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S. Dweck explains how mindset impacts growth and change.

**Jim Boomer** • Mar. 16, 2020



Each year, our team provides consulting services to hundreds of top-performing accounting firms. The thing about being a consultant, as many CPA firms are learning, is that while you can provide insight and advice to help your client solve a problem, you can't make decisions for them or force them into action. We can help build consensus and commitment and provide ongoing accountability, but it's ultimately up to the client to decide whether and how to implement the plan of action we've recommended.

Most of the time, the difference between success and failure of a project comes down to mindset. In the book *Mindset: The New Psychology of Success*, author Carol S. Dweck explains how mindset impacts growth and change.

## Fixed mindset vs. growth mindset

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improve and be smarter if they work at it. They're open to new ideas and learning and see failures as opportunities.

Our mindset shapes whether we can learn and change and grow. The good news is that anyone can adopt a growth mindset, think differently and become more open to innovation and growth.

James Anderson, a Certified Growth Mindset Trainer, identified several [misunderstandings about mindsets](#). Before we jump into how to adopt a growth mindset, it's essential to address at least two of those misunderstandings.

First, your mindset is not an innate part of who you are. You weren't born with either a fixed or growth mindset – you developed it through your experiences, especially the role models you had as a child and the messages you received from others.

Second, growth vs. fixed isn't an either/or proposition. No one has a completely fixed or growth mindset. It's more accurate to talk about the degree to which a person holds a growth or fixed mindset about abilities. We all have a mixed mindset to varying degrees.

### Six steps to adopting a growth mindset

It's possible to develop a growth mindset, and in the accounting profession today, we believe it's not just a good idea, but vital to long-term success. Here's how you go about moving toward the growth end of the mindset spectrum.

#### 1. Focus on learning

Seek out the best sources of information from within and outside the profession and focus on learning from the best. Read books, industry publications and quality blogs. Listen to podcasts and attend conferences. There is a lot of information out there, so work on developing the skill of identifying the best and avoiding the rest.

## 2. Choose the right role models

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## 4. Set a vision and define goals

Creating a vision and setting goals can help provide the motivation you need to move from a fixed mindset to a growth mindset. What do you want to achieve in the next year? Five years? Ten years? Get a clear picture of where you want to be and then break your vision down into goals that will help you reach it.

## 5. See failures as opportunities

People with a growth mindset know that failure is a necessary stop on the road to success. When faced with failure, they see it as an opportunity to change tactics or apply extra effort to improve results.

## 6. Be authentic

A growth mindset demands authenticity in how you think and act. Know who you are and what you're all about. You don't have to put on a perfect front to others. Don't be afraid to be yourself and let your values be known to others. When you are open and honest in your interactions with others, people know where they stand with you and trust you.

To innovate and think differently, accountants need to adjust their mindsets. But realize that a growth mindset isn't the only ingredient for success – it's just the first step. You also need to do the work of transforming yourself and your firm to become future-ready. Having a growth mindset doesn't guarantee success – it just opens the door to getting there. It's a process that involves mindset, goals and action that leads to results.

Firm Management

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