

The screenshot shows a website for 'Chasing Your Potential'. At the top, there's a cartoon illustration of a girl with wings. Below it, a section for 'Dyslexia' shows three video thumbnails. Under 'AD/HD', there are also three video thumbnails. A 'Slidebooks' section is shown with five book-like cards: 'EXCUSES', 'EXCUSES', 'ATTENTION DEFICIT DISORDER', 'INTERACTIVE DISORDER', and 'TREATMENTS FOR AD/HD'. Each card has a small 'Chasing Your Potential' logo. At the bottom, the website URL 'www.chasingyourpotential.com' is visible.

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The screenshot shows a Wikipedia page about 'Learned helplessness'. The text defines it as behavior typical of an organism (human or animal) that has endured repeated painful or otherwise aversive stimuli which it was unable to escape or avoid. After such experience, the organism often fails to learn escape or avoidance in new situations where such behavior would be effective. Below the text is a link to the source: '-- Wikipedia'. At the bottom, the website URL 'www.chasingyourpotential.com' is visible.

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The screenshot shows a website for 'Seligman'. The top section has a cartoon illustration of a girl with wings and the word 'Seligman'. Below it, the text 'Explanatory style' is displayed. To the right is a graphic of a road signpost with one arrow pointing right labeled 'Optimism' and another arrow pointing left labeled 'Pessimism'. At the bottom, the website URL 'www.chasingyourpotential.com' is visible.

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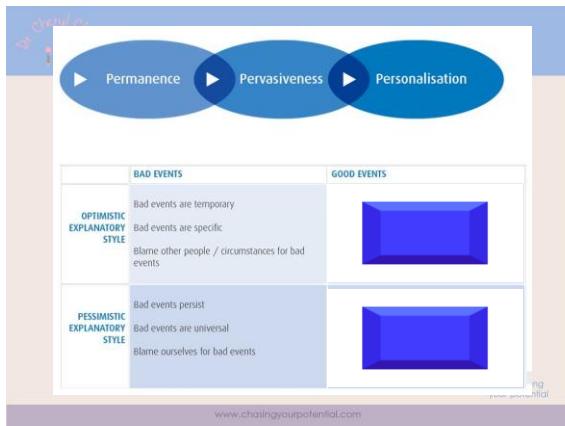
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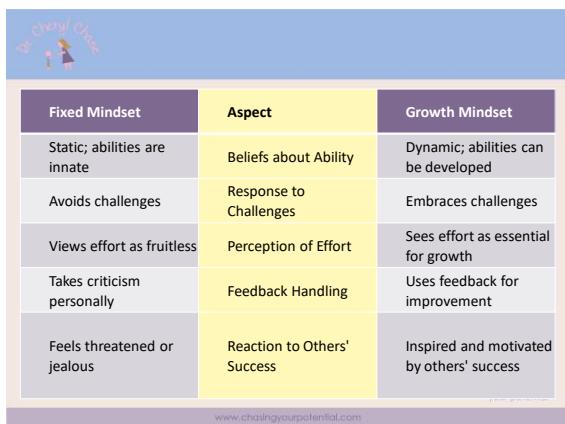
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## Dweck's findings

Helpless children:

- Attribute failure to lack of ability
- Employ ineffective strategies when working on problems
- Report feeling negatively while working
- Expect to do poorly
- Ruminate about irrelevant matters
- Fall apart when they encounter failure
- Do not benefit from prior successes

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Zhang, K., & He, W.-J. (2025). Teachers' Growth Mindset, Perceived School Climate, and Perceived Parental Autonomy Support Moderate the Relationship Between Students' Growth Mindset and Academic Achievement. *Journal of Intelligence*, 13(1), 8. <https://doi.org/10.3390/jintelligence1301008>

**Moderating Factors:** teacher's mindset, school climate, parental autonomy

**Positive Effects:**

**Teachers with Growth Mindsets:**

- Encourage effort and improvement
- Strengthen student's growth mindsets and academic performance

**Supportive School Climate:**

- Provides resources and encouragement for development
- Creates a safe environment for challenges

**Parental Autonomy Support:**

- Encourages independence and self-directed learning
- Aligns home encouragement with students' beliefs
- Leads to greater motivation and achievement

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The relationship is not as simple as we once thought.

- For K-12 students, growth mindset interventions can improve grades and motivation, particularly in math and science.
- But not a guarantee; some kids with a growth mindset still struggle if external barriers (e.g., lack of resources) or internal factors (e.g., anxiety) outweigh their mindset.

• Moderating variables

- It's not just about the student's mindset alone – this relationship isn't a straight shot; shaped by the environment around the student.

• Focus is shifting from "does growth mindset work?" to "under what conditions does it work best?"

• Nuanced; less about blanket claims, more about context.

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## 1. Acknowledge fixed mindsets

- We are all a mix of fixed and growth mindsets and probably always will be.
- To ban fixed mindsets will likely create false growth mindsets. Sometimes it makes sense.
- Be aware of where you are fixed, and where you are growth and challenge your own areas of fixed nature – in YOURSELF and the children you serve.

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## 2. Raise awareness about mindsets

- Everywhere and everyone!
  - Dinner table, grandparents, siblings, other parents, school.
- Maybe do a book-club-style reading of Dweck's book(s)? Seligman's book(s)? Make them gifts!
- Many things we thought were set are actually moldable.
  - many brain functions we thought were fixed are now seen more like a muscle;
  - they can be strengthened with effort and hard work.
  - connections are established through experience and practice

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## 3. Normalize the struggles

- Try, at dinner, "Who had a hard challenge today to tell us about?" or, "Who is in the midst of a struggle?"
- Help them focus on strategies by asking questions like:
  - "What can we do to tackle this challenge?"
  - "What can we do when we're feeling stuck?"
- These questions assume that we will feel stuck, which is a natural part of life.
- Then our kids are no longer preoccupied with whether they will get the right answer immediately, but rather on how they will uncover understanding even when they get stuck.
- "This is hard! Good think you can do hard stuff!"

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#### 4. Wait....give them time

- Too often, when we experience or see struggle, we want to move past it.
  - It's uncomfortable to watch someone struggle
  - But that's the good stuff.
- Instead of moving past the struggle, spend more time in it - celebrate it. Don't send the message struggle is bad!
- Help them recognize the struggle and see it as a learning opportunity. Don't lift the weight from them just as they are about to get it by scaffolding too much.
- Let them get there themselves as you spot them and cheer them on.



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#### 5. Set a culture that values taking some risks



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**BE WILLING TO SUCK AT SOMETHING  
LONG ENOUGH TO GET GOOD AT IT.**



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We ask children to be vulnerable  
every day.

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But, are you trustworthy?

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- Avoid sarcasm, teasing (quick story B 3<sup>rd</sup> grade, nickname)
- Put yourself out there and let them see it!
- Check your own perfectionism

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#### 6. Teach kids to articulate their thinking

- Focus children on their learning **process** and growth, rather than their performance.
- Teach them to be prepared to explain their thinking with concrete evidence (text evidence in reading; strategy evidence in math).
- Justifying your answers/thinking, and being open to critique, requires a level of vulnerability. And TRUST.
- When we cultivate an environment that justifies and critiques (matter of fact tone), we are cultivating a group of learners who are curious, engaged, and eager to learn from feedback. (I pay a lot of money for my tennis coach)

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## 7. Encourage deliberately!

Give "Process-Oriented Feedback" versus "Person-Oriented Feedback"

- Explicitly emphasize effort, use of strategies, and actions
- Praise for finding mistakes, for learning and accomplishing the task



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| Instead of.....  | Try.....   |
|--|--|
| Hey, you tried your best. That's ok. Not everyone is good at X                   | Hummn, what strategy did you try? Is there another way to go about it?                               |
| If they get it right away:<br>You got it! You are so smart!                      | I'm sorry! I don't want to waste your time, let's try another one and see if we can grow that brain! |
| Maybe this is just not your thing.<br>That's ok.                                 | It isn't about getting it right away. It is about learning. What might you try now?                  |
| Wow, you are a natural at this!  | It was fun watching you work at that.  |
| Nope. Maybe if you paid more attention you would have learned what I taught you. | If you are having a hard time with this, what is a different strategy you can try?                   |

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## 8. Harness the power of "yet"

- "I'm not good at math....."
- "I'm not good at math YET!!"
  
- SMART PEOPLE WORK HARD!!!!
- TALENTED PEOPLE WORK HARD!!!!



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## Ohhhhh – and....

- quick note about those dogs in group three – the dogs did not try to escape the shock (because they expected that nothing they do will stop the shock).
- To change that expectation, researchers physically had to pick up the dogs and move their legs, replicating the actions the dogs could take to escape the electrified grid.
- This had to be done a minimum of two times before the dogs would start jumping over the barrier on their own.
- Threats, rewards, and observed demonstrations had no effects on the helpless dogs.

**Give it time, be patient, use guided practice.**

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## Research Overview via AI (2/28/25)

Carol Dweck's mindset theory posits two types: a **fixed mindset** (believing abilities are static) and a **growth mindset** (believing abilities can develop through effort). Studies, like those from Dweck and her collaborators (e.g., Blackwell et al., 2007), show that students with a growth mindset tend to perform better academically over time, especially when facing challenges. This is because they embrace effort, persist through setbacks, and seek learning opportunities. However, it's not a perfectly linear relationship for all students—factors like socioeconomic status, teacher support, and individual temperament can influence outcomes.

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For K-12 students, research suggests growth mindset interventions can improve grades and motivation, particularly in math and science (e.g., Paunesku et al., 2015). But it's not a guarantee—some kids with a growth mindset still struggle if external barriers (e.g., lack of resources) or internal factors (e.g., anxiety) outweigh their mindset. So, while a growth mindset generally correlates with better academic performance, it's not a straight line for everyone.

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### Does Growth Mindset Help in School?

- Yes, usually! Kids with a growth mindset often get better grades.
- They don't give up when things get tough—they keep trying.

### Is It the Same for Every Kid?

- Not exactly—it's not a perfect rule.
- Most kids do better with a growth mindset, but some still struggle.
- Things like family support or school help matter too.

### Why It's Cool for Kids

- Encourages them to see mistakes as a way to learn.
- Makes them braver about tough subjects like math or reading.

### Quick Takeaway

- Growth mindset = better chance at success, but it's not magic—it's a boost!

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### Dweck animated video

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YI9TVbAal5s>



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Springer School and Center empowers students with dyslexia, ADHD, and executive function challenges through four pillars: Springer Diagnostic Center, Springer Lower School & Middle School, Springer High School and Springer Learning Center.

Learn more at [Springer-LD.org](http://Springer-LD.org).




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