



SUCCESS WITH HABITS OF MIND

Three Important Lessons

**How the Habits
of Mind can
become the
common language
of learning in
your school and
community.**



JAMES ANDERSON



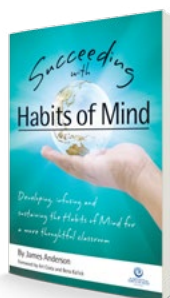


ABOUT JAMES ANDERSON

Do you want to create a school culture that continually develops students' intelligence? Would you like to enhance psychological wellbeing and increase engagement? Do you need expert, practical advice from a certified trainer with a proven track record of enhanced learning outcomes?

James Anderson is an expert in Growth Mindset, Learning Agility and the Habits of Mind. An International Affiliate Director of Art Costa and Bena Kallick's Institute for Habits of Mind, James is a certified Mindset Works trainer with real school experience. His personal and practical experience as a middle school leader gives him an intimate understanding of the challenges schools face. By taking a whole-school approach to his training, James creates effective, sustainable change when working with teachers and schools to develop Growth Mindsets.

An author, trainer and Certified Speaking Professional (CSP), James is practical and engaging. He has more than 15 years' international experience in teacher training and consulting, and is an affiliate director of the Institute for Habits of Mind.



James is also the author of *Succeeding with Habits of Mind* and *The Agile Learner*, and has contributed to Costa and Kallick's *Learning and Leading with Habits of Mind*.

Some of the services James offers include:

- **Participant workshops**
Face-to-face workshops that cover all aspects of Habits of Mind and Mindsets.
- **School-based training**
Effective school-based training tailored to your individual school needs.
- **Online training**
Convenient and affordable fully mentored learning in a rich multimedia environment.
- **Keynote presentations**
Motivating keynotes with practical steps to change the way you teach.
- **Long-term relationships**
James builds long-term relationships with schools to ensure deep, enduring change.

Are you ready to infuse your school with the Habits of Mind and develop Growth Mindsets in your students? Contact James today.



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20 YEARS OF SUCCESS WITH HABITS OF MIND

As Art Costa, Bena Kallick and the Institute for Habits of Mind celebrate their 25th year, I celebrate my 20th year working with the Habits of Mind.

I can't begin to adequately describe the phenomenal impact the Habits of Mind have had on my life, both professionally and personally.

From my work as a classroom teacher working with middle-school students, to my position as a school leader, to the past 15 years working as a consultant to schools and businesses, I've seen first-hand the profound impact the Habits of Mind have had on thousands of learners around the world.

I've been fortunate enough to contribute to two of Costa and Kallick's key books: *Learning and Leading with Habits of Mind* and *Habits of Mind Across the Curriculum*. I've also published my own book, *Succeeding with Habits of Mind*, and created the Habits of

Mind website (www.habitsofmind.org), which supports tens of thousands of educators every year.

I believe that the Habits of Mind are one of three key ideas that will stand the test of time as a powerful and enduring contribution to learning. The other two are Carol Dweck's work on Mindsets and Anders Ericsson's work on the Acquisition of Excellence. The Habits of Mind can be applied with great effect not only in schools, but in businesses and the day-to-day lives of every person on the planet.

What have I learnt over the past 20 years working with Habits of Mind?

In the early days, as I worked with hundreds

The Habits were woven into the very fabric of the school’s **culture and identity**. In fact, the **commitment** to the Habits of Mind increased with time. This commitment **endured and grew** through changes in principals, government and educational priorities.

of schools around Australia, it became clear that although schools could easily see the potential of the Habits of Mind, not all of them could translate and implement their potential into effective school change.

Many schools jumped on board the Habits of Mind bandwagon, only to leave it behind a few years later. The only evidence of the Habits ever being part of the school were a few posters on the walls, and perhaps a few advocates bravely waving the Habits of Mind flag as the school moved on to its next initiative.

However, a few schools did see profound changes in their culture. Academic results improved. The lives of students, teachers and, in many cases, the whole school community were profoundly and positively impacted by the Habits of Mind.

In these schools, there was never a sense of the Habits of Mind becoming “last year’s initiative”. The Habits were woven into the very fabric of the school’s culture and identity. In fact, the commitment to the Habits of Mind increased with time. This commitment



endured and grew through changes in principals, government and educational priorities.

The Institute for Habits of Mind recognised many of these schools as Learning Communities of Excellence. Waikiki Elementary, which has flown the Habits of Mind flag for almost 20 years, is one such school. Schools I have worked with, including Kirwan State High School, Nudgee College, Mathew Flinders Anglican College and Westbourne Park Primary School, have also sustained their work in powerful ways for more than 10 years.

So, why is it that so many schools fail with Habits of Mind while others achieve such great success?

The most **profound** and **sustainable changes** are achieved when the Habits pervade **all aspects of the school**, not just a classroom or two.

As I reflect on my own Habits of Mind journey, I attribute the difference to three key lessons:

1. A Growth Mindset

Schools will only achieve long-term success with the Habits of Mind if they build on a foundation of the Growth Mindset. This is a critical element that, unfortunately, was missing in many schools in the early days of the Habits of Mind work.

2. A whole-school approach

The power of the Habits of Mind is magnified exponentially when the whole school adopts them. While individual teachers can and do make a difference in their own classrooms, the most profound and sustainable changes are achieved when the Habits pervade all aspects of the school, not just a classroom or two.

3. Development of the Habits of Mind

To succeed with the Habits of Mind, you cannot simply “teach” them. They’re not a topic to be covered and ticked off. The focus must be on developing, extending, building upon and improving the way the students engage with them. Much more than a vocabulary, the Habits of Mind require changes in pedagogy.

As we mark the 25th anniversary of the Institute for Habits of Mind, in this book we will delve into these three key lessons. My hope is that by sharing this wisdom, even more schools and organisations can make profound and enduring impacts on their communities with the Habits of Mind.

As Art Costa would say, the world *can* become a more thought-filled place.





LESSON 1:

A GROWTH MINDSET

A Growth Mindset is at the heart of the Habits of Mind. In fact, I don't believe you can have success with the Habits of Mind without a Growth Mindset. Let me explain the connection.

The underlying premise of Costa and Kallick's work is that we can *learn* to behave more intelligently^{1,2}. Habits of Mind describe the 16 dispositions skilfully employed by characteristically successful people. The central message is that we must develop these Habits of Mind to learn how to behave more intelligently³.

Psychologist Carol Dweck's work on Mindsets works from exactly the same premise. However, there is a significant difference. Dweck sidesteps the question about whether it's possible to develop your intelligence. Instead, she asks: How do our behaviours change when we *believe* our intelligence – and other basic characteristics – can be developed?

Fixed versus Growth

What Dweck describes as a Growth Mindset is not growth itself. It's an invitation to grow. It's an understanding that growth is possible.

This belief can have an enormous impact on our motivations and actions. Without a Growth Mindset, we can't enter the processes that lead to growth. This is critically important for the learner *and* the teacher.

For the learner with a Fixed Mindset, the Habits of Mind describe what intelligent people have. They also identify what other people don't (and won't) have. The Habits of Mind help these learners categorise people as either having intelligence or not having it. There is no pathway for future learning; only



a way to identify what some people have and what some people don't.

For the learner with a Growth Mindset, the Habits of Mind describe and define what they need to develop in order to become more intelligent. The Habits provide a focus for their efforts. They offer a pathway for future learning and an opportunity for the learner to continually develop their intelligence.

When I first read Dweck's work, I recognised that the schools and teachers succeeding with Habits of Mind consistently approached their work with a Growth Mindset. They instilled in their students the understanding that they had the capacity to become more intelligent.

However, because Costa and Kallick's work pre-dated Dweck's work, these schools weren't using the language of a Growth Mindset. Instead, their actions reflected a Growth Mindset. Their behaviours and pedagogy signified their underlying belief

“ A Growth Mindset is not growth. It is the **invitation to grow.** ”

that they could help increase students' intelligence.

The problem in schools that struggled with Habits of Mind was that their efforts were being undermined by the kind of Mindset being communicated by school structures, culture and the teachers' own Mindsets.

The False Mindset

Many teachers have grown up with messages about intelligence and abilities as being relatively fixed and stable. Children (including ourselves) have been ranked and grouped by ability. They have been categorised as



being a type – eg. mathematical, artistic, scientific, etc. These messages create a pervading Fixed Mindset, which permeates the classroom and, in turn, our work with Habits of Mind.

This is what Dweck and her colleague Susan Mackie call a False Mindset. Someone with a False Mindset may intellectually understand that intelligence is a learnable construct. They may even advocate a Growth Mindset and the importance of the Habits of Mind. But they have failed to deeply reflect upon their own history and beliefs. Because of this, they do not have an insight into how their history and beliefs have influenced their own Mindset. They may, in fact, act from a more Fixed Mindset perspective, and unintentionally pass these Fixed messages on to their students.

Why a Growth Mindset is so important

Habits of Mind are about learning to behave more intelligently. However, many schools and teachers have failed to recognise or act on the incongruence between this message and the Fixed Mindset messages that have traditionally been part of school and the broader community. As a result, their efforts

to develop more intelligent behaviours have been undermined by the Fixed Mindset belief that intelligence is unchangeable

Today, we know better. We not only recognise that intelligent behaviours can be taught – we recognise the importance of understanding that this change is possible. We understand the Growth Mindset, and we understand how to nurture and develop it in ourselves, our students, our classrooms and our schools. The key to leveraging our work with Habits of Mind is to develop a Growth Mindset culture.

The lesson I learnt – possibly the single most important lesson – is that the Habits of Mind and the Growth Mindset are intimately connected. The Habits of Mind describe how to teach students to behave more intelligently. But our efforts to do this will fail if we operate from a predominantly Fixed Mindset.

To succeed with the Habits of Mind, we must establish a Growth Mindset in our schools, our teachers and our students. Then, and only then, are we likely to see the promise of the Habits of Mind fulfilled.



LESSON 2:

A WHOLE-SCHOOL APPROACH

I have had the great pleasure of working with many schools that have seen the Habits of Mind flourish in their communities over many years.

Not only have these schools embedded the Habits of Mind, they have sustained them.

Unfortunately, not all schools have sustained their work. For many, the Habits of Mind have become simply another of “last year’s initiatives”.

Why is it that some schools succeed with the Habits of Mind, sustaining their work and reaping the benefits for years and even decades, while others do not?

As we’ve discussed, having a Growth Mindset is a critical ingredient. Every successful Habits of Mind school has either implicitly

or explicitly built their work upon a Growth Mindset foundation. However, a Growth Mindset alone is not enough.

In many schools, time moves on. Habits of Mind are unintentionally dropped. There’s never a decision to stop engaging in them, but sometimes they get left behind. At some point, the staff changes, leadership changes, the focus changes and teachers start saying, “We used to do Habits of Mind. I don’t really know what happened to them, though.”

From my observations, the schools that succeed and sustain their work with the Habits of Mind focus on the following four areas:

They (the Habits of Mind) become the **common language of learning** throughout the **wider school community**, creating what Costa describes as a “**more thought-filled world**”.

1. Curriculum and assessment

The Habits of Mind are embedded in the teaching and learning process. The school goes well beyond teaching students the names and descriptions of the Habits of Mind. It teaches students how to engage in the Habits more effectively. Students aren't simply required to use the Habits – they are expected to develop and improve them.

Teachers play an important role in this. This means the development of the students' Habits becomes an explicit learning outcome that's built into the teaching process and student assessment.

2. School environment

You know a Habits of Mind school when you walk into one. You can see it in the very fabric of the school. You can hear it in the language used by teachers and students. It's not only apparent in the classroom – it's in the assembly halls, the office and the staff room.

Most importantly, the Habits aren't decoration or window dressing. And they're not the result of a budget allocation (although that's important, too). The school environment is an authentic reflection of the way the Habits of Mind are referred to and valued by school staff, students and teachers.

3. Wider school community

Habits of Mind are not only for children. In fact, in schools where the Habits of Mind are deeply embedded, the teachers tell me how important the Habits of Mind are to them personally. They have made a personal commitment to the Habits as life-long learners.

They also tell me that the Habits of Mind are essential to the way the school's staff works together. The Habits represent a common set of expectations about the way teachers should work together and independently.

Finally, the teachers tell me that because the Habits of Mind are so important, they must teach them to the children as well.

Not only are the Habits of Mind important within the school, their influence extends beyond the school's walls. Parents and even local businesses embrace the Habits of Mind. They become the common language of learning throughout the wider school community, creating what Costa describes as a “more thought-filled world”.

4. Policies and practices

School policies and practices are the glue that holds all this together. The Habits of Mind are woven into school policies and practices, which means they become deeply embedded



in the traditions of the school. They become part of “the way things are done around here”. The Habits are intertwined with the parts of school culture that are regularly revisited, recommitted to and renewed.

Because they represent ways of behaving intelligently and achieving success, the Habits of Mind are woven authentically into the day-to-day life of the school. Each policy document contains the language of the Habits of Mind. Actions and choices in the school are guided by them.

In the face of change, the Habits of Mind endure. They endure because schools interpret change through the Habits of Mind lens. The school asks, “How do the Habits of Mind help us respond to this new challenge / need / initiative / policy, etc?” The Habits of Mind become the vehicle through which everything else is achieved.

All four areas are required for sustained success

I’ve seen many schools that approach the Habits of Mind as a classroom initiative, something that’s important for the children. They are seen in isolation from the rest of the school, a teaching tool only. These schools often find it difficult to sustain their work.



One of the key lessons I’ve learnt is that something powerful happens when schools focus on all four of the above areas. They reinforce and support each other, until the Habits of Mind become an integral part of the school itself. When this happens, the Habits of Mind flourish and are sustained for many years.



LESSON 3:

DEVELOPMENT OF THE HABITS OF MIND

When Art Costa first described what would become known as the Habits of Mind, he used the term “intelligent behaviours”.

“Intelligent behaviours,” he said, “are demonstrated when we are confronted with questions and problems *for which we don’t know an immediate answer.*”

Costa had identified these behaviours based on other researchers’ descriptions of what the most intelligent people do. These were people at the top of their field, who worked on the most difficult problems and achieved the highest standards. Costa described these people as engaging in the Habits of Mind.

But as useful and powerful as this picture was, it was incomplete. These people weren’t simply “demonstrating” Habits of Mind. They

demonstrated how to use them in their most skillful, mature and highly developed form.

Learning to behave more intelligently

Not all problems are equal. Some problems are difficult – much more difficult – than others. Solving easy problems requires only a basic, simple application of the Habits of Mind. You don’t have to behave too intelligently to solve easy problems.

But as problems become more difficult, they demand an increasingly well-developed set of behaviours. This takes us to the heart of what the Habits of Mind are all about: learning

This takes us to the heart of what the Habits of Mind are all about: **learning to behave more intelligently.**

You must develop **more mature** Habits of Mind to solve **increasingly difficult problems.**

to behave more intelligently. You must develop more *mature* Habits of Mind to solve increasingly difficult problems.

Recognising the importance of development, Costa and Kallick came to define the Habits of Mind as “the dispositions that are *skillfully* and *mindfully* employed by characteristically successful people when confronted with problems, the solutions to which are not immediately apparent.”

It’s not that the people who have reached the highest level of performance “use” the Habits of Mind and other people don’t. It’s that these people have learnt how to use them more effectively and skilfully than other people. This means they can solve the most difficult problems and progress further than anyone else. They have learnt how to behave more intelligently.

In this light, it became clear that our role in schools was not to teach the Habits of Mind, but to help students continually develop them.

The difference between teaching the Habits and developing them

Unfortunately, many schools went down the path of “teaching” students the Habits of Mind – simply educating them about the names and meanings – and asking them to

“use” them. They failed to realise that this was simply the introduction and more work was needed.

The real work didn’t begin until we started to question how we could *teach* children to get *better* at the Habits of Mind. At the time, we didn’t have models that showed us what it looked like to get better at the Habits of Mind.

To address this, I teamed with Costa and Kallick, and in 2006⁴ we published the Dimensions of Growth for the Habits of Mind. These dimensions represent the ways in which learners can grow within each Habit of Mind. While they don’t represent a complete description of development, they do describe the pathways along which growth can take place.

Briefly, these dimensions are:

Meaning: We seek a deeper, more insightful, more sophisticated understanding of the Habit of Mind.

Capacity: We build an increasing repertoire of skills, strategies and techniques through which we engage in the Habit.

Alertness: We become more finely attuned to the signals and cues in a situation that tell us when we should and shouldn’t engage in one or more of the Habits of Mind.

When you focus on developing **more intelligent behaviours** in your students, your work with the Habits of Mind **never ceases**. Each year, your goal is to **further develop** every student's intelligence.

Value: We come to better recognise the benefits and advantages of engaging in the Habits of Mind. We place increasingly high value on them and choose to engage in them over less productive behaviours.

Commitment: We become more committed to the ongoing development of the Habits of Mind. We learn to be increasingly self-assessing, self-directed and self-monitoring in our development of the Habits.

In my observations, only the schools that embrace the idea of development, by adopting the Dimensions of Growth or by working on development more intuitively, succeed in the long run with the Habits of Mind.

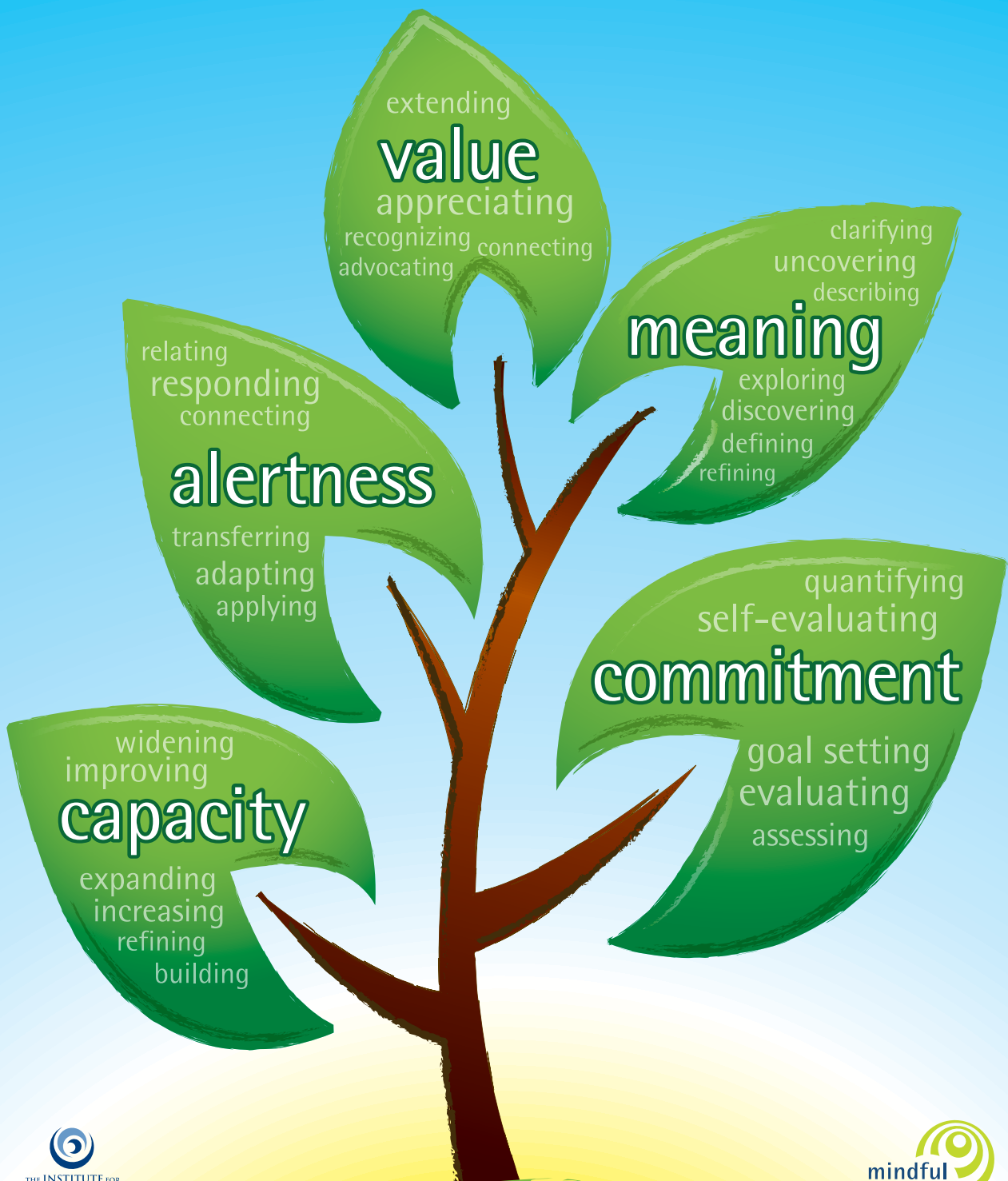
Without this focus on teaching students to improve their Habits and to learn to behave more intelligently, schools falter. Teachers feel as though they have "covered" the Habits of Mind, and students start to say, "We've done the Habits of Mind already."



When you focus on developing more intelligent behaviours in your students, your work with the Habits of Mind never ceases. Each year, your goal is to further develop every student's intelligence so they are better able to solve increasingly difficult challenges.

You have a goal that truly sustains your work; a goal that will ensure your focus on the Habits of Mind results in greater success for your school and, most importantly, your students.

Habit of Mind



Dimensions of Growth

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