

How Can You Develop a Growth Mindset About Teaching?

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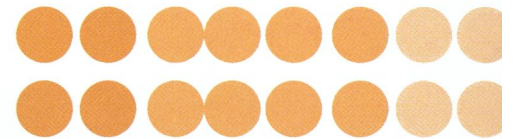
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How Can You Develop a Growth Mindset About Teaching?

Research has shown that it's never too late to develop a growth mindset about your abilities. The first step is to get in touch with your fixed mindset. We all have some of it tucked away somewhere, and it's important to acknowledge that. We need to learn to hear that fixed-mindset voice when it speaks to us, saying things like: "You'd be able to do this easily if you were a good teacher," "You'll never be as good as that teacher," and "You'll never be able to get these students to learn this."

The fixed-mindset voice also warns us to keep away from risks: "If you take that risk and it doesn't work out, you'll lose status/control/respect." And it beats us up if we take a risk and it doesn't work out: "You see, you took a risk and failed; don't

You can choose to learn from a mistake and try again.



try that again. Stick to what you know." If we have major setbacks, it really goes to town: "Why not face the facts; you're just not cut out for this." So, listen to that voice. Just hear it out and recognize it for what it is. It's the voice that speaks from a fixed-mindset perspective. Why not form a discussion group and all share your fixed-mindset thoughts? Then you'll really know you're not alone.

After listening to that voice for a couple of weeks, start talking back to it. Start answering it with a growth-mindset voice: "Nobody is good at this right away. It takes experience." "I really admire that teacher. Maybe I can ask her to observe my class and give me feedback." "Maybe other teachers have some good ideas about how to teach this material more effectively." "Maybe I need to find some new strategies or set different goals." When you think about taking a risk or trying out new things, remind yourself that risks and setbacks are a critical part of learning. And keep reminding yourself that risks and setbacks will make you a better teacher if you commit yourself to learning from them. Practice this in your group. Practice talking back to your fixed mindset, and help each other do it, too.

Finally, understand that you have a choice. Even when you feel anxious or discouraged, you can choose to act in a growth-mindset way. You can choose to experiment with something new. You can choose to learn from a mistake and try again. At some level, grit is a choice: You recognize that the growth of your skills is in your hands, and you choose to make that happen.

— Carol Dweck

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Are you wondering if you have a growth mindset or a fixed mindset? Find out!