

our society. We decide that things are worse than they actually are—a condition Lerner refers to as “surplus powerlessness.” ...

The illusion of powerlessness can just as easily afflict the fortunate among us. I know many people who are confident and successful in their work and have loving personal relationships, yet can hardly conceive of trying to work toward a more humane society. Materially comfortable and professionally accomplished, they could make important social contributions. Instead they restrict their search for meaning and integrity to their private lives. Their sense of shared fate extends only to their immediate families and friends. Despite their many advantages, they, too, have been taught an “explanatory style” that precludes participation in public life, except to promote the most narrow self-interest.

*Points out that some of the most well-off people are driven by self-interest when they might use their wealth to make important “social contributions.”*

Whatever our situations, we all face a choice. We can ignore the problems that lie just beyond our front doors; we can allow decisions to be made in our names that lead to a meaner and more desperate world. We can yell at the TV newscasters and complain about how bad things are, using our bitterness as a hedge against involvement. Or we can work, as well as we can, to shape a more generous common future.

*Leaves us with a clear decision about whether or not we allow others to make choices for us or to take on the responsibility of working for the common good.*

ANNE COLBY AND THOMAS EHRLICH, WITH ELIZABETH BEAUMONT AND JASON STEPHENS

## Undergraduate Education and the Development of Moral and Civic Responsibility

At the time that the two primary authors published this essay, they worked at the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching, a U.S.-based education policy and research center founded by Andrew Carnegie in 1905. The foundation embraces a commitment to developing networks of ideas, individuals, and institutions to advance teaching and learning. Anne Colby holds a PhD in psychology from Columbia and currently serves as a consulting professor at Stanford University. Prior to that, she was director of the Henry Murray Research Center at Harvard University. With Thomas Ehrlich, she published *Educating for Democracy: Preparing Undergraduates*

*for Responsible Political Engagement* and won the 2013 Frederic W. Ness Book Award for their book *Rethinking Undergraduate Business Education: Liberal Learning for the Profession*. Thomas Ehrlich is a consulting professor at the Stanford Graduate School of Education. He is a graduate of Harvard College and Harvard Law School and holds five honorary degrees. Professor Ehrlich has previously served as president of Indiana University, provost of the University of Pennsylvania, and dean of Stanford Law School. His most recent book (2013) is *Civic Work, Civic Lessons: Two Generations Reflect on Public Service*.

*Shares a concern that Loeb expresses about trends toward increased individualism and lack of civic engagement. Especially interested in reaching out to undergraduates, whereas Loeb addresses a more general audience.*

*Stresses the responsibility that universities and colleges have to encourage students to be involved.*

*As concerned with morality as with civic engagement, which is a departure from Loeb. Maintains that moral and civic responsibility are inextricably linked.*

*Elaborates on how moral principles are tied to democratic principles. Contends that decision making relies on having a "strong moral compass."*

We are among those increasingly concerned about two related trends in contemporary American culture—excessive individualism and moral relativism on the one hand and popular disdain for civic engagement, particularly political involvement, on the other. In our view, undergraduate years are an important time for developing in students moral and civic responsibility that can help reverse these trends. This essay describes our work-in-progress, under the auspices of the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching, to analyze the American undergraduate scene in terms of efforts to promote students' moral and civic responsibility and to encourage our colleges and universities to strengthen those efforts.

Some people who have written about these issues have focused exclusively on civic responsibility, avoiding the more controversial area of morality (e.g., Barber, 1998). We include moral as well as civic responsibility in the scope of our project, because we believe the two are inseparable. Our democratic principles, including tolerance and respect for others, procedural impartiality, and concern for both the rights of the individual and the welfare of the group, are all grounded in moral principles. Likewise, the problems that the civically engaged citizen must confront always include strong moral themes—for example, fair access to resources such as housing, the moral obligation to consider future generations in making environmental policy, and the conflicting claims of multiple stakeholders in community decision-making. None of these issues can be adequately resolved



*Educators must commit themselves to teaching civic responsibility and morality.*

*Defines moral engagement in broad terms to promote thoughtful reflection and call upon institutions of higher education to foster moral engagement.*

*Defines civic engagement as a necessary means for sustaining a democracy that encompasses both thoughtful reflection and subsequent action.*

without a consideration of moral questions. A person can become civically and politically active without good judgment and a strong moral compass, but it is hardly wise to promote that kind of involvement. Because civic responsibility is inescapably threaded with moral values, we believe that higher education must aspire to foster both moral and civic maturity and must confront educationally the many links between them.

What do we mean by “moral” and by “civic”? We consider “moral,” in its broadest sense, to include matters of values both personal and public. As we use the term, “morality” is not confined to a specific sphere of life or action, nor is it necessarily tied to religion. In advocating moral engagement, we are not promoting any particular moral or meta-ethical viewpoint. Rather, we are interested in fostering more thoughtful moral reflection generally and the adoption of viewpoints and commitments that emerge from reasoned consideration. We believe that higher education should encourage and facilitate the development of students’ capacities to examine complex situations in which competing values are often at stake, to employ both substantive knowledge and moral reasoning to evaluate the problems and values involved, to develop their own judgments about those issues, and then to act on their judgments.

We consider “civic” to range over all social spheres beyond the family, from neighborhoods and local communities to state, national, and cross-national arenas. Political engagement is a particular subset of civic engagement that is required for sustaining American democracy. We are not promoting a single type of civic or political engagement, but instead urging that the effective operation of social systems and the successful achievement of collective goals demand the time, attention, understanding, and action of all citizens. Institutions of higher education have both the opportunity and obligation to cultivate in their graduates an appreciation for the responsibilities and rewards of civic engagement, as well as to

foster the capacities necessary for thoughtful participation in public discourse and effective participation in social enterprises.

In general terms, we believe that a morally and civically responsible individual recognizes himself or herself as a member of a larger social fabric and therefore considers social problems to be at least partly his or her own; such an individual is willing to see the moral and civic dimensions of issues, to make and justify informed moral and civic judgments, and to take action when appropriate.

We believe that moral and civic development is enhanced by mutually interdependent sets of knowledge, virtues, and skills. Because they are interdependent, no simple listing of attributes is adequate. Such a listing may imply that the elements involved have precise definitions and parameters that might be gained through a single course or even from reading a few books. We have come to understand through studying various colleges and universities that this is not the case. Instead, enriching the moral and civic responsibility of all members of the campus community is best achieved through the cumulative, interactive effect of numerous curricular and extracurricular programs, within an environment of sustained institutional commitment to these overarching goals. . . .

Included in the core knowledge we consider integral to moral and civic learning is knowledge of basic ethical concepts and principles, such as justice and equity, and how they have been interpreted by various seminal thinkers. Also included is a comprehension of the diversity of American society and global cultures, and an understanding of both the institutions and processes of American and international civic, political, and economic affairs. Finally, deep substantive knowledge of the particular issues in which one is engaged is critical.

This core of knowledge cannot be separated from the virtues and skills that a morally and civically responsible individual should strive to attain. The virtues and skills we have in mind are not distinct to moral and civic learning but are necessary for active

*The teaching of civic and moral engagement should occur in different fields of study and programs supported by a national organization such as the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching.*

*Avoids defining values that can inform judgment, but offers a description of core knowledge and concepts that educators should impart to their students.*

*Core knowledge of key issues and an understanding of civic, political, and economic concerns should go hand in hand with moral and civic learning.*



*Elaborates upon the idea of community building that Loeb introduces, particularly empathy, trust, and compassion.*

*Maintains that to act requires applying core knowledge and values, in contrast to Loeb, who uses evidence from sociology, health, and psychology to inspire people to become civically and politically engaged.*

engagement in many personal and professional realms. Among the core virtues is the willingness to engage in critical self-examination and to form reasoned commitments, balanced by open-mindedness and a willingness to listen to and take seriously the ideas of others. Moral and civic responsibility also requires honesty in dealings with others, and in holding oneself accountable for one's action and inactions. Without a basis of trust, and habits of cooperation, no community can operate effectively. Empathy and compassion are also needed, not only for relating to those in one's immediate social sphere, but for relating to those in the larger society as well. Willingness to form moral and civic commitments and to act on those is a core virtue that puts the others into practice.

Finally, the core skills of moral and civic responsibility are essential for applying core knowledge and virtues, transforming informed judgments into action. They include the abilities to recognize the moral and civic dimensions of issues and to take a stand on those issues. But they also include skills that apply to much broader arenas of thought and behavior, such as abilities to communicate clearly orally and in writing, to collect, organize, and analyze information, to think critically and to justify positions with reasoned arguments, to see issues from the perspectives of others and to collaborate with others. They also include the ability and willingness to lead, to build a consensus, and to move a group forward under conditions of mutual respect.

LAURIE OUELLETTE

## Citizen Brand: ABC and the Do Good Turn in US Television

Laurie Ouellette is a professor of communication studies at the University of Minnesota. The author of *Lifestyle TV* and coauthor of *Better Living through Reality TV: Television and Post-Welfare Citizenship*, she has published extensively about public broadcasting, TV history, fashion and style, self-help culture, and social media.

and social expectations of failure, cyber addiction, medical addiction, and beliefs about disabilities and racial differences.

While most of us suspect that the way we see—and feel about—ourselves and others is in part a product of our society, these authors offer fresh perspectives on how this dynamic works, with many eye-opening examples. What we imagine to be “facts” are often not supported by evidence, and the effects of these misunderstandings on people’s lives can be dramatic. Conversely, understanding the scientific facts behind our behaviors and attitudes can be life changing.

For example, psychologist Carol Dweck examines the brain science behind those who respond to failure by giving up (a “fixed mindset”) and those who instead see failure as an exciting opportunity to learn and grow (a “growth mindset”). Cyberpsychologist Mary Aiken applies scientific analysis of addiction to bear on our often compulsive use of technology and offers insights about breaking the cycle. Bio-anthropologist Agustín Fuentes offers “myth-busting” analysis about race and biology, aiming to demonstrate how often we make the wrong assumptions about what bodies can tell us, and how damaging those assumptions can be.

Some of the authors focus on the ways we alter our bodies and why. For example, Margaret Talbot looks at the significance of “brain-boosting” drugs, which continue to be popular on college campuses, raising the bar for academic performance (particularly when students are also cramming in social activities). William J. Peace extends the conversation about body “norms” into the realm of disability studies and challenges us to reframe our ideas of the disabled body by examining adaptive sports.

These readings will take you from theories and research to your very own body, from your daily practices to the largest questions of what it means to be human. We bet you will have strong responses to these ideas, and we invite you to dive into this raucous conversation.

#### CAROL DWECK

### *From Mindset: The New Psychology of Success*

Carol Dweck is a psychology professor at Stanford and one of the leading experts in the field of motivation. Beyond her scholarly publications on how and why people succeed, her writing has appeared in the *New York Times*, the *Washington Post*, and many other newspapers and magazines. She lectures all over the world and is frequently interviewed by television news programs. This reading is drawn from her 2006 bestselling book *Mindset: The New Psychology of Success*. Before you read, take a moment

to think about your own general response to failure, something all humans experience. You might think of something as common as failing a quiz. How does failure make you feel? What behavioral changes do you usually make—if any—to respond to small or large failures?

Dweck introduces this topic with a narrative example (see Chapter 11) of observing children responding to a challenge with either frustration or excitement. This leads to the inquiry driving her research: “What are the consequences of thinking that your intelligence or personality is something you can develop, as opposed to something that is a fixed, deep-seated trait?” (para. 7). Note that this piece is divided into eight sections, with visuals at the end. As you read, pay attention to the organizational logic of each section and to the ways each (including the visuals) contributes to Dweck’s larger point about the difference between a “fixed mindset” and a “growth mindset.”

The definitions of “fixed mindset” and “growth mindset” are in the section titled “What Does All This Mean for You? The Two Mindsets.” Be sure that you understand these definitions well enough to explain them to someone else. The next section, “A View from the Two Mindsets,” offers many examples of these two mindsets in action; as you read those examples, reflect on your own responses to academic challenges. The implications of these two mindsets are explored in the final sections of the reading, where Dweck invites the reader to consider how these mindsets lead to different attitudes about the value of effort and affect how accurately we estimate our abilities.

Dweck concludes with a series of questions designed to engage the reader in self-reflection, inviting you to consider how differently you might approach education—as well as other challenges—with a growth mindset. The *Calvin and Hobbes* comic underscores her point with humor. The final graphic, with contrasting “fixed mindset” and “growth mindset” paths through trying something new, illustrates how Dweck’s argument reaches far beyond the classroom. Life is full of challenges. How you handle them, she argues, is something you can change.



When I was a young researcher, just starting out, something happened that changed my life. I was obsessed with understanding how people cope with failures, and I decided to study it by watching how students grapple with hard problems. So I brought children one at a time to a room in their school, made them comfortable, and then gave them a series of puzzles to solve. The first ones were fairly easy, but the next ones were hard. As the students grunted, perspired, and toiled, I watched their strategies and probed what they were thinking and feeling. I expected differences among children in how they coped with the difficulty, but I saw something I never expected.



Confronted with the hard puzzles, one ten-year-old boy pulled up his chair, rubbed his hands together, smacked his lips, and cried out, "I love a challenge!" Another, sweating away on these puzzles, looked up with a pleased expression and said with authority, "You know, I was *hoping* this would be informative!"

*What's wrong with them?* I wondered. I always thought you coped with failure or you didn't cope with failure. I never thought anyone *loved* failure. Were these alien children or were they on to something?

Everyone has a role model, someone who pointed the way at a critical moment in their lives. These children were my role models. They obviously knew something I didn't and I was determined to figure it out—to understand the kind of mindset that could turn a failure into a gift.

What did they know? They knew that human qualities, such as intellectual skills, could be cultivated through effort. And that's what they were doing—getting smarter. Not only weren't they discouraged by failure, they didn't even think they were failing. They thought they were learning.

I, on the other hand, thought human qualities were carved in stone. You were smart or you weren't, and failure meant you weren't. It was that simple. If you could arrange successes and avoid failures (at all costs), you could stay smart. Struggles, mistakes, perseverance were just not part of this picture.

Whether human qualities are things that can be cultivated or things that are carved in stone is an old issue. What these beliefs mean for you is a new one: What are the consequences of thinking that your intelligence or personality is something you can develop, as opposed to something that is a fixed, deep-seated trait? Let's first look in on the age-old, fiercely waged debate about human nature and then return to the question of what these beliefs mean for you.

## Why Do People Differ?

Since the dawn of time, people have thought differently, acted differently, and fared differently from each other. It was guaranteed that someone would ask the question of why people differed—why some people are smarter or more moral—and whether there was something that made them permanently different. Experts lined up on both sides. Some claimed that there was a strong physical basis for these differences, making them unavoidable and unalterable. Through the ages, these alleged physical differences have included bumps on the skull (phrenology), the size and shape of the skull (craniology), and, today, genes.

Others pointed to the strong differences in people's backgrounds, experiences, training, or ways of learning. It may surprise you to know that a big champion of this view was Alfred Binet, the inventor of the IQ



test. Wasn't the IQ test meant to summarize children's unchangeable intelligence? In fact, no. Binet, a Frenchman working in Paris in the early twentieth century, designed this test to identify children who were not profiting from the Paris public schools, *so that new educational programs could be designed to get them back on track*. Without denying individual differences in children's intellects, he believed that education and practice could bring about fundamental changes in intelligence. Here is a quote from one of his major books, *Modern Ideas About Children*, in which he summarizes his work with hundreds of children with learning difficulties:

A few modern philosophers . . . assert that an individual's intelligence is a fixed quantity, a quantity which cannot be increased. We must protest and react against this brutal pessimism. . . . With practice, training, and above all, method, we manage to increase our attention, our memory, our judgment and literally to become more intelligent than we were before.

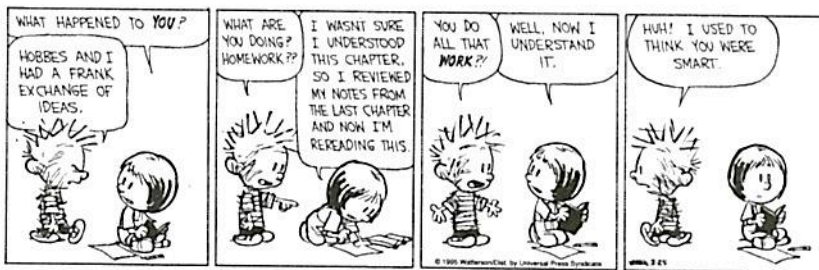
Who's right? Today most experts agree that it's not either-or. It's not nature *or* nurture, genes *or* environment. From conception on, there's a constant give and take between the two. In fact, as Gilbert Gottlieb, an eminent neuroscientist, put it, not only do genes and environment cooperate as we develop, but genes *require* input from the environment to work properly. 10

At the same time, scientists are learning that people have more capacity for lifelong learning and brain development than they ever thought. Of course, each person has a unique genetic endowment. People may start with different temperaments and different aptitudes, but it is clear that experience, training, and personal effort take them the rest of the way. Robert Sternberg, the present-day guru of intelligence, writes that the major factor in whether people achieve expertise "is not some fixed prior ability, but purposeful engagement." Or, as his forerunner Binet recognized, it's not always the people who start out the smartest who end up the smartest. 11

## What Does All This Mean for You? The Two Mindsets

It's one thing to have pundits spouting their opinions about scientific issues. It's another thing to understand how these views apply to you. For twenty years, my research has shown that *the view you adopt for yourself* profoundly affects the way you lead your life. It can determine whether you become the person you want to be and whether you accomplish the things you value. How does this happen? How can a simple belief have the power to transform your psychology and, as a result, your life? 12

Believing that your qualities are carved in stone—the *fixed mindset*— 13 creates an urgency to prove yourself over and over. If you have only a certain amount of intelligence, a certain personality, and a certain moral character—well, then you'd better prove that you have a healthy dose of



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them. It simply wouldn't do to look or feel deficient in these most basic characteristics.

Some of us are trained in this mindset from an early age. Even as a child, I was focused on being smart, but the fixed mindset was really stamped in by Mrs. Wilson, my sixth-grade teacher. Unlike Alfred Binet, she believed that people's IQ scores told the whole story of who they were. We were seated around the room in IQ order, and only the highest-IQ students could be trusted to carry the flag, clap the erasers, or take a note to the principal. Aside from the daily stomachaches she provoked with her judgmental stance, she was creating a mindset in which everyone in the class had one consuming goal—look smart, don't look dumb. Who cared about or enjoyed learning when our whole being was at stake every time she gave us a test or called on us in class?

I've seen so many people with this one consuming goal of proving themselves—in the classroom, in their careers, and in their relationships. Every situation calls for a confirmation of their intelligence, personality, or character. Every situation is evaluated: *Will I succeed or fail? Will I look smart or dumb? Will I be accepted or rejected? Will I feel like a winner or a loser?*

But doesn't our society value intelligence, personality, and character? Isn't it normal to want these traits? Yes, but...

There's another mindset in which these traits are not simply a hand you're dealt and have to live with, always trying to convince yourself and others that you have a royal flush when you're secretly worried it's a pair of tens. In this mindset, the hand you're dealt is just the starting point for development. This *growth mindset* is based on the belief that your basic qualities are things you can cultivate through your efforts. Although people may differ in every which way—in their initial talents and aptitudes, interests, or temperaments—everyone can change and grow through application and experience.

Do people with this mindset believe that anyone can be anything, that anyone with proper motivation or education can become Einstein or Beethoven? No, but they believe that a person's true potential is unknown



(and unknowable); that it's impossible to foresee what can be accomplished with years of passion, toil, and training.

Did you know that Darwin and Tolstoy were considered ordinary children? That Ben Hogan, one of the greatest golfers of all time, was completely uncoordinated and graceless as a child? That the photographer Cindy Sherman, who has been on virtually every list of the most important artists of the twentieth century, *failed* her first photography course? That Geraldine Page, one of our greatest actresses, was advised to give it up for lack of talent? 19

You can see how the belief that cherished qualities can be developed creates a passion for learning. Why waste time proving over and over how great you are, when you could be getting better? Why hide deficiencies instead of overcoming them? Why look for friends or partners who will just shore up your self-esteem instead of ones who will also challenge you to grow? And why seek out the tried and true, instead of experiences that will stretch you? The passion for stretching yourself and sticking to it, even (or especially) when it's not going well, is the hallmark of the growth mindset. This is the mindset that allows people to thrive during some of the most challenging times in their lives. 20

## A View from the Two Mindsets

To give you a better sense of how the two mindsets work, imagine—as vividly as you can—that you are a young adult having a really bad day: 21

One day, you go to a class that is really important to you and that you like a lot. The professor returns the midterm papers to the class. You got a C+. You're very disappointed. That evening on the way back to your home, you find that you've gotten a parking ticket. Being really frustrated, you call your best friend to share your experience but are sort of brushed off.

What would you think? What would you feel? What would you do? 22

When I asked people with the fixed mindset, this is what they said: "I'd feel like a reject." "I'm a total failure." "I'm an idiot." "I'm a loser." "I'd feel worthless and dumb—everyone's better than me." "I'm slime." In other words, they'd see what happened as a direct measure of their competence and worth. 23

This is what they'd think about their lives: "My life is pitiful." "I have no life." "Somebody upstairs doesn't like me." "The world is out to get me." "Someone is out to destroy me." "Nobody loves me, everybody hates me." "Life is unfair and all efforts are useless." "Life stinks. I'm stupid. Nothing good ever happens to me." "I'm the most unlucky person on this earth." 24

Excuse me, was there death and destruction, or just a grade, a ticket, and a bad phone call? 25

Are these just people with low self-esteem? Or card-carrying pessimists? No. When they aren't coping with failure, they feel just as worthy and optimistic—and bright and attractive—as people with the growth mindset. 26

So how would they cope? “I wouldn't bother to put so much time and effort into doing well in anything.” (In other words, don't let anyone measure you again.) “Do nothing.” “Stay in bed.” “Get drunk.” “Eat.” “Yell at someone if I get a chance to.” “Eat chocolate.” “Listen to music and pout.” “Go into my closet and sit there.” “Pick a fight with somebody.” “Cry.” “Break something.” “What is there to do?” 27

*What is there to do!* You know, when I wrote the vignette, I intentionally made the grade a C+, not an F. It was a midterm rather than a final. It was a parking ticket, not a car wreck. They were “sort of brushed off,” not rejected outright. Nothing catastrophic or irreversible happened. Yet from this raw material the fixed mindset created the feeling of utter failure and paralysis. 28

When I gave people with the growth mindset the same vignette, here's what they said. They'd think: 29

“I need to try harder in class, be more careful when parking the car, and wonder if my friend had a bad day.” 30

“The C+ would tell me that I'd have to work a lot harder in the class, but I have the rest of the semester to pull up my grade.” 31

There were many, many more like this, but I think you get the idea. Now, how would they cope? Directly. 32

“I'd start thinking about studying harder (or studying in a different way) for my next test in that class, I'd pay the ticket, and I'd work things out with my best friend the next time we speak.” 33

“I'd look at what was wrong on my exam, resolve to do better, pay my parking ticket, and call my friend to tell her I was upset the day before.” 34

“Work hard on my next paper, speak to the teacher, be more careful where I park or contest the ticket, and find out what's wrong with my friend.” 35

You don't have to have one mindset or the other to be upset. Who wouldn't be? Things like a poor grade or a rebuff from a friend or loved one—these are not fun events. No one was smacking their lips with relish. Yet those people with the growth mindset were not labeling themselves and throwing up their hands. Even though they felt distressed, they were ready to take the risks, confront the challenges, and keep working at them. 36

## So, What's New?

Is this such a novel idea? We have lots of sayings that stress the importance of risk and the power of persistence, such as “Nothing ventured, nothing 37



gained” and “If at first you don’t succeed, try, try again” or “Rome wasn’t built in a day.” (By the way, I was delighted to learn that the Italians have the same expression.) What is truly amazing is that people with the fixed mindset would not agree. For them, it’s “Nothing ventured, nothing lost.” “If at first you don’t succeed, you probably don’t have the ability.” “If Rome wasn’t built in a day, maybe it wasn’t meant to be.” In other words, risk and effort are two things that might reveal your inadequacies and show that you were not up to the task. In fact, it’s startling to see the degree to which people with the fixed mindset do not believe in effort.

What’s also new is that people’s ideas about risk and effort grow out of their more basic mindset. It’s not just that some people happen to recognize the value of challenging themselves and the importance of effort. Our research has shown that this *comes directly* from the growth mindset. When we teach people the *growth* mindset, with its focus on development, these ideas about challenge and effort follow. Similarly, it’s not just that some people happen to dislike challenge and effort. When we (temporarily) put people in a fixed mindset, with its focus on permanent traits, they quickly fear challenge and devalue effort.

We often see books with titles like *The Ten Secrets of the World’s Most Successful People* crowding the shelves of bookstores, and these books may give many useful tips. But they’re usually a list of unconnected pointers, like “Take more risks!” or “Believe in yourself!” While you’re left admiring people who can do that, it’s never clear how these things fit together or how you could ever become that way. So you’re inspired for a few days, but basically the world’s most successful people still have their secrets.

Instead, as you begin to understand the fixed and growth mindsets, you will see exactly how one thing leads to another—how a belief that your qualities are carved in stone leads to a host of thoughts and actions, and how a belief that your qualities can be cultivated leads to a host of different thoughts and actions, taking you down an entirely different road. It’s what we psychologists call an *Aha!* experience. Not only have I seen this in my research when we teach people a new mindset, but I get letters all the time from people who have read my work.

They recognize themselves: “As I read your article I literally found myself saying over and over again, ‘This is me, this is me! They see the connections: “Your article completely blew me away. I felt I had discovered the secret of the universe!” They feel their mindsets reorienting: “I can certainly report a kind of personal revolution happening in my own thinking, and this is an exciting feeling.” And they can put this new thinking into practice for themselves *and* others: “Your work has allowed me to transform my work with children and see education through a different lens,” or “I just wanted to let you know what an impact—on a personal and practical level—your outstanding research has had for hundreds of students.”

## Self-Insight; Who Has Accurate Views of Their Assets and Limitations?

Well, maybe the people with the growth mindset don't think they're Einstein or Beethoven, but aren't they more likely to have inflated views of their abilities and try for things they're not capable of? In fact, studies show that people are terrible at estimating their abilities. Recently, we set out to see who is most likely to do this. Sure, we found that people greatly misestimated their performance and their ability. *But it was those with the fixed mindset who accounted for almost all the inaccuracy.* The people with the growth mindset were amazingly accurate. 42

When you think about it, this makes sense. If, like those with the growth mindset, you believe you can develop yourself, then you're open to accurate information about your current abilities, even if it's unflattering. What's more, if you're oriented toward learning, as they are, you *need* accurate information about your current abilities in order to learn effectively. However, if everything is either good news or bad news about your precious traits—as it is with fixed-mindset people—distortion almost inevitably enters the picture. Some outcomes are magnified, others are explained away, and before you know it you don't know yourself at all. 43

Howard Gardner, in his book *Extraordinary Minds*, concluded that exceptional individuals have “a special talent for identifying their own strengths and weaknesses.” It's interesting that those with the growth mindset seem to have that talent. . . . 44

### Grow Your Mindset

Which mindset do you have? Answer these questions about intelligence. Read each statement and decide whether you mostly agree with it or disagree with it. 45

1. Your intelligence is something very basic about you that you can't change very much.
2. You can learn new things, but you can't really change how intelligent you are.
3. No matter how much intelligence you have, you can always change it quite a bit.
4. You can always substantially change how intelligent you are.

Questions 1 and 2 are the fixed-mindset questions. Questions 3 and 4 reflect the growth mindset. Which mindset did you agree with more? You can be a mixture, but most people lean toward one or the other.

You also have beliefs about other abilities. You could substitute “artistic talent,” “sports ability,” or “business skill” for “intelligence.” Try it. 46



It's not only your abilities; it's your personal qualities too. Look at these statements about personality and character and decide whether you mostly agree or mostly disagree with each one. 47

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

Here, questions 1 and 3 are the fixed-mindset questions and questions 2 and 4 reflect the growth mindset. Which did you agree with more? 48

Did it differ from your intelligence mindset? It can. Your "intelligence mindset" comes into play when situations involve mental ability. 49

Your "personality mindset" comes into play in situations that involve your personal qualities—for example, how dependable, cooperative, caring, or socially skilled you are. The fixed mindset makes you concerned with how you'll be judged; the growth mindset makes you concerned with improving. 50

Here are some more ways to think about mindsets: 51

- Think about someone you know who is steeped in the fixed mindset. Think about how they're always trying to prove themselves and how they're supersensitive about being wrong or making mistakes. Did you ever wonder why they were this way? (Are you this way?) Now you can begin to understand why.
- Think about someone you know who is skilled in the growth mindset—someone who understands that important qualities can be cultivated. Think about the ways they confront obstacles. Think about the things they do to stretch themselves. What are some ways you might like to change or stretch yourself?
- Okay, now imagine you've decided to learn a new language and you've signed up for a class. A few sessions into the course, the instructor calls you to the front of the room and starts throwing questions at you one after another.

Put yourself in a fixed mindset. Your ability is on the line. Can you feel everyone's eyes on you? Can you see the instructor's face evaluating you? Feel the tension, feel your ego bristle and waver. What else are you thinking and feeling? 52

Now put yourself in a growth mindset. You're a novice—that's why you're here. You're here to learn. The teacher is a resource for learning. Feel the tension leave you; feel your mind open up. 53

The message is: You can change your mindset. 54

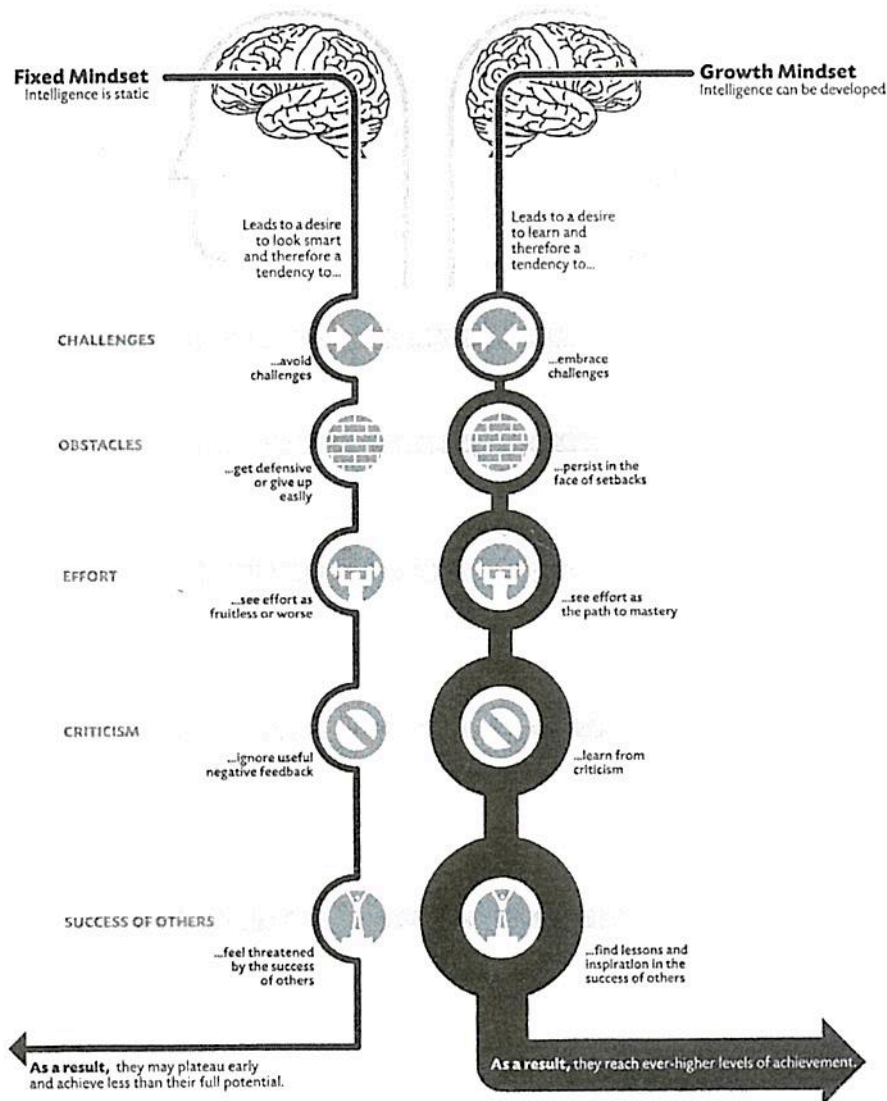


Diagram by Nigel Holmes. In "Fixed Mindset vs. Growth Mindset Figure" and "Chapter 1: The Mindsets" from *MINDSET: THE NEW PSYCHOLOGY OF SUCCESS* by Carol S. Dweck, Ph.D., copyright © 2006 by Carol S. Dweck, Ph.D. Used by permission of Random House, an imprint and division of Penguin Random House LLC. All rights reserved.



### Reading as a Writer: Analyzing Rhetorical Choices

1. Dweck mentions several experts in the field of psychology. In pairs or teams, look up information and share your findings on Alfred Binet (para. 9), Gilbert Gottlieb (para. 10), Robert Sternberg (para. 11), and Howard Gardner (para. 44). How are their ideas relevant to Dweck's argument?
2. Draw on the visual rhetoric tools in Chapter 10 to analyze the comic or the graphic at the end of the piece. How does the visual presentation of



the concept enhance Dweck's argument? Connect your response to two specific passages in this reading.

### Writing as a Reader: Entering the Conversation of Ideas

1. Dweck argues that we can change our mindset, if we understand the implications of our responses to failure. Mary Aiken (pp. 614–28) considers the ways the digital tools we use for education can foster negative behaviors. Imagine these authors in conversation with one another, challenging one another's claims and perhaps finding some common ground. Now put yourself into this conversation. Write an essay in which you build on these authors' ideas and your own experience and analysis of facing educational challenges in a digital age. Use Chapter 6's models for stating a thesis to help you figure out an approach for your argument.
2. How might Dweck's theory of mindsets help you understand the short narratives on education in Chapter 1 by Ta-Nehisi Coates (pp. 20–24), Richard Rodriguez (pp. 24–31), and Gerald Graff (pp. 31–36)? Choose one or two of those short narratives to consider in light of Dweck's theory, and write an essay in which you apply mindset concepts to the examples depicted in the education narratives. What aspects of those narratives stand out, and what significance do you see in your findings?

MARGARET TALBOT

### *From Brain Gain: The Underground World of “Neuroenhancing” Drugs*

Margaret Talbot is a staff writer at *The New Yorker*, where this article first appeared in 2009. Talbot has also written for *The New Republic* and *The Atlantic Monthly* on a wide range of topics, including changing attitudes toward women's work and family life, the intersection of politics and moral debates, and children's culture. This article on “neuroenhancing” drugs is part of an unfolding conversation among scholars and public intellectuals about the increasingly large role that prescription medication plays in many people's lives. You may be aware of the debates about whether we are “overmedicating” patients for depression or attention deficit disorder. In this article, Talbot takes up a more recent side effect of our medically fascinated culture—the nonmedical use of prescription drugs such as Adderall and Ritalin to enhance academic performance, particularly at the college level. In this piece, Talbot describes stressful dynamics of college life that may be familiar to you—balancing academic demands with other pressures on your time, whether from work or socializing. As you read, compare Talbot's examples to your own experiences and the ways you and your peers struggle to stay on top of the competing demands of contemporary life and college coursework.

Talbot uses an extended example of an anonymous student, “Alex,” to make a broader point about the ways many college campuses “have become