

The Growth Mindset Challenge

Kotaro Fujimoto (NIT (KOSEN), Oshima College)

Today I'd like to talk about *The Growth Mindset Challenge* that I've been working on for the past year. "Growth Mindset" is a concept proposed by Dr. Carol Dweck, a psychologist at Stanford University. According to her, there are two types of mindsets: Growth Mindset and Fixed Mindset. Fixed Mindset is a way of thinking that regards failures as shameful things because human ability is determined by innate qualities. On the other hand, Growth Mindset considers human abilities to be created through ingenuity and effort.

A year ago, I became interested in Growth Mindset through her Ted Talk. Since then, I've been trying to make myself face challenges that are a little more difficult for me. I call it The Growth Mindset Challenge.

The challenge consists of three steps. First, choose a task that you cannot do now. Second, document your strategies and efforts. Third, reflect upon the record. The first thing I undertook was to improve my ranking in school. Then, I continued this by taking the math test, TOEIC test, and even a physical education test that I was not good at. Furthermore this summer, I took the University of Tokyo's transfer exam and passed it.

The purpose of this challenge is to overcome the feeling of wanting to give up when you fail, and thinking, "I can do it, I just haven't done it yet". Therefore, it is meaningless if something is easy to accomplish. Keeping a record of the strategies taken and the amount of effort you expended is good for motivation and analyzing "why" the result happened. When the results are not encouraging, we can reflect on which strategies were wrong and whether enough effort was expended, which will lead to the next challenge.

Before I learned Growth Mindset, I had a typical Fixed Mindset. Consequently, every time I failed doing something, I was always in denial about myself. When I was in elementary and junior high school, I used to practice *kendo* all the time. However, every time I lost a match, I thought that if I couldn't win even after trying so hard, I must not have any talent. It never occurred to me that I might be stronger by devising a better way to practice and changing my fight style. In addition, my relationship with my parents was not going very well. I thought changing the relationship was impossible. Therefore, for fear of failing further in *kendo*, and believing that my relationship with my parents could not be improved, I entered my current school as a dormitory student to escape from everything. At that time, I was more afraid of failure than anything else.

However, with a Growth Mindset, I've been able to face difficulties with excitement and without fear of failure. I was able to pass the entrance exam, which no one from my school had yet taken, and open up my own career path. My relationship with my parents also improved through "ingenuity and effort," and now I have left the dormitory and have been commuting to school.

Growth Mindset will turn difficulties into opportunities and failures into learning. If you're obsessed with a Fixed Mindset, try the Growth Mindset Challenge. That will change your worldview completely!