

## Success Through a Growth Mindset

Does your team respond poorly to feedback? Do you hear them say that a task is “too hard” or “I am who I am?” As a leader, are you threatened by the success of other leaders or teams? Do you avoid challenges for yourself or your team? If you’ve answered yes to any of these questions, then you and your team may be stuck in a fixed mindset.



A fixed mindset is the belief that one’s talent, intelligence or abilities are fixed traits that determine one’s success or lack thereof. Effort does not matter and therefore is not required to achieve goals; it is predetermined by one’s fixed traits. Someone that has a fixed mindset will avoid challenges, expect rewards without much effort, believe something is too hard because it does not come natural to them, ignore constructive criticism, and feel threatened by others’ abilities, talents, or successes.

Your team can be released from a fixed mindset by embracing a growth mindset. A growth mindset is the opposite of a fixed mindset, in that the belief is one’s talent, intelligence or abilities are not fixed traits and can be developed with putting forth time, effort, and perseverance. Having a growth mindset can improve your team’s outlook and help them to reach their individual and team goals.

Carol Dweck, an American psychologist, introduced the idea of fixed and growth mindset through his research. It further claimed that “If people believe that they can do better, they start to understand that putting in the extra effort will make them stronger. So, they begin to put in those extra efforts, which ultimately leads to higher achievement.” (Sharma, 2023)

If you want your team to consist of individuals that put forth the “extra effort,” then it is imperative to develop a growth mindset in your team; however, the growth mindset starts with you. As a leader you must focus on progress, opportunities to work on your weaknesses while also building your strengths, have self-awareness, make small efforts towards your goals, and celebrate your achievements. Leaders should model growth-oriented habits to their team. Some habits include encouraging new ideas, knowing your own goals and abilities, having a clear vision for the future, learning from other leader’s successes and failures, tenacity, reading other leaders’ stories, and going the extra mile in your own tasks and for your team.

Once you have begun creating these growth-oriented habits, it is time to develop a growth mindset in your team. This starts with the team’s culture. Creating a culture of continuous learning will help your team have a growth mindset. It also helps your team improve their own skills and job performance. For example, provide an in-service training, share an article on growth mindset with the team, or schedule individuals to attend a Learning & Leadership Development class.

Leaders will also want to promote individual growth to members on their team. Shubah Sharma mentions, “The best way to do that is by providing them with the right opportunities, setting clear expectations and realistic goals, and providing feedback that is both honest and helpful. It will also be vital for them to remove any roadblocks that may result in growth.” Leaders can take the time to learn what the individual’s goals are during one-on-one rounding and assist the individual in obtaining their goals.

Your team can only work towards a growth mindset if they understand the difference between a fixed and growth mindset. During staff meetings, huddles, or rounding, as the leader you can educate your team on a fixed mindset and a growth mindset. Change it up each time you meet with the team:

- Talk about the differences or ask questions

- Send articles on the growth mindset to them
- Post a fixed versus growth mindset chart in the breakroom
- Discuss scenarios that apply to their job role of what a fixed mindset response and a growth mindset response would be
- Pay attention to your team and recognize them for having a growth mindset

In order for your team to be successful there must be a culture of a growth mindset. It's imperative that, as the leader, you strive for a growth mindset within yourself by adopting growth-oriented habits, as well as pouring into your team. Having a growth mindset means to continually learn and put forth effort with the abilities and talents you have as an individual leader and encourage the same from your team. Endorsing a growth mindset will benefit your team in reaching their individual goals and team goals as well.

-Katie Lazarek, member of the 2023 Emerging Leaders Cohort

#### References

- Cherry, K. (2022, September 20). *What Is a Mindset and Why It Matters*  
Verywell Mind. <https://www.verywellmind.com/what-is-a-mindset-2795025>
- Sharma, S. (2023, August 18). *12 Ways to Build a Growth Mindset and Succeed in Your Career*.  
Risely. <https://www.risely.me/how-can-managers-develop-a-growth-mindset-within-their-team/>