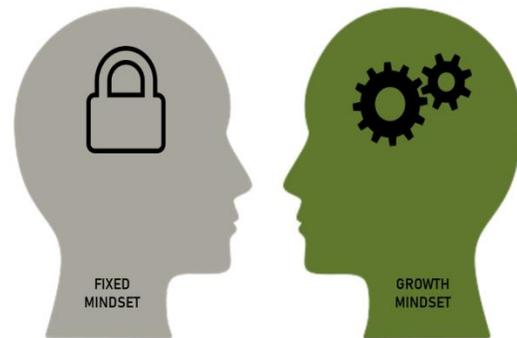


» The Growth Mindset

- What do you fundamentally believe about your future leaders and talent?
- Is their talent due to special inborn skills?
- Do you believe your talent and leaders can continually emerge through growth and development?



This is the fundamental issue raised in *Mindset*, by Carol S. Dweck, Ph.D. In her book she describes a fixed vs. growth mindset and applies her theories in the realms of sports, academia, parenting, and industry.

Corporate leaders who have a **fixed mindset** believe that you are born with special skills. Leaders with a **growth mindset** believe talents and skills can be developed. Fixed mindset leaders get stuck in the superstar syndrome. Only their superstars add real value and should be invested in. Those leaders tend to create Talent Management strategies and programs that focus on the superstars. They create pay programs that reinforce this view of talent (stock options for the few, merit budget mostly reserved for the stars). Development and training budgets are also reserved for the few. Of course, promotions follow. This mindset can create a culture of huge egos and ruin morale for the mere mortals in the organization. Growth mindset leaders seek to get the best from all of their employees and their Talent Management strategies follow a more egalitarian approach.

Years ago HBR featured a favorite article of mine, *The Risky Business of Superstars* written by Boris Groysberg, Ashish Nanda, and Nitin Nohria. The research made a compelling case for the havoc that a superstar culture can create in an organization. The authors explained how the performance of stars can be attributed more to the systems and people around them vs. any super ability. And fortunately (or unfortunately) I was witness to an executive who bought the superstar theory hook, line and sinker. After he left the organization (because his ego got too big), his successor and I had the hard work of reestablishing a culture of valuing and recognizing the entire team and helping everyone to grow, contribute, and succeed.

As a leader, invest in strategies to engage and inspire your entire team!

