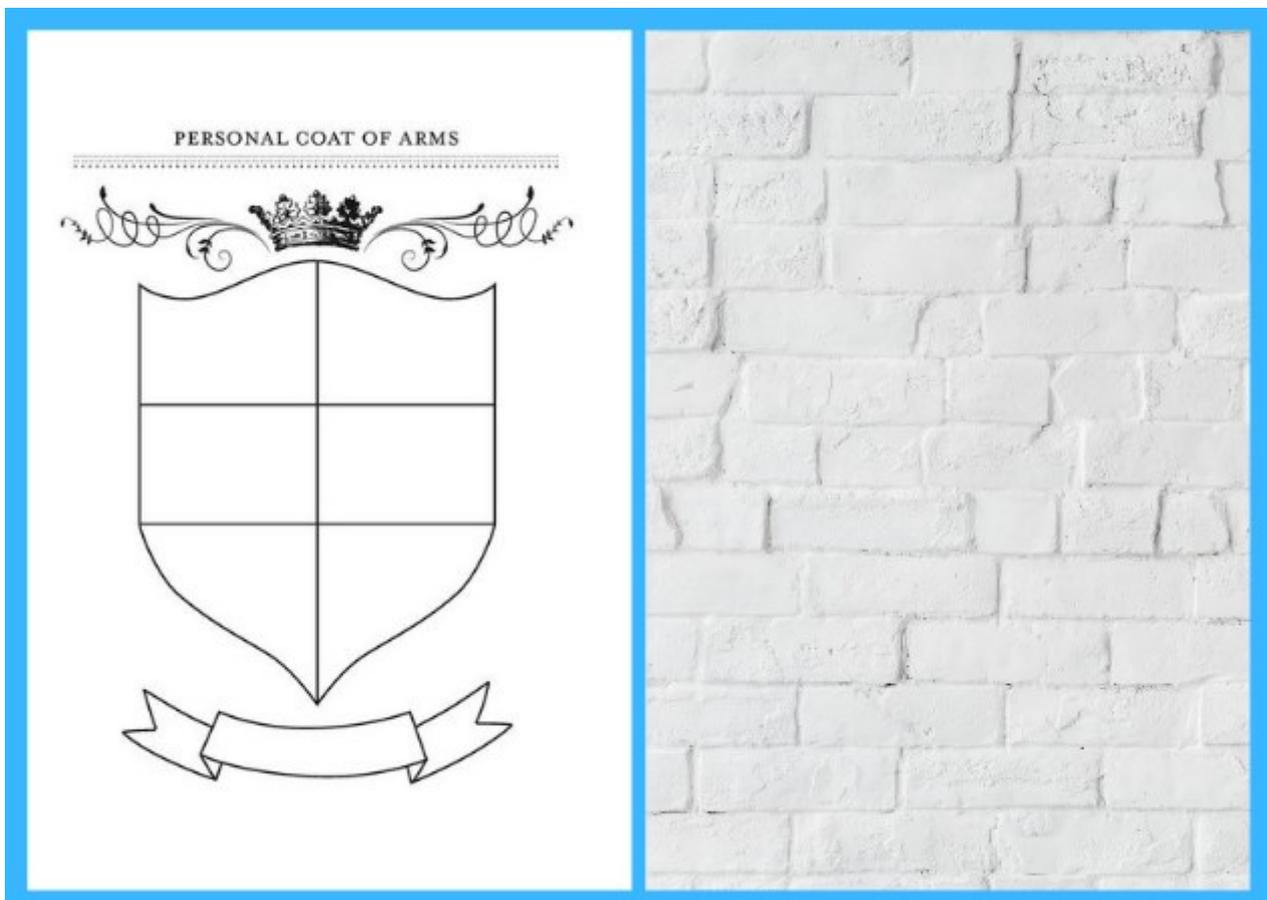
### Challenge

This involves seeing learning as a challenge. Rather than talk about a problem or issue, talk about a challenge, as this can be interpreted subconsciously that it is possible, rather than talking about a problem or issue, which may be seen as a more permanent subconscious barrier. In fact, some pupils who have developed a fabulous confident mindset can be a little disappointed when the challenge is too easy! This is where the key component of resilience is introduced via role models and real scenarios in the classroom and life.

Classic traditional role models may be Norm Larson and WD40, Edison and the lightbulb, Richard Branson and business ventures and failures, and JK Rowling and book rejections. More contemporary role models could be Jelle and gaming, Zoella and Alfie with blogging, F2 and football rejection and success. These and other examples can be found on my You Tube channel [here](#).

### Uniqueness

This is how we see and value ourselves. One of the first things to do is to focus on achievements and qualities, rather than appearance. Appearance is important, i.e. to be well dressed and well groomed, but in my opinion, it should never outweigh personal qualities and achievements, as these are difficult to lose once achieved and will last a lifetime. A good starting place is completing a shield and/or a wall.



A good tip is to ask a friend or teacher to complete some of your spaces in the shield or wall as this acts as confirmation – this process can be a very powerful tool in developing belief and momentum.

### **Positivity**

A key quality of developing a confident mindset is to be able to see the positives in every situation. This links into resilience, as an initial negative situation may ultimately yield positive outcomes. Asking pupils to find role models who encountered negativity and turned it into a positive is a great starting exercise, i.e. Alvin Law, Dick and Rick Hoyt, Mia Hamm.

I talk about the Chimp Paradox, which was introduced by Dr Steve Peters. He explains how we all have a chimp which is always looking for the negative in everything and is at its strongest at night when we are sleeping in bed. To counteract this, I ask pupils to complete a simple **Today Result and Tomorrow Promise**. This involves the child writing down in a diary the good things that happened that day i.e. the teacher praised me, I completed my homework, I helped my parents (Today Result) and one promise they are going to do tomorrow, i.e. help my parents around the house, support other pupils in my class, ask questions when I am unsure (Tomorrow Promise).

### **Perception**

This is perhaps the key area of the confident mindset. How we interpret our world and the actions of others can contribute to either a confident or insecure mindset. Three people can see the same incident but each could have different interpretations. Just being aware of this phenomenon may be the trigger to start developing a more realistic perception. This awareness may be the start of smarter confidence, where the pupil recognises the impact of themselves on others, along with recognising the needs of others.

## Action

For a confident mindset to be achieved there must be an element of action, i.e. implementation of ideas, thoughts and feelings. However, when pupils demonstrate action by putting their hand up in class, making a presentation or leading a group, they may well receive negative results. This is where FAIL is important...**FIRST ATTEMPT IN LEARNING.**

All of the above concepts and practical strategies can be found in the CUPPA Series.

## Teachers

The classroom environment must contribute to growth mindset. By this I mean that feedback, either verbal or non-verbal, must be fair, consistent and accurate. For example, if the teacher puts up with or ignores negative 'sniping' by fellow pupils in response to an action or words of another pupil, then this is tantamount to condoning this negative 'sniping.'

Within the classroom setting, teachers need to plan out and deliver the necessary steps to developing growth mindset. If this process happens too quickly, disengagement or ineffective learning may be the outcome and barriers will be formed. One method of classroom delivery to start growth mindset is outlined by Brock and Hundley in *The Growth Mindset Coach* (2016) page 31:

- Preflection
- How we learn
- Mistakes of self and others
- Video examples
- Comic strip examples
- T Chart
- Think, pair, share about how a challenge was solved

## Laying the Foundations

Essentially, teachers need to discover where pupils are in their understanding of their potential, and help them to develop the five growth mindset concepts of effort, resilience, guidance, feedback and challenge. Then they should focus on how learning occurs, and highlight how mistakes and errors may well be necessary for progress. Pupils can then take this information and create cartoon strips and T charts. Finally, knowledge and how breakthroughs were made can be shared in the classroom.

Equally, it may be that you break down personal barriers and negative perceptions of self by introducing the concept of **Be The Best Version Of Me**. Each child should not compare with others, but try to be better today than they were yesterday, and be better tomorrow than they are today. This means that they only compare with themselves. A barrier to gaining a growth mindset is lack of feedback. Therefore, to eliminate this barrier, measures and scaling need to be made before, during and after set periods of time. This could be test measures such as the Brock and Hundley Questionnaire below:

## Growth Mindset Questionnaire

1. There are just somethings that I will never be good at
2. When I make a mistake I try and learn more
3. When others do better than me I feel threatened
4. I enjoy getting out of my comfort zone
5. When I show others I am smart or talented, I feel successful
6. I feel inspired by the success of others
7. I feel good when I can do something others cannot
8. It is possible to change how intelligent you are
9. You should not have to try to be smart - you are just smart or not
10. I enjoy taking on a new challenge or task with which I am unfamiliar

Odd questions = Fixed Mindset

Even questions = Growth Mindset

## Parents

Parental support is where the triangle of success between pupils and teachers is formed. I have heard many parents and carers say that they are doing all they can to help. Yet I often find out that this just comprises of being positive, with no tangible support that makes the pupil accountable. To counteract this barrier to support, Jackie Beere (2016) puts a useful set of questions together which helps parents support their children:

1. What did you learn today that surprised you?
2. Did you make any good mistakes today?
3. How did you learn from them?
4. What did you do today that made your brain grow?
5. How did you help someone else stretch their brain power?

Beyond these questions, parents should work with teachers to create a set of metacognition grids to evaluate effort, resilience and thinking strategies. These grids (taken from the CUPPA book Series) are a simple, yet effective way for pupils to document their endeavours.

## SELF-REFLECTION EFFORT GRADE

Chris also wants to know how much effort you put into those challenges. Circle the box that describes your effort.

**5** Total focus and in flow, wanting to achieve success and constantly searched for different ways to solve challenges, not distracted.

**4** Mainly focused and mainly in flow, wanting to achieve success most of the time, and some searching for different ways to solve challenges, slight distraction.

**3** Intermittent focus and stop-start flow, wanting success but not prepared to really stretch, and slowly got frustrated, some distraction.

**2** Little focus and little flow. Let go of responsibility for effort, got really frustrated and tired out. Only did some work, distracted.

**1** Not interested and no flow unless it's really easy. Watched the clock. Can't Be Bothered (CBB), totally distracted

Criteria	When did I do this? Score one (low) to five (high)
I worked in a challenging way and pushed my thinking.	
I had no fear of being judged.	
I was resilient and kept going when things got difficult (this could be distractions, past lessons, negative memories)	
I demonstrated no fear of failure.	
I kept practising, used effort and found flow.	
I accepted feedback and was patient.	
I worked as a team.	

# References

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Various ideas and concepts have been taken from my books [The Amazing Journey Of CUPPA](#) – His Quest to Find the Five Secrets of the Confident Mindset. It features several role models for talent and intelligence role models.

For further information and practical strategies:

PERTS Project for Education Research That Scales (Carol Dweck) – Mindset Kits [www.mindsetkit.org](http://www.mindsetkit.org)