

# 3 Steps To Achieving A Growth Mindset In Your Organisation

*How do you bring growth mindset to life, or make it real within an organisational setting?*

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How do you bring Growth Mindset to life, or make it real within an organisational setting, is a question we are often asked? Whilst there are no easy solutions to this conundrum, there are things we can focus on, as we become more mindful and improve what we do.

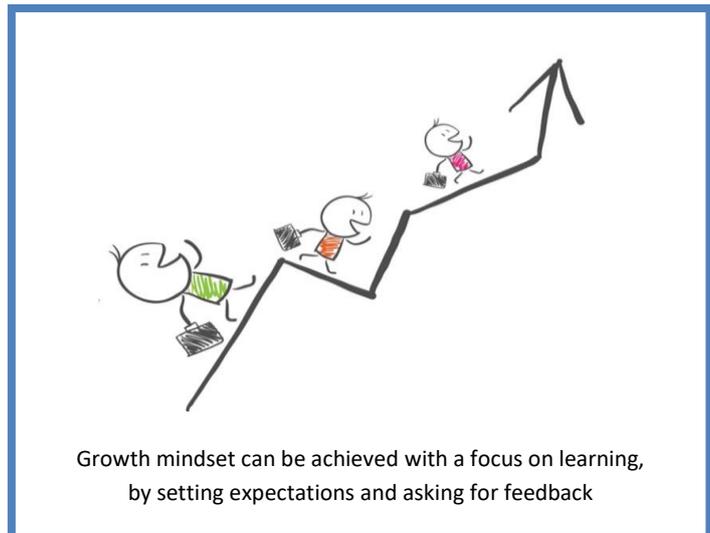
## 1. Focus on learning

This stretches far beyond a reliance on HR to facilitate high quality learning programmes and the latest in digital training courses. It flows through the arteries of our organisations in the language we use and the behaviours we demonstrate every day. What is praised, who is recognised and how do we deal with failure? Are we a learning [growth mindset] organisation that promotes effort and recognises failure as the yin to our growth yang? Or does failure take a beating whilst the latest 'star' of the moment [fixed mindset] stands on the podium and bows to the crowd?

Language is powerful and changes the way our brains receive and act on information. It is critical for ideas to take hold and provides the nourishment for mindset to take root. Our individual behaviour models the way and sets the stage for how we collectively behave, particularly when we hold leader positions. If we want to create a growth mindset environment, a focus on learning is key and that begins with our language and behaviour rather than formalised learning processes.

## 2. Expect the best

Expectation shapes our reality. As demonstrated via the much published 'placebo effect', the dynamics of expectation directly impact how we perceive the world. If we



set high standards within a supportive learning culture we will have a positive influence on ourselves and all those around us. By expecting the best and using powerful empowering language we shift energy, as expectations shape perceptions and our interactions with each other.

As humans we experience what we expect to experience. From a leader perspective caring about the expectations of those we are managing matters. Empathy and trust are key components, without which we can trigger a threat response. This is not conducive to growth mindset and, instead, drives inconsistency and poor performance.

### 3. Encourage feedback

It sounds so easy but very few of us ever ask for feedback. Indeed, most of us are repeatedly trained on how to give feedback. This is tricky as giving feedback activates the threat response in both the giver and the receiver [Inge, C. Z., et al, 2017]. New knowledge suggests it is far more productive to create a culture of asking for feedback. Without feedback we can't learn, therefore, growth is restricted. We need feedback to progress yet it fills most of us with dread and we go to great lengths to avoid it [except when there is no escape, such as the annual performance review].

Asking for feedback on the other hand makes life less stressful. When we do the asking we have prepared ourselves to accept the response and as such our threat reaction is much lower. For the 'giver' it takes away all the worry and strain around how to position the feedback. We have been asked, all we need to do is respectfully contribute to the learning journey of the other person.

Within the context of an organisation that is not used to encouraging feedback this concept can feel quite radical and it can be difficult to know where to start. Feedback should be a fluid, on-going activity, part of what we do each day. Asking is a great way to take input from the team to improve leadership practice and by asking we, the leaders, model the way for others to do the same, peer to peer, one team at a time.

And that sums up growth mindset. It's achieved with a focus on learning, by setting challenging not overwhelming expectations and by asking for feedback to continually grow our skills and capability. Never forgetting to praise effort, when learning has taken place, as we progress one step, one day and one word at a time.

*“Amateurs call  
it genius. Masters  
call it practice”*  
Darren Hardy

#### References and further reading

Inge C.Z, Chesebrough C.B., West T.V, & Rock D., 2017: Getting to a Culture of Feedback: A science-based strategy to improve performance at scale. Neuroleadership Journal