

**MINDSET: THE NEW  
PSYCHOLOGY OF SUCCESS**  
*by Carol S. Dweck*

*Summary & Worksheet*

## The Book In Three Or More Sentences:

The book categorizes people into the following groups: fixed mindset and growth mindset. While the first group is convinced that their qualities are carved in stone and talent is god-given, the second will climb the top by hard work. Yep, according to Carol S. Dweck, your natural capabilities will only get you so far. By sharing studies, interviews, and stories, the author wants to embed a simple idea in your worrying mind – that with the right mindset, everything can be learned. With the right mindset, everything can be achieved.

## The Core Idea:

Want something? You need to work for it! It's not about winning or losing. It's not about talent or skills. It's about giving your best effort. About understanding that to be amongst the top achievers, you must first convince your mind that winning is not a one-time event. It is a continuous process. Ah, and one more thing: don't glorify intelligence. Praise people for their efforts.

### *Highlights:*

- *People with a fixed mindset survive in life by avoiding challenges and blaming others.*
- *People with a growth mindset focus on continuous learning and improving their abilities.*
- *To change your life, you need to change your mindset.*

## **5 Key Lessons from Mindset: The New Psychology of Success:**

- *Lesson #1: There Are Two Mindsets We Can Embody – Fixed or Growth*
- *Lesson #2: Learn To Risk Your Success And Don't Let Failure Define You*
- *Lesson #3: There Is No Such Thing As a Natural-Born Accountant. Everything is Learnable*
- *Lesson #4: Praise People for Their Efforts, Not for Their Intelligence*
- *Lesson #5: You Need To Develop A Growth Mindset – Here's How*

### **Lesson #1: There Are Two Mindsets We Can Embody – Fixed or Growth**

You either have it, or you don't. You're either smart, or you're not. At least that's what people with the fixed mindset think.

In contrast, folks who don't have cemented understandings of the world visualize things differently – “I'm still not kick-ass at this thing, but through trial and error I can get better.”

Some consider the set of cards they get when they're born unchangeable. Others, the folks with the flourishing mindset, see them as a temporary condition.

That's the whole concept of Mindset: The New Psychology of Success.

Throughout the whole book, Carol S. Dweck outlines the main characteristics of the two mindsets we humans can embody – the fixed and the growth mindset.

Here are the essentials:

#### **What People With a Fixed Mindset Believe:**

- You're born with certain skills. Like a car coming off the production line. Once you're out in the world, no one, not even the manufacturer – your mom – can upgrade your skills or elevate your thinking.
- These folks hang around people who are worse than them to feel better. They avoid high-achievers because they feel threatened by them and their self-esteem suffers.
- Blame, excuse, avoidance, and criticism are their primary tools to go

around in life.

- They focus on praise and on the prize. Their mantra is: “Give me the prize. I already know everything. If I don’t win, I quit.”

### **What People With a Growth Mindset Believe:**

- They don’t hide in the bushes, quit, abandon ship when things are not coming together as they initially planned. Quite the contrary. They get even more determined. Their motivation to confront their problems and improve skyrockets.
- Grow-minded people prefer to communicate with folks who are better than them. To learn from them. To share their errors and ask for advice. Their ego is not fueled by fake compliments, it’s endorsed by improving.
- Determination, action, ability to learn, and desire to go further despite the current setbacks are their main abilities.
- Their main priority in life is to keep learning. Their mantra is: “I want to learn and to get better. I don’t care about prizes. Give me a new challenge.”

*“Why waste time proving over and over how great you are, when you could be getting better? Why hide deficiencies instead of overcoming them? Why look for friends or partners who will just shore up your self-esteem instead of ones who will also challenge you to grow?” Carol S. Dweck*

## **Lesson #2: Learn To Risk Your Success And Don’t Let Failure Define You**

I am a failure.

That’s what people with a fixed mindset think about themselves when they fail to achieve a specific task. They can be caring parents. Passionate writers. Compassionate friends. But when “I can’t open this can of beans. I’m must be a total loser.”

Even professional athletes. People who won gold medals. People who, in front of thousands of other people, beat other players can fall into this degenerating way of thinking when they miss an opportunity or do something wrong.

As the author writes, “If you’re somebody when you’re successful, what are you when you’re unsuccessful?”

But can a one-time event really summarize and define your whole life?

For people with a fixed mindset, it can. For these folks, winning 10 times means nothing if they lose 1 time.

That's why they dream about retiring early, and they avoid bigger challenges – they don't want to turn success into failure. After they won an award, they intentionally hide the invitation of the next contest. They don't want to risk what they have currently.

They dodge learning new things because they know how unprepared they will be in this new area. And when they lack skills, their mind transforms the "I'm not good at this" into "I'm not good at all."

That's why it's so important to adopt a growth-minded belief.

No matter whether you're winning or losing, the important thing is to learn and to get better.

Don't let failure define who you are. You can constantly improve and get better – if you choose to.

### **Lesson #3: There Is No Such Thing As a Natural-Born Accountant. Everything is Learnable**

*"Just because some people can do something with little or no training, it doesn't mean that others can't do it (and sometimes do it even better) with training." Carol S. Dweck*

Michael Jordan. The prodigy of basketball. The flying man. Air Jordan. The slam dunk maestro who we all view as god-like was cut from the high school varsity team when he was young. Why? He still wasn't the Michael Jordan we all know today from TV.

He was just a regular guy who played basketball. Nothing more. Nothing less.

He wasn't talented per se. He was simply determined to become the best at the game.

From a very young age, he understood what most of us can't get through our heads for a lifetime – that there's no such thing as talent. You get better by working harder.

When he was cut from the varsity team, in an interview his mother said, “I told him to go back and discipline himself.” Apparently, he took her words to heart.

Of course, you can be a bit better than others at some things – that’s what we call talent. But your “natural” abilities will only get you to a certain point in your career. From there, the road is always the same – hard work and mental toughness.

## **Lesson #4: Praise People for Their Efforts, Not for Their Intelligence**

You finished your homework on time? Here’s a sticker!

That’s what happens in school.

We let our children go there to learn something, but they come out as people who seek constant reassurance and cannot tolerate criticism.

But teachers are not the only ones to blame.

The parents are the main suspects.

As the author writes in the book, “I remember often being praised for my intelligence rather than my efforts, and slowly but surely I developed an aversion to difficult challenges.”

When people continuously tell you that you’re smart, gifted, natural, you sooner or later start to believe these words.

You start to focus on tasks that come easy. And, naturally, avoid the difficult ones. After all, you don’t want to question your abilities and you don’t want to let others down.

This is the fixed mindset trap.

To turn things around, to instill the growth mindset, don’t praise your children, your co-workers, your spouse for her recent promotion. Compliment her effort. Show respect for the hard work she did.

Also, don’t judge when your child test results are lower. Figure out what they don’t understand and inspire them to love the process, not the end score.

After all, it's not about winning or losing. It's about making the best effort and becoming a little better with each day.

*“You have to apply yourself each day to becoming a little better. By applying yourself to the task of becoming a little better each and every day over a period of time, you will become a lot better.” Carol S. Dweck*

## **Lesson #5: You Need To Develop A Growth Mindset – Here's How**

Becoming a person with a growth mindset is not a one-off event. This change needs to be maintained.

Sorry for ruining it for all of you.

So even if you're a hard-working entrepreneur or a loving parent, you need to do certain things, all the time, to ensure that your mind will continuously flourish.

What exactly?

Carol S. Dweck gives us a short step-by-step framework that can help us keep getting better.

1. Step 1: Embrace your fixed mindset: We all have both mindsets in our heads. Yes, you can be a relentless athlete and push yourself on the field, but your relationship might suck. Don't feel bad about this. We all have flaws. After all, we're humans. The first step is to take a moment to determine where your mind is faulty.
2. Step 2: Identify the triggers: When does your fixed mindset take control over your body? Is it when you're thinking about starting a big project? Maybe your fixed mindset emerges when you're struggling with something? Or, when you lost a job? An argument? Or when you encounter someone who's better than you? The common scenario is to hear a voice in your head that says, “You're not good enough. You're not worthy.”
3. Step 3: Give a name to your fixed-mindset: Imagine that this part of your brain as another person. Now, give him a name. You can use a funny character from a book or a devilish actor from a movie.
4. Step 4: Educate it: Now, when something bad happens, when you start to criticize yourself, you know who to blame. It's no longer you, it's this “other” person. What to do next? “Educate it. Take it on the

journey with you.” Listen to what this other person has to say. Probably it’s something along the lines of, “You’re going to fail. You’re lazy.’ You’re not capable of handling this.” Then, explain that you’re still going to try, and create a plan. Invite this other person to join you on the growth-mindset journey.

If you let it, your fixed mindset will always lead you to comfort. To where it’s safe. This part of your brain exists to protect you. But where it’s safe it’s a dead-end path.

You need a new way of thinking to continue to thrive. A growth-mindset way of thinking.

## Actionable Notes:

- Recognize your mindset: Answering the following questions will help you identify what’s your mindset - fixed or growth. What do you think about your intelligence, do you think that it can be changed? What’s your default reaction when a friend criticize your work? Congratulations, if you still consider the commentator as a pal, and you take into account his remark, you have a growth mindset. But if you want to strangle this traitor, you are on the other side. This step is crucial for your future development. You need to know in which area you have limiting beliefs in order to improve.
- Avoid the somebody–nobody syndrome: “If I win, I’ll be somebody; if I lose I’ll be nobody.” Who you are as a person is not defined by the result of your test or by the type of medal you get. It’s more about how you handle criticism and what you do once you fail. Are you blaming others for your misfortunes or are you taking notes of what you did wrong? If you can view yourself as someone who’s constantly “in progress” mode, you’ll be willing to get up the next day and make improvements.
- Mindset is more important than talent: Talent can even be viewed as a curse. If you consider yourself gifted, special, you won’t exercise enough. You’ll feed your mind with stuff like, “I was born good at math, I don’t have to study hard.” And while your smartness can help initially, when tasks become challenging, your inability to solve them will make you question yourself. It’s actually better to not feel talented and not call yourself a genius. By refraining yourself from flattering your ego with divine-like names, you’ll learn to work harder than anyone else.
- Create a thriving environment: There’s no such thing as a no-effort relationship. Or an easy job. Also, the Olympic Games committee won’t hand you a gold medal for simply participating in the event.



No. In real life, the effort you put in is what counts. Lasting results come from lasting efforts. You need to create an environment that praises effort. To tell your children, your colleagues, that skills are learnable. To explain that, even if you're a natural in a specific field, you still need to work hard and to keep learning. That's how future success is made. Not by praising talent and not by resting on your past achievements.

- Every word matters: If you're a parent (or a teacher) every word that comes out of your mouth sends a message. Your words and your deeds teach your children how they should behave. If you're telling your children that smoking is bad but you're doing it, they'll lose credibility. So, if you want to help your children grow, if you want to help them develop a growth mindset, send a growth mindset message. Endorse them for their efforts and don't judge. Teach them that life is a continuous learning process.

## **Commentary and My Personal Takeaway**

You never tried writing, singing, or dancing because you don't think you have a talent for these activities? That's your fixed mindset speaking.

According to the author, we can achieve whatever the hell we want. It's not about talent, skills, or experience, it's about realizing the truth – that through hard work, we can learn and master pretty much everything.

While the fixed mindset will tell you that your abilities are set in stone, the growth mindset will whisper, "The harder you try, the better you'll get!"

An eye-opening book that will help you approach problems and people differently. Instead of blaming and trying to prove you're right, you'll seek communication, admit your flaws, and strive to make things better without labeling others.

If you don't feel you have what it takes to become great at something or you often get sucked into a self-sabotaging vortex of feelings, you should read this book.

Key takeaway:

There's no such thing as permanent traits. People have the power to develop their abilities through continuous learning and training. Change your mindset to change your life.

## Notable Quotes:

*“If parents want to give their children a gift, the best thing they can do is to teach their children to love challenges.” Carol S. Dweck*

*“The fixed mindset is so very tempting. It seems to promise children a lifetime of worth, success, and admiration just for sitting there and being who they are.” Carol S. Dweck*

*“But think about it—do you want to never grow? Next time you’re tempted to surround yourself with worshipers, go to church. In the rest of your life, seek constructive criticism.” Carol S. Dweck*

## *What to read next:*

- Actionable [Book Summary: Can’t Hurt Me](#) by David Goggins
- Actionable [Book Summary: The Evolving Self](#) by Robert Kegan
- Actionable [Book Summary: The Manual](#) by Epictetus

# INTERACTIVE SHEET FOR NOTE-TAKING

*Reading alone won't help you understand the actionable notes. You need to engage with the content. Answer the question below (just type inside the boxes) to outline your future steps:*

1. What's your default reaction when someone criticizes your work?
2. How do you deal with criticism and what do you do once you fail?
3. Do you have a talent? What do you do to improve your gift?
4. Are you praising others for their efforts or for their grades?
5. What kind of message do you want to send to the people around you?

*Don't forget to save your changes.*