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INTRODUCTION

In 1988, a group of researchers, including Stanford psychology professor Carol Dweck, studied students' responses to failure.

Some students rebounded well, while others were derailed by simple setbacks.

After extensive research with thousands of students, Dr. Dweck came up with the terms *fixed mindset* and *growth mindset* to encapsulate the differences between how all of us think about learning.

Simply put, having a growth mindset means you believe that you can and will improve with effort. A fixed mindset, by comparison, means that you believe you have a fixed amount of intelligence or talent that will never change.

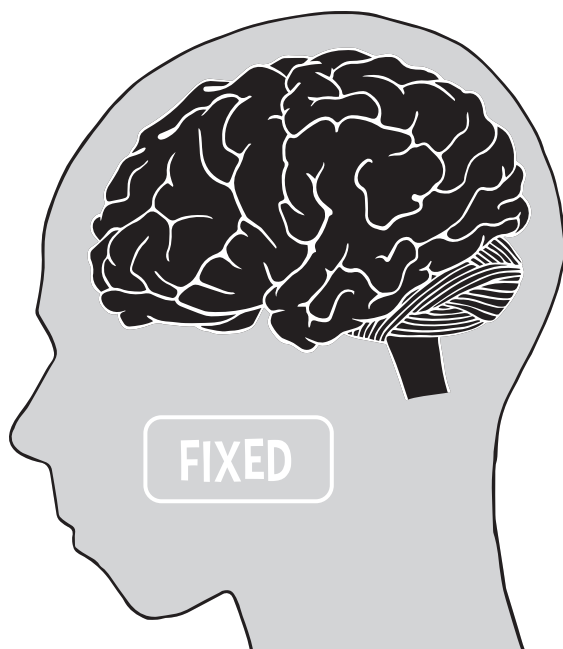
We all have these two mindsets, but what Dr. Dweck has shown is that students are more likely to succeed once they take on a growth mindset and understand that they can get better at anything with time and effort.

In a fixed mindset, challenges are avoided, criticism is ignored, and students feel threatened by the success of others and are quick to give up when things get hard.

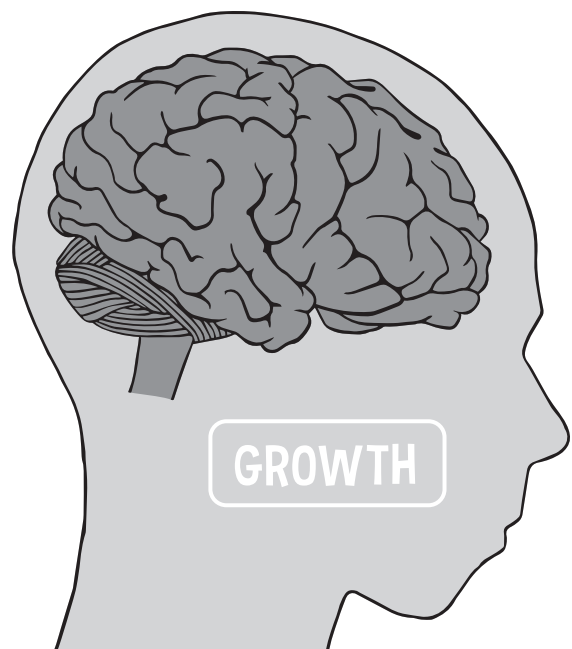
In a growth mindset, mistakes are seen as learning opportunities, challenges are welcomed, and students persevere with effort, leading to a desire to learn even more.

Teaching students about a growth mindset and the science behind it, including brain plasticity, has helped countless students grasp the idea that they can achieve their dreams, no matter their starting points.

The activities in this book support the growth-mindset philosophy. With practice and positive reinforcement, students will be able to adopt this flexible, supportive, and uplifting perspective.



knowledge is unchanging



knowledge can grow

I will **DO** MY BEST.

“Start unknown, finish unforgettable.”

⚡ Misty Copeland

When students understand the importance of giving their best effort to a challenge, they begin to see the possibilities of what they can achieve.

★ Reading Passage: Misty Copeland

Ballerina Misty Copeland overcame a challenging childhood to become the most famous dancer of her generation.

★ Short-Answer Activity: The Best You Can Be

Read the short poem aloud to the class; discuss what it means to do your best. Then ask students to answer the questions about what they read.

★ Small-Group Activity: Best of Friends

Students will pair up and interview each other about what they are best at, as well as some of their favorite things. When done, ask students to share and introduce their partners to the class.

★ Whole-Class Activity: Best Foot Forward

In this movement activity, students will complete a short matching task and then perform a silly movement they will share with the class.

★ Journal Prompt: Doing Your Best

Reflecting on what they have learned, students will draw or write about a time they were proud of giving their best.

★ Growing Beyond

Send students home with a plain lunch bag. Ask them to choose three things that represent the best of themselves and place the objects in the bag. The only rule is that the objects must fit in the bag. They can also decorate the bag however they would like. For a week, designate some time each day for a small group of students to share their “best of me” bags with the class.

Name: _____ Date: _____

MISTY COPELAND

Misty Copeland is a famous ballet dancer. Her story shows us that dreams can come true.

Most dancers start training when they are young. But Misty didn't find ballet until she was 13 years old.

Misty grew up with five brothers and sisters. She moved around a lot. She was shy. And she always wanted to be perfect.

In middle school, she was on the drill team. Misty loved gymnastics. Her teacher thought she might like to try ballet.

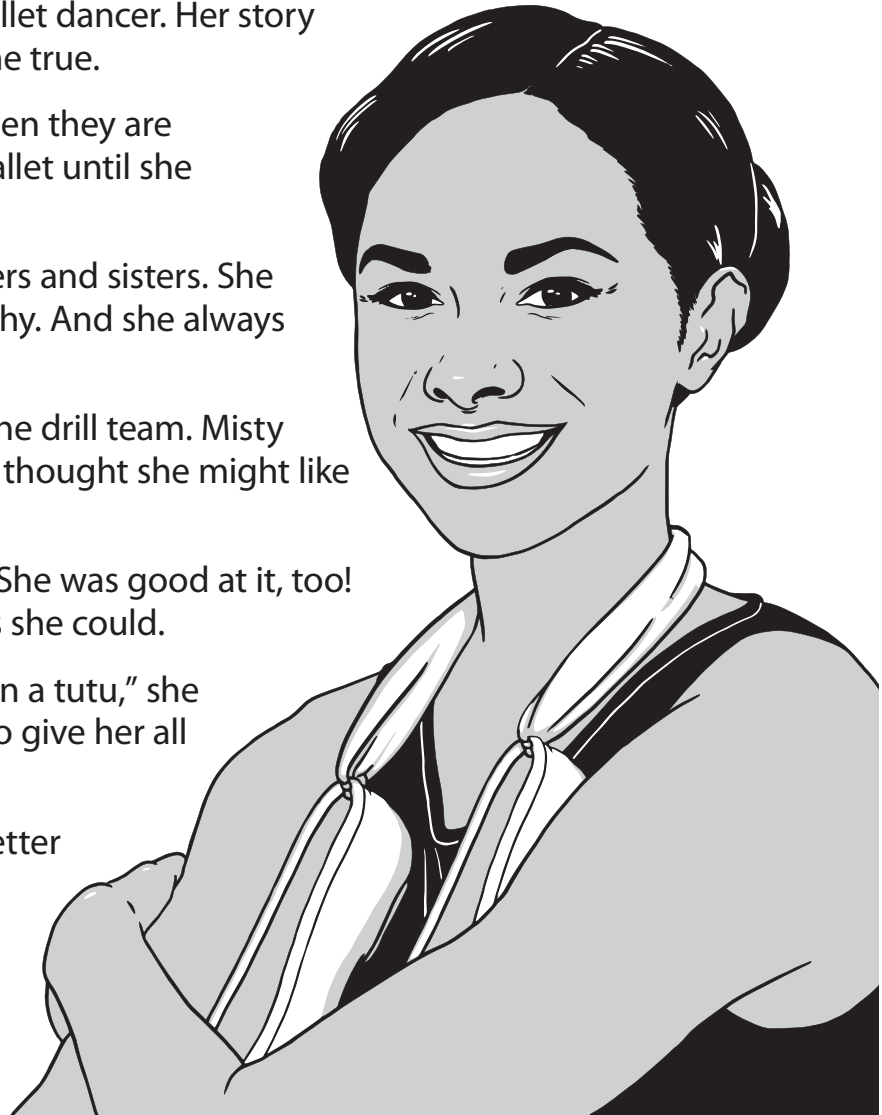
Misty loved dance right away. She was good at it, too! She began training as much as she could.

"I can do anything when I am in a tutu," she said. Misty knew she wanted to give her all to dance.

The more Misty trained, the better she danced. She wanted to be the best she could be. She never gave up, even when it was hard.

Misty just kept practicing. Then she joined the American Ballet Theatre. She was the first black woman to be a star dancer.

Misty has inspired dancers all over the world. She is a true example of what it means to do your best.



Name: _____ Date: _____

THE BEST YOU CAN BE

Doing your best means giving your all. Here is a poem about what it means to do your best.

Your Best

If you always try your best
Then you'll never have to wonder
About what you could have done
If you'd summoned all your thunder.

And if your best
Was not as good
As you hoped it would be,
You still could say,
"I gave today
All that I had in me."

—Barbara R. Vance, from *Suzie Bitner Was Afraid of the Drain*

Directions: Think about Misty's story and the poem above. Then answer the questions below.

1. What does it feel like when you do your best? _____

2. What could stop you from doing your best? _____

3. What are three words you would use to describe Misty? _____

Name: _____ Date: _____

BEST OF FRIENDS

Directions: Find a partner. Ask them these questions about their best and favorite things. Write or draw their answers below.

★ What is your friend's name? ★

★ What is your friend best at? ★

★ Who is your friend's best friend? ★

★ What is your friend's favorite memory? ★