

Why Mindset Matters, 'Mindset' (extract) - Dr Carol S. Dweck, (2006)

“What are the consequences of thinking that your intelligence or personality is something you can develop, as opposed to something that is a fixed, deep-seated trait?”

The view you adopt for yourself profoundly affects the way you lead your life. It can determine whether you become the person you want to be and whether you accomplish the things you value.

Believing that your qualities are carved in stone – the **fixed mindset** – creates an urgency to prove yourself over and over... I've seen so many people with this one consuming goal of proving themselves – in the classroom, in their careers, and in their relationships. Every situation calls for a confirmation of their intelligence, personality, or character. Every situation is evaluated: Will I succeed or fail? Will I look smart or dumb? Will I be accepted or rejected? Will I feel like a winner or a loser?

There's another mindset in which these traits are not simply a hand you're dealt and have to live with, always trying to convince yourself and others that you have a royal flush when you're secretly worried it's a pair of tens. In this mindset, the hand you're dealt is just *the starting point for development*. This **growth mindset** is based on the belief that your basic qualities are things you can cultivate through your efforts, your strategies, and help from others.

“A person's true potential is unknown (and unknowable); that it's impossible to foresee what can be accomplished with years of passion, toil, and training.”

The passion for stretching yourself and sticking to it, even (or especially) when it's not going well, is the hallmark of the growth mindset. This is the mindset that allows people to thrive during some of the most challenging times in their lives.

... People's ideas about risk and effort grow out of their more basic mindset. It's not just that some people happen to recognise the value of challenging themselves and the importance of effort. **Our research has shown that this comes directly from the growth mindset.**

When we teach people the growth mindset, with its focus on development, these ideas about challenge and effort follow. Similarly, it's not just that some people happen to dislike challenge and effort. When we (temporarily) put people in a fixed mindset, with its focus on permanent traits, they quickly fear challenge and devalue effort... a belief that your qualities are carved in stone leads to a host of thoughts and actions...

‘The fixed mindset makes you concerned with how you'll be judged; the growth mindset makes you concerned with improving.’

- Carol Dweck (pages 6-7)