

# Preview



Winter Season | 2018/2019

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# MINDSET

## taking a look within

Have you ever taught a student or coached an athlete that seemed to have “everything”, but yet never achieved success? An athlete may seem to have everything skill-wise, but mindset has a huge influence on success.

In Carol S. Dweck’s research delves into mindset. Dweck has identified two mindsets that people can have on talent and abilities.

### FIXED VS. GROWTH MINDSET

Athletes with a fixed mindset believe that their talents and skillsets are simply fixed. They believe they are born with a certain amount of talent and that’s that. In this mindset, athletes may become so concerned with being and looking talented that they actually never end up developing their full potential. They are often pre-occupied about what others will think of them, and are often afraid to not live up to their “image”.

On the other hand, athletes with a growth mindset, believe that talent and skillset can be developed. They truly believe that effort, instruction and deliberate practice can lead to success. They believe that talent is something you build on and develop.

### CHARACTERISTICS OF GROWTH VS. FIXED MINDSET

#### LOOK GOOD AT ALL COSTS = FIXED MINDSET

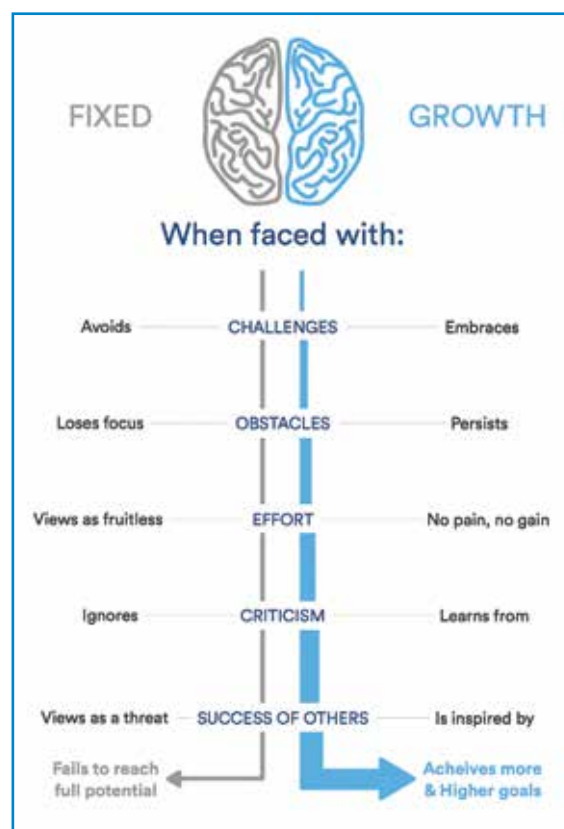
Athletes who tend to have a fixed mindset believe that if you have natural talent, you shouldn’t need much effort. In fact, for them, having to work hard can create doubt in their ability. In their mind,

whatever they are talented in, is meant to be easy. These are the types of athletes or students that often “coast” by, often achieving success with little effort. The danger of winning or achieving a lot of success at a young age can create this fixed mindset mentality. The danger is that the fixed mindset “naturals” never learn to work, as a consequence,

when they later reach their limits, they often have a hard time accepting defeat. Other characteristics of a fixed mindset athletes are; they have a hard time accepting constructive feedback., they see the success of others as a threat, are less resilient through difficult times, and as a consequence performance plateaus early on.

#### LEARN LEARN LEAN = GROWTH MINDSET

Research has repeatedly shown that a growth mindset fosters a positive outlook towards learning and development. Characteristics of a growth mindset is someone that is hungry to learn, appreciates constructive feedback, is more resilient towards setbacks, they view “failure” as learning opportunities. They understand that effort is what ignites their ability and causes it to grow over time. As a consequence, performance increases over time..





SKIER: Tracey Fraser  
PHOTO: John EVELY



## HOW ARE MINDSETS COMMUNICATED ?

Mindsets can be taught in the way we praise. Dweck's research discusses that praising children or adolescents on intelligence or talent puts them into a fixed mindset. Comments such as "wow, you are so smart, so talented" can lead to fix mindset mentality. By focusing on intelligence and talent sends the message to the athlete or student that you perceive them in a certain way. Fixed mindset athletes would not want to skew their "label" perception, so they would rather choose the easy road then the more difficult road. For them, not living up to others perception about them would be seemed as failure. Dweck's studies also showed that after a series of difficult problems fixed mindset students lost their confidence and enjoyment, performance plummeted, and scored dropped almost 40%.

### SO WHAT OR HOW SHOULD WE PRAISE ?

By praising effort or strategy put students in a growth mindset, in which they sought and enjoyed challenges. It was also shown that such praise helped maintain motivation after prolonged difficulties. Therefore, coaches might do well to on focusing on their athletes process or learning and improvement versus

natural talent. A focus on learning and improving not only sends the message of what they did to bring about their success, but also what they can do to recover from setbacks. A focus on talent, does not teach this

## WHAT ABOUT COACHES' MINDSET ?

As a coach, reflect if you have a fixed or growth mindset. It is important to reflect on how we see our athletes, reflect on what type of athletes you have a tendency to believe in ? Do you lean towards talent, skillset, work ethic, openness ?

Growth mindset coaching would more likely foster teamwork and team spirit. A coach that tends to have more of a fixed mindset, will find that their athletes will often be eager to impress their coach with their talent and will try to be the "superstar" in their coaches' eye. However, if an athlete knows that their coach values passion, learning and improvements, these athletes will want to aim for these elements.

How many athletes have you seen dominate the U10 - U16 circuit, and do "nothing" once they enter the FIS circuit? The biggest gift you can give an athlete, is develop skillset through a non-judgemental safe environment.

Where an athlete will feel comfortable to try something out of their comfort zone and not feel judged on the outcome. You can do this via your feedback, listening and communication skills. I understand, we must take into consideration the athletes environment as a whole, but coaches hold a lot of influence in a young impressionable athlete.

"70% of kids quit their sport before high school... because it isn't fun anymore" - [trusportpur.ca/theridehome](http://trusportpur.ca/theridehome)

What can you do as a coach to help create a fun environment that will foster learning in a safe non-judgemental environment ?

Reference:



### Heidi Malo

M. HK- Mental Performance Consultant  
CSPA Member (Canadian Sport Psychology Association)  
heidimalo@gmail.com  
[heidimalo.com/HeidiMaloMentalPerformanceConsultant](http://heidimalo.com/HeidiMaloMentalPerformanceConsultant)

#### References:

Dweck, Carol S.. *Mindset: The New Psychology Of Success*. New York : Ballantine Books, 2008. Print.  
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