

# Understanding Growth Mindset

## Growth Mindset Defined:

After studying the behavior of thousands of children, Dr. Dweck coined the terms fixed mindset and growth mindset to describe the underlying beliefs people have about learning and intelligence.

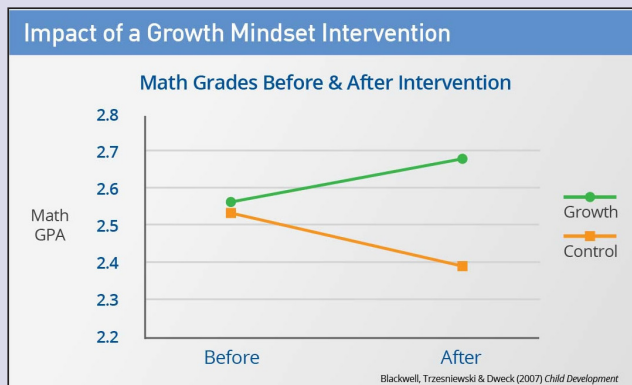
She found that people with a growth mindset believed that their success depended on time and effort. People with a growth mindset believed their skills and intelligence could be improved with effort and persistence. They embraced challenges, persisted through obstacles, learned from criticism and sought out inspiration in others' success.



## Research Supporting Growth Mindset

### Conclusion1: Growth mindset can be taught and results in greater achievement.

Table 2. 7th graders who were taught that intelligence is malleable and shown how the brain grows with effort, showed a clear increase in math grades.

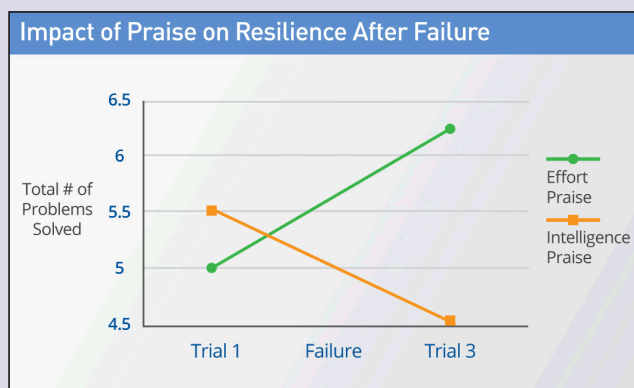


Researchers began to understand the link between mindsets and achievement. They hypothesized, if you believe your brain can grow, you behave differently. So the researchers asked, "Can we change mindsets? And if so, how?"

This began a series of interventions and studies that prove we can indeed change a person's mindset from fixed to growth, and when we do, it leads to increased motivation and achievement.

### Conclusion2: Adult feedback can influence the development of a growth mindset

Table 3. 5th graders who were praised for effort exhibited more challenge-seeking behavior, cited learning goals as most motivating and solved more problems than those praised for intelligence.



In a study with 5th graders, Dweck and Mueller divided the children into two groups and asked them to work on a puzzle task. One group was praised for their intelligence and the other for effort. When the initially easy task became harder, the groups reacted in very different ways. Students praised for intelligence preferred to continue working on the easier tasks, while students praised for effort chose to progress to more challenging tasks.

# Instilling a Growth Mindset in Youth Ministry

## 9 Strategies



1. **Change your language and help youth change theirs.** Language — written, spoken and thought — shifts mindsets. This can take place in interactions, through teaching, or through signage displayed in children and youth settings.



2. **Connect growth mindset concepts to Scripture.** For example, 2 Thessalonians 1:3-5, James 1:3-4, Philippians 4:13, Romans 12:2, Proverbs 14:23, James 1:5 include concepts related to growth mindset. Because Christ lives in us, we can confidently approach Him for help and strength.



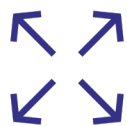
3. **Give feedback that highlights the value of planning and trying different learning strategies.** This type of praise encourages learning and growth. Avoid praising intelligence and sheer effort, as it does not increase motivation to try new things.



4. **Use diverse teaching strategies.** Exposing children and youth to different instructional methods and strategies will help build a repertoire of learning skills to handle diverse challenges. These methods can then be applied in a variety of situations.



5. **Teach the value of challenges.** Explaining the inherent benefits of overcoming obstacles can help students develop a growth mindset. This is linked to increased resilience and perseverance. It encourages youth to keep trying even when things are difficult.



6. **Encourage youth to expand their answers.** Asking students to elaborate on their thoughts during discussion reveals what they do and don't understand. Encourage them to process content at a deeper level as they reflect on their responses.



7. **Explain the purposes of abstract skills and concepts.** Consider — Why is it significant? What are its uses? How it will help in the future? This will help children and youth understand the importance of what you are teaching.



8. **Say “yet” more often.** The word “yet” can change disparaging sentences into positive ones, promoting growth. This word instills hope for the future and increases self-efficacy.



9. **Incorporate curriculum that teaches growth mindset concepts or skills.** Helpful resources include Growth Mindset Works ([www.mindsetworks.com](http://www.mindsetworks.com)) and Big Life Journal ([biglifejournal.com](http://biglifejournal.com)).