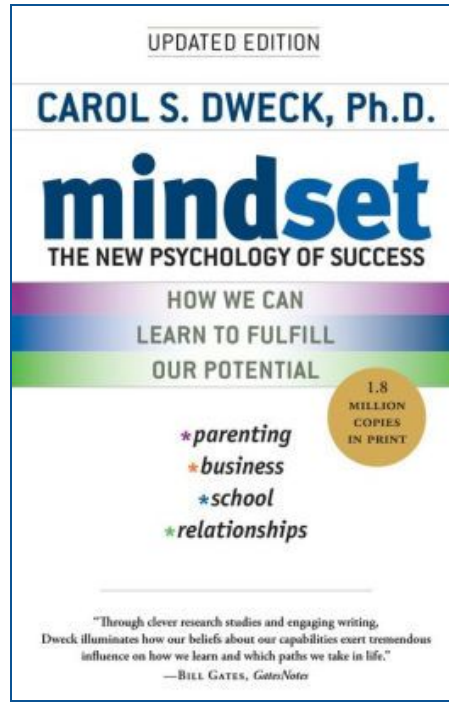


Favorite Quote:

“The fixed mindset makes you concerned with how you’ll be judged; the growth mindset make you concerned with improving.” –Carol Dweck



Summary: published in 2007, *Mindset* is the 246-page culmination of Carol Dweck’s groundbreaking research on achievement and success. Carol is a world-renowned Stanford psychologist who argues there are two fundamental mindsets we adopt: 1) fixed mindset—our qualities are carved in stone, and 2) growth mindset—our qualities can be cultivated through effort. The former is lethal to development and goal attainment; the latter, a catalyst. The end goal: eradicate insidious fixed mindset from your being. Embrace a growth mindset and attain a fulfilling life with a newfound dynamism.

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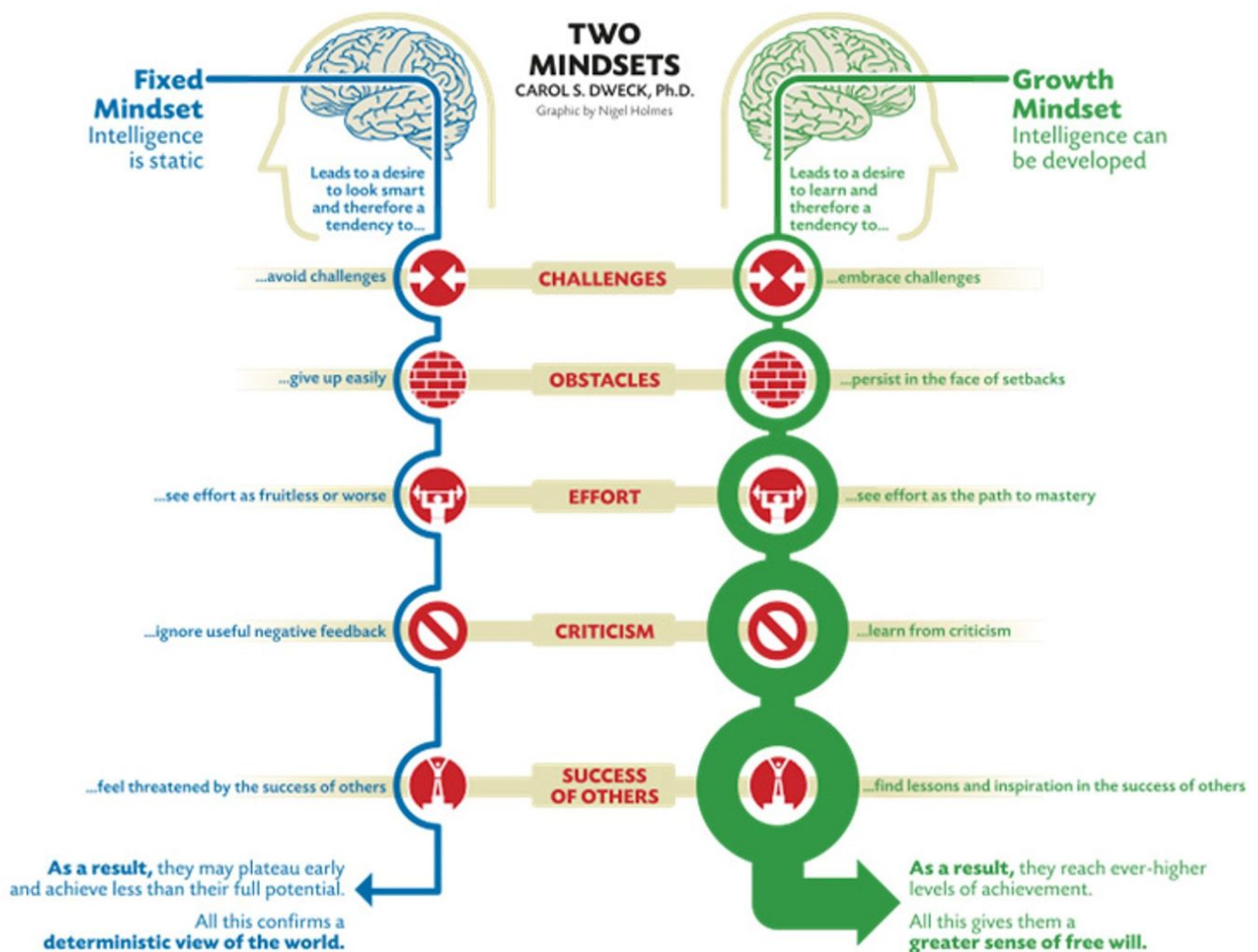
Author’s Bio: Carol S. Dweck, Ph.D., is one of the world’s leading researchers in the field of motivation and is the Lewis and Virginia Eaton Professor of Psychology at Stanford University. She has held professorships at Columbia and Harvard Universities, and has been elected to the American Academy of Arts and Sciences. Her scholarly book *Self-Theories: Their Role in Motivation, Personality, and Development* was named Book of the Year by the World Education Federation. Her work has been featured in such publications as *The New Yorker*, *Time*, *The New York Times*, *The Washington Post*, and *The Boston Globe*, and she has appeared on *Today* and *20/20*.



The Mindsets

Overview: Carol introduced the two mindsets: fixed vs. growth. The fixed mindset creates an urgency to prove yourself over and over: every situation calls for a confirmation of your intelligence, personality, or character. Conversely, the growth mindset is rooted in a belief that everyone can change and grow through application and experience. It involves a passion for stretching yourself, persistence, and embracing failure as a teacher.

This image isn't presented until page p. 245 but I'm including it here because I'm a visual person and perhaps so are you. This is the best visual synopsis of the book:



Favorite Quotes

- Exceptional individuals have “a special talent for identifying their own strengths and weaknesses.”
—Howard Gardner, *Extraordinary Minds*

Notes

- It is startling to see the degree to which people with the fixed mindset do not believe in effort.

- The growth mindset is self-aware, intellectually honest. Humility overpowers the ego because the growth mindset wants accurate information about current abilities, even if unflattering.
- Exceptional people have a special talent for **converting life's setbacks into future successes**.
- The fixed mindset is very much rooted in concern or fear of how you'll be judged.

Inside the Mindsets

Overview: mindsets are beliefs. Beliefs have huge agency over our behavior. Therefore, if we deeply interrogate our own belief system, we can get within range to actually change life for the better.

Favorite Quotes

- “You aren’t a failure until you start to blame.” —John Wooden
- “As a society we value natural, effortless accomplishments over achievement through effort.”
—Malcolm Gladwell



“I don’t divide the world into the weak and the strong, or the successes and the failures. . . *I divide the world into the learners and nonlearners.*”
—Benjamin Barber

Notes

- When you enter a mindset, you enter a new world. In one world—the world of fixed traits—success is about proving you’re smart or talented. Validating yourself. In the other—the world of changing qualities—it’s about stretching yourself to learn something new. Developing yourself.
- Mindsets are just beliefs. They’re powerful beliefs, but they’re just something in your mind, **and you can change your mind**.
- People with the growth mindset are comfortable asking for help. Not knowing is not seen as a vulnerability. Those with a fixed mindset don’t want to expose their deficiencies.
- When choosing a partner, growth mindset folks seeks someone who challenges them to become better, and encourages them to learn new things.
- Intelligence ≠ perfection.
- Story of Janet Cooke and Stephen Glass, young reporters at the *Washington Post* and *The New Republic* who created fake stories to earn their recognition.
- Think about potential for a moment:

- No test can measure it
- No person can truly gauge it
- The brain knows no limits other than self-imposed blockades.
- **Joe Kennedy** oozed fixed mindset: “It’s not what you are. It’s what people *think* you are that matters.”
 - He also condemned a gentleman for wearing red socks and brown shoes. Appearance was more important to him than talent and potential.

CEO examples from this book

Name	Company	Mindset	Examples
Lee Iacocca	Chrysler Motors	Fixed	Insulated himself from criticism; became a nonlearner; never shared credit.
Albert Dunlap	Sunbeam	Fixed	Focused on short-term appeasement of Wall Street.
Lou Gerstner	IBM	Growth	Addressed deeper, multi-year problems and company rebounded.
Jack Welch	GE	Growth	Took full responsibility for insider trading scandal; inspired innovation.
Alan Wurtzel	Circuit City	Growth	Would constantly seek to learn from his board members for knowledge.
Steve Case	AOL	Fixed	Denied problems, blamed others, vowed revenge.
Jerry Levin	Time Warner	Fixed	Image focused; AOL Time Warner lost almost \$100B in 2002.
Steve Bennett	Intuit	Growth	Met with front-line employees to understand their perspective.
Lou Gerstner	IBM, Amex, RJR	Growth	Seeked outside expertise, disbanded mgmt committee, changed incentives structures, cut prices, regained custom focus; shares increased 800%
Anne Mulcahy	Xerox	Growth	Cut the workforce by 30% with empathy; learned the details of every unit.
David Packard	Hewlett-Packard	Growth	Rewarded a defiant employee with a medal for challenging his guidance.

- The fixed mindset will often opt for success over growth to prove they’re special or superior. This often compounds into entitlement—feeling the world owes you something.
- Author being vulnerable (and something I totally relate to):

“The scariest thought, which I rarely entertained, was the possibility of being ordinary.”

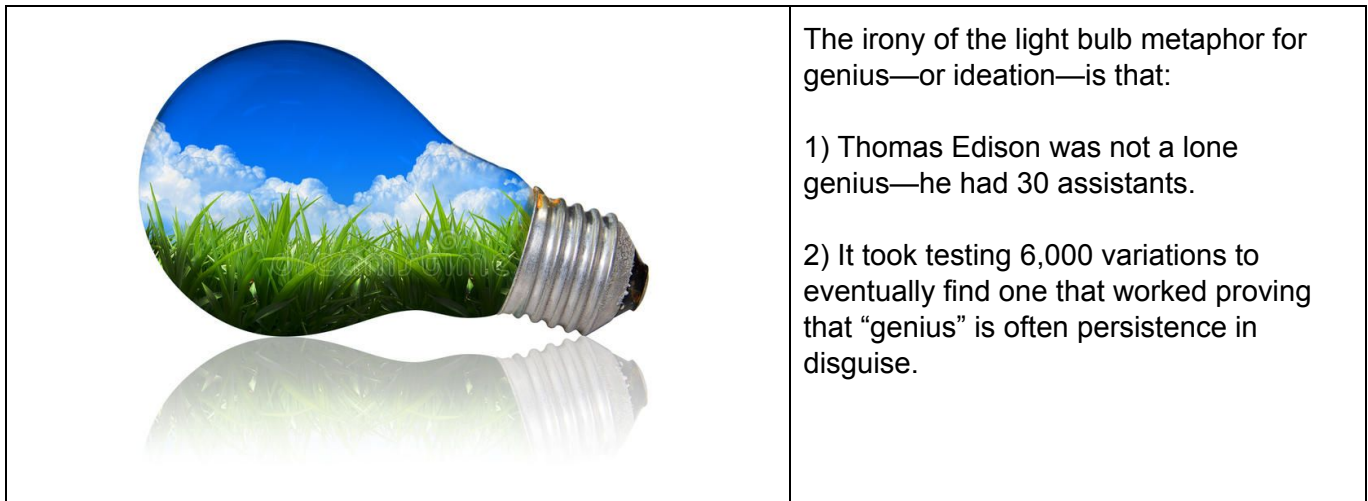
- The *New York Times* points out that failure has transformed from an action (I failed) to an identify (I am a failure). This is especially true in the fixed mindset and further catalyzed by social media and our hyper-narcissistic generation.

“In summary, people who believe in fixed traits feel an urgency to succeed, and when they do, they may feel more than pride. They may feel a sense of superiority, since success means that their fixed traits are better than other people’s. However, lurking behind that self-esteem of the fixed mindset is a simple question: If you’re somebody when you’re successful, what are you when you’re unsuccessful?”

- Even in the growth mindset, failure can be a painful exercise. **But it doesn't define you.**
- Story of 3-Michelin-Star chef, Bernard Loiseau who committed suicide when rumors circles of his restaurant losing a Michelin star.
- Growth mindset individuals still cope, but **they cope with determination.**
- People with the the growth mindset admire effort because that is what ignites ability.
- The key is to learn to catch yourself in the fixed mindset and then SWITCH, making sure you take the challenge, learn from the failure, and continue your effort.

The Truth about Ability and Accomplishment

Overview: “genius” is often persistence in disguise. “Genius” without effort is fallow.



Favorite Quotes

- “There are no ‘natural’ geniuses.” —Twyla Tharp, *The Creative Habit*

Notes

- **For children, do not praise their ability (fixed mindset). Praise their effort (growth mindset).**
- In the fixed mindset, imperfections are shameful.
- On gender differences:
 - In a grade school study, boys received 8x the criticism for their conduct compared to girls. This could explain the tendency for some boys to be more insulated from critique.
- Story of Judit Polgar, the best female chess player in the world whose father was a growth mindset evangelist and taught her innate talent is nothing and success is 99% hard work.
- Growth mindset is about *having a plan* for things in life. Try completing this sentence with a personal ambition:

What's my plan for _____?

- Starting my own company
- Finding my dream job
- Earning a promotion

- Meeting a potential spouse
- Bringing kids into this world

Sport

Overview: mindset applied to various sports and athletes. The best example of a fixed mindset athlete was John McEnroe who believed talent is a natural endowment.

Favorite Quotes

- “There is something about seeing myself improve that motivates and excites me.” —Jackie Joyner-Kersey
- “The mark of a champion is the ability to win when things are not quite right—when you’re not playing well and your emotions are not the right ones.” —Billie Jean King
- “I believe ability can get you to the top, but it takes character to keep you there.” —John Wooden

Notes

- Do you believe that character is strength in the face of adversity?
- The words “triumph of human will” get me every time
- Jack Nicklaus, perhaps the greatest golfer in history, faced many clutch shots that would determine victory or defeat: **he only missed one in his entire career.**

Business

Overview: the powerful implications of mindset when applied to people working together.

Favorite Quotes

- “True self-confidence is the courage to be open—to welcome change and new ideas regardless of their source.” —Jack Welch

Notes

- Many a corporate scandal has been further compounded by the fixed mindset. Gladwell shares that when the working environment esteems employees for their innate talent, they have grave difficulty when their image is threatened. **“They will not take the remedial course. They will not stand up to investors and the public and admit that they were wrong. They’d sooner lie.”**
- To the fixed mindset individual, **image > integrity**
- The growth mindset individuals 1) constantly trying to improve, 2) surround themselves with the most able people they can find, and 3) look squarely at their own deficiencies and mistakes.
- Back to Lee Iacocca, fixed mindset CEO of Chrysler: he never shared the credit. He actually killed innovative design plans for fear that his underlings might receive credit. Unbelievable.
- Jack Welch learned to hire for **inner hunger** and a passion to **get things done**. These attributes, sometimes hard to find on a resume, are much more valuable than pedigree.

Leadership is about growth and passion, not about brilliance.

- Story of a young HP engineer who defied leadership by selling a new display monitor which eventually went on to reap \$35M in sales. David Packard gave him a medal for “extraordinary contempt and defiance beyond the normal call of engineering duty.” How cool is that? Growth mindset in action.

On our entitled, overpraised generation:

- There are legions of well-meaning parents who, in an attempt to bolster their children’s self-esteem, lavished their kids with compliments of how smart and talented they are. . .
 - These kids have now entered the workforce and have created demand for quarterly and monthly bonuses (over annual), rewards for basic duties, and a general expectation of being special for simply doing their job.

“We now have a workforce full of people who need constant reassurance and can’t take criticism.”

How to create a growth-mindset environment at work:

- Presenting all skills as learnable
- Conveying that the organization values learning and perseverance, not just ready-made genius or talent
- Giving feedback in a way that promotes learning and future success
- Presenting managers as a resource for learning
- ***Most of failures in management is a result of those manager’s failing to *keep learning*.

Relationships

Overview: people with growth mindsets handle breakups better—for them it's about understanding, forgiving, and moving on. It's still painful and sad, but they don't let it reflect on them personally. They'll never use the word *humiliated* and give the power away to other people.

Favorite Quotes

- “True self-confidence is the courage to be open—to welcome change and new ideas regardless of their source.” —Jack Welch

Notes

- The growth mindset applies to both individuals, but also the relationship itself, which can also grow and evolve.
- One of the biggest lies about relationship: “If we right for each other, we wouldn't have to work so hard.” A no-effort relationship is a doomed relationship, not a great relationship.



Story of Bill Clinton after the scandal: he went to counseling and learned that he had developed coping mechanisms during childhood to shoulder the immense responsibilities (not leading dad hit mom), but on the other hand he could be devoid of responsibility and optimistically delusional regardless of circumstances.

- A key to successful relationships is learning to appreciate each other's differences. If developed, both partners grow and the relationship deepens. But for this to happen, people need to feel they're on the same side.
- Close friends can turn on you if they're of the fixed mindset and derive self-esteem from being superior. Your achievements could create problems.
- How does fear of judgment manifest in your day to day?
 - How we dress and present ourselves
 - Whether or not we speak up in a team meeting
 - How we divulge information and practice vulnerability
 - Optics and posturing in order to appear a certain way
 - Focusing on perception rather than truth, effort, and growth

Parents, Teachers, Coaches

Overview: as a parent, teacher or coach, every word and action can send a message which reinforces how they think about themselves. **You want to convey: *You are a developing person and I am interested in your development.*** You want to avoid all parts of the fixed mindset which conveys: *You have permanent traits and I'm judging them/you.* The fixed mindset creates an internal monologue that is focused on judging.

Favorite Quotes

- "Challenge and nurture." —Dorothy DeLay, on her approach to teaching
- "If success means they're smart, then failure means they're dumb." - the biggest lie of the fixed mindset
- "Did you make your best effort?" If yes: "You may be outscored, but you will never lose."
- "I had a different philosophy. . . For me, concern, compassion, and consideration were always priorities of the highest order." —John Wooden
- "You never stay the same. You either go one way, or the other." —Alex Rodriguez

Notes

- Don't coddle your children. It will make them soft.
- Don't praise your children for ability; **praise their EFFORT.**

- If you are a parent and want to give your children a gift, the thing you can do is to teach your children to:
 - Love challenges
 - Be intrigued by mistakes
 - Enjoy effort
 - Keep on learning
- Speed and perfection are the enemy of difficult learning.
- Withholding constructive feedback does not help your children's confidence; **it harms their future.**
- "Misbehaving" is normal. Research shows that normal, young children misbehave every three minutes.
- Beware of success: it can knock you into a fixed mindset: "I won because I have talent. Therefore, I will keep winning."

Changing Mindsets

Overview: in order to change a fixed mindset, one must take the hardest, but simplest step: action. More specifically: the smallest action. You have to overpower the mindset's grasp that your situation is a reflection of who you are. Most of this is derived from a deeply paralyzing fear of judgment we learned as children. Unwind it.

Notes

- The fixed mindset + social media: we choose superlatives over substance and description. Everything is in service of the ego and protecting the image.



[Aaron Beck](#), a psychiatrist in the 1960s, realized it was his clients' beliefs that were causing their problems. He is regarded as the father of cognitive therapy, and his pioneering theories are widely used in the treatment of clinical depression. Beck also developed self-report measures of depression and anxiety, notably the Beck Depression Inventory (BDI) which became one of the most widely used instruments for measuring depression severity.

- **Personal story:** in Jackson Hole last month, I met a 29-year-old named Sebastian. He was in a wheelchair and shared he was paralyzed from the waist down in a skiing accident when he was 15. Sebastian didn't let it define him. He continued developing himself, and to this day can ski *double black diamonds*.

The idea that they are worthy and will be loved is crucial for children, and—if a child is unsure about being valued or loved—the fixed mindset appears to offer a simple, straightforward route to this.

- Plans beat vows every time: Peter Gollwitzer and his colleagues conducted research that showed vowing, even intense vowing, is often useless.

- **Feeling bad, doing good:** you can feel miserable and still reach out for information that will help you improve.
- Habit: what if at the beginning of each month you identified the #1 problem you would like address, change or solve?

*People in a fixed mindset often run away from their problems. If their life is flawed, then they are flawed.
It's easier to make believe everything's all right.*

- Ask your children: "Yeah, but what did you learn?"
- **Strategy + Planning >> Vowing + Monologues**
- It's amazing: once a problem improves, people often stop doing what caused it to improve!!! Once you feel better, you stop taking your medicine.

The benefits the author is pitching:

- "Richer" life
- "More alive"
- More courageous
- More open person