A Growth Mindset: Making a Positive Contribution
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Content

• What is your mindset?
• Neuroplasticity
• Fixed vs. growth mindsets
• From individuals to teams and organisations
• Talent & Creativity
• Managing your project team
• Adopting a growth mindset
What is your mindset about intelligence?

- Rate your level of agreement / disagreement with the following statements

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.

What is your mindset about personality?

- Rate your level of agreement / disagreement with the following statements

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.
Perspective

- Scenario
  - Your company has sent you on training which you’re really enjoying
  - At class one evening, you find out that you got a C+ for one of your assignments and you’re very disappointed
  - That evening as you leave class, 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

How do you respond?

**Fixed mindset**
- Stay in bed
- Get drunk
- I’m a failure
- I won’t bother trying hard next time
- Cry
- Break something

**Growth mindset**
- I’d look at what was wrong and resolve to do better
- I’d start thinking about working in a different way
- I’d try harder
- I’d be careful where I parked my car
Neuroplasticity

Mindset – Carol Dweck
Background

• Carol Dweck
• Wide application for children and students
• Parenting (and management) skills
  – Praising *intelligence* encourages a fixed mindset
  – Praising *effort* encourages a growth mindset
• Adults can also learn to change their mindsets
  – Yes: you *can* teach an old dog new tricks!
• Now research being extended from individuals to organisations

Summary of Dweck’s Mindset

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Fixed</th>
<th>Growth</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ability is static</td>
<td>ability is developed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>avoids challenges</td>
<td>embraces challenges</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>gives up easily</td>
<td>persists in obstacles</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>sees effort as fruitless</td>
<td>sees effort as necessary</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ignores useful criticism</td>
<td>learns from criticism</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>threatened by others</td>
<td>inspired by others’ success</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Organisational research

• To explore company mindsets, the researchers asked a diverse sample of employees at seven Fortune 1000 companies about the extent to which they agreed with various statements
  – E.g. “When it comes to being successful, this company seems to believe that people have a certain amount of talent, and they really can’t do much to change it.”
• High levels of agreement suggested that the organization had a predominantly fixed mindset; low levels suggested a growth mindset.

How Companies Can Profit from a “Growth Mindset”, HBR, November 2014

Organisational research

• Typically found a real consensus about the organisation’s mindset
• Characteristics went with each mindset
  – **Companies with a fixed mindset**
    • Small handful of “star” workers were highly valued
    • Employees pursued fewer innovative projects
    • Kept secrets, cut corners, and cheated to try to get ahead
  – **Supervisors in growth-mindset companies**
    • expressed significantly more positive views about their employees
    • Rated them as more innovative, collaborative, and committed to learning and growing
    • More likely to say that their employees had management potential

How Companies Can Profit from a “Growth Mindset”, HBR, November 2014
What about Talent?

**Fixed mindset**
- The “war on talent” – McKinsey
- Hire the most talented, qualified people
- Worship talent
- Entitlement – I am talented therefore special
- Disproportionately reward the stars

**Growth mindset**
- The “talent myth” – Malcolm Gladwell
- Talent makes up a much smaller part of success than previously thought
- Useful but not sufficient
- Drive and passion count more
- The system is the star, not the individuals

**Effort and/or ability**
Even geniuses have to work hard...

- No matter what your ability is, **effort** is what ignites that ability and turns it into accomplishment
- Malcolm Gladwell’s Outliers:
  - 10,000 hours
    - Elite violinists
    - Beatles
    - Bill Gates
  - Practice plays a major role in success

Creativity

- How creative are you?
- More or less so than when you were 4yrs old?
- What happened?
- Creativity is like a muscle than can be exercised
The Need to be Creative

Number one ingredient for creativity?

- You guessed it!
  - The resilience & perseverance produced by a growth mindset
Dweck addressing the United Nations

• “A fixed or growth mindset can be embedded in an organization, a culture or a nation.
• In the context of the United Nations, a growth mindset could:
  – foster innovation and creativity,
  – assist in envisioning the development potential of nations and
  – enhancing collaboration and negotiation by emphasizing possibility and change.”

I don’t divide the world into the weak and the strong, or the successes and failures...I divide the world into the learners and non-learners.

— Benjamin Barber —
“CEO disease”?

- Wanting to be seen as perfect
- Choosing short-term strategies to look like a hero
- Blame everyone and everything else for failures
- A “genius with a thousand helpers”

Examples:
- Lee Iacocca at Chrysler;
- Jeffrey Skilling at Enron

The best CEOs

- Take responsibility for mistakes
- Take a long-term view
- Share credit
- Nurture employees
- Open to feedback
- Listen to customers

Examples
- Jack Welch of General Electric
- Lou Gerstner of IBM
- Anne Mulcahy of Xerox
How do you manage your team?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Fixed mindset</th>
<th>Growth mindset</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Talent-focus</td>
<td>Effort-focus</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Heroes</td>
<td>Learners</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Short-term strategy</td>
<td>Long-term strategy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self-importance</td>
<td>Self-confidence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reign of terror</td>
<td>Mentoring</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Take personal credit</td>
<td>Share credit</td>
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<tr>
<td>Criticise mistakes</td>
<td>Allow people to make mistakes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Be defensive about mistakes</td>
<td>Be open to feedback</td>
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<tr>
<td>Pay lip-service to lessons</td>
<td>Really learn lessons</td>
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<tr>
<td>Groupthink</td>
<td>Avoid groupthink</td>
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Avoid “groupthink”

- Alfred P. Sloan, the former CEO of General Motors, was leading a group of high-level policy makers who seemed to have reached a consensus
  - “I take it we are all in complete agreement on the decision here…. Then I propose we postpone further discussion of this matter until our next meeting to give ourselves time to develop disagreement and perhaps gain some understanding of what the decision is all about.”

- Ancient Persians used a similar idea to prevent groupthink ...
  - Whenever a group reached a decision while sober, they later reconsidered it while intoxicated (and vice versa).
On the shoulders of giants…

• Andrew Carnegie once said
  – “I wish to have as my epitaph: ‘Here lies a man who was wise enough to bring into his service men who knew more than he.’”

The power of YET

KEEP CALM
It's Not Finished
Adopting a growth mindset

- Reflection
  - Am I taking ownership of my mistakes?
  - What can I learn from this?
  - How can I improve?

- The meaning of Failure
  - Fixed mindset: "I'm not good enough."
  - Growth mindset: "Not YET."

Change from “fixed” to “growth”

1. Learn to hear your “fixed” voice
   - “What if I fail? I’ll be a failure!”
2. Recognise you have a choice
3. Answer with a “growth” voice
   - “Most successful people had failures along the way”
4. Take growth mindset action
   - Practice acting on the growth mindset
Growth activities

• Take a growth mindset back to your teams
  – Play a video clip on neuroplasticity, growth mindset or Grit
  – Ask your teams to do the following:
    • Come up with at least 3 reasons why it is important for people to recognize that they can develop their capabilities
    • Describe how they have managed to become better in something they used to be not so good at
    • Explain to a hypothetical other person how s/he can develop his/her capabilities.
    • Think of and analyse an example where someone else learned something which they didn’t think they would learn
    • Discuss!

“Do not judge me by my successes, judge me by how many times I fell down and got back up again.”
– Nelson Mandela
THANK-YOU

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Further viewing / reading

– Angela Lee Duckworth: GRIT

– Malcolm Gladwell: Outliers
– Jim Collins: Good to Great
– Marshall Goldsmith: What got you here won’t get you there
– Blinkist