



There was a really fascinating study done on us students versus East Asian students when it came to math.

The researcher was trying to figure out why U.S. students are always so behind when it comes to math and why East Asian students are so much farther ahead.

After doing the research, they realized at the core was growth mindset. When they asked the American students what makes you good at math, their answer almost across the board was *you're either good at math or you're not*. When they asked the East Asian students almost unanimously the response was *you need to work hard*.

This is a really stark example of the difference between growth mindset and fixed mindset.

If you have a fixed mindset, you think that something either is or isn't and there's nothing to be done. If on the other hand, you have a growth mindset, you understand that with some hard work and effort you can get better at that thing.

Math is a really common example. You have likely seen others. People will say things like:

*I'm just not good at spelling.*

*I'm just not good at cooking.*

*I'm a terrible driver.*

When you have that fixed mindset, there's no reason for you to try to get any better.

It's important as a leader that you lead your team with a growth mindset and you remind them that growth is always possible and to invest in that growth.

Growth mindset came out of the work of Carol Dweck and her book, 'Mindset.'

If you haven't read it, I highly recommend it. According to Dweck, mindset is a belief that a person's capacities and talents can be improved over time.

Now the caveat here is that of course, we're all born with some natural gifts and interests and our ceilings might be different.

It doesn't say we all start with the same level of capacity and talent or that we can all finish at the same level.

What it does say is that we can all improve. This is a really helpful mindset to take on with your team too where they will not all be starting from the same place and they might not all be able to get to the same place.



When we adopt a fixed or growth mindset this shows up at work in lots of ways in skills, challenges, effort, feedback, and setbacks.

You can see where having the fixed mindset can be really harmful but having the growth mindset can be really powerful.

It matters because when you and your team operate within a culture that adopts a growth mindset, it will increase Innovation. You're going to want to come up with new ideas and try new things because you believe that things can grow and get better which then encourages investment in that growth. You're more likely to take risks and try out new things and even if they don't reach the end goal it helps you eventually get closer to the next goal based on your learning.

It really leverages your talent and it can help you tap into talents that people didn't even know they had.

Sometimes we get boxed in where we're pegged as the good writer or the good speaker or the good whatever and then that's the work we get all the time. It might just be that we believe we're not good at something else. We've been told we're not good at something else or we've never even bothered to try.

That's where the growth mindset can really be a huge benefit.

It improves morale as people are learning and growing and they know that their mistakes are not going to derail them. It's not going to be a permanent scar on their record. There's an understanding that mistakes are part of that growth process and it helps people get promotion opportunities when they believe that they can reach that level.

This is such a powerful comic from Success Pictures. It shows how people choose to interpret failure. With the unsuccessful on the left, it's just another burden on top of their head weighing them down.

If that's how people choose to process failure then of course, they're going to try to avoid it because they don't want that extra weight on their shoulders or head in this case.

In the picture on the right, you see this person is using the steps of failure to get to success. Each step gets a little bit closer and if that's the environment and mindset you encourage on your team, you're going to get more impact and result from that. People are going to keep pushing through, not letting those mistakes bring them down, finding new and exciting, more effective ways to do things.

How can you create that growth mindset on your team?

As always, it's up to you to model that. If your team sees you trying new things and fumbling and making mistakes and learning from those mistakes that gives them permission to do the same.



You need to invest in the growth and development of your team, encourage them to take risks and try things.

How many times have you heard in the workplace,

*Oh, we've always done it that way.*

or

*We tried that once and it didn't work.*

It just squashes people's motivation and creativity. Be open to new ways of doing things or trying a way that didn't work before, trying it again at a different time or in a different way.

Where do you embrace mistakes as a part of learning?

Watch your language.

I constantly hear people say:

*I'm just not good at this* and it's just accepted. Whether it's math or spelling or speaking or driving or whatever it is and then it starts to create an acceptance of that fixed mindset.

Be patient.

Growth is hard and long and slow and it's a mess along the way. We'll talk about delegation later on but one of the biggest challenges when we finally learn to delegate is the first time we delegate something and that person makes a mistake, we say, 'see- it's so much easier if I just do it.'

That's not how it works when people are first trying new things.

You have to prepare for them to make lots of mistakes and encourage that.

Think about how you're hiring people and how you're promoting them. How much are you focusing on their pedigree or their background or education or experience?

How much are you focusing on their potential?

How much are you promoting within?

Organizations who invest in growth mindsets are much more likely to promote from within versus organizations with fixed mindsets who are much more likely to promote from outside.



One of my favorite strategies is to embrace the word 'yet'.

This is great.

If you work with children or have children in your lives, when they say, 'I don't know how to do it' or 'I don't enjoy this' or 'I I'm just not good at this' you can always say 'yet.'

*I'm not good at this yet.*

*I don't know how to do this yet.*

*This isn't my strength yet.*

It really drives home that point of a growth mindset.

So the most important question for you is, how will you create a growth mindset on your team?