

5 Parenting Strategies to Develop a Growth Mindset

September 17, 2014 By Melissa Taylor

How do I Help Promote a Growth Mindset?

According to Carol S. Dweck, Ph.D., author of [Mindset](#), I can do the following:

1. Have daily learning discussions.

- a. At dinner, in the car or at bedtime take time for both the kids and parents to share the answers to these types of questions:
 - i. “What did you learn to day?” (*I LOVE this – so much better than “How was your day?”*)
 - ii. “What mistake did you make that taught you something?”
 - iii. “What did you try hard at today?”
- b. It’s really important says Dweck that I share what I learned, too. This models for kids that I learn new things every day, even learning from failures.
- c. When children share, you can reply like this:
 - i. “You certainly did get smarter today.”
 - ii. “I like the way you tried all kinds of strategies on that math problem until you finally got it right.”
 - iii. “We all have different learning curves. It may take more time for you to catch on to this and be comfortable with this material, but I you keep at it like this you will.”
 - iv. “Everyone learns in a different way. Let’s keep trying to find the way that works for you.”

(These are direct quotes from *Mindset* by Carol S. Dweck, Ph.D.)

2. Give feedback on process only.

- a. [Praise effort](#), persistence, strategies, seeking challenges, setting goals, planning, or using creative strategies.
- b. Don't praise personal abilities like being smart, pretty, or artistic. This kind of praise actually can [lead to a loss of confidence](#) since kids won't be smart at everything. They'll doubt their ability to be good at something that is difficult initially.
- c. [Salman Khan recently wrote](#) that he will never tell his son he's smart for this very reason. He shares, *"Between the deep body of research on the field of learning mindsets and this personal experience with my son, I am more convinced than ever that mindsets toward learning could matter more than anything else we teach."*

3. Do you know brains can grow?

- a. Explain to kids how the [brain can grow stronger](#) and that intelligence can improve throughout your life. Intelligence is not fixed. It's changeable. This is called [brain plasticity](#). (Aren't you so glad!?)
- b. What's more, [learning CHANGES our brains](#). (Again, three cheers for brain growth!) Kids need to know this is possible.

4. Encourage risk, failing, and learning from mistakes.

- a. Now is the time to let our kids risk and fail. Failure teaches our kids important life lessons. For one, it's how they learn resiliency
- b. But we often want to prevent our kids from failing, from feeling upset or sad.
 - i. DON'T!
 - ii. We must let our kids fail now so that they can strengthen their growth mindset muscles. If we don't, they will be adults with no perseverance, with no belief in their abilities to work hard and succeed.
- c. In [The Blessings of a Skinned Knee](#), Wendy Mogel says to be compassionate and concerned but not enmeshed.
- d. Let's keep each other accountable on this. This is hard but so important.
- e. And when your child fails, celebrate the lessons in the failure. Tell them about all the [famous people who failed](#) and didn't give up

5. Encourage and model positive self talk.

Finally, I think it's worth sharing this [self-talk chart from Fieldcrest Elementary](#). Our self talk is where it all starts to shift.

What Can I Say to Myself?	
Instead of....	Try Thinking...
1. I'm not good at this.	1. What am I missing?
2. I'm awesome at this.	2. I'm on the right track
3. I give up.	3. I'll use some of the strategies we've learned.
4. This is too hard.	4. This may take some time and effort.
5. I can't make this any better.	5. I can always improve so I'll keep trying.
6. I just can't do math.	6. I'm going to train my brain in Math.
7. I made a mistake.	7. Mistakes help me to learn better.
8. She's so smart. I will never be that smart.	8. I'm going to figure out how she does it so I can try it!
9. It's good enough.	9. Is it really my best work?
10. Plan A didn't work.	10. Good thing the alphabet has 25 more letters.