



MANAGING ACADEMIC CHALLENGES

AND DEVELOPING A GROWTH MINDSET



Managing academic challenges and setbacks in a healthy way

Academic challenges and setbacks can be extremely upsetting. It can be especially difficult if you have **very high expectations** regarding your academic performance.

Extensive research led by **Dr. Carol Dweck** of **Stanford University** shows that using a **growth mindset** can help frame challenges as learning opportunities as opposed to failures, and can support you in persisting through difficulties!

WHAT IS A GROWTH MINDSET?

The belief that our individual cognitive attributes and abilities are not fixed, but rather, can be developed through learning



This is in contrast to a fixed mindset, where one believes that their cognitive attributes are fixed and cannot be changed or developed



EMBRACING A GROWTH MINDSET

instead of a fixed mindset has shown to improve:

- Motivation and persistence
- Academic achievement
- Resilience

EVALUATE YOUR MINDSET!

What mindset do you have?* Consider whether you agree or disagree with the following statements:

1	You cannot change the amount of intelligence you have	Agree	Disagree
2	Even though you can learn new things, this doesn't change how intelligent you are.	Agree	Disagree
3	You are able to change the amount of intelligence you have throughout your life.	Agree	Disagree
4	Even though you are a certain kind of person now, you can still change the important parts of who you are.	Agree	Disagree

*Adapted from: Dweck, C. S. (2006). *Mindset: The new psychology of success*. Random House Inc.



If you agree with items 1 & 2, you currently favour a fixed mindset.
If you agree with items 3 & 4, you currently favour a growth mindset.

TIPS FOR DEVELOPING A GROWTH MINDSET



VIEW CHALLENGES AS OPPORTUNITIES

Having a growth mindset means making the most of opportunities for self-improvement. Challenges are the perfect opportunities for growth!



REPLACE THE WORD "FAILING" WITH THE WORD "LEARNING"



When you fall short of a goal or don't meet your expectations for your performance, you haven't failed- you've learned!

REFLECT ON YOUR GROWTH

Think of something that you previously did not know how to do and learned through effort and practice. This is evidence of growth and learning!



VALUE THE PROCESS OVER THE END RESULT



Remember that feeling challenged means that you are learning something new. Find value in the process, rather than focusing solely on the outcome.

USE THE WORD "YET"

When you find yourself struggling with a task, tell yourself that you simply haven't mastered it *yet*!



CULTIVATE A SENSE OF PURPOSE

[**CLICK HERE**](#) for a 3-minute video on what students and professors have to say about growth mindset

Why are you pursuing your goals? Try to keep the big picture in mind, rather than getting caught up in temporary setbacks.