The Agile Mindset – the Next Steps

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Disclaimer: This provocative presentation is ideally the beginning of a conversation. It won't take long for me to tell you everything I know about cognitive psychology, although I have been reading in the area for several years now. I'm an amateur who has sufficient interest in weird topics and a strange way of connecting ideas that might or might not be of interest to you. Thank you for your tolerance and understanding of my meanderings and I hope you learn a little that might help you in your life.

This is not an "academic" presentation, but those interested in more information are invited to ask me for references for any part of this talk and I will be happy to make them available.

Do you mostly agree or mostly disagree with the following

Intelligence is something very basic that you really can't change much. You're born with it or not. Yes, you can learn new things, but you can't really change how intelligent you are.

No matter how intelligent you are, you can always get better, sometimes you can improve a lot.
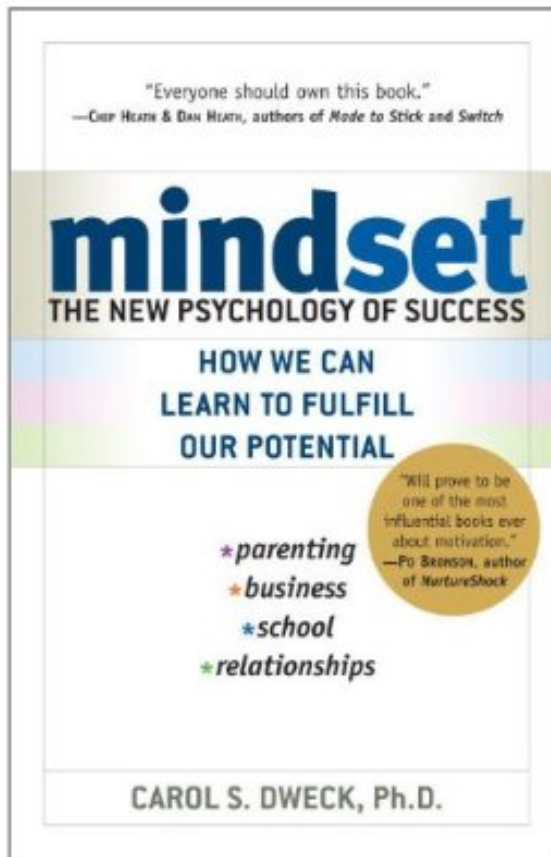
You can substitute any ability or talent for "intelligence."

Agile 2012 Keynote

http://www.agilealliance.org/resources/learning-center/keynote-the-power-of-an-agile-mindset

Mindset – Carol Dweck

More info

New Yorker – "The Talent Myth," gladwell.com

New York Magazine – "How not to talk to your kids," Po Bronson

TIME magazine – "How to help them succeed"

mindsetonline.com/

www.stanford.edu/dept/psychology/cgi-bin/drupalm/cdweck

Two mindsets: Fixed & Agile

Research shows that mindset:

Determines goals

Reactions to failure

Belief about effort and strategies

Attitudes toward others' successes

Two mindsets
Fixed vs. Agile

Ability – static, like height

Ability – can grow, like muscle

Goal - look good

Goal - to learn

Challenge - avoid

Challenge - embrace

Failure - defines your identity

Failure – provides information

Effort - for those with no talent

Effort - path to mastery

Reaction to challenge - helplessness

Reaction to challenge – resilience

Belief about yourself affects belief about others

Those with a fixed mindset are quick to judge others based on little information and quick to stereotype

Those with an agile mindset don't ignore information about others but are less negative/positive

"Who do you trust" – Agile 2008

..\Videos\Carlsberg.flv

Why stereotyping is a bad thing

Because those who are labeled become believers in the stereotype

Women taking math tests

Iowa 3rd grade teacher, Jane Elliott – 1968 – the day after MLK assassination

pbs.org/wgbh/pages/frontline/shows/divided/etc/view.html

Stereotypes are prophetic

Stereotypes change our behavior. Our behavior has an effect on other's behavior and without anyone understanding any of it, you have a self-fulfilling prophecy.

Pygmalion in Management," J. Sterling Livingston, Sept/Oct 1988 *Harvard Business Review*.

The fixed mindset and goals

Both fixed and agile have both performance and learning goals

Fixed see every setting as a place where everyone performs and are judged

Over time performance goals can drive out learning goals

Mistakes are bad, effort is for dummies

The good news is...

Mindset is not "fixed"

We encourage one or the other in each other

We develop one or the other in our children

Research has shown that small experimental manipulations, e.g. feedback or reading an article can produce one or the other

Effort & failure are good!

Praise effort, strategies, process

Ask about the work

Instead of ignoring failure, teach others that it's a way to learn and improve

Tell stories about those who suceeded by working through failure—tell your own stories!

Talk about the research in cognitive science that shows that the brain is like a muscle, learning grows new connections in the brain

For Kids

Instead of "You're so smart" or "You picked that up so quickly," **say** "That was a clever approach" or "I'm proud of your persistence."

Instead of "You're a natural" **say** "Practice is really making you better."

Instead of "Did you win?" **say** "Did you give your best effort?"

Instead of "How was your day?" **say** "What did you learn today?" or "What mistakes did you make that taught you something?"

Instead of "What do you want to do when you grow up?" **say** "What are your plans for reaching your goals?"

Never let failure progress from an action to an identity.

Never label kids, e.g. "Jimmy is the artist" or "Susie is the computer geek."

When a child doubts her ability, ask her to think of areas where she once had low ability and now excels, or to recall a time when she saw someone learn

something or improve in ways no one thought possible.

For Yourself

Instead of **letting salary, benefits, and status define job satisfaction, ask yourself if you're still learning. If yes, then you're fortunate to have a job that encourages a growth mind-set. View its challenges as opportunities rather than stress. If you've stopped learning, then consider looking either for new avenues of growth or for another job.**

Instead of **blaming others in your relationships, remember "the whole point of a relationship is to encourage each other's development."**

Depressed people tend to believe that it's just the way they are. **Instead of** **viewing yourself as a failed end product, think of yourself as a temporarily derailed work in progress. "We usually think of personality as something very stable, but we're finding that even core parts of it can be changed by shifting mind-sets."**

For Others

Instead of arguing with someone (especially a significant other) that "you're not stupid, you're brilliant, it's just that those people can't see it," choose a quiet moment to talk about what you've learned about this research. Don't force anyone to read about it, just make it available. In the typical argument, one fixed label is being substituted for another.

Instead of using generalities, give specific, concrete examples of when the other has made progress and done something that was thought to be difficult or challenging.

Instead of praising talent when things are going well, "see, I told you that you were brilliant," praise the process and the effort that was involved in the success.

Agile software development

Fail early, fail often.

Fail fast, learn constantly.

Failure *IS* an option.

Without failure how can learning happen?

"Make mistakes faster."
    Rich Sheridan, CEO, Menlo Innovations

"Perfect is a verb."   Kent Beck

"Those that fail fastest grow strongest."
    Roy Singham, Founder and Chair, Thoughtworks

Agile is agile

The agile mindset believes that we are *ALL* a work in progress.

The agile software development process isn't fixed. It continues to change and grow as we learn more about it. If we are lucky, this will never end because it will never be perfect.

We will continue to improve as we age—just like me ☺!

Ever tried. Ever failed. No matter. Try Again. Fail again. Fail better. Samuel Beckett, Irish poet (1906-1989)

You must learn to fail intelligently. Failing is one of the greatest arts in the world. One fails forward to success. Thomas Edison

Thanks for listening!

Thoughts on mistakes

Don't equate making mistakes with being a mistake. There is no such thing as a successful person who has not failed or made mistakes, there are successful people who made mistakes and changed their lives or performance in response to them, and so got it right the next time. They viewed mistakes as warnings rather than signs of hopeless inadequacy. Never making a mistake means never living life to the full. Steve Jobs

Sometimes when you innovate, you make mistakes. It is best to admit them quickly, and get on with improving your other innovations." Steve Jobs

Move fast and break things. Unless you break things you're not moving fast enough. Mark Zuckerberg

Basic research is what I am doing when I don't know what I am doing. Wernher von Braun

Success seems to be connected with action. Successful people keep moving. They make mistakes, but they don't quit. Conrad Hilton

Anyone who has never made a mistake has never tried anything new. Albert Einstein

I have not failed. I've just found 10,000 ways that won't work. Thomas Edison