

How to Develop a Growth Mindset

Explore this Article ■ Working on Self Awareness ■ Dealing With Failure
■ Developing a Strategy to Hone Your Intelligence ■ Questions & Answers ■ References

Co-authored by Sandra Possing  and 10 contributors

Last Updated: August 21, 2020

Having a growth mindset means you believe that your intelligence, creative ability, and character are more than just what you're born with.^[1] With this mindset, you can always work on increasing your intelligence and self-awareness, continually growing as a person. It can also help you to view failure in a different light, as it teaches you to treat everything that happens as a learning experience.

Method 1

Method 1 of 3: Working on Self Awareness



1 **Figure out what your gifts and talents are.** Your gifts and talents will help you succeed, but they can only do so if you know what they are. You need to be self-aware enough to use and hone the gifts you already have.^[2]

- Start by thinking about the areas in which you excel. What comes easiest to you? In which subjects did you always do well in school? What do you breeze through at work?
- Ask your friends, family, and co-workers for feedback. Often, they can see talents that you're blind to. For instance, maybe you have a natural ability to talk anyone into anything. You may not even notice that ability, yet it's a skill that comes in handy in many fields.
- You could ask your friends, "I'm trying to become more self-aware. Can you tell me what you think my strengths and weaknesses are?"



2 Know your challenges. It's also equally important to know your challenges, so you can work on those areas. Listen when you do receive feedback from others, either solicited or unsolicited, as that will help you learn where you can grow. For example, if a friend says, "You're starting another new project? What happened to the last one?" you may realize that you aren't following through on your projects.[3]



- 3 Give yourself credit for effort.** ^[4] Studies have shown that kids who are praised for their effort rather than for the result are more likely to develop a growth mindset. That's because they become focused on the process rather than the the end result. You can use that to your own benefit by rewarding yourself for your hard work, rather than just the end result.^[5]
- For every designated length of time that you work on something, reward yourself with a fun break or treat. This can help keep your focus on the effort.
 - Or if you tried a new recipe at home, something you find difficult, you probably would normally tell yourself, "That's so delicious!" While that's not bad necessarily, you should also think about the process, telling yourself, "I'm proud of myself for trying out a new recipe and working so hard on it."



4 Ask for feedback on your efforts. To help you be more aware, ask for feedback on the work you do at the office and at home. While it may be painful at times, feedback can help you learn, improve, and grow, which will challenge you to do better next time.^[6]

- For instance, if you're new to the office, you could ask a co-worker to look over a report you're working on to see if you have the right idea. You could say, "Since I'm new here, would you mind looking at this report to see if the right idea?" Once you turn it in, you could ask your boss, "How'd I do on that report? What could I improve on in the future?"
- In your personal life, ask for feedback when others seem upset with you. For instance, if your spouse seems frustrated with you, ask them why: "You seem to be upset with my behavior lately. What can I do better?"

5 Speak with a therapist. A qualified counselor or therapist can help you identify negative thinking patterns and other roadblocks toward developing a growth mindset. A therapist can make an assessment of your personal relationships, your professional development, and personal experiences. They can also give you "tools" to combat negative thoughts, improve your self esteem, and offer support when you experience setbacks.



1 Treat failures as mistakes. Some people view failure as a reason to quit. They've failed; it's time to stop. However, people with a growth mindset view failures as simple mistakes. The difference is a mistake is something that can be learned from. Once they've learned from their mistake, they can move on and do better in the future.^[7]

- Mistakes don't have to be a bad thing. If anything, you'll be wiser for having made mistakes along the way.^[8]
- When you have a setback, spend some time reflecting on the mistake. What went wrong? Could you have done something differently to prevent it? Write down your findings so that you can review them and be mindful of them the next time around.
- For example, say you tried a new recipe that didn't go well. You could declare yourself a bad cook and not try again. Alternatively, you could analyze what went wrong and try to do better next time. Maybe the dinner burned because you weren't paying enough attention to it. Next time, you'll know to be more attentive.



2 Remember mistakes don't define who you are. Another problem you may have with failure is letting it define your sense of self. When you do that, you start seeing yourself as a failure. The problem is, that tends to push you towards a fixed mindset, rather than a growth mindset. Mistakes are something you do. That aren't who you are as a person. When you can learn to separate the two, you'll find it easier to grow and learn from your mistakes.^[9]

- For example, maybe you made a big mistake at work, such as screwing up a major order. One possibility is seeing yourself as a screw-up, as someone who can do nothing right. However, if you view it just as just a mistake, you can move on.
- That is, you made a mistake: screwing up the order. But it was just one mistake, and now you know better. You'll do better on the next order because you've learned from the mistake.
- Take a moment to identify all the things you've done well or right in the situation. For instance, maybe you did a great job smoothing things over with the client once you realized your mistake. This can help make the mistakes easier to accept.



3 Be willing to try new things. ^[10] Part of developing a growth mindset is always working to grow and challenge yourself. That means that you must try new things. However, when you try new things, you're bound to make mistakes, which keeps many people from even attempting new things. The important thing is to keep trying and challenging yourself.^[11]

- That includes taking on things that seem too challenging. You'll make mistakes, but you'll learn from the experience and realize what you can do.
- For instance, maybe you've always wanted to learn a new language, but you've been afraid you won't be able to understand it. Take on the challenge, anyway. Even if you don't become fluent, you'll still learn more about yourself and another culture.

Method 3 of 3: Developing a Strategy to Hone Your Intelligence



1 Focus on hard work, not your natural abilities. If you think that natural intelligence is the only way to succeed, you'll likely fail. Most people who have major successes work extremely hard to get there, even if they do have some natural talent. You also need to believe in the power of hard work to continually hone and master your skills.^[12]

- It's important to apply this principle to your everyday life. Work each day on mastering your skills. Don't give up because you don't get it on the first try.
- For instance, if you've always wanted to paint, don't give it one attempt and think you've failed because you're not immediately great. Try honing your skills a bit each day.
- Don't try to improve all your skills at once, either. Think about what is most important, then work on that first. Once you've begun to master that skill, work on what you think is the next most important skill.



2 Don't make the same mistake over and over again. While this advice may sound simple, in practice it's not as easy. When you're trying to make something work, you may have a tendency to go back to the same solutions over and over. The key to breaking out of that cycle is to approach the problem from different angles to find new solutions.^[13]

- One way you can implement this strategy is to think about your assumptions on a project. Sometimes, changing the assumptions can change how you look at the problem.
- For instance, maybe your problem is you need a new car that will carry items you own for your business. However, cars that are big enough to carry items inside are mostly out of your price range. You've made the assumption that you can only carry items inside the car. If you throw that assumption out, you may find a car with a top rack or a car that can pull a small trailer would work, both of which would fit your needs for cheaper.



3 Be persistent. Persistence is absolutely key to developing a growth mindset. That's because it takes persistence to keep working through problems and to keep developing your intelligence and skills. Even if it seems like a problem will never have a solution, it's important to keep pushing forward. That's how the real work gets done.^[14]

- Persistent does not mean unrelenting — don't be afraid to take a break if you get overwhelmed or frustrated. Just make sure you go back to working on the issue.



4 Learn from everyone and everything. ^[15] To develop a growth mindset, you need to constantly be expanding who you are. That means continually learning more about the world around you through whatever means you can. The more you learn, the more you grow.^[16]

- Read books. Take classes. Visit museums and educational sites. Watch documentaries. Take any opportunity you can to learn about the world around you.
- Also, learn from other people. Talk to people in coffee shops, and ask them about their world. Ask for help from friends, family, and co-workers when you don't know something. Let others' experience guide you.
- You can especially learn when your mind encounter very different situations: Make friends with people from different cultures or with different beliefs or ideologies. Experience things that you've never done. Go to places where you've never been. Let your mind become familiar with all the possibilities!



5 Keep pushing yourself further. Without realizing it, you may be working at less than your maximum because you sometimes need a challenge, something to compete against to push you harder. Sometimes, that competition can come from within, meaning you always pushing yourself to do better than the last time, always trying to best yourself. Each time you do, you'll learn a bit more about yourself and the world.^[17]



Expert Q&A

Question

What does it mean to develop a growth mindset?



Sandra Possing
Life Coach
Expert Answer

Having a growth mindset means reframing failure as an opportunity to grow. We're conditioned by society to believe failure is a bad thing, but that doesn't have to be the case! If you have a growth mindset you can learn to accept mistakes and learn from them, which will ultimately make you better at what you do.

Helpful 8 Not Helpful 0

References

1. ↑ <https://www.mindsetworks.com/science/>
2. ↑ <http://www.inc.com/angelina-zimmerman/the-8-tremendous-ways-for-developing-a-growth-mindset.html>
3. ↑ <http://www.inc.com/angelina-zimmerman/the-8-tremendous-ways-for-developing-a-growth-mindset.html>
4. ↑ Sandra Possing. Life Coach. Expert Interview. 13 August 2020.
5. ↑ <http://blog.innerdrive.co.uk/how-do-you-actually-develop-growth-mindset>
6. ↑ <http://blog.innerdrive.co.uk/how-do-you-actually-develop-growth-mindset>
7. ↑ Sandra Possing. Life Coach. Expert Interview. 13 August 2020.
8. ↑ Sandra Possing. Life Coach. Expert Interview. 13 August 2020.
9. ↑ <http://www.inc.com/angelina-zimmerman/the-8-tremendous-ways-for-developing-a-growth-mindset.html>
10. ↑ Sandra Possing. Life Coach. Expert Interview. 13 August 2020.
11. ↑ <https://www.edutopia.org/discussion/developing-growth-mindset-teachers-and-staff>
12. ↑ <http://www.inc.com/angelina-zimmerman/the-8-tremendous-ways-for-developing-a-growth-mindset.html>
13. ↑ <http://blog.innerdrive.co.uk/how-do-you-actually-develop-growth-mindset>
14. ↑ <http://blog.innerdrive.co.uk/how-do-you-actually-develop-growth-mindset>
15. ↑ Sandra Possing. Life Coach. Expert Interview. 13 August 2020.
16. ↑ <http://www.inc.com/angelina-zimmerman/the-8-tremendous-ways-for-developing-a-growth-mindset.html>
17. ↑ <http://blog.innerdrive.co.uk/how-do-you-actually-develop-growth-mindset>

About This Article



Co-authored by:
Sandra Possing
Life Coach

This article was co-authored by [Sandra Possing](#). Sandra Possing is a life coach, speaker, and entrepreneur based in the San Francisco Bay Area. Sandra specializes in one-on-one coaching with a focus on mindset and leadership transformation. Sandra received her coaching training from The Coaches Training Institute and has seven years of life coaching experience. She holds a BA in Anthropology from the University of California, Los Angeles. This article has been viewed 22,894 times.

★★★★★
9 votes - 96%

Co-authors: **10**
Updated: **August 21, 2020**
Views: **22,894**

Categories: [Personal Development](#)

<https://www.wikihow.com/Develop-a-Growth-Mindset>

The text and visual content in this PDF is intended only for your personal, non-commercial use. Any commercial reproduction of the contents of this document without the express written permission of wikiHow, Inc., is prohibited.