

# FIXED MINDSET VS. GROWTH MINDSET

It's not always the people who start out the smartest who end up the smartest.

- *Alfred Binet, inventor of the IQ test*

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# Agree or Disagree?

Look at the following statements with regard to *ability to learn*. Do you agree or disagree with each?

- Your ability to learn is something very basic about you that you can't change very much
- You can learn new things, but you can't really change your intelligence
- Now matter how much intellectual ability you have, you can always change it a bit
- You really can't change how intelligent you are

# Agree or Disagree?

Look at the following statements with regard to *personality and character*. Do you agree or disagree with each?

- You are a certain kind of person and there is not much that can be done to really change that
- No matter what kind of person you are, you can always change substantially
- You can do things differently, but the important parts of you can't be changed
- You can always change basic things about the kind of person you are

# Did you know...

- ...that some praise can actually *hinder* school performance?
- ...that beliefs about where abilities come from have critical consequences on motivation and achievement?

# Mindset is...

- Beliefs about yourself and your most basic qualities
  - Intelligence
  - Talents
  - Personality
- Some believe these traits are givens, and that nothing can change that
- Some believe that these traits can be developed through dedication and effort

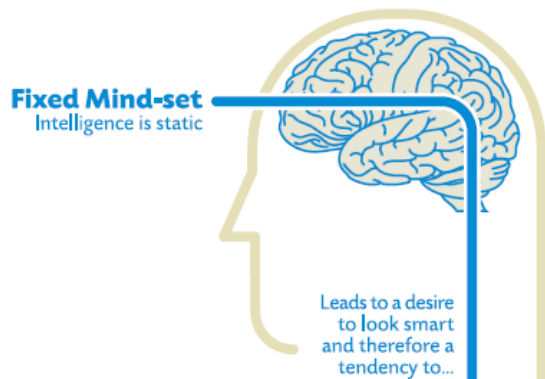
# Mindset explains...

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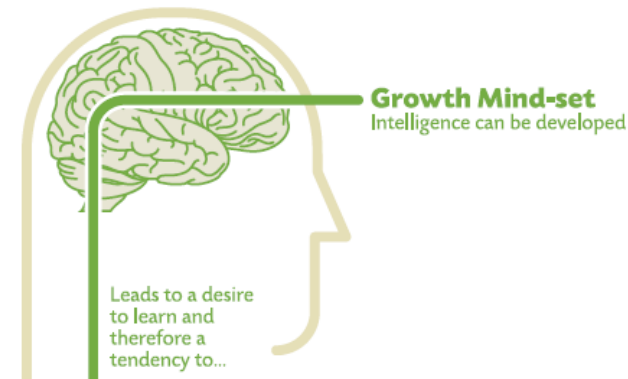
- Why brains and talent alone don't bring success
- How intelligence can stand in the way of success
- Why praising intelligence doesn't foster accomplishment, but jeopardizes it
- How teaching a simple idea about the brain can raise grades and productivity

# Fixed vs. Growth Mindset

- “The key [to achievement], isn’t ability; it’s whether you look at ability as something inherent that needs to be demonstrated or as something that can be developed”
- Fixed mindset – intelligence is static
- Growth mindset – intelligence can be developed
- “You’re smart” vs. “You tried so hard”

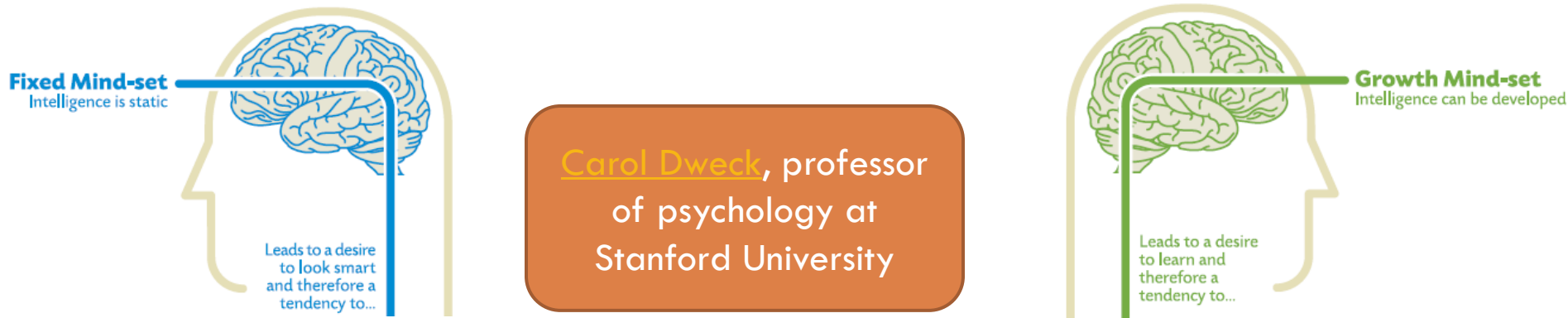


Carol Dweck, professor  
of psychology at  
Stanford University



# Fixed Mindset

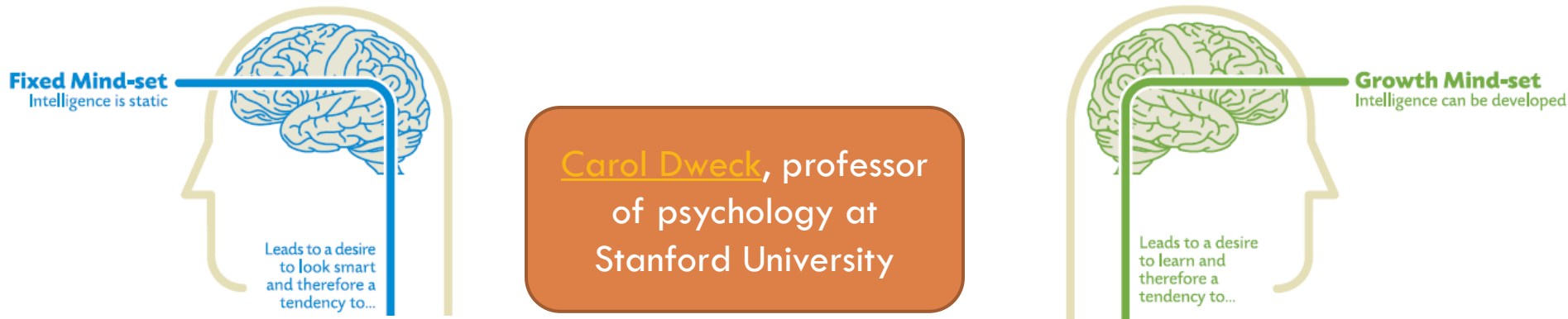
- ❑ Belief that basic qualities, like intelligence, are fixed traits
- ❑ Spend time admiring accomplishments instead of developing further
- ❑ Belief that talent alone creates success – without effort





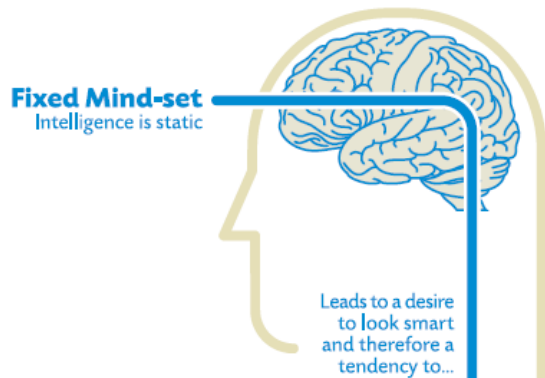
# Growth mindset

- Belief that basic abilities can be developed through hard work and effort
- Brains and talent are a starting point to success
- Creates a love of learning and resilience

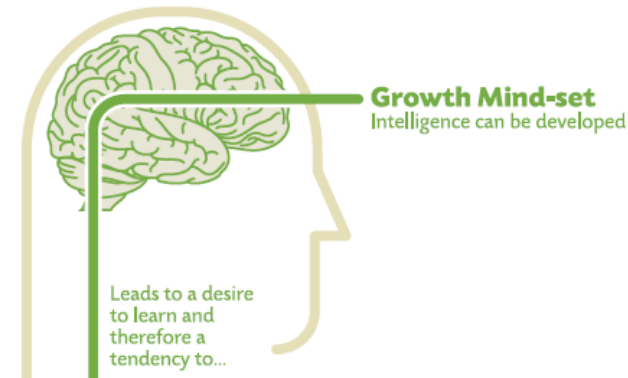


# Why Growth Mindset?

- Video – Carol Dweck on [praise](#)
- Kids who have a growth mindset...
  - Embrace challenge
  - Persist in the face of setbacks
  - See effort as a path to mastery
  - Learn from criticism
  - Find lessons and inspiration in the success of others



[Carol Dweck](#), professor  
of psychology at  
Stanford University



# The Truth About Ability and Achievement

- Try to picture Thomas Edison as vividly as you can. Think about where he is and what he's doing. Is he alone? When asked, people say things like this:
- “He's in New Jersey. He's standing in a white coat in a lab-type room. He's leaning over a light bulb. Suddenly, it works! [Is he alone?] Yes. He's kind of a reclusive guy who likes to tinker on his own.”
- In truth, the record shows quite a different fellow, working in quite a different way.



## Edison's Lab in Menlo Park, New Jersey

**What eventually set him apart was his mindset and drive...**



## Michael Jordan on Failure

# How Praise Reinforces a Fixed Mindset

- When we praise children for being naturally gifted or talented; we are telling them that we value them for what comes naturally, not for what they earn through hard work
- We want to offer them feedback that will encourage them to push their boundaries of achievement
- We want our children to understand that talent is not nearly as important as **practice, hard work, and determination** for long-term success

# How Praise Reinforces a Fixed Mindset

- Avoid family labels to assign roles to children
  - “Our organized one”
  - “He’s the one destined for medical school”
  - “The family comedian”
- This sets up unrealistic expectations and makes a child more vulnerable to feelings of inadequacy
- The one without the label has a difficult time establishing their role in the family and career path
- By setting up labels for kids, if they do not have immediate success with something they want to quit

# Messages About Success

- Listen for the messages in the following examples:
  - ▣ “You learned that so quickly! You’re so smart!”
  - ▣ “Look at that drawing. Martha, is he the next Picasso or what?”
  - ▣ “You’re so brilliant, you got an A without even studying!”
- If you’re like most parents, you hear these as supportive, esteem-boosting messages. But listen more closely. See if you can hear another message. It’s the message that children hear:
  - ▣ “If I don’t learn something quickly, I’m not smart.”
  - ▣ “I shouldn’t try drawing anything hard or they’ll see I’m no Picasso.”
  - ▣ “I’d better quit studying or they won’t think I’m brilliant.”



# How Do I Praise Effectively

- Feedback needs to be constructive and informative
- Should be in the form of questions rather than evaluative statements
  - ▣ Ex. What did you do to reach that level of performance?
- Research shows children are looking for our feedback that will help them improve
  - ▣ Looks like: honest, specific and helpful
  - ▣ Doesn't look like: labels, praising, or scolding

# How Do I Talk To My Child?

## What to Say

- Guidance in specific techniques
- “Wow! You stuck with that until you solved it.”
- “Show me the strategy you used to get that new skill.”
- “Tell me how you were able to overcome that obstacle.”

## What NOT to Say

- “You need to work harder.”
- “You are so smart!”
- “You have such a great talent.”
- “You are going to rule the world.”

# How Do I Talk To My Child?

## What to Say

- Wow, you got 10 out of 10 right! What strategy did you use to get a perfect score?
- What can you learn from this mistake that will help you do better next time?
- You're becoming such a good learner.

## What NOT to Say

- Wow, you got 10 out of 10 right! You must be really smart at this.
- You'll do better next time.
- You're so smart!

[Dweck Video](#)



## Advice For Kids

# People Who Demonstrate a Growth Mindset

- Anyone can be better if they are willing to put in the **time** and **effort**.
- Beethoven – deaf and depressed
- Bethanie Hamilton – lost left arm in shark attack
- Doug Flutie – “too short” to play football
- Tom Cruise - dyslexic

# Steps to Changing Your Mindset

- Step 1: Learn to hear your fixed mindset voice
- Step 2: Recognize that you have a choice
- Step 3: Talk back to it with a growth mindset voice
- Step 4: Take the growth mindset action

# Step 1: Learn to Hear Your Fixed Mindset Voice

- When approaching a challenge you might hear a little voice
  - ▣ “What if you fail – you’ll be a failure.”
  - ▣ “People will laugh at you.”
- When you face criticism the little voice might think things like...
  - ▣ “It’s not my fault.”
  - ▣ “You are clearly not capable.”

## Step 2: Recognize That You Have a Choice

- Your interpretation of challenges, setbacks and criticism are your choice
- You can view your talents and abilities as fixed
- You can view your talents and abilities as something that can be stretched and expanded with effort and hard work



# Step 3: Talk Back to Yourself with a Growth Mindset Voice

## Fixed Mindset

- Are you sure you can do it?
- What if you fail – you'll be a failure.
- It's not my fault.
- This would have been a breeze if I had any talent.

## Growth Mindset

- I'm not sure I can do it, but I am going to try.
- If I don't try, I am already failing.
- I will have to fix this.
- Even great minds have to put in effort to succeed.

# Step 4: Take the Growth Mindset Action

- Keep in mind, the voice you heed is your choice whether you...
  - ▣ Take on the challenge
  - ▣ Learn from setbacks and try again
  - ▣ Hear criticism and act on it
- Practice hearing both voices and acting on the growth mindset

# Resilience

- Set of attributes that give people the strength and fortitude to confront overwhelming obstacles
- Described as: social, optimistic, energetic, cooperative, inquisitive, helpful, punctual and on-task
- Goes beyond self-confidence

# How Can We Help?

REMEMBER:

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- We must structure opportunities into our children's day that will enable them to experience feelings of:
  - Competence
  - Belonging
  - Usefulness
  - Potency
  - Optimism

# Resilience – Key Experiences

- Provide children with authentic evidence of success (competence)
- Show them they are valued members of the community (belonging)
- Reinforce feeling that they have made contributions (usefulness)
- Make them feel empowered (potency)
- Look at the positive side of life (optimism)

# Grit Survey

- Respondents were asked a series of questions based on the following scale.
- Very much like me
- Mostly like me
- Somewhat like me
- Not much like me
- Not like me at all

# Grit Survey

- New ideas and projects sometimes distract me from previous ones
- Setbacks don't discourage me
- I have been obsessed with a certain idea or project for a short time but later lost interest
- I am a hard worker
- I often set a goal but later choose to pursue a different one
- I have difficulty maintaining my focus on projects that take more than a few months to complete
- I finish whatever I begin
- I am diligent

# Study on Grit

- Angela Duckworth – math teacher turned psychology professor at UPenn
- She found that students who worked hard did the best
  - ▣ These were not always the “smartest” kids
- Grit is defined by Duckworth as *sticking with things over the long term until you master them*
- Success is a result of grit and conscientiousness, not just IQ.

“Eighty percent of success is showing up.” ~ Woody Allen



# Grit Survey Findings

- Found a person's grit rating was a high predictor of success
  - ▣ At the elite United States Military Academy, West Point, a cadet's grit score was the best predictor of success in the rigorous summer training program known as "Beast Barracks." Grit mattered more than intelligence, leadership ability or physical fitness.
  - ▣ At the Scripps National Spelling Bee, the grittiest contestants were the most likely to advance to the finals -- at least in part because they studied longer, not because they were smarter or were better spellers.

"Genius is 1% inspiration and 99% perspiration." ~Thomas Edison

# Getting “Gritty”

- Duckworth believes it is probably innate to personality, but can be learned
- Human qualities have been proven to be partially environmental - even intelligence
- Grit can wax and wane based on experiences
  - ▣ A child can be extremely disciplined about basketball, but give up at the slightest math confusion
  - ▣ This is why GROWTH mindset is SO important!
- We need to give our children experiences where they will need grit to overcome obstacles

# In Summary...

- **Growth mindset** – intelligence and talent can be developed with effort and time
- **Resilience** – the strength and fortitude to overcome an overwhelming obstacle
- **Grit** - sticking with things over the long term until you master them – not giving up

What you need to leave with...

*It's ok for your child to be frustrated.*

*Don't let them give up.*

*Prompt them with questions and guide them in the right direction.*

*They may not like it today, but they will be grateful later. 😊*