



Beginner's and Growth Mindset

Our positions as wellness experts create a mindset and expectation that we know everything about employee wellness. While we do know about the principles of wellness, this gives us opinions and points of view that may make us think we know more than we do, leading us to potentially inaccurate conclusions.

There's no way to know an individual's beliefs, understanding, and emotions around their health and wellness. Therefore, it's important to drop our expertise and any preconceived notions and instead listen and learn from those around us. In other words, adopt a beginner's mindset.

"If your mind is empty...it is open to everything. In the beginner's mind there are many possibilities, but in the expert's mind there are few."

—Shunryu Suzuki

EXPERT'S MIND	BEGINNER'S MIND
One correct solution and whatever deviates from that solution is wrong	No right or wrong way to approach a situation
Know what they need to do, so may make assumptions and not ask questions	No expectations or preconceived notions
Narrow point of view	Curious; open and eager to learn
Ego	Humility

Think about how often you assume a person's stance on wellness. Maybe you've said, "Oh, they don't support wellness" or "Our leadership is so focused on the financials that they'll never give me the resources I need." These assumptions can get in our way before we even try to set up a meeting with someone, much less ask them questions to better understand their perspective.

Whenever you are collaborating, it's important to approach the situation with "I wonder..." instead of "I know..."

A close cousin of a beginner's mind is a **growth mindset**. Growth mindset was a term introduced by psychologist Carol Dweck to describe the underlying beliefs people have about learning and intelligence.

She found that individuals with a growth mindset believe that their success depends on time and effort. This means their skills and intelligence can be improved with practice.

On the other hand, a fixed mindset is the belief that intelligence is static and no amount of practice will help you improve. In other words, whatever talents and intelligence you were born with is all you have!



Here is an explanation of both mindsets:

FIXED MINDSET	GROWTH MINDSET
Intelligence is static	Intelligence can be developed
Avoids challenges and keeps us in our comfort zones	Leads to a desire to learn
Gives up easily	Persists in face of obstacles and sees effort as a path to mastery
Ignores useful negative feedback	Learns from criticism
Feels threatened by the success of others	Inspiration in the success of others

Here are examples of how a growth and fixed mindset apply to your role as a wellness professional:

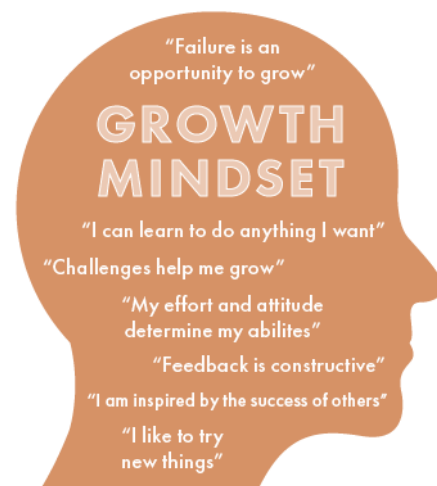
FIXED MINDSET	GROWTH MINDSET
I'll never be able to get leadership on board with wellness.	Leadership may not be interested in wellness now, but I can learn what's important to them and start connecting the dots between the two.
I'm a wellness person. This isn't what I was trained to do.	I have skills and talents that allow me to expand beyond my formal training.
Yikes, that meeting didn't go well. I should go back to what I'm good at.	Yikes, that meeting didn't go well. What can I learn from that so I don't make the same mistake next time?

If you find that some of the recommendations in this toolkit feel difficult, there's nothing more effective than practice. According to Dr. Lara Boyd, Canada Research Chair in Neurobiology of Motor Learning, increased struggle during practice leads to more learning and greater structural change in the brain.

How can you get past the struggle when you're trying something new?

If you hear your private voice saying "I can't do it," add "yet."

"I can't do it yet" is adopting a growth mindset and allows you time to practice a new behavior or skill set.



Resource

Carol Dweck's Ted Talk: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hiiEeMN7vbQ&list=RDLVhiiEeMN7vbQ&start_radio=1&v=hiiEeMN7vbQ&t=5