

Cultivating Your Growth Mindset at Kosen

National Institute of Technology, Akita College

K: Hello, everyone. We are from National Institute of Technology, Akita College. I am Kanta.

N: I am Naoto.

S: I am Sakorako. Naoto, a question comes to my mind suddenly. Do you think you have grown up at Kosen?

N: Hmm, that is a very interesting question. I think I improved in many ways.

S: I do not have any special talent and sometimes I struggle in finding ways to be better.

N: Nooo, you are improving. Our mind plays a very important role in how we think about ourselves. Our thoughts decide our actions. Here is a magic phrase for you called Growth Mindset!

S: Growth Mindset? I heard it for the first time. What does it mean?

N: Excellent question. Let Kanta explain it.

K: Ok! The Growth Mindset means " if you put in time and the right effort, you can develop your abilities". Yes, it sounds difficult to make it happen, but you can start with some simple acts. For example, asking teachers any question that you do not understand even if it might seem basic or silly. Such a simple thing can lead to cultivating a Growth Mindset.

S: I see. Naoto, can we develop the Growth Mindset even in school club activities?

N: Of course.

S: That sounds difficult for me. I know you (Naoto) are good at tennis. Isn't that because you are talented and you have been practicing it since you were little?

N: No, actually I started playing tennis after I entered Kosen.

S: What? I can hardly believe that!! So why did you start playing soft tennis after you came here?

N: Because I wanted to try something new.

S: Wow, that's amazing, so how did you become so skillful?

N: At the beginning of my tennis journey, I had a hard time. All my teammates were experienced, but I didn't even know how to hold the racket. I failed a lot of times and could not meet the requirements of the team.

S: But now you are as strong as your teammates.

N: That's because I changed my mindset about practice. At first, I concentrated on basic skills such as swinging. I thought about what the purpose of practice is and how to use it in the game. While I practice, I imagine myself playing in a real match. Also, I learned techniques by observing the movements of other team members. Most importantly, I spent a lot of time practicing.

S: So, you mean you become stronger by making efforts.

N: Yes, I'm in 4th grade now, and I am playing an essential role in the tennis team. No matter how long it takes, if you make the right efforts, it will definitely lead to good results. I learned this growth mindset from my experience in the tennis club.

S: I see. The efforts that you put forth make you both physically and mentally stronger

so that you can acquire any skill. But I'm not always confident when I face big challenges.

K: Then I have another good piece of advice for you on how to cultivate your Growth Mindset! Break down your goals to overcome the challenges.

S: What do you mean by that? Can you explain more?

K: I am going to tell you an interesting story. Look at this! (Origami photo)

S: That's impressive!! Why are you so enthusiastic about Origami?

K: I was motivated by an origami solo exhibition when I was in the first grade of elementary school. At that time, I came across this work called "Devil" (show a photo). I was fascinated by it, so I immediately went to a bookstore and bought a book with instructions on how to fold this Devil and tried it.

S: It seemed very complicated.

K: Yes, but interestingly, folding this piece of work became my big goal even though I was a little boy who lost a lot of teeth at that time.

S: That's funny. So how did you make this impossible task happen?

K: There were many Origami works that I couldn't fold when I was little. However, I started with making some simple tasks in the book. By completing those simple tasks, I gradually improved my skills. Then it became possible for me to fold more difficult works by repeating them. Now making a 'devil' is a piece of cake.

S: I can see your confidence. By setting a lot of small and achievable goals, you can keep your motivation and achieve your big goal!

M: Yes, this mindset is quite useful for my school life at Kosen as well.

S: What is it useful for?

M: A good example is how to manage exams effectively. We all know that, when the exam approaches, we think we have to study, but it's hard to get into learning for the exam. In that case, you need to break down your big task. Set small goals to achieve it. Specifically, there are things like setting achievable points for each subject and practicing unsolvable problems. By reaching a lot of these minor goals, you can maintain your motivation and eventually achieve big goals.

S: You are right. I should not be afraid of big challenges, instead, get comfortable with them little by little. All right, we have discussed how to cultivate a growth mindset at school, let's look back on the main points of growth mindset by doing this quiz.

S: First, we can become **stronger** by making **efforts** (Naoto says "stronger" and "efforts"). Second, we can overcome **challenges** by breaking down our **goals** (Kanta says "challenges" and "goals").

S&K&N: let's be stronger for the rest of our school life with the Growth Mindset!
Thank you!