

Q) Why do some people achieve their goals, not quit and persevere despite the setbacks and obstacles they face?

A) They have a "growth mindset"!

## How Fixed and Growth Mindsets Create Life Success.

### Why we quit easily and lack motivation.

Maybe you are "naturally academically gifted" or perhaps like me you have to work hard at school to achieve good results and even then "good results" may not be that great. Many students believe the reason they don't get good results is because they are not smart. As a result they give up easily and lack motivation. Why bother working hard on a task if it is only going to end up making you feel disappointed or worse a failure?

### What successful people have that most people don't have.

Successful people believe that failure is good! Yes, you read that right. Michael Jordan says, "I've failed over and over in my life and that is why I succeed". Some people see failure as a guide, clue, message, and information about what to improve so they can achieve their goal (they have a growth mindset). On the other hand, people who quit easily at the slightest hint of difficulty believe that failure is a reflection of who they are (fixed mindset).



## What are fixed and growth mindsets?

Many students believe that intelligence is fixed, that each person has a certain amount and that's it. This has been described as a *fixed mindset*. Students with this mindset worry about how much of this fixed intelligence they possess. A fixed mindset makes challenges threatening for students (because they believe that their fixed ability may not be up to the task) and it makes mistakes and failures upsetting (because they believe that such setbacks reflect badly on their level of fixed intelligence).

Other students believe that intelligence is something that can be cultivated through **effort** and education. They don't necessarily believe that everyone has the same abilities or that anyone can be as smart as Einstein, but they do believe that everyone can **improve** their abilities. And they understand that even Einstein wasn't Einstein until he put in years of focused hard work. Students with this *growth mindset* believe that intelligence is a potential that can be developed through learning. As a result, confronting challenges, learning from mistakes, and persevering in the face of setbacks become ways of getting smarter.

The table below is a summary of how the fixed and growth mindset attitude affects different situations.

Situation	Fixed Mindset	Growth Mindset
Challenges	Avoids	Embraces
Obstacles	Give up easily	Persists in the face of setbacks
Effort	Sees it as fruitless	Sees it as pass to mastery
Criticism	Ignores it	Learns from it
Success of Others	Feels threatened	Finds lessons and inspiration

The good news is that you aren't stuck with the same sort of mindset forever! To change your mindset, firstly start to really listen to your inner voice. How do you react to challenges? What do you say to yourself when things are difficult or don't work out how you want? Once you become aware of your reactions, you then need to start changing the messages to yourself to be more aligned with a growth mindset. For example, if you find yourself thinking 'I don't think I can do it', recognise that you have a choice about how you react, talk back to the fixed mindset with a growth mindset voice. Say to yourself 'Well I think this is going to be hard but if I put in the effort and get help along the way I probably can do it'. Every time you have a fixed mindset thought, challenge it with a growth mindset perspective. You'll be amazed at the differences that start to appear in your life!

To read more about the fixed and growth mindset and how it links with the research on "brain-plasticity" go to [www.humanconnections.com.au](http://www.humanconnections.com.au) and click on the blog link.

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