



How to teach  
**GROWTH**  
**MINDSET**  
to kids

— THE 4-WEEK GUIDE —

 Big Life Journal

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# Introduction

Developing the right mindset early on is crucial for a successful, happy life. When kids learn that putting forth effort and using the right strategies can help them get better at things, they feel empowered and try harder. When they know their brains are capable of growing, they are more confident, resilient, and can push through the fear of failure!

So how do we TEACH this simple and incredible concept to children?

To start, be sure to understand the basics.

## WHAT IS GROWTH MINDSET?

We all have beliefs about our own abilities and potential. These beliefs are part of our mindset which is so powerful it can fuel our behavior and predict our success. Mindset shapes our everyday lives, helping us interpret our experiences and future possibilities.

In her research at Stanford University, Dr. Carol Dweck identified two different types of mindsets. **Growth mindset** occurs when we believe our intelligence and abilities can be improved upon with effort and the right strategies.

A willingness to confront challenges, a passion for learning, and viewing [failure](#) as a springboard for growth are all characteristics associated with a growth mindset. Not surprisingly, this type of mindset is strongly linked to greater happiness and achievement in life.

In contrast, those with a **fixed mindset** believe their intelligence and abilities cannot be altered in a meaningful way. As a result, mistakes are often seen as failures rather than opportunities to grow and learn. When stuck in a fixed mindset, we may fear new experiences, avoid risks, and feel the need to repeatedly prove ourselves to others.



# How to Use This Guide

Teaching a growth mindset to children is not an easy task but it could become one of the greatest **contributions** you make towards their success and happiness.

In this 4-week guide, you will find the **KEY** elements for establishing a growth mindset at home or in your classroom. Each week offers a variety of recommended **activities** and **resources**, as well as suggested **scripts** to facilitate easy and fun discussions with children.

## 3 STEPS TO MAKE THE MOST OF THIS GUIDE

1. **Prepare.** Some easy planning can do wonders to create a relaxed atmosphere. Make sure you have the recommended resources before you begin (see next page). Though not required, they are designed to make this process much easier for you and more fun for kids.
2. **Set aside time.** A dedicated time for the suggested activities will allow children not feel rushed. Just a few minutes a day can make a big difference.
3. **Spark their curiosity.** When you show excitement about learning this new concept, children will be curious and will want to know why.

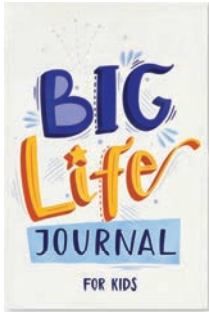
## WHAT TO DO AFTER THIS GUIDE

Growth mindset is a lifelong journey and this guide is designed to get you started. When you complete this 4-week program, continue implementing what you learned in weeks three and four. In addition, your child or students can keep working on their [Big Life Journal](#), listening to the [Big Life Kids podcast](#), and using our [Friday free printables](#).

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For the complete collection of Big Life Journal products, go [HERE](#).  
For bulk orders (including special school discounts), go [HERE](#).  
To read how schools implement Big Life Journal resources, go [HERE](#).  
For homeschooling support, go [HERE](#).

# Recommended Big Life Journal Resources



[Big Life Journal - 2nd Edition](#) is a **growth mindset** journal recommended for ages 7-10.

In this illustrated and guided journal, children discover mistakes are opportunities to GROW and they can achieve anything when they're persistent!

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The [Growth Mindset Printables Kit](#) is a collection of worksheets, posters, activities, and coloring pages designed to help your children or students learn how to:

- stay resilient
  - welcome mistakes as opportunities to grow
  - overcome the fear of failure
- 



This [uplifting digital kit](#) features five positivity-boosting challenges including the **5-Day Growth Mindset Challenge**.

Designed for all learning styles, every challenge includes fun multisensory activities to help children develop a positive attitude and healthy mental habits.

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The [Big Life Kids Podcast](#) accompanies the [Big Life Journal - 2nd Edition](#) for a multisensory learning experience. The podcast teaches children to stay resilient, believe in themselves, and face life's challenges with confidence.

This podcast is produced by [Big Life Journal](#) and includes helpful [show notes](#) for parents.

## Additional resources

[Resilience Kit](#)

[Positivity & Connections Kit](#)

[Posters](#)





## Week One: Introduce It

This week, children will learn about the concept of mindset and how the two types, growth and fixed, differ. You will also discuss the BRAIN and how it can grow and strengthen in response to challenges.

As you introduce these new ideas, keeping the tone fun and light will go a long way towards engaging kids.

### Step 1: Build The Foundation

Have a family or classroom discussion about the following questions:

1. **What does it mean to GROW?** What kinds of things grow? Answers will vary. Growth means to develop, change, mature, evolve. Living things grow - plants, animals, and people. Even our brains can grow!
2. When you think of the brain or minds, **what do you think MINDSET means?** Mindset is the way our brain perceives ourselves and the world. Our mindset helps us look at problems and mistakes in a positive way!
3. **Let's put those words together: growth and mindset.** When we combine them, it means something really important. What could growth mindset mean? A growth mindset is believing in the power of yourself and your brain! We know our intellect and abilities develop when we try hard things, use the right strategies, and don't give up. So a growth mindset is when we know, with practice, we will get better at something.
4. If fixed is the opposite of growth, **what does it mean to have a FIXED mindset?** A fixed mindset means you think you can't get better at things, even if you practice. Wanting to quit, give up, or deciding we're just not good at something are all the clues we have a fixed mindset.

Use the [Mindsets Poster](#) to demonstrate and discuss the differences between the two mindsets. Use the [Growth Mindset Poster](#) as inspirational growth mindset manifesto (you can make it your daily ritual to read it together).



Use the **suggested script** below to discuss mindset.

*"Everyone in the world has a way of perceiving things. We call this a mindset. You have a mindset, your friends have a mindset, and your teacher has a mindset.*

*We can choose to look at the world in a way that makes us feel strong and happy, or in a way that makes us feel frustrated and weak.*

*People with a growth mindset know they can get better by working hard and trying different strategies. They keep trying even when things are tough and they say things such as, 'I can't do this...yet' or 'Mistakes help me learn.'*

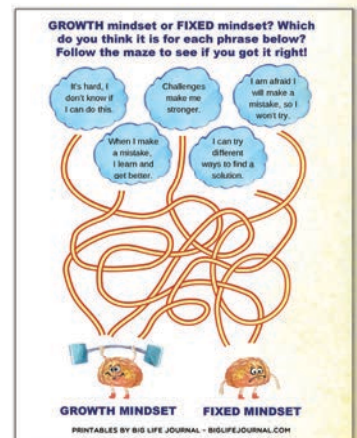
*People with a fixed mindset feel differently as if they are stuck with the way things are. A fixed mindset happens to anyone at some time or another but it's important we choose to have a growth mindset, keep trying, and stick with challenges."*

## Step 2: Share Examples from Your Own Lives

Share a personal story about when you were stuck and used hard work and help from others to overcome a challenge.

Ask your child or class to share similar examples from their lives. In the classroom, this could be done with everyone together or in smaller groups.

Use the **Growth Mindset Maze** printable ([Growth Mindset Printables Kit](#)) as a fun activity for kids to gauge their understanding of two types of mindset.



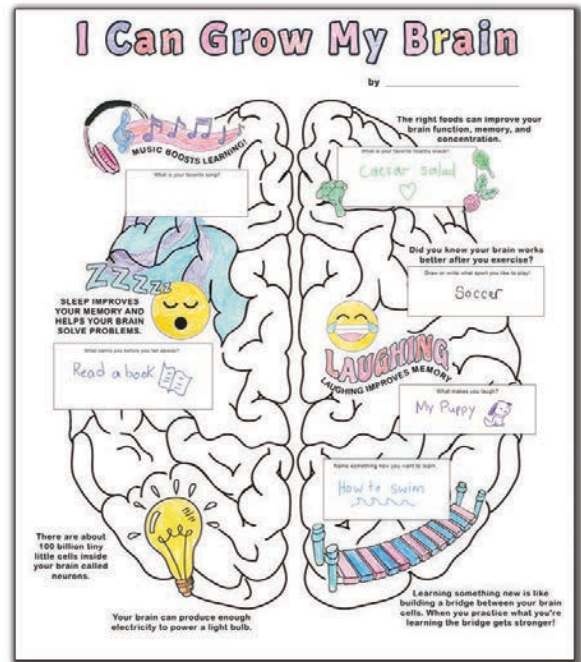
### Step 3: Discuss The Power of The Brain

Discuss the brain and its remarkable ability to change and grow. Use our **suggested script** below.

*“Now that we know what growth mindset is, let’s talk a bit more about our brain and the amazing things it can do! Did you know you can grow your brain when you try new things and don’t give up when something is tough?”*

*Learning something new is hardest the first time, but your brain behaves like a muscle and gets stronger every time things are repeated. Let’s watch a video [see suggestions below] to help us understand this even better.”*


Use the **"I Can Grow My Brain" poster** ([Growth Mindset Printables Kit](#)) for this step. It's a great activity for kids to learn more about how their brain works and exercise their creativity.



### Suggested Resources for Week One

1. **Growth Mindset Poster** ([hardcopy](#) or [PDF](#)) can serve as an inspirational growth mindset manifesto.
2. **Mindset Poster (PDF)** is a visual representation of growth and fixed mindsets and helps children understand the difference between the two.
3. **"I Can Grow My Brain" Poster** ([Growth Mindset Printables Kit](#)) is a fun activity where kids learn about the power of their brain.
4. **Growth Mindset Maze** ([Growth Mindset Printables Kit](#)) is a fun activity where kids decide whether a statement belongs to a fixed or a growth mindset.
5. **Big Life Journal** (ages 7-10). Use chapter one "Believe in Yourself" to discuss how your thoughts and self-talk impact your mindset.



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6. [Big Life Kids Podcast](#) is a growth mindset podcast for children which accompanies the Big Life Journal - 2nd Edition. Listen to episodes 1 and 2.
  7. **Parent's Guide to a Growth Mindset** ([Growth Mindset Printables Kit](#)) provides specific examples of what to say and ask to help children develop a growth mindset.

## READ

1. [Fantastic Elastic Brain](#) by JoAnn Deak (ages 4-8) or any other book from Top 85 Growth Mindset Books For Children ([Growth Mindset Printables Kit](#))
2. [The Ultimate Guide to Praising Your Kids](#) (article for adults)
3. [How to Explain Growth Mindset to Kids: Neuroplasticity Activities](#) (article for adults)
4. [The Brain is Like a Muscle](#) (article for adults and older kids)

## WATCH

1. [Growth Mindset Video](#) (2.5 minutes)
2. [Learning and the Brain](#) (3 minutes)

## Week Two: Notice It

This week, you begin to identify growth and fixed mindsets in ourselves and others. Everywhere you look, you can find examples of others either quitting or overcoming their challenges.

### Step 1: Reflect on Definitions

Go back to the definitions of growth and fixed mindset from Week One. Did anyone notice a time they were using either mindset? Discuss how we can change from fixed to growth mindset with simple words and phrases.

Use the **suggested script** below.

*“Last week we talked a lot about a growth mindset and how our brains get stronger when we persist and don’t give up. Have you noticed a time you had a growth mindset in the last few days? Did you feel your brain growing? What about a time you felt stuck?”*

This week complete the **5-Day Growth Mindset Challenge** ([Challenges Kit](#)) to help kids solidify the concepts (join them as their challenge buddy). Designed for all learning styles, this challenge includes fun activities such as matching games, word search, and fill in the blanks.



### Step 2: Practice Switching from a Fixed to Growth Mindset

Ask your child/class to think of some FIXED mindset phrases commonly used at home or anywhere else (“I am not good at this”, “I can’t do anything right”) and write them down.

Next, create a list of alternate phrases that reflect growth mindset (“I’m not good at this **yet**”). Above the fixed mindset column, write “Instead of” and on the Growth mindset column, “I Can Say...”

Use the **suggested script** below.

*“Let’s think of things we say when we’re stuck in a fixed mindset and write them down. We can then come up with other words to switch from the fixed mindset into a growth mindset. I’m sure we can come up with lots of great ideas!”*

Use the **Growth Mindset Statements** printable ([Growth Mindset Printables Kit](#)) as a guide for this step.

Cover the part under “I Can Say” and only show the part where it says “Instead of.”

Ask your children how they can change each statement from negative to empowering. For example, you can ask, “What is a better way of looking at a situation?”



### Step 3: Display Visuals as Everyday Reminders

Display visuals around your home/classroom as constant reminders of new vocabulary and ideas. Have the child/class locate their favorite spots to hang posters and refer to them frequently throughout the day.

Then, when you hear a child making a fixed mindset statement, you can simply point to a poster and have them read it (or read together).

You can use the printable posters [Growth Mindset Poster](#), [Success Iceberg Poster](#), and [You Can Learn Anything Poster](#).





## Step 4: Discuss How Growth Mindset Looks, Feels, and Sounds

Set aside at least several minutes to discuss how growth mindset can be easily included in your everyday lives.

As a *family*: Use the printable **We Are a Growth Mindset Family** ([Growth Mindset Printables Kit](#)) to discuss specific ways we can help each other when we're "stuck" and need help shifting our perspective from a fixed to growth mindset. A [family meeting](#) would be a great place to do this.

*In school*: Consider how growth mindset LOOKS, FEELS, and SOUNDS in class and use the printables **We Are a Growth Mindset Class** ([Growth Mindset Printables Kit](#)) to write down everyone's ideas. Make Growth Mindset Monitor one of your classroom jobs. End the school day with time for students to share their mindset experiences.



## Step 5: Use Book and Movie Characters

Identify growth and fixed mindsets in favorite book and movie characters. Pay attention to how the characters *feel* depending on their mindset and discuss ways persistence, love of learning, and resilience are portrayed.

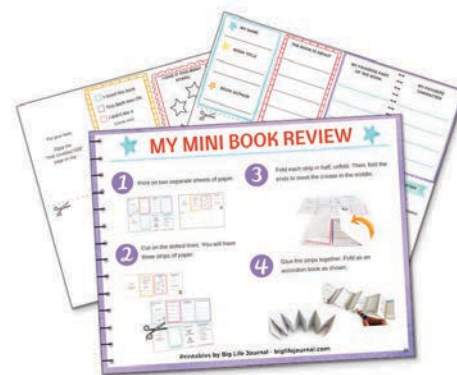
Point out when a character does the hard work of shifting from a fixed to a growth mindset.

Use the suggested script below.

*“In so many of your favorite books and movies, the characters are learning to have growth mindsets too. Let’s pick one now and try to find all the ways we see it happening!”*

Use the **Book Review Printable** ([Growth Mindset Printables Kit](#)), as a fun activity for kids to practice noticing growth mindset characters in books.

After your child or students read a book, have them fill out the printable and set a few minutes aside for them to tell you about it.



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## Suggested Resources for Week Two

1. **5-Day Growth Mindset Challenge** ([Challenges Kit](#)) will help your child practice growth mindset concept and vocabulary.
2. **Posters:** [Growth Mindset Poster](#), [Success Iceberg Poster](#), and [You Can Learn Anything Poster](#) can be hung in a bedroom or a classroom.
3. **Growth Mindset Statements** ([Growth Mindset Printables Kit](#))
4. **We are a Growth Mindset Family/Class** ([Growth Mindset Printables Kit](#))
5. **Book Review Printable** ([Growth Mindset Printables Kit](#))
6. **Big Life Journal** - use chapter two “Mistakes Help You Grow” to discuss how mistakes are just opportunities to learn and grow.
7. **Big Life Kids Podcast** - listen to episodes 3 and 4 (they go together with chapter two of the Big Life Journal).

### READ

1. **Top 85 Growth Mindset Books for Children and Adults** is a list of our favorite and most popular books for you and your kids!
2. **25 Growth Mindset Statements and Affirmations**

### WATCH

**Top 75 Growth Mindset Movies for Children** is a list of great movies with characters who demonstrate a growth mindset, grit, perseverance, courage, and determination.

## Week Three: Model It

Your ability to MODEL a growth mindset can make the difference between a child understanding the concept and actually *living* it. Let them see your growth mindset in action.

### Step 1: Share Your Experiences

Be honest when something is tricky for you. Tell kids when you're discouraged, share your fixed mindset thoughts and brainstorm solutions aloud. Show them we're ALL learning this growth mindset thing together!

[Big Life Journal](#) is a great connection tool which provides opportunities for discussions and experience sharing.

Use the **What Happens When Someone Has a Growth Mindset** poster ([Growth Mindset Printables Kit](#)) to discuss which of the benefits you have already experienced yourself since you began your growth mindset journey.



### Step 2: Discuss Feelings

Discuss how positive feelings such as satisfaction, contentment, and happiness come from persisting through challenges and not giving up when it gets difficult.

When stuck in a fixed mindset, share how you felt sad, anxious, or even hopeless. Negative feelings happen to everyone and are perfectly normal. At the same time, they may serve as **clues** that you need to shift your thinking and attitude.

You can use the **Calming Strategies for Adults** and **Strategies to Keep Me Calm** ([Resilience Kit](#)) to discuss ways you can manage negative feelings when they become overwhelming so you can keep going and not give up.

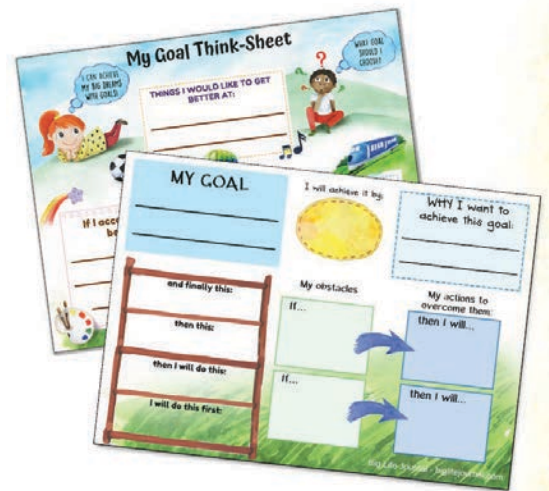




### Step 3: Set a New Goal

Set a personal **goal** to learn something new and share your learning process with your child or students. How did you feel at the start? What can you do to make sure you don't give up before achieving it? Review ways children can set and meet their own goals.

Use the **Goal-Setting Printables** ([Self-Esteem & Confidence Kit](#)) as a fun activity for you and kids to practice setting new goals.

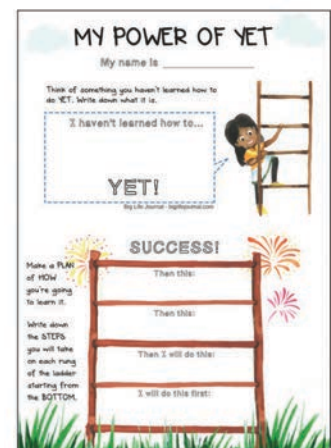


### Step 4: Use The Power of YET

With one simple word, any fixed mindset phrase can be transformed into a statement of hope. “I can't do this...yet.” It's all about the FUTURE, and not giving up until we get there.

Make a “YET” bulletin board or designate a wall at home for all the things you can't do...yet!


Use **My Power of YET** printable ([Growth Mindset Printables Kit](#)) as a fun activity to practice using “Yet!”



Use the **suggested script** below.

*“Even though I know about growth mindset, I still have to work at it. Especially when something is hard for me. I can tell I'm in a fixed mindset when I have thoughts about quitting and start to feel frustrated. When I feel that way, I know I need to change my thinking to a different mindset.*

*One way that works is just using the word 'yet.' We can add it onto the end of almost any sentence to change our perspective. For example, when I get frustrated by a*



challenge and think ‘I’ll never get it,’ I just say, “I don’t get it...yet.” Or if I think I can’t do something, I’ll say, “I can’t do it...yet.”

‘YET’ is almost like a magic word because it can instantly make us feel stronger. It gives us hope and strength to keep going when things become difficult.

Can you think of a sentence that ends with ‘yet’ which can make you feel stronger and more powerful?”

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## **Suggested Resources for Week Three**

1. **What Happens When Someone Has a Growth Mindset poster** ([Growth Mindset Printables Kit](#))
2. **Calming Strategies for Adults** ([Resilience Kit](#))
3. **Strategies to Keep Me Calm** ([Resilience Kit](#))
4. **Goal-Setting printables** ([Growth Mindset Printables Kit](#)) will make goal setting more fun and effective.
5. **My Power of YET printable** ([Growth Mindset Printables Kit](#))
6. **Famous Failures Kit** is a set of stories highlighting famous people from around the world who have failed and struggled on their way to success.
7. **Big Life Journal** - use chapter 3 “Be Persistent” to discuss how sometimes we just need to give our brain enough time to learn new things.
8. **Big Life Kids Podcast** - listen to episodes 5 and 6 (they go together with chapter 3 of the Big Life Journal)

### **READ**

1. [Not Yet](#) by Lisa Cox (ages 4-8)
2. [Flight School](#) by Lita Judge (ages 4-8)

### **WATCH**

1. [Janelle Monae “The Power of Yet”](#) (Sesame Street, 2015) (2.5 minutes)
2. [C.J. Luckey - The Power of Yet](#) by Andre Kahmeyer (4 minutes)

## Week Four: Practice It

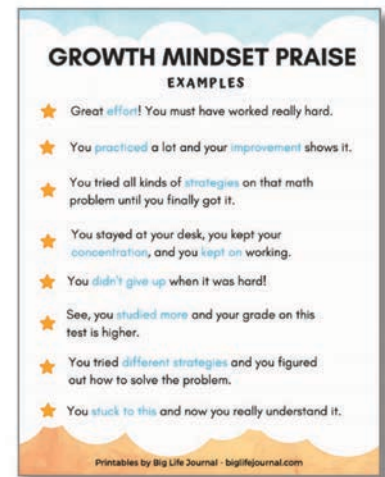
Growth mindset is all about effort, so what better way to teach it than through practice, practice, practice?

### Step 1: Praise for a Growth Mindset

Praise for perseverance and hard work rather than being smart or talented. Connect positive results with effort rather than innate ability, and children will be more willing to take risks and try new things.

When you notice hard work or positive self-talk, make sure they know it!

The **Growth Mindset Praise** printable ([Growth Mindset Printables Kit](#)) is a great guide to follow which provides specific examples.

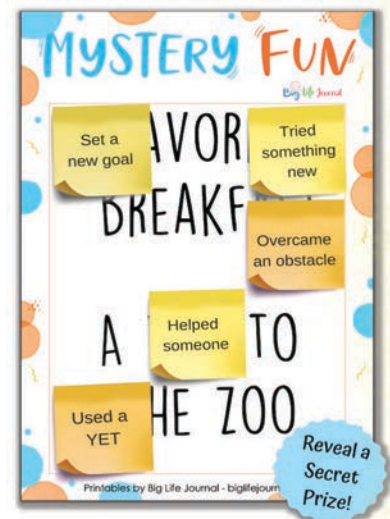


### Step 2: Make It a Game

Introduce various games like "I spy a growth mindset" or the **Mystery Fun Game** ([Positivity & Connection Kit](#)) to make this learning process fun.

Print out the Mystery Fun poster and write a mystery prize or activity on it (a trip to the zoo, favorite breakfast, popcorn party, etc.)

Next, cut out the growth mindset task squares ("Celebrated a mistake", "Used a YET!") and tape them over the mystery prize. Whenever someone completes a growth mindset task, remove a square.



When all the square have been removed and the mystery prize is revealed -- it's time to celebrate!



### Step 3: Encourage Productive Struggle

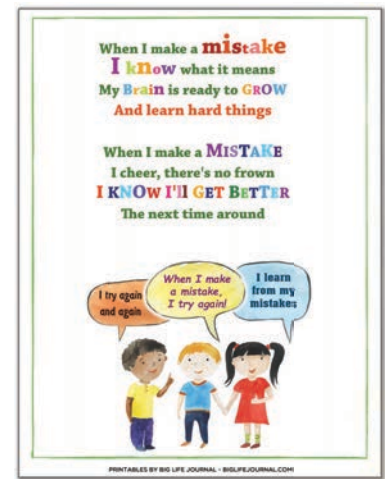
In the safe environment of your home or class, give children **time** to think through their challenges, brainstorm solutions, and seek help if needed. Grappling with a problem builds resilience, so give kids time for reflection before jumping in to help or “save” them.

Use **My Problem-Solving Plan** or **My Mighty Treasure Coins** ([Self-Esteem & Confidence Kit](#)) to help your children or students understand the challenges they’re facing and practice finding ways to overcome them.

### Step 4: Reframe Mistakes

Get excited when opportunities for growth occur! In a challenging moment, say things like, “This seems like an opportunity to grow our brains!” Create an environment where setbacks are expected and even celebrated.

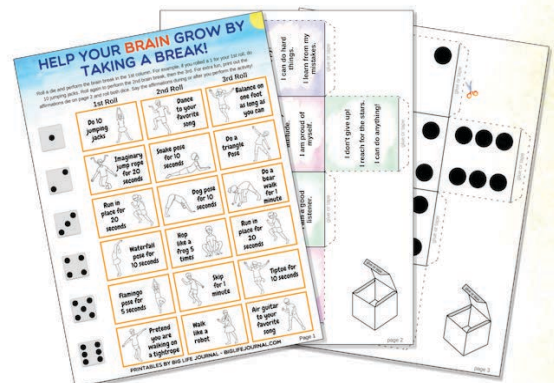
Have kids read a fun **Mistakes Poem** ([Growth Mindset Printables Kit](#)) to get them excited about their mistakes and failures. Print it out and post where they can see it often!



### Step 5: Hit Pause

Exercising the brain can be hard for kids. When your child (or you) becomes frustrated, it’s okay to take a break. “It’s time to give our brains a little rest. We’ll come back to this tomorrow!”

Use the **Brain Breaks Activities** ([Growth Mindset Printables Kit](#)) if you feel a physical exercise can benefit in the moment of frustration.



Being watchful of your own fixed mindset “triggers” can help with this process.



## Suggested Resources for Week Four

1. **Growth Mindset Praise printable** ([Growth Mindset Printables Kit](#)) provides specific examples of the praise.
2. **Mystery Fun Game** ([Positivity & Connection Kit](#))
3. **My Problem-Solving Plan** or **My Mighty Treasure Coins** ([Self-Esteem & Confidence Kit](#))
4. **Mistakes Poem printable** ([Growth Mindset Printables Kit](#))
5. **Brain Breaks Activities** ([Growth Mindset Printables Kit](#))
6. **Big Life Journal** - use chapter four “Be Grateful” to discuss how growth mindset can also help us develop the desired qualities such as gratitude.
7. **Big Life Kids Podcast** - listen to episodes 7 and 8 (they go together with chapter four of the Big Life Journal).

### READ

1. [Mistakes That Worked](#) by Charlotte Foltz Jones (ages 8-12)
2. [The Most Magnificent Thing](#) by Ashley Spires (ages 3-7)
3. [How to Teach Problem Solving Skills to Kids](#) (article for adults)
4. [The Ultimate Guide to Praising Your Kids](#) (article for adults)

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In a few short weeks, children can establish a **foundation** in growth mindset and a new way of viewing challenges. We encourage you to go beyond the four weeks. Make the mindset the cornerstone of your child’s learning!

Simple strategies such as praising effort, reframing mistakes as opportunities, and embracing “**YET**” are powerful methods for shifting their thinking, and ours. When we model a growth mindset by facing challenges and showing OUR persistence, children know they have an ally on this journey.

Armed with a positive mindset and the knowledge that growth and change are always possible, kids will be ready to tackle their big, wonderful life ahead!

