



CULTIVATING A GROWTH MINDSET

LEARNING OBJECTIVE

Learning Objective: Learn about and develop a plan to adopt a growth mindset.

Air Force Category: Personal

Competency: Embodies Airman Culture (Sub: Develops Self)

Competency: Communicating (Sub: Active Listening, Writing)

Air Force Category: People/Team

Competency: Leading people (Sub: Develops and Inspires others)

CONCEPT: GROWTH MINDSET

Definitions: *the view you adopt for yourself profoundly affects the way you lead your life*

Fixed Mindset: believing that your qualities are carved in stone; creates an urgency to prove yourself over and over. (Dweck, 2006, p. 6)

Growth Mindset: believing that your basic qualities are things you can cultivate through your efforts (Dweck, 2006, p. 6)

Comparison Chart	Fixed Mindset	Growth Mindset
Belief	Capabilities are inborn and barely changeable	Capabilities are affected by effort and learning can develop them
Achievement	Proving you are smart	Means you are learning & stretching
Tendency	Appear as capable as possible	Try to learn and to improve as much as possible
View on effort	Too much effort is considered a lack of talent; shouldn't be required	Effort is considered normal and necessary for improvement and growth; path to mastery makes you better
Success	Being the best and based on talent	Defined as working hard to become your best and based on motivation
Failure	Humiliation	Means you haven't worked hard enough yet; not reached your potential
Feedback	Threatening, seen as attributed to traits	Welcomed, helpful in providing direction for improvement
Talented Peers	Threatening and creates jealousy	Seen as a source of inspiration

TOOLS FOR LEARNING:

1. Mindset self-assessment: <http://mindsetonline.com/testyourmindset/step1.php>
2. Dr. Carol Dweck TED talk: The power of believing you can improve
https://www.ted.com/talks/carol_dweck_the_power_of_believing_that_you_can_improve?language=en

PERSONAL REFLECTION QUESTIONS:

1. Is there a talent or ability you would like to have but don't? How do you know you don't have it—what's the evidence?
2. Can you name one thing you could do to develop that ability? Two?
3. Consider a time you faced an important opportunity or challenge with a fixed mindset? What were your thoughts and worries—about your abilities? About other people's judgments? About the possibility of failure? Describe them vividly.
4. Now, can you take that same opportunity or challenge and switch into a growth mindset? Think of it as a chance to learn new things. What are the plans and strategies you're thinking about now?
5. Is there someone in your life (a boss, mate, friend, child) with a fixed mindset—someone who won't take risks, who can't admit mistakes, who falls apart or gets defensive after setbacks? Do you understand that person better now?

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

1. What were your observations reading/watching about mindsets?
2. Why do you think mindset matters? How can it affect the climate of an organization?
3. How can a leader's fixed mindset affect his or her own actions? How can it affect the climate of an organization?
4. How could a leader's growth mindset affect his or her own actions? How can it affect the climate of an organization?
5. How can you shift your mindset from fixed to growth?

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

Dweck, C. (2006). *Mindset: the new psychology of success*. (Available via Overdrive both electronically and audio from the Air Force Library)

Ted Talk: The Power of Belief and Success: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?t=35&v=pN34FNbOKX>

Dweck, C. (2016). "What Having a "Growth Mindset" Actually Means. *Harvard Business Review*.
<https://hbr.org/2016/01/what-having-a-growth-mindset-actually-means>