

MANAGING EXPECTATIONS & COPING WITH ACADEMIC CHALLENGES

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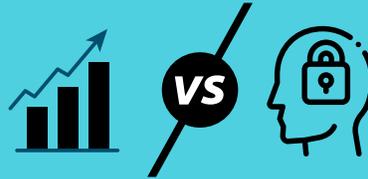
Academic challenges and setbacks can be extremely upsetting. Performance pressures, fear of failure and/or its long-term consequences, and fear of disappointing family are all top student stressors. ^{1,4,7,8} It can be especially difficult if you started with **very high expectations** regarding your **academic performance**, perhaps based on how you performed in previous years.

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!⁹



WHAT IS A GROWTH MINDSET?

The belief that our individual cognitive attributes and abilities are not fixed, but, rather, can be developed through learning.^{5,6}



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

WATCH THIS 3-MINUTE VIDEO TO LEARN THE BASICS OF GROWTH MINDSET!

Research has shown that embracing a growth mindset instead of a fixed mindset can improve:

- Motivation and persistence⁹
- Academic achievement²
- Resilience²

CLICK HERE for a 3-minute video on what students and professors have to say about growth mindset

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 statements 1 & 2, you currently favour a fixed mindset.

If you agree with statements 3 & 4, you currently favour a growth mindset.

TIPS FOR DEVELOPING A GROWTH MINDSET³

VIEW CHALLENGES AS OPPORTUNITIES

Having a growth mindset means making the most of opportunities for self-improvement.

Challenges are the perfect opportunities for growth!



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.



CULTIVATE A SENSE OF PURPOSE

Why are you pursuing your goals?

Try to keep the big picture in mind rather than getting caught up in temporary setbacks.

REPLACE "FAILING" WITH "LEARNING"

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



USE THE WORD "YET"

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

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!



GROWTH MINDSET IN ACTION

Here are some examples of how these tips can actually be put into action to help you develop a growth mindset.

The key is to change your perspective.

"This exam is the hardest ever and I can't do it."

Instead



"This exam may be super challenging, but maybe I can just get 5 marks better than last time."

"If I fail this exam, I can't reach my goals."



"If I fail this exam, I'll have to problem-solve for other ways to reach my goals."

"If I don't do well enough to pass, it's hopeless."



"If I don't do well enough to pass, I'll have to keep trying or find another way that works for me."

"There's only one way to succeed."



"There are many different ways to succeed in my life."

CONTACT INFORMATION

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