

## An introduction to the Growth Mindset

One of the ways we are looking to develop our students and prepare them for their next steps is to introduce a Growth Mindset ethos both in and out of lessons.



A mindset is simply a belief – a belief about yourself and your fundamental qualities.

People with a **fixed mindset** believe that qualities like intelligence are stable (fixed). They don't change much over time; in the fixed world success is about proving you're smart or talented: in this world, effort and failure are things to be avoided because they reveal your limitations.

"A person's potential is determined from birth- you just have to live with it"

People with a **Growth Mindset** believe these qualities are growable: they are susceptible to change. In the world of Growth Mindset you can choose to stretch yourself to learn something new: In this world failure is a useful hint and effort is what makes you smart or talented.

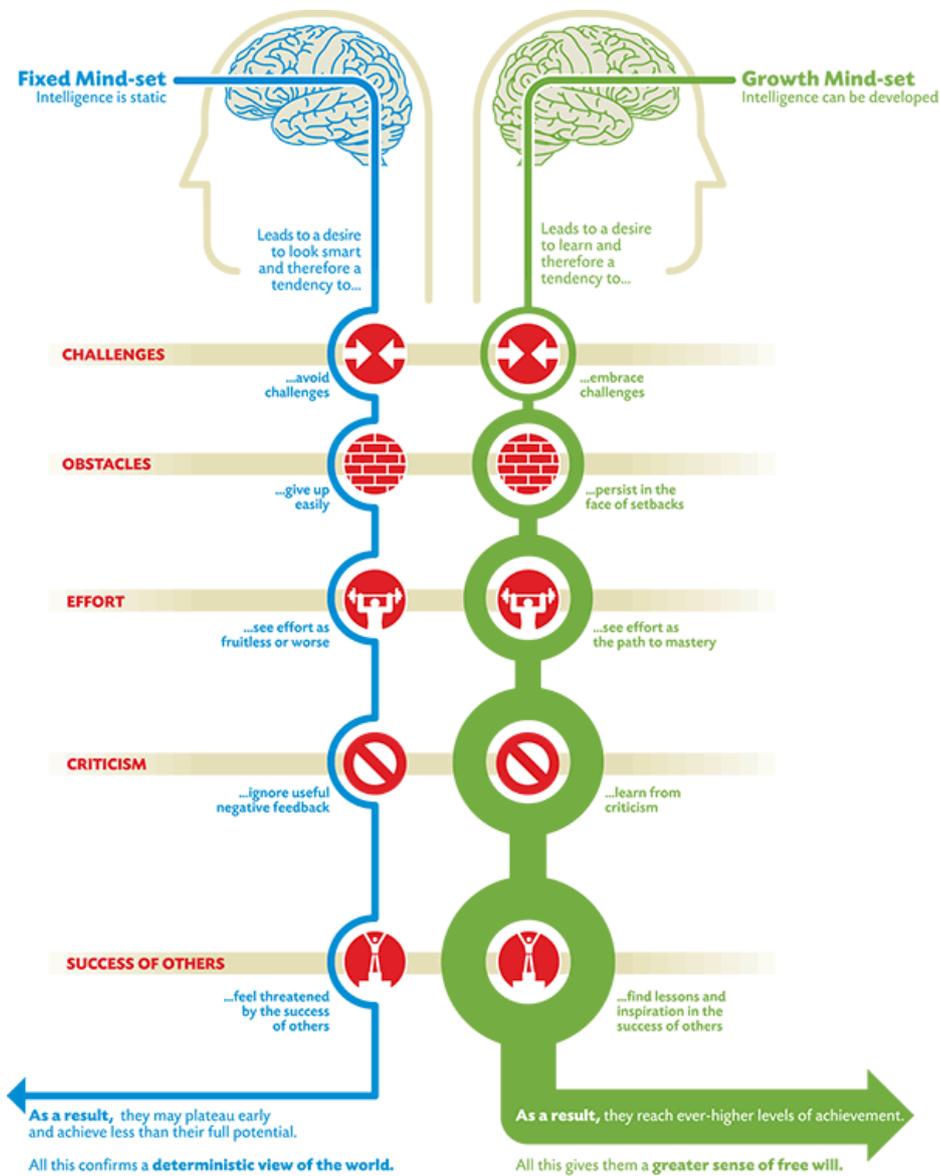
"A person's true potential is unknown (and unknowable); it's impossible to foresee what can be accomplished with passion, effort and training."  
(Professor Carol Dweck 2007)

Professor Carol Dweck has carried out in-depth research into this area and is the originator of the Mindset Theory.

The research shows that the growth mindset is what fosters grit, determination and work ethic within students, athletes, and people of all ages.

Carol Dweck's extensive research of the topic also shows that people with a Growth Mindset learn, grow, and achieve more than people that have fixed mindsets.

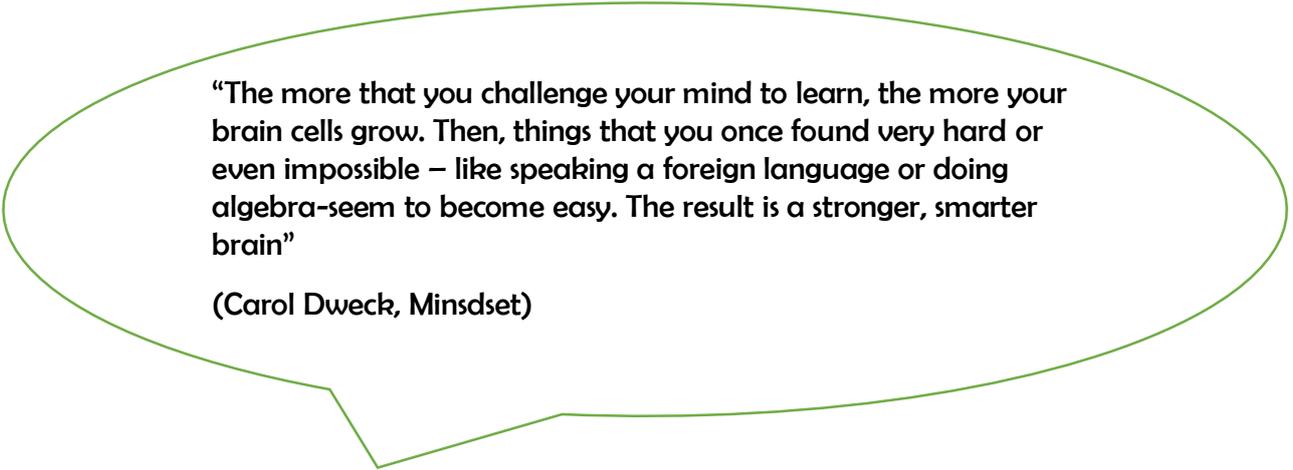
FIXED MINDSET		GROWTH MINDSET
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• SOMETHING YOU'RE BORN WITH</li> <li>• FIXED</li> </ul>	SKILLS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• COME FROM HARD WORK.</li> <li>• CAN ALWAYS IMPROVE</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• SOMETHING TO AVOID</li> <li>• COULD REVEAL LACK OF SKILL</li> <li>• TEND TO GIVE UP EASILY</li> </ul>	CHALLENGES	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• SHOULD BE EMBRACED</li> <li>• AN OPPORTUNITY TO GROW.</li> <li>• MORE PERSISTANT</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• UNNECESSARY</li> <li>• SOMETHING YOU DO WHEN YOU ARE NOT GOOD ENOUGH</li> </ul>	EFFORT	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• ESSENTIAL</li> <li>• A PATH TO MASTERY</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• GET DEFENSIVE</li> <li>• TAKE IT PERSONAL</li> </ul>	FEEDBACK	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• USEFUL</li> <li>• SOMETHING TO LEARN FROM</li> <li>• IDENTIFY AREAS TO IMPROVE</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• BLAME OTHERS</li> <li>• GET DISCOURAGED</li> </ul>	SETBACKS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• USE AS A WAKE-UP CALL TO WORK HARDER NEXT TIME.</li> </ul>



The diagrams help outline that we are looking to provide opportunities for our students to:

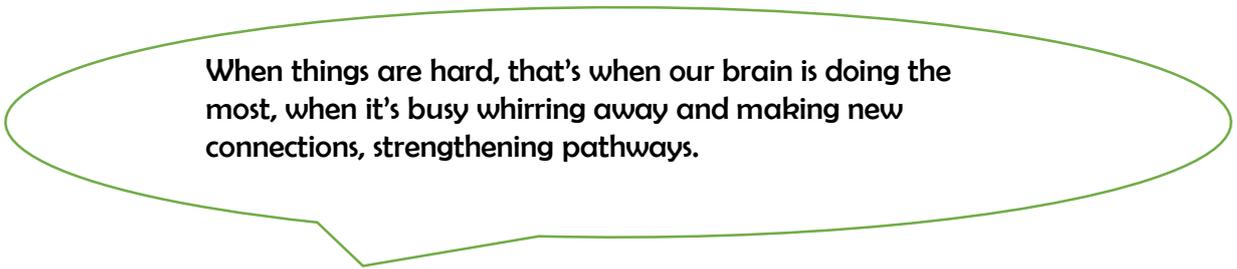
- **Embrace challenge in lessons**
- **Be persistent and resilient if the task challenges them**
- **Give the required effort to master the subject**
- **Learn from and engage with the teacher's feedback**
- **Take motivation from the success around them.**

### **Messages from the Growth Mindset**



“The more that you challenge your mind to learn, the more your brain cells grow. Then, things that you once found very hard or even impossible – like speaking a foreign language or doing algebra-seem to become easy. The result is a stronger, smarter brain”

(Carol Dweck, Mindset)



When things are hard, that's when our brain is doing the most, when it's busy whirring away and making new connections, strengthening pathways.

### **Do most people have a Growth Mindset?**

Research suggests 40% of us have a fixed mindset and a similar number have a growth mindset.

However approximately 15-20% of people are undecided or have mixed mindsets – growth in some domains and fixed in others.

For example, some people say practise makes perfect when learning to ride a bike, but as for computers, I was born without the Windows gene! (Hymer &Gershon 2014)

### **So are Mindsets changeable?**

Mindsets aren't themselves fixed. They are beliefs: beliefs are changeable.

## How can you help?

Try not to tell your son/daughter they are bright, clever, intelligent, talented and have natural ability

Praise them for the process they have gone through...the effort and persistence to become skilled or achieve a high level

Show interest in learning tasks set...Be happy when you find things challenging... 'We should learn something useful here'

Ask questions about your son's/daughter's learning – 'Why did you choose to write that?' Why did you use that colour?

If they get a good grade or result show them recognition of the effort and commitment they have given to achieve it.

Allow them to give things a go, make mistakes and learn from it...Fail – **F**irst **A**tttempt **I**n **L**earning

Value effort and dedication that go into achievements

Don't tell them you were no good at a certain subject...this gives them the excuse that it's an innate issue

If they say 'I don't understand' reply 'Let's see what you are missing.'

Reduce the use of the word 'work' and replace with the word learning – something which more clearly brings personal benefits to your son/daughter

If they say 'It's good enough' ask 'Is this really your best work?'

If they are saying they can't do it...say you can't do this **YET!**

If they say 'this is too hard'...tell them...'it just may take you some time and effort'