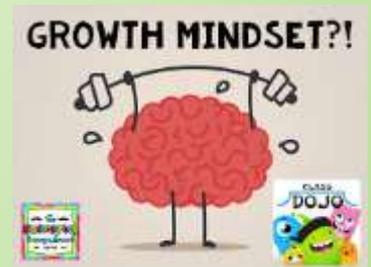


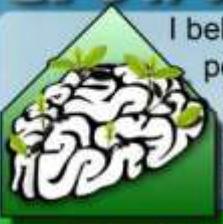
Watch your language and Grow your mind



At Bryntirion, a number of different methods are being used by staff to encourage all students to believe that the brain can grow and become 'smarter through continuous effort and hard work'. This concept of 'Growth Mindset' is gathering momentum through the Educational World and the most notable research has been carried out by Carol Dweck.

Research consistently shows that the most successful people, in any industry, share a similar 'growth mindset'. This stems from the belief that intelligence is not a 'fixed' trait that one is born with, but is developed throughout life by the consistent and constant application of effort.

The following table summarises the possible outcomes of each 'mindset'

<p>The following info is adapted from Carol Dweck, World-renowned Stanford University psychologist's theory on changing our mindset.</p>	<h2>Growth Mindset</h2>  <p>I believe that my character, personality and intelligence can be developed. My true potential is unknown.</p>	<h2>Fixed Mindset</h2>  <p>I believe that my character, personality, potential and intelligence are carved in stone and determined at birth.</p>
Desire	to push myself, take risks and constantly learn new things. I enjoy a challenge.	to look smart in every situation and to prove myself again and again. I must never fail.
Evaluation of situations	"Will it allow me to grow?" "Will it help me to overcome challenges?"	"Will I succeed at it or fail?" "Will it make me look intelligent or stupid?"
Attitude to setbacks	"I failed. I'll learn from it and move on." "I'll try harder next time."	"I'm a failure." "I knew I'd fail, I'm an idiot."
Attitude to challenges	I embrace challenges and persist when things get tough.	I avoid challenges. I get defensive and give up easily.
Effort	I believe that personal growth and learning require effort.	Why bother with effort? It's not going to change a thing.
Criticism	I try to learn from criticism. "What can I do to improve?"	I ignore criticism. I do things my way.
The success of others	I find lessons and inspiration in other people's successes.	I feel threatened by the successes of others. If they succeed, I fail.
Result...	They achieve ever-higher levels of success.	They plateau early, and never reach their full potential.

The importance of praise, and feedback, as a parent

Through her research, Dweck showed that the type of praise given when a child is successful can have a significant impact on the type of mindset they develop. Simply, the praise used can convey two messages:

- **Fixed mindset:** “You have permanent characteristics and I’m judging them”
- **Growth mindset:** “You are a developing person and I’m interested in your development”

Messages about success:

These messages can be illustrated further by the below examples: *(taken from <http://www.scottishschools.info/Websites/SchSecValeOfLeven/UserFiles/file/Whats%20on/Mindset/praise.pdf>)*

Messages about success:

Listen for the messages in the following examples:

- ✓ “You learned that so quickly! You’re so smart!”
- ✓ “Look at that drawing Sara, is he the next Picasso or what?”
- ✓ “You’re so brilliant, you got an A without even revising!”

If you are like most parents, you hear these as supportive, esteem-boosting messages. But, listen more closely. These are the messages many children hear:

- X “If I don’t learn something quickly, I’m not smart”
- X “I shouldn’t try drawing anything hard or they will see I am no Picasso”
- X “If I start revising they will stop thinking I am brilliant”

Messages about failure :

Nine year old Libby was on her way to her first gymnastics competition. She was a little nervous about competing but she was good at gymnastics, really loved it and felt confident about doing well. She had even thought about the perfect place in her room to place the trophy she could win.

In the first event, the floor exercises, Libby went first. Although she did a good job, after the next few girls had performed she slid down the scoring table. Libby also did well in other events, but not well enough to win. By the end of the evening, she had received no trophies and was devastated.

What would you do if you were Libby’s parents?

1. Tell her that she thought she was the best.
2. Tell her she was robbed of a trophy that was rightfully hers
3. Re-assure her that gymnastics is not important
4. Tell her that she has the ability and will surely win next time
5. Tell her that she didn't deserve to win

There is a strong message in our society about how to boost children's self-esteem, and a main part of that message is: Protect them from failure! While this may help with the immediate problem of the child's disappointment, it can be harmful in the long run. Why?

If we consider the five possible reactions from a mindset point of view:

The first (you thought she was the best) is insincere. She was not the best—you know it and she does too. This offers her no recipe for how to recover, or how to improve. The second (she was robbed) places blame on others, when in fact the problem was mostly with her performance, not the judges. Do you want her to grow up blaming others for her deficiencies? The third (reassure her that gymnastics doesn't really matter) teaches her to devalue something if she doesn't do well in it right away. The fourth (she has the ability) may be the most dangerous message of all. Does ability automatically take you where you want to go? If Libby didn't win this competition, why should she win the next one?

The last opinion (tell her that she didn't deserve to win) seems hardhearted under the circumstances. You wouldn't quite say it that way. However, that's largely what her growth-minded father told her.

Here's what he actually said: "Libby, I know how you feel. It is so disappointing to have your hopes up and to perform your best but not to win. But you know, you haven't really earned it yet. There were many girls there who have been in gymnastics longer than you and who have worked a lot harder than you. If this is something you really want, then it is something you'll really have to work for". He also let Libby know that if she wanted to do gymnastics purely for fun, that was just fine. If she wanted to excel in the competitions, more was required and that she could ask her coaches for guidance.

Libby took this to heart, spending much more time repeating and perfecting her routines, especially the ones she was weakest in. At the next meeting there were eighty girls from all over the area. Libby won five medals for the individual events and was the overall champion of the competition, for which she received a large trophy.

In essence, her father had not only told her the truth, but also taught her how to learn from her failures, to do what it takes to succeed in the future and where to seek help to improve. He sympathised deeply with her disappointment, but he did not give her a phoney boost that would only lead to further disappointment.



The wording of praise has a very powerful effect. The following table can act as a quick reference guide to ensure you are giving as much 'growth' praise as possible:

FIXED MINDSET Praise

"Great result—You're really smart at..."

"You learned that so quickly—you are so smart"

"You are such a talented musician / athlete / mathematician"

"Don't worry about that last test—you have the ability and will do better next time"

"You got an A—I'm so proud of your grade!"

"Fantastic—you're getting A / B / C grades with no effort"

"Don't worry, not everyone can be good at Maths—I never was. You have other talents - focus on what you're better at"

GROWTH MINDSET Praise

"Wow, great result. You clearly tried really hard and your extra effort has paid off"

"A good start, now try something even more challenging to really help you improve"

"The amount of work and effort you put into being a musician / athlete / mathematician means you are making excellent progress—well done"

"In the last test it's clear you did not spend enough time on revision—what are you going to do differently for the next test?"

OR child tries REALLY hard but still no success:

"You put so much effort in, which is fantastic. Keep going—let's work together, find some new ideas and work out what you don't understand"

"You really studied for that test and your improvement shows. Well done!"

"Clearly that was too easy. Try an even more challenging paper / question / task you could learn from"

"You haven't quite mastered that topic in Maths yet. Keep working hard, speak to your teacher, practise even more and you will improve"



HOW TO FOSTER A GROWTH MINDSET AT HOME

1. Pay attention and verbally praise children for skills that do not sound predetermined: hard work, persistence, rising to a challenge, learning from a mistake, etc. rather than being “smart, “brilliant” or “gifted”.

2. Be a growth mindset role model. Be honest: how often do you say “I can’t (cook/sing/balance my bank account)” or “I’m terrible at (sports/spelling/maths/public speaking)” as if there is no hope for you. Make sure you are sending the right message—maybe even take on something new! Children should be expected to finish any sentence about something they are currently unable to do with the word— “YET!”

3. Encourage your child to forget taking the easy route (where little learning is done) and instead embrace challenges. A sheet full of questions he/she already knows the answers to will not “grow the brain” like one deeper problem to solve (even if they do not get the correct answer).

4. Remember growth mindset isn’t just academic; it applies to many areas of life (athletic, musical, social). Having trouble getting the basketball into the net? Keep making mistakes on a guitar chord? Discuss the next steps for improvement.

5. Discourage envy of peers and talk to you child about what he / she can learn from others who appear more successful. While skills may come more easily to some, most often there is an element of practice, persistence and hard work which leads to achievement.

Growth Mindset
Failure is the most essential step to success