What is the Growth Mindset?

The Origin of the Growth Mindset:

--Carol Dweck, a Stanford Psychologist and Professor, is the individual who coined the term “growth mindset” in her 2006 book, *Mindset: The New Psychology of Success*, after 30 plus years of research that began with her dissertation question:

“What makes a really capable child give up in the face of failure, where other children may be motivated by the failure?”  

2

Growth Mindset defined:

--Mindset is the core assumption about the malleability of any personal qualities, meaning they can be shaped or molded into something else.

--It is a belief or way of thinking, “the view you adopt for yourself which profoundly affects the way you lead your life.”

--This way of thinking can determine the rest of your life, what you become and accomplish; it is a transformational belief.  

3

--In the area of education, the focus is on intelligence.

--Growth mindset (or the incremental theory of intelligence) in education is a belief that intelligence is malleable, that it can be developed and changed through effort and practice. Mindset about intelligence influences students’ academic performance and behavior, goal orientations, perspectives on effort as essential to growth or indicative of low ability, and resilience in the face of difficulty. Growth mindset promotes lifelong learning. Learners’ mindsets are malleable and can thus be shaped by feedback, expectations, messages about risks and mistakes, and explicit instruction.  

4

--The abilities you are born with are merely a starting point. People are born with varying “amounts” of basic qualities and then one can choose to

2 Walters, 2014
3 Dweck, 2006, p. 6
4 Aditomo, 2015; Blazer, 2011; Dweck, 2006
develop them through their efforts, perseverance, learning different strategies, and seeking help from others.  

--Everyone has different strengths and weaknesses, but everyone can change and grow; everyone’s true potential is limitless from their own personal starting place.

--Learning must be seen as something that takes effort and practice over time, just like an athlete must practice their sport overtime in order to improve and be good at it.

“More and more, research is suggesting that, far from being simply encoded in the genes, much of personality is a flexible and dynamic thing that changes over the lifespan and is shaped by experience.”
~Carol Dweck

“Everyone can change and grow through application and experience. The passion for stretching yourself and sticking to it, even (especially) when it’s not going well, is the hallmark of the growth mindset.”
~Dweck

“Whether you think you can, or you think you can’t—you’re right.”
~Henry Ford

Someone with a growth mindset:

--has learned that intelligence can be developed
--sees effort as a necessary and key part of learning
--embraces challenges knowing this is how they will learn and grow
--persists in the face of adversity or setbacks and strives to overcome them
--sees mistakes as a natural and essential part of learning
--learns from feedback/constructive criticism
--is inspired by and learns from others’ successes

---Dweck, 2006
6 You Can Grow Your Intelligence, 2016
7 Dweck, 2006
The cardinal rule of the growth mindset is: LEARN!  

1) Take on challenges, stretch your abilities, and learn new things.

2) Work hard, believe that effort leads to learning. The harder more effectively you work at anything, the better you will be. As the saying goes, work smarter, not harder!

3) Confront deficiencies and correct them; mistakes are necessary to learning. Learning is a transformation and causes some discomfort.  

**Development of a growth mindset must be done deliberately. It must be clear that effort is just as valuable as arriving at the correct answer. The process of learning is the focus. Difficulties are temporary; if one strategy doesn't work, try another. Emphasis should be put on the many ways one can find the correct answer from a toolbox of strategies.**

**Fixed Mindset Defined:**

**Someone with a fixed mindset:**  

--believes intelligence is something they are born with in a set, or fixed, amount, which is out of their control, thus effort is pointless

--values looking smart above all else

--sees effort as a waste of time, something they would not need to do if they were smart or had ability because smarts come naturally

--avoids challenges in an effort to "look smart;" prefers to look smart by succeeding at easy tasks, tasks they know they can accomplish

--sees errors/failure as a sign that they lack ability, which causes anxiety and even "paralysis"

--gives up easily

--ignores valuable feedback; mistakes are something to hide not fix

---

8 Dweck, 2007  
9 Miller, 2013  
10 Dweck, 2006