

GROWTH MINDSET NEWSLETTER



Issue 006

Fall 2024

The Power of Growth Mindset: Learning from Others' Success

This newsletter will dive into an empowering topic that affects not just students, but educators, parents, and staff alike: the relationship between observing the performance of others and cultivating a growth mindset.

The Role of Others' Performance in a Growth Mindset

Have you ever watched someone accomplish something you've been struggling with, and felt that familiar knot in your stomach? That voice that whispers "I'll never be that good" is something we've all heard. But what if that moment of comparison could actually become your springboard for growth? Here's what the research tells us about transforming envy into inspiration...

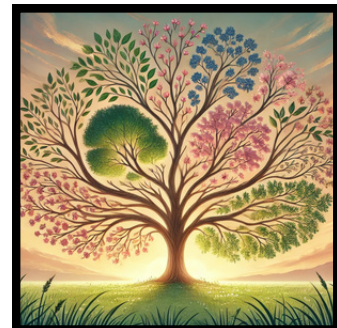
Inspiration over Comparison

Research from the Journal of Educational Psychology shows that students with a growth mindset are more likely to see their peers' achievements as inspiration rather than competition. Instead of thinking, "I'll never be as good," they think, "I can learn from this example."

Reframe comparisons by teaching students to compare their current performance to their past achievements rather than their peers'. This encourages self-reflection and personal growth.

Social comparison, when handled constructively, can encourage self-reflection and goal setting. However, unchecked, it can lead to negative self-assessment.

- **Constructive Comparisons:** A study by Bandura (1997) on self-efficacy theory found that observing others succeed fosters the belief, "If they can do it, so can I." This effect is especially pronounced when students see peers who started at a similar level achieving their goals.
- **Potential Pitfall:** A Developmental Psychology study (2020) highlighted that students with a fixed mindset were more likely to feel demoralized when compared to high achievers, viewing the gap as evidence of their own inadequacy rather than a challenge to overcome.
- **Solution:** Harmful comparisons can be mitigated by framing peer success as evidence of learning potential, emphasizing individual progress rather than competition.



Motivation: Modeling Resilience

Observing others overcome setbacks fosters resilience. When students see their peers struggle and then succeed, they learn that challenges are a natural part of growth.

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Research demonstrates that observing high-performing peers can inspire individuals to push their limits, especially when they believe success is achievable through effort. A 2010 study published in *Psychological Science* examined how students responded to high-performing peers. Those with a growth mindset viewed their peers as role models, sparking motivation to emulate their strategies and work habits. Conversely, those with a fixed mindset felt intimidated and discouraged, perceiving the peer's success as unattainable.

Reframe Comparison as Learning

One of the most impactful aspects of observing others is learning from the strategies they use to succeed. Instead of seeing others' success as a threat, encourage students to view it as an opportunity to learn.

- **Research Insight:** A 2019 study in *Learning and Instruction* showed that when students watched peers verbalize their thought processes during problem-solving, they not only improved their understanding but also adopted similar problem-solving strategies. This demonstrates that observing others CAN directly impact skill acquisition.
- **Actionable Tip:** Teach students to ask, "What can I learn from how they succeeded?" rather than, "Why are they better than me?"

By implementing these strategies, individuals can gradually shift their perspective, learning to see others' success as an opportunity for inspiration and personal growth.

Learning Connections

Bandura, Albert. *Self-Efficacy: The Exercise of Control*. W.H. Freeman, 1997.

Claro, Susana, Paunesku, David, and Dweck, Carol S. "Growth Mindset Tempers the Effects of Poverty on Academic Achievement." *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences*, vol. 113, no. 31, 2016, pp. 8664–8668. doi:10.1073/pnas.1608204113.

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Yeager, David S., and Dweck, Carol S. "Mindsets That Promote Resilience: When Students Believe That Personal Characteristics Can Be Developed." *Educational Psychologist*, vol. 47, no. 4, 2012, pp. 302–314. doi:10.1080/00461520.2012.722805.

Vygotsky, Lev S. *Mind in Society: The Development of Higher Psychological Processes*. Harvard University Press, 1978.

"Learning From Others' Success: Vicarious Learning and Goal Achievement." *Learning and Instruction*, vol. 63, 2019, pp. 22–30. doi:10.1016/j.learninstruc.2019.05.003.

"Social Comparison and Achievement Motivation in Adolescents." *Developmental Psychology*, vol. 56, no. 5, 2020, pp. 951–964. doi:10.1037/dev0000894.

GROWTH MINDSET

A PATH TO SUCCESS

SUCCESS SUMMIT

The success of others
inspires and motivates us.

TIP: CELEBRATE PEERS' ACHIEVEMENTS
AND ASK, "WHAT CAN YOU LEARN FROM
THEIR JOURNEY?"

CRITICISM CROSSROADS

Constructive feedback
points us toward growth.

TIP: VIEW FEEDBACK AS GUIDANCE, NOT
JUDGMENT.

CHALLENGE HILL

Embracing challenges builds
strength for bigger goals.

TIP: TAKE ON DIFFICULT TASKS,
REMEMBER THAT EFFORT LEADS TO
PROGRESS.

OBSTACLE VALLEY

Persistence in setbacks is key
to growth. Mistakes are
lessons in disguise.

TIP: NORMALIZE FAILURE BY SHARING A
PERSONAL STORY WHERE PERSISTENCE
LED TO SUCCESS.

A "GROWTH MINDSET" IS A BELIEF THAT ONE'S
ABILITIES AND INTELLIGENCE CAN BE DEVELOPED
AND IMPROVED THROUGH EFFORT, LEARNING,
AND PERSISTENCE, RATHER THAN BEING FIXED
TRAITS; IT MEANS EMBRACING CHALLENGES,
SEEING SETBACKS AS LEARNING
OPPORTUNITIES, AND VALUING THE PROCESS OF
LEARNING OVER IMMEDIATE SUCCESS

EFFORT BRIDGE

Effort is the bridge to success.

TIP: TAKE ON DIFFICULT TASKS, REMEMBER
THAT EFFORT LEADS TO PROGRESS.



Growth Mindset Tenets

