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Grit and the Growth Mindset

By Lori A. Hoffner

In an ecosystem [research](#) study, scientists found that although trees grew faster in a biosphere indoor environment than they did outdoors, they would collapse under their own weight before they'd reach maturity. This happened, they concluded, because there was no wind in the biosphere to produce "stress wood" or resiliency in the trees.

This type of wood makes the tree more resilient and allows the trees to be strong enough to live to maturity.

In the turbulence of today's world, it often feels like we've weathered more than our fair share of storms, yet these challenges

may have gifted us a reservoir of resilience and grit we never knew existed. Grit, the relentless determination to achieve goals, is a defining characteristic that propels us forward even when the path seems arduous, and the rewards seem distant.

To foster a growth mindset, grit becomes a critical companion. Cultivating grit involves a willingness to learn from mistakes, a commitment to continuous improvement, and surrounding oneself with like-minded individuals. Identifying those who persist in the face of challenges, who show up when the going gets tough, is vital for personal and collective growth.

Acknowledging the interplay between fixed and growth mindsets is crucial. Fixed mindsets, where intelligence and traits are perceived as unyielding, hinder progress. Recognizing triggers for a fixed mindset—such as feeling challenged, experiencing setbacks, or encountering criticism—allows us to navigate these moments with self-awareness.



Embracing a growth mindset is an empowering journey marked by the belief that intelligence is not fixed but can be expanded through strategic efforts and diverse experiences. Individuals with a growth mindset possess an innate desire to learn, demonstrating a proactive commitment to acquiring new knowledge. Their dedication extends beyond mere curiosity; they actively engage in hard work, employ various learning strategies, and willingly seek assistance when faced with challenges. Furthermore, a fundamental tenet of this mindset is the acknowledgment that mistakes are not failures but invaluable opportunities for learning and improvement. By internalizing these principles, individuals with a growth mindset navigate their personal and professional paths with resilience, constantly evolving and seizing the chance to transform setbacks into steppingstones for success.

Leadership plays a pivotal role in shaping the mindset of a team. Leaders must examine whether they view their staff through a fixed or growth lens. Fostering an environment where learning is encouraged, mistakes are seen as opportunities for growth, and support is readily available is essential. Process-praise and mentorship relationships contribute to a culture of continuous learning and improvement.

A key element in cultivating grit is understanding one's purpose and finding meaning in work. Connecting with the broader significance of one's contributions makes perseverance sustainable. This awareness, coupled with a growth mindset, empowers individuals to confidently face challenges, knowing they have the capacity to overcome them.

Looking Ahead:

The metaphor of the wind symbolizes the unpredictable nature of challenges. Resilience hinges on cultivating grit and approaching challenges with an open, growth mindset. Navigating the winds of change provides the opportunity for personal and professional growth, allowing individuals to reflect years later and say, "I did a great job in the midst of those challenges."

As we face the uncertainties that may lie ahead, our ability to weather the storms and navigate change depends on the cultivation of grit and a commitment to a growth mindset. By embracing challenges with openness and determination, we not only overcome obstacles but also pave the way for continuous learning and success.

Want more information on developing grit? Check out [GRIT the Power of Passion and Perseverance](#) by Angela Duckworth.

Lori A. Hoffner, Organizational Development Speaker & Trainer helps people and organizations create open, positive, and inclusive environments through her speaking, training, and consulting. Since 1997, Lori has had the pleasure of working with audiences across the country to help them learn, grow, and develop positive practices for their organizations. If you want to learn how Lori can support your team, give us a [call](#).