

Episode 6: Want to develop a growth mindset? Here's how to do it

Hi Guys!

Welcome to Episode 6 of *The Resilient Type* podcast!

Before we begin, I'd just like to address something that you may've been wondering about if you caught the last episode. In Episode 4 and 5, I discussed the 7 factors of resilience, and in Episode 5, I shared 5 strategies to help you start building your resilience. If you did the maths, you would've noticed that I didn't include strategies for 2 of the 7 factors. This was an intentional decision, as I'm going to dive deeper into those areas another time.

One of the two factors I left out in Episode 5 was realistic optimism. Realistic optimism is linked to growth mindset, and this is the focus of this week's episode!

Today, I'll briefly explain the 2 main types of mindset, why it's important to develop a growth mindset, and I'll be sharing 11 tips that can actually help you develop one! By the end of this episode, you'll understand what a growth mindset is, why having a growth mindset is more beneficial than a fixed mindset, and have the information you need to start developing a growth mindset immediately!

Before we get started, let me know if you're tuning in! Take a screenshot and share it on Instagram! And don't forget to tag me @empoweredmillennialgirl so I can send you some love!

At eight years old, I was told I was bad at Maths. In high school, my Maths teacher refused to support me when I wanted to join a standard class whose results wouldn't be scaled down at the end of the year. Throughout my education, there was plenty of evidence that supported the idea that I couldn't excel at Maths, and I believed it.

I honestly believed that Maths would always be my downfall and that I'd never improve, no matter what I did. But this mindset didn't just relate to my mathematical ability. Until a few years ago, I believed that *all* my abilities were fixed. Growth mindset challenges this idea.

The 2 main types of mindset

So, what is growth mindset? Well, growth mindset is a concept developed by psychologist, Carol Dweck.

I actually first came across the concept when I was studying to be a teacher, and boy, this concept has taken off (especially in schools) since then!

A mindset is a perception that a person holds about themselves. My negative belief about my mathematical ability is an example of a fixed mindset.

According to Dweck, having a fixed mindset means that you believe “basic qualities, like intelligence or talent, are simply fixed traits... that talent alone creates success – without effort.” On the other hand, having a growth mindset means that you believe “basic abilities can be developed through dedication and hard work.”

In other words, a person with a fixed mindset will believe that their initial abilities cannot be changed and they will inevitably give up when they experience difficulty, maybe believing it’s “just not meant to be”. On the other hand, someone with a growth mindset will see a challenge and put in the effort to overcome it, because they know that with time and effort, they can overcome their obstacles.

The concept of growth mindset is now heavily reinforced in the classroom today, so why can’t adults get on board, too?

Why it’s important to develop a growth mindset

There are a number of reasons why it’s important to develop a growth mindset.

We might not be at school anymore, but I bet negative beliefs, like your ability in a certain subject still haunts you. I know I still have to catch myself before I say, “I’m not good at Maths,” and use it as an excuse to avoid even basic mental arithmetic. Not only does a fixed mindset set you up so you don’t want to try, but it shatters your confidence so you don’t even feel capable of success if you *do* try. A fixed mindset can be dangerous. Please don’t let it hold you back.

This next point is related, but another reason why it’s important to develop a growth mindset is because a fixed mindset keeps us small and prevents us from levelling up and eventually, reaching our potential. If you stay where you are and don’t try new things, this time next year, you’ll be in the exact same place. Playing to your strengths is comfortable, but at some point, you’ll reach your ceiling and stagnate... and that gets boring.

If you want to achieve any sort of goals in life, your mindset will have a direct impact on your success. For example, say you want to lose 10 kilos. You might start seeing change in the first month, but then after that, you might find your weight loss flatlining, or worse, *increasing*. Without a growth mindset, you might just give up altogether! The way you think about your abilities can have a huge impact on your progress and achievement in literally any area. Nothing big has ever been achieved without a little bit of elbow grease!

Having a growth mindset can also help you build resilience when you get thrown a curve ball. We all know that life is no bed of roses. Things can change in the blink of an eye. (Hi, 2020!) Tempting as it may be to view yourself as a victim and cry that there’s nothing you can do when faced with a challenge (fixed mindset), the better option is to look at the challenge as a learning opportunity and work to overcome it (growth mindset).

Where’s my evidence? Well, in [2017-18](#), the Australian Bureau of Statistics found that 1 in 5 Australians had a current mental or behavioural condition like depression. The [2007](#) National

Survey of Mental Health and Wellbeing of adults aged 16–85 estimated that 45% of people in this age range would experience a mental disorder at some point in their lives. The rates of depression are similar in other Western countries like the UK and USA. Many experts believe that a lack of a resilience could be the cause of this increase.

Where does a lack of resilience stem from? A fixed mindset.

11 tips to develop a growth mindset

OK, so you know what a growth mindset is and why it's important, but how do you actually develop a growth mindset?

Although changing your mindset isn't as easy as flicking a switch, if you start applying the following tips, you'll start noticing a change in no time!

1. Recognise and accept your weaknesses.

I'm sure you're already well aware of your weaknesses, hence all the negative thoughts you're probably having about your abilities. But consider this: Is shame playing a part in your feelings about it? Once you both recognise and *accept* your weaknesses, you can let go of the shame associated with it and move forward to develop a growth mindset.

To learn more about shame, check out Episode 3.

2. View challenges as opportunities to grow.

When trying to solve any problem, there's always the possibility of failure. But why is that a bad thing? Remember that the importance of *effort* is the central idea behind a growth mindset, not immediate success. In failure, there's always a lesson that can be learned, and being open to making mistakes can help you grow as a person.

3. Focus on your potential for growth rather than others' approval.

This is linked to the last point, but ask yourself if you're letting your fear of what others' think control whether you try new things or not. I remember when I first wanted to start a blog, I was so scared of what people would think. It took courage to start, but I wanted to try something new, so despite the fear, I did it anyway.

When you prioritise praise or what others think about you, you miss out on potential learning opportunities. Part of becoming your own person means moving past the need to be approved by others, whether it's family, friends or strangers on the internet! If you want to improve in any way, your focus should be on the opportunity for growth, not others' approval.

4. Take calculated risks.

Humans learn by making mistakes, and to make mistakes, you have to take calculated risks. Put yourself out there, try something new! Of course, it's scary at first, but the more often you take calculated risks, the easier it will be in the future. Nothing ventured, nothing gained, my friend!

5. Value the journey.

We often try new things and set goals because of the end result, right? I get it, but are you so focused on the end result that you're missing the learning experiences along the way? Part of having a growth mindset is valuing the learning process, so if you want to develop a growth mindset, you have to appreciate the journey too. Don't rush to get to the end or you'll miss the good stuff!

6. Understand the purpose behind your learning.

OK, so in theory, a desire to learn is great and all, but what if negative school experiences have put you off learning? If embracing new learning experiences is a challenge for you, think about what you want to achieve and let that lead you in the right direction.

A desire to learn stems from having a valid reason to learn in the first place. For example, if you want to be more assertive, why do you want to learn this? Is it to move up in your career, or is it to set boundaries with your parents? What's the purpose behind the action you want to take? When you know why you're doing something, it'll make you more motivated and can help you keep things in perspective as you work towards a growth mindset.

7. Reflect and seek feedback.

By now, we've established that if you want to develop a growth mindset, you have to give new things a go! We may fail, especially on our first effort, but instead of giving up or taking it as a sign that "it's just not meant to be", reflect on what went wrong and why, and if possible, get some feedback. You may not even know what went wrong, so getting an outsiders perspective can help a lot. If you want to improve in any area, you'll need to find out what you can do better next time. Look for the lesson in the experience.

8. Remind yourself that improvement isn't a sign of failure.

Are you a perfectionist? For perfectionists, if something isn't perfect, it can bring up a lot of shame and make you believe that *you're* a failure (not your work). When developing a growth mindset, it's important to remember that if something needs to be improved, it isn't necessarily a failure, it's just an opportunity to make something *better*. In your personal development journey, improvement is a necessity. Try not to take it personally.

9. Reject the idea that nature defines you.

OK, this is the big one! Whether you agree or disagree that nature defines you is basically what differentiates those with a fixed mindset and those with a growth mindset. If you want to develop a growth mindset, you need to reject the idea that your abilities are fixed. While you may have certain natural talents or weaknesses, you can always improve by putting in more effort. As Einstein famously said, “Genius is 1% talent and 99% hard work.”

10. Be conscious of your attitude.

“I’m bad at that.” “She’s much smarter than me.” Have you ever noticed how fixed beliefs like these sound so negative? To encourage a growth mindset, it’s important to be conscious of your attitude as you go about your day. Are you feeling embarrassed or ashamed? Are you frustrated? When you’re conscious of how you’re feeling, you can acknowledge the emotion, sit with it and then move on. Crazy, right? I know it’s easy to spiral, but you don’t have to let one bad emotion ruin your entire day! Being aware of your attitude can keep you on track when it comes to developing a growth mindset. This also leads me to my last tip.

11. Correct your thinking.

Fixed beliefs about our abilities are hard to shake. I get it! So of course, thoughts like “I’m bad at Maths” are going to come up now and again. But listen up! If you only take away one thing from this episode, I hope you remember this: When you start thinking something with a decidedly fixed mindset, correct yourself!

Here are some phrases that you can use to encourage a growth mindset:

- Replace “I failed”, with “I’m still learning. What has this taught me?”
- Instead of “This is too hard”, say “Learning takes time. I just haven’t mastered this yet.”
- Instead of “I’m not good at this”, ask “How can I improve?”
- Replace “She’s more talented than me” with “What can I learn from her?”
- Instead of “I don’t know how to solve this problem” ask “What strategies have I used in the past to solve similar problems?”
- And instead of “I’m so smart”, remind yourself, “I did well because I worked hard.”

At some point, we’ve all believed that our talents and abilities were fixed. A growth mindset rejects this and encourages learning, dedication and effort. In order to learn, you need to open yourself up to the possibility of failure through taking calculated risks. A growth mindset is also important in developing realistic optimism, which as you know is a key factor in the development of resilience.

Like anything, a mindset shift takes practice to master, but by changing the way you think about your abilities and reframing your thoughts, you can develop a more positive sense of self and take your personal development to the next level!

To recap, here's what we've covered in this episode:

- A fixed mindset means that you believe “basic qualities, like intelligence or talent, are simply fixed traits... that talent alone creates success – without effort.” A growth mindset means that you believe “basic abilities can be developed through dedication and hard work.”
- It's important to develop a growth mindset so you can feel more confident, motivated and open-minded, to encourage personal growth and build your resilience.
- To develop a growth mindset, you need to: 1. Recognise and accept your weaknesses. 2. View challenges as opportunities to grow. 3. Focus on your potential for growth rather than others' approval. 4. Take calculated risks. 5. Value the journey. 6. Understand the purpose behind your learning. 7. Reflect and seek feedback. 8. Remind yourself that improvement is not a sign of failure. 9. Reject the idea that nature defines you. 10. Be conscious of your attitude. 11. Correct your thinking.

Thanks for joining me today. I hope you've found this episode helpful!

If you want to continue the conversation, DM me on Instagram. My handle is @empoweredmillennialgirl. I'd love to chat!

Talk to you again soon!

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