

## Mindset

In her book, *Mindset - The New Psychology of Success*, author Carol Dweck asserts that people basically have one of two mindsets: **fixed** or **growth**.

A **fixed** mindset focuses on natural abilities. This mindset promotes the belief that intelligence is inborn, that a "smart" person does not have to work to master material, and that failure, rather than being a signal for greater effort or better strategies, is a signal of lack of intelligence. As a result, those with a fixed mindset avoid challenges and decrease effort after setbacks. Fixed mindset people listen to the voice in their head that says, "watch out, failure ahead." After a setback, that voice says, "Pull out now to save face."

A **growth** mindset, on the other hand, takes setbacks and challenges as signals of an opportunity to learn. An individual with a growth mindset is willing to try difficult subjects and continue to work toward mastery. People with a growth mind-set believe intelligence can be developed and cultivated.

Dweck studied pre-med students taking an organic chemistry course. All were highly motivated to get good grades. Two groups emerged among those who weren't performing as well as they had hoped. One group quickly concluded organic chemistry simply wasn't their thing, and they essentially gave up. The other group believed they could get better and made plans to do so. In the end, the students with growth mindsets outperformed students with fixed mindsets, who were less resilient and had more fear.

The good news is that you can change your mindset. For more on this topic, you can visit the following websites to test yourself to see what your mindset is. The book gives you strategies for changing your mindset.

<http://www.mindsetonline.com>

<http://www.brainology.us>

<http://www.sciam.com/article.cfm?id=the-secret-to-raising-smart-kids>. (Full article reference: Scientific American Mind 18, 36-43 (December 2007))

[http://www.ltscotland.org.uk/Images/mindsets-carol\\_dweck\\_tcm4-569410.pdf](http://www.ltscotland.org.uk/Images/mindsets-carol_dweck_tcm4-569410.pdf)

Book: **Mindset, The New Psychology of Success**, by Carol Dweck