

IN PURSUIT OF PURPOSE

— HELPING CHART YOUR PATH —

Growth Mindset Worksheet

*Companion Material to Module 1, Lesson 3:
Developing a Growth Mindset*



Want to learn more about *In Pursuit of Purpose*? Go to
<https://inpursuitofpurpose.thinkific.com/>

Growth Mindset Background

Carol Dweck is the psychologist and researcher who created the concepts of fixed mindset and growth mindset. She has taught at Columbia, Harvard and U of Illinois. She currently teaches at Stanford.



When trying to assess where you fall on the fixed and growth mindset spectrum, it is helpful to watch how you respond to failure.

Fixed-mindset individuals dread failure because they believe it's a negative statement on their basic abilities. People with growth mindset don't fear failure as much because they realize their performance can be improved and learning comes from failure.

Dweck's definition of fixed and growth mindsets from a 2012 interview:

"In a fixed mindset, students believe their basic abilities, their intelligence, their talents, are just fixed traits. They have a certain amount and that's that, and then their goal becomes to look smart all the time and never look dumb.

In a growth mindset, students understand that their talents and abilities can be developed through effort, good teaching and persistence. They don't necessarily think everyone's the same or anyone can be Einstein, but they believe everyone can get smarter if they work at it."

["Stanford University's Carol Dweck on the Growth Mindset and Education"](#) OneDublin.org. 2012-06-19.

What's Your Mindset? Let's Test It

Want to test out where you fall on the growth vs fixed mindset spectrum? Dr. Carol Dweck has a simple and free test you can take here: <http://mindsetonline.com/testyourmindset>



Making the Shift from Fixed to Growth

As discussed in the workbook (module 1, lesson 3), the first step to making a change starts with awareness.

On the next page are a variety of different tactics for you to leverage to strengthen your growth mindset.

To get this process started, Professor Dweck recommends the following four steps:

First, learn to hear your fixed mindset. Recognize when you have fixed mindset reactions.



These might sound like this:

“I don’t know if I can do this. Maybe I’m not good enough.”

“What if I fail? I will be so embarrassed.”

If things don’t go as well as hoped, the voice might say, “This proves it. I don’t have what it takes.”

Facing criticism, you might say to yourself, “It’s not my fault that this didn’t work.”

Second, recognize you have a choice

in how you hear feedback and respond to challenges and criticisms. This is similar to what we talked about in Module 3, Lesson 4: Learning from Hard Times. We can’t always control what happens to us, but we can always control how we respond.

When you struggle or fail, you can either think, “That proves that I can’t do it.” (A fixed mindset response)

OR you can see these challenges as signs that you need to ramp up your strategies and effort, stretch yourself, and expand your abilities. (A growth mindset attitude)



Third, talk back to your limiting thoughts with a growth mindset voice.

Here are a few common triggers that might fire up our fixed mindset vulnerabilities.

Approaching Challenges:

When you think “What if I fail? What will this say about me?” respond with the growth mindset message of “Most successful people had failures along the way.”

If you hear yourself say, “That looks really hard. I want to do it, but I think I will take the safer path instead,” counter this with, “When I really push myself and stretch beyond my comfort zone, that is when I am more likely to learn and grow.”

Hitting Setbacks:

If you hear that harsh voice saying, “This proves it. I am not good enough” say to yourself: “That is not true. Basketball wasn’t easy for Michael Jordan and science wasn’t easy for Thomas Edison. They had a passion and put in tons of effort. I just need to keep trying.”

Facing Criticism:

When someone gives you guidance on things you can do better, what is your general reaction? Now, we aren't talking about someone giving harsh feedback. None of us like that. Even if it is framed constructively, do you still struggle?

With fixed mindset, criticism feels like an attack on who we are. Of course we feel defensive when there is a belief that we can't change our capabilities. Being told that you aren't good enough leaves you feeling stuck with nowhere to go.



With growth mindset, feedback isn't as scary. You can see that feedback is focused on **what we do**. And since we believe that we have the capacity to improve our performance, advice gives us a roadmap on how to keep moving towards success.

When you have a fixed mindset, a natural response to criticism is "It's not my fault." You want to truly believe that, so you can keep defending your belief in your abilities.

With a growth mindset, we can make an important pivot. It is less scary to take responsibility for mistakes and shortcomings. "If I don't take responsibility, I can't fix it. Let me listen—however painful it is— and learn whatever I can."

Fourth, take the growth mindset action.

Have you heard the Cherokee story about a grandfather teaching his grandson about life?

"A fight is going on inside me," he said to the boy. "It is a terrible fight and it is between two wolves. One is evil—he is anger, envy, sorrow, regret, greed, arrogance, self-pity, guilt, resentment, inferiority, lies, false pride, superiority, and ego."



He continued, "The other is good – he is joy, peace, love, hope, serenity, humility, kindness, benevolence, empathy, generosity, truth, compassion, and faith. The same fight is going on inside you—and inside every other person, too."

The grandson thought about it for a minute and then asked his grandfather: "Which wolf will win?"

The old Cherokee simply replied, "The one you feed."

You can think about growth mindset and fixed mindset the same way. **The one you feed will be the mindset that wins.**

At this point in the process, you have

- Heard your fixed mindset voice
- Recognized that you have a choice in how you respond
- Replaced your fixed mindset thinking with growth mindset statements

What you do next is the equivalent of feeding one wolf or the other. Take fixed mindset action, and you will strengthen a fixed mindset within you.

Instead, choose to follow the final step which is to **take growth mindset action.**

You can take growth mindset action by:

- Taking on challenges wholeheartedly
- Learning from your setbacks
- Resolving to hang tough and try again
- Listening to feedback with an open mind and willingness to learn
- Remembering that the path to success includes a lot of “ready, aim, fire”.... “aim, fire”... “aim, fire.”
- When assessing how you are doing, compare your progress to your own performance in the past, not the performance of others.



Do this and you will nurture your belief in your ability to expand your capabilities and talents. This in turn will increase your confidence, self-efficacy and resilience.

Making the Shift Exercise

Now that you have read the previous pages, you are ready to try this out.

1. Hear and recognize your fixed mindset messages

Write down what you say to yourself.

Making the Shift Exercise (Continued)

2. Recognize that you can choose how you respond

Say something along the lines of "That's fixed mindset thinking. I choose to believe that I have the ability to grow and improve."

3. Replace your fixed mindset thinking with growth mindset statements

Look again at the fixed mindset thought you wrote down in number 1 and replace this with a growth mindset thought instead.

4. Take Growth Mindset Action

Now make it happen. You can write out actions that will support your messaging. In Pursuit of Purpose students, remember that you can also reference your Authentic Action plan (Module 4, Lesson 3) or the Being Brave worksheet (Module 2, Lesson 6)

Repeat this process as often as necessary.

And don't forget about the Power of Yet Exercise from our workbook!

IPoP students, rewatch Module 1, Lesson 2 to get a refresher on the Power of Mindset.

Going Deeper

Sometimes our core beliefs, the things that define who we believe we are and how we see the world, need a bit more coaxing in order to make a shift from negative to positive.

Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT) is a type of therapy focused on solutions, encouraging patients to challenge distorted thoughts and change destructive patterns of behavior. CBT helps people change their negative core beliefs, which could include fixed mindset limiting thoughts.

If you feel like you need to keep working at making the shift from fixed to growth, CBT might be a helpful path for you to explore. University of Pennsylvania's Dr. Amy Wenzel writes a paper outlining techniques titled [Modification of Core Beliefs in Cognitive Therapy](#).

As always, be mindful of your mental health needs and seek the support of a doctor if you are struggling.

Learning More

Read: Carol Dweck's [Mindset: The New Psychology of Success](#)

Test Yourself: [What's Your Mindset?](#)

Watch Carol Dweck: [Power of Believing You Can Improve](#)
[The Power of Yet](#)

Want to share with your kids? Here is the [The Power of Yet – Sesame Street version](#)



Want to learn more about how to craft your authentic life? Go to <https://inpursuitofpurpose.thinkific.com/> to learn more.