

MINDSET FOR GIFTED STUDENTS (AND THE PARENTS/TEACHERS WHO LOVE THEM!)



Cathy Fischer
ESCLC Gifted Supervisor
January 28, 2019

GIFTED, TALENTED, AND MINDSET... BRIEFLY DEFINED

Gifted: Natural ability that is significantly above the norm for a person's age, evident in cognitive and academic areas.

Talented: Natural aptitude or skill that is significantly above the norm, evident in the areas of creativity, visual and performing arts, and leadership.

Mindset: A set of beliefs that determines one's behavior, outlook, and mental attitude; thus academic success can be attributed to perseverance and effort.

As we learn more, think about your viewpoints:

- Can a person be G/T and succeed without a growth mindset?
- Can a person succeed without being G/T, as long as they possess a growth mindset? Fixed mindset?

A FEW POINTS TO PONDER....

Winston Churchill

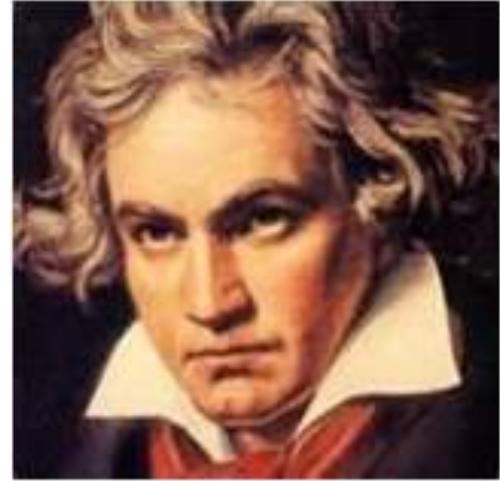
- Repeated a grade
- Placed in lowest military division, lowest rank



Do you think his parents worried about his potential?

BEETHOVEN

- His teacher called him a “hopeless composer”



If someone said this about your child, would you suggest an alternate activity for him/her?

LEO TOLSTOY

- **Dropped out of college**
- **Described as “unable and unwilling to learn”**



“Everyone thinks of changing the world, but no one thinks of changing himself.”

“The two most powerful warriors are patience and time.”

Was it passion, endurance, dedication, persistence, grit, and/or perseverance (Growth Mindset) which enabled him to be regarded as one of the greatest authors of all time, or was he truly gifted? Both?

...AND OTHER ROLE MODELS....

Einstein's teacher said that he was “academically subnormal”

Michael Jordan's coach said that he “wasn't more talented than other people”

Walt Disney was told that he lacked “creative imagination”

J.K. Rowling was told her “story would never sell”



Were these role models TRULY GIFTED, did they exhibit a GROWTH mindset, or BOTH? Think about it, as we delve into Growth Mindset!

ARE PEOPLE BORN "SMART"?

Take the quiz! (Paper or online)

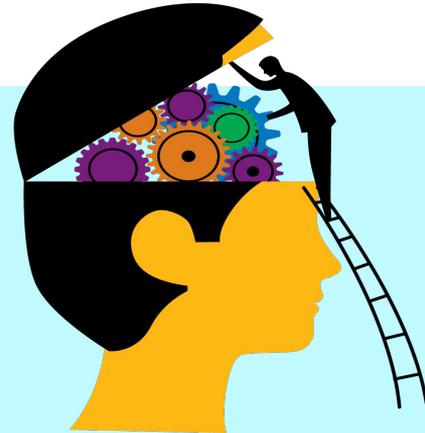
[Mindset Quiz](#)



WHERE DID YOU FALL ON THE MINDSET SPECTRUM?

AS WE LEARN MORE ABOUT MINDSET, THINK ABOUT:

- HOW **YOUR** MINDSET AFFECTS THE WAYS IN WHICH YOU PARENT/OFFER FEEDBACK
- WHETHER YOU BELIEVE MOST **GIFTED STUDENTS** HAVE FIXED MINDSETS, GROWTH MINDSETS, OR A COMBINATION OF BOTH

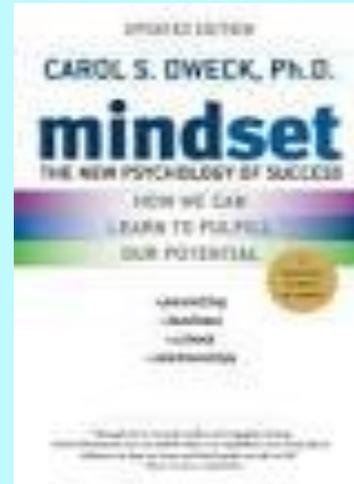


THE THEORY.....

Mindset, based on the book by Carol Dweck

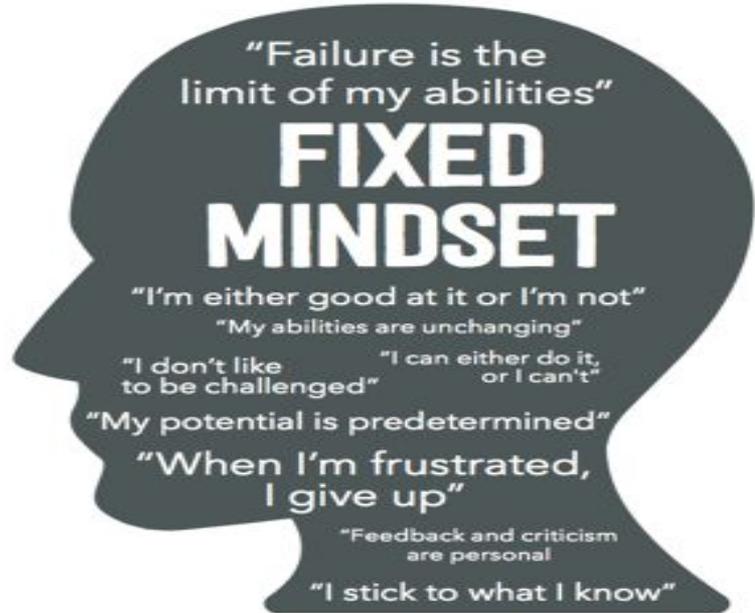
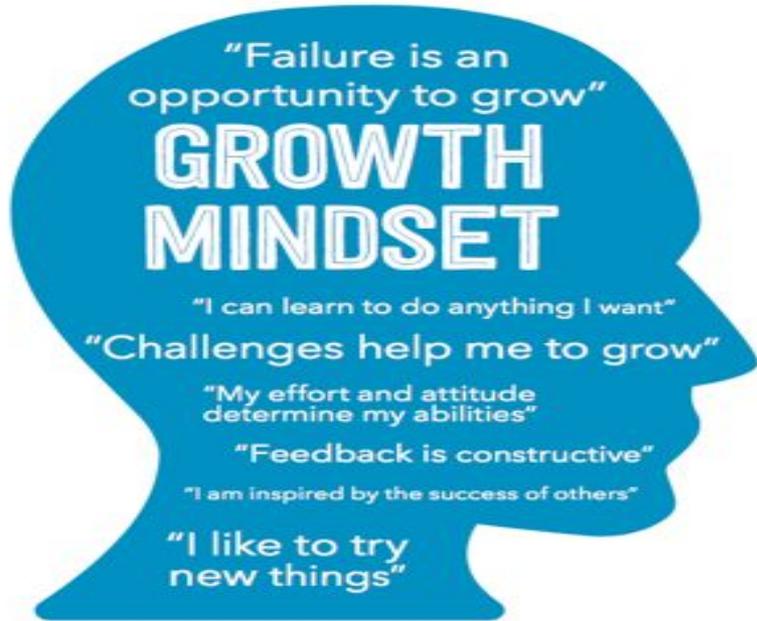
Key Points:

- Fixed vs Growth Mindsets
- The Pitfalls of Praise
- Now What?



FIXED VS. GROWTH MINDSET

Fixed vs Growth Mindset Prezi



HOW DOES MINDSET APPLY TO GIFTED STUDENTS?



Quick review of gifted characteristics!

Fixed Mindset = Unhealthy PERFECTIONISM

- *“I have to earn all ‘A’s!”* (stress)
- *“I’m smart - I’m supposed to know this!”* (meltdown, defiance)
- *“My drawing/cursive, etc. isn’t perfect!”* (destruction)
- *“I can’t do anything to help fill in blank.”* (sadness)
- Some students with perfectionistic tendencies might blame themselves for having a fixed mindset, *“I don’t even have the right mindset; I guess I’m a failure!”* (depression)

HOW CAN WE HELP TO CURB PERFECTIONISTIC TENDENCIES?

Perfectionism Defined: The **overwhelming need** to achieve at high levels, which may be caused by a desire to please others, achieving successes without failures at an early age, difficulty setting realistic goals.

Healthy Perfectionism	Unhealthy Perfectionism
<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Focus on striving for excellence● Managing behaviors that do not interfere with daily life● Performing at “best possible levels”, then moving on● Gentle acceptance of self	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Focus on failures● Having a compulsive drive to achieve, even if unachievable● Continued dissatisfaction with one’s work● Fear of trying● May lead to anxiety, depression, procrastination, and underachievement



Model, Monitor, Modify.....[Mindset](#) Matters!

[Mindshift Article](#)

GIFTED AND MINDSET, CONTINUED....



Fixed Mindset = **UNDERACHIEVEMENT**

- “I’ll never be able to do this project, so I won’t even start.” (motivation)
- “If I can’t be the best, I won’t try.” (competitive environment)
- “This is too hard to figure out!” (potential disability?)

[Stuck on an Escalator \(commercial\)](#)

HOW CAN WE BATTLE UNDERACHIEVEMENT?

Underachievement Defined: Discrepancy between ability and performance/achievement.



3 major contributing factors/How we can help:

Motivation: Does the student demonstrate excitement for learning ?	Understand learning/expression styles Don't link "worth" to achievement or giftedness
Environment: Do the home and school environments understand and support the learner?	Use supportive, encouraging feedback, rather than competitiveness/criticism
Potential Disability: Is the underachievement chronic in all or some academic/social/emotional areas, thus inhibiting academic/social/emotional growth and development ?	Monitor and record observations and measurable data. Speak with school professionals regarding observations/insights

*More on **Motivation** and **Environment** to come!*

MORE SUGGESTIONS FOR WORKING WITH PERFECTIONISTS AND UNDERACHIEVERS

Ignite Talk: Productive Struggle



- Celebrate and share mistakes
- Use the acronym “FAIL” Teaching Students How to Fail
- Showcase famous failures which led to great inventions and breakthroughs/athletic growth: Michael Jordan
Chocolate Chip Cookie Mistake
- Assist gifted students in **understanding themselves**. Interest inventories, learning surveys, multiple intelligences quizzes, mindset checklists, etc. may be used at home or at school
- Assist students in **setting goals** and **self-monitoring** progress (social-emotional AND academic)



THE PITFALLS OF PRAISE

Praise can elicit either a **GROWTH** mindset or a **FIXED** mindset.....



How do you exhibit praise?

PRODUCTIVE VS. UNPRODUCTIVE PRAISE

Remember, praise for **EFFORT, STRATEGIES, PERSISTENCE**, not **ABILITY, GIFTEDNESS, BEING “SMART”**.



Ability-Based Praise: “You’re so clever/smart!/talented!”, “You’re so good at this!”



Specific, Process-Oriented Praise: “I can see that you’ve **invested a lot of effort** into this project”, “What a **creative way to solve** this problem!”, “I’m so proud of you for **sticking with it**, and not giving up!”

REMEMBER.....ENVIRONMENT MATTERS!

The 4 Most important components of a Growth Mindset environment:

- **Access** to advanced learning opportunities
- Deliberate **cultivation** of psychosocial skills (perseverance, resilience, grit)

[Character Lab](#)

[Calm Schools Initiative](#)

- Student **understanding of neural networks** of the brain
- Growth mindset **feedback and praise**

ACCESS TO ADVANCED LEARNING OPPORTUNITIES



- Can **anyone who wishes** to take Honors/AP/CCP courses take these classes within your school district?
- How do we define and ensure “success”?
- Support differentiated, responsive classrooms to align with growth mindset culture
- Don’t withhold opportunities (What if Michael Phelps had trained in a kiddie pool?)
- Allow **TIME** to ponder and persevere (boredom is okay!)
- Focus on **DIVERGENT**, open-ended activities at home/school in which students are encouraged to brainstorm with no “right” answers [PBL sample](#) [Mystery Science](#) “Would you Rather...” game (great dinner conversation!)

DELIBERATE CULTIVATION OF PSYCHOSOCIAL SKILLS

Did you know that 75% of achievement is contributed to psychosocial skills (noncognitive factors)?

[Olszewski-Kubilius, 2013]

- Skills must be **deliberately** modeled, taught, and cultivated across all content areas: **perseverance, resilience, emotional regulation, comfort with intellectual tension/discourse, self-confidence, coping skills when faced with failure...SO DIFFICULT** for gifted students! [Angela Duckworth's Grit Scale](#)
- Students should self-evaluate and monitor growth [Big Life Journal](#)
- Mistakes = data!

BUILDING A CONCEPTUAL UNDERSTANDING OF THE BRAIN

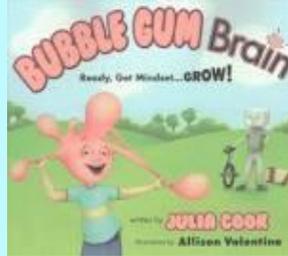
“Understanding neural networks can significantly increase motivation.” (*Dweck, 2010*)

- Truly gifted students are very complex; they may reject the view that perceptions of self and motivation are not fixed; teach mindset through a **factual, scientific** approach, such as brain plasticity: [Ned the Neuron](#) , [Neuroplasticity \(Kahn Academy\)](#)
- Reinforce the **“Power of Not Yet”**

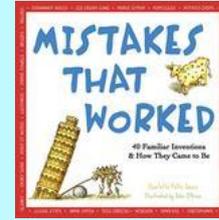
[The Power of Not Yet, Carol Dweck](#)

RESOURCES: BOOKS

Bubble Gum Brain (primary)

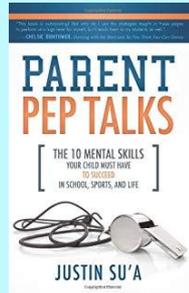


Mistakes That Worked (primary)

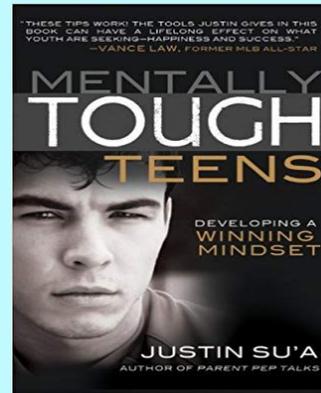


Growth Mindset for Kids: We All Have Brain Power (primary)

Mindset Matters (primary)



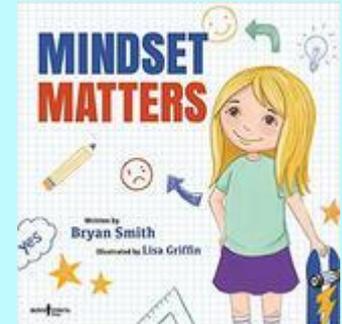
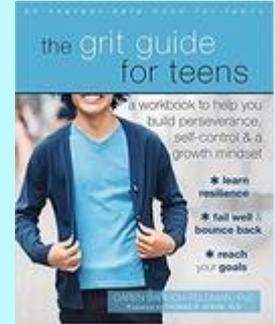
Mentally Tough Teens (MS/HS)



Parent Pep Talks (MS/HS)

Carol Dweck's Growth Mindset (MS/HS)

The Grit Guide for Teens (MS)



RESOURCES: WEBSITES

- Promoting Growth Mindset at Home and School:

<https://prezi.com/h6mshfv0c8aj/the-growth-mindset-classroom/>

- Top 85 Growth Mindset Books for Students and Adults:

<https://biglifejournal.com/blogs/blog/top-growth-mindset-books-children-adults>

- Supporting the Emotional Needs of the Gifted (SENG)

<https://www.sengifted.org/>

- Prufrock Press:

<https://www.prufrock.com/Parenting-Gifted-Children-C1059.aspx>