**The Success Mindset**

Carole Dweck is a world-renowned Stanford University psychologist. In decades of research on achievement and success, Dweck has discovered a truly groundbreaking idea, the power of our mindset.

She wrote *Mindset: The New Psychology of Success*

In it, she describes the two main mindsets:

1. The fixed mindset and
2. The growth mindset.

The fixed mindset is one that says you either are smart or you’re not. You’re a born salesperson, artist, musician or you’re not.

The growth mindset is Dweck’s preferred mindset. “It’s the belief that intelligence, talent and skills can be developed.”

Her advice to parents and teachers is not to praise children for being smart. Praise them for hard work and effort. It’s the difference between a teacher tell a child, you’re smart. Rather than telling a person, you really worked hard at that.

Dweck says that one word can help you change from a fixed mindset to a growth mindset. The word is “yet.”

A fixed mindset salesperson will say, “I’m no good at closing.” The salesperson with a growth mindset adds the magic word. “I’m just no good at closing yet.” The implication is this: “But I’m going to get good at it.”

Carole Dweck writes, *The praised generation hits the workforce. You can’t pick up a magazine or turn on the radio without hearing about the problem of praise in the workplace. We could have seen it coming. We’ve talked about all the well-meaning parents who’ve tried to boost their children’s self-esteem by telling them how smart and talented they are. And we’ve talked about all the negative effects of this kind of praise.*

*Well, these children of praise have now entered the workforce, and sure enough, many can’t function without getting a sticker for their every move. Instead of yearly bonuses, some companies are giving quarterly or even monthly bonuses. Instead of employee of the month, it’s the employee of the day. Companies are calling in consultants to teach them how to lavish rewards on this overpraised generation. We now have a workforce full of people who need constant reassurance and can’t take criticism. Not a recipe for success in business, where taking on challenges, showing persistence and admitting and correcting mistakes are essential.*

*Why are businesses perpetuating the problem? Why are they continuing the same misguided practices of the overpraising parents and paying money to consultants to show them how to do it? Maybe we need to step back from this problem and take another perspective.*

*If the wrong kinds of praise lead kids down the path of entitlement, dependence and fragility, then maybe the right kinds of praise can lead them down the path of hard work and greater hardiness. We have shown in our research that with the right kinds of feedback even adults can be motivated to choose challenging tasks and confront their mistakes.*

*What would this feedback look or sound like in the workplace? Instead of just giving employees an award for the smartest idea or praise for brilliant performance, they would get praise for taking initiative, for seeing a difficult task through, for struggling and learning something new, for being undaunted by a setback, or for being open to and acting on criticism. Maybe it could be praise for not needing constant praise!*

*Through a skewed sense of how to love their children, many parents in the ‘90s (and unfortunately many parents of the ‘00s abdicated their responsibility. Although corporations are not usually in the business of picking up where parents left off, they may need to this time. If businesses don’t play a role in developing a more mature and growth-minded workforce, where will the leaders of the future come from?*

My take: No matter how your parents or your teachers messed you up, you can develop a growth mindset. First you become aware that there is such a thing. Second, you quit judging your failures as fatal and start learning from them.

As the late, great Jim Rohn was fond of saying, “Don’t wish for easier problems. Wish you were better.”

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