Growth Mindset Feedback Tool

Growth minded language motivates students to ensure they remain persistent, resilient, and focused on the process of learning. It is important to give learners feedback about how their process leads to a result so they can understand that their abilities will develop with effort.

Use these language frames in the following situations:

When they struggle despite strong effort

- OK, so you didn't do as well as you wanted to. Let's look at this as an opportunity to learn.
- What learning strategies are you using? How about trying some different ones?
- You are not there yet. *or,* When you think you can't do it, remind yourself that you can't do it yet.
- I expect you to make some mistakes, since we're learning new things. If we examine what led to our mistakes we can learn how to improve.
- Mistakes are welcome here! Our brains grow if we learn from our mistakes.
- You might be struggling now, but you are making progress. I can see your growth (in these places). (Note: Say this only if they're indeed making progress).
- Yes, it's tough – we come to school to make our brains stronger! If it were easy you wouldn't be learning anything!
- You can learn to do it – it's tough, but you can; let's break it down into steps.
- Let's stop here and return tomorrow with a fresher brain.
- I admire your persistence and I appreciate your mental effort. It will pay off.

When they are lacking specific skills needed for improvement

- Let me add new information to help you solve this.
- Here are some strategies to figure this out.
- Describe your process for completing this task.
- Let's practice this so we can move it from our short-term to our long-term memory.
- Give it a try – we can always fix mistakes once I see where you are getting held up.
- What parts were difficult for you? Let's look at them.
- Let's ask [another student] for advice—they may be able to explain it in a new way, suggest some ideas, or recommend some strategies.
- Let's write a plan for practicing and learning.
- If you make [these specific] changes, we can reassess your score. Let's discuss a plan for you.

When they are making progress

- Hey, do you realize how much progress you've made?
- That's a tough problem/task/concept that you've been working on for a while. What strategies are you using? They are really working for you.
- I can see a difference in this work compared to your earlier work. You have really grown with ___.
- I see you using your strategies/tools/notes/etc. Keep it up!
- Hey! You were working on this for a while and you didn't quit!
- Your hard work is clearly evident in your process/project/essay/assignment.
- Look at how much progress you've made so far! Do you remember how difficult this was when you first started?

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When they succeed with strong effort

- I am so proud of the effort you put forth.
- I am very proud of you for not giving up, and look what you have to show for it!
- Congratulations – you really used great strategies for studying, managing your time, controlling your behavior, etc.
- I want you to remember for a moment how challenging this was when you began. Look at how far you have come!
- All that hard work and effort paid off!
- The next time you have a challenge like this, what will you do?
- What choices did you make that you think contributed to your success?
- It's exciting to see the difference in your work now when we compare it to your earlier work.
- Doesn't it feel good to master this? How does it feel to master this?
- Are you proud of yourself? Tell me what makes you most proud.

When they succeed easily without effort

- It's great that you have that down. Now we need to find something a bit more challenging so you can grow. That's what we all come to school to do.
- It looks like your skills weren't really challenged by this assignment. Sorry for wasting your time!
- I don't want you to be bored because you're not challenging yourself.
- We need to raise the bar for you now.
- You're ready for something more difficult.
- What skill would you like to work on next?
- What topic would you like to learn more about next?
- Could you find two other ways to solve that problem? Solving problems in different ways helps us deepen our understanding and be able to apply it.
- Can you help Billy learn what you've learned? By helping others, we not only contribute to their success, but we also deepen our own understanding.

When they don't put in much effort and then don't succeed

- I understand that it may seem daunting at first. How can we break this down into smaller tasks so it's not so overwhelming?
- What are your goals for this assignment/class/year? How can you make a plan to achieve those goals? What effort will be required?
- It looks like you're not putting forth much effort. Is this the way you see it? If not, what is it that you are doing, and how can I help you with some new strategies?
- What are the barriers to your success? How can I help you overcome them?
- Remember when you worked really hard for _____ and were successful? Maybe you could try those strategies again.
- If improvement is your goal, it's going to take effort and practice to get there. Our brains won't grow if we don't try hard things.
- What choices are you making that contribute to this outcome? If you want a different outcome, maybe you need to make different choices.

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Growth Mindset Framing Tool

In order to create a safe classroom environment where all students are willing to take on challenges and push themselves, it is important to make the focus on learning clear, make it safe to make mistakes, and communicate a high confidence in all students' ability to rise to the learning challenges. Use the following statements when introducing a new topic, concept, skill, or assignment in class:

For Communicating a Learning Goal

- New material is an opportunity for all of us to stretch our abilities!
- Today, your brain will get stronger.
- I am hoping that you all do not know this already; I wouldn't want to waste your time!
- I really want us to stretch beyond our comfort zone on this!
- After you do this, I'm going to ask everyone to share one mistake and what you learned, so we can all learn from it.
- I'd like everyone to share one thing that is really confusing, at this point, with their partner.
- The point of the lesson is learning; I want to know what parts are unclear so we can all meet our learning target.
- Today's target for learning is [x learning objective.] Tomorrow, we will continue our work and take a deeper dive by working on [y learning objective].
- I do not expect you to know this already. I am here to help you learn challenging material.
- Today, I want you to challenge yourself. Stretch to learn this challenging material.
- This is very dense and challenging material. You may not understand all of it right away, but I want you to give it a first try.
- This is just the first draft—you'll have lots of chances to improve it.
- I want you to push yourselves to tackle this concept.
- You won't be graded on this—it's a risk-free zone!
- We're in the learning zone today. I expect you to make a lot of mistakes because mistakes are normal when we're learning new things.
- This is a very challenging task. I want you to try, even if you think you won't get it right. I'm not looking for right answers; I'm looking for risk-taking.
- We'll be firing a lot of neurons today while we learn, and we may not make all the necessary connections to understand this material, and that's OK. We'll get there.

For Communicating High Expectations

- I know that you all have the ability to learn this, so I have set the bar high.
- This will be a challenging concept to learn, but all of us can reach the goal.
- If you begin to get frustrated, be sure to communicate with me about your progress so I can provide support to you. I am confident you can learn this with the right support.
- I am going to push you all because I know that you can all achieve amazing work!
- Our classroom is a place for everyone to learn challenging material. I am here to help you meet that goal.
- I expect you to make mistakes when you try hard things! This is challenging, but rewarding!
- This may be difficult right now, but as you learn more, it will become easier.
- When you master this learning, you can be proud of yourself, because this isn't easy.
- Here is my challenge for you. I know you can meet it. I want you to challenge yourself.
- I have seen you stretch and succeed in the past. Let's do it again.

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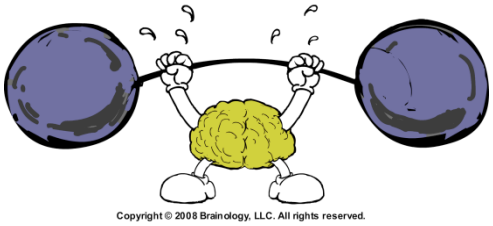
About Mindset Works

Mindset Works was co-founded by one of the world's leading researchers in the field of motivation, Stanford University professor Carol S. Dweck, Ph.D. and K-12 mindset expert Lisa S. Blackwell, Ph.D. The team translates psychological research into practical programs and services to help students and educators increase their motivation and achievement.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