Fostering a Growth Mindset

A growth mindset is a belief that a person can change as they grow, whereas a fixed mindset is a belief that people have innate talents and skills that determine if they will succeed or not. For instance, a person with a fixed mindset believes that people are born with intelligence; a person with a growth mindset believes that intelligence can be cultivated through hard work and experience. A student who is failing an art class might think “I am just not creative” when they could choose to view the situation as a chance to improve by evaluating why they are failing and learning new skills for success.

Everyone has moments of failure, and having a fixed mindset will only exacerbate those negative feelings. However, if you view your shortcomings as chances to grow and improve rather than failing, then you will have a more positive outlook and “failing” won’t seem so bad. If you are interested in developing a growth mindset, make an effort to do the following:

⇒ **Use the word yet.** Instead of saying, “I don’t understand chemistry,” say, “I don’t understand chemistry... yet.”

⇒ **Reflect.** How often do you actively evaluate your actions of the day? Do not overanalyze, but reflecting on your potential weaknesses can help you flourish.

⇒ **Embrace growth over speed.** Learning fast is not as conducive as learning well. Allow yourself the chance to review your mistakes, practice, and grow. Be proud of yourself for even the smallest step forward.

⇒ **Think of learning as training your brain.** The brain is like a muscle in the fact that if exercise it, it will work more efficiently. You can change your views about learning by thinking of it as training your brain to succeed.

Whether you already have a positive growth mindset, or you’re still establishing it, remember that you are doing something amazing every time you make a mistake, learn from it, and grow.

To Do Before School

Use this checklist to ensure your semester starts off right. Check the box if the statement applies to you.

- I know which classes I am taking and where they are located.
- I have all necessary school supplies and books.
- I have my student ID.
- I have my parking or metro pass.
- My financial aid is up to date.
- I read through my syllabi and determined if I have any questions for the professor.
- I wrote down all important dates, such as exams and final projects, in my planner.

Meet the Staff

Janeece Woodson received her Bachelor of Arts and Master of Arts in English from the University of Missouri-St. Louis in 2017 and 2019, respectively. She currently serves as a Tutoring Coordinator in the University Tutoring Center. In addition, she teaches English as an adjunct professor for various colleges in the St. Louis area; her recent courses include composition and business writing at UMSL. In her free time, Janeece enjoys reading memoirs and wilderness backpacking.