

# MANAGING EXPECTATIONS

## AND DEVELOPING A GROWTH MINDSET

*Managing academic challenges and setbacks in a healthy way*

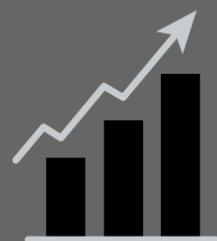


Academic challenges and setbacks can be extremely upsetting in university. Performance pressures, fear of failing, and fear of extending one's program are all top engineering student stressors<sup>5</sup>. It can be especially difficult if you started university with **very high expectations** regarding your **academic performance**, perhaps based on how you performed in high school or CEGEP.

Studies show that using a **growth mindset** can help frame challenges as learning opportunities as opposed to failures, and can support you in persisting through difficulties!<sup>6</sup>

### WHAT IS A GROWTH MINDSET?

The belief that our individual cognitive attributes and abilities are not fixed, but, rather, can be developed through learning<sup>3-4</sup>.



This is in contrast to a fixed mindset, where one believes that their cognitive attributes are fixed and cannot be changed or developed.

### EMBRACING A

### GROWTH MINDSET

instead of a fixed mindset has shown to improve:

- Motivation and persistence<sup>6</sup>
- Academic achievement<sup>1</sup>
- Resilience<sup>1</sup>

**WATCH THIS 3-MINUTE VIDEO TO LEARN THE BASICS OF GROWTH MINDSET!**

### EVALUATE YOUR MINDSET!

What mindset do you have? Consider whether you agree or disagree with the following statements:

|          |  |       |          |
|----------|--|-------|----------|
| <b>1</b> | You cannot change the amount of intelligence you have  | Agree | Disagree |
| <b>2</b> | Even though you can learn new things, this doesn't change how intelligent you are.                         | Agree | Disagree |
| <b>3</b> | You are able to change the amount of intelligence you have throughout your life.                           | Agree | Disagree |
| <b>4</b> | Even though you are a certain kind of person now, you can still change the important parts of who you are. | Agree | Disagree |

\*Adapted from: Dweck, C. S. (2006). *Mindset: The new psychology of success*. Random House Inc.



If you agree with statements 1 & 2, you currently favour a fixed mindset.

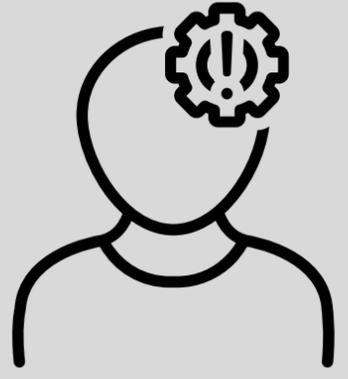
If you agree with statements 3 & 4, you currently favour a growth mindset.

# TIPS FOR DEVELOPING A GROWTH MINDSET<sup>2</sup>

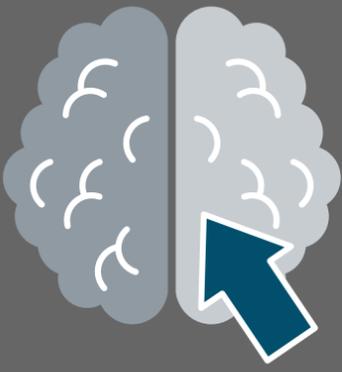


## VIEW CHALLENGES AS OPPORTUNITIES

Having a growth mindset means making the most of opportunities for self-improvement. Challenges are the perfect opportunities for growth!



## REPLACE THE WORD "FAILING" WITH THE WORD "LEARNING"



When you fall short of a goal or don't meet your expectations for your performance, you haven't failed- you've learned!

## REFLECT ON YOUR GROWTH

Think of something that you previously did not know how to do and learned through effort and practice. This is evidence of growth and learning!



## VALUE THE PROCESS OVER THE END RESULT



Remember that feeling challenged means that you are learning something new. Find value in the process rather than focusing solely on the outcome.

## USE THE WORD "YET"

When you find yourself struggling with a task, tell yourself that you simply haven't mastered it *yet*!



## CULTIVATE A SENSE OF PURPOSE

**[CLICK HERE](#)**  
for a 3-minute video on what students and professors have to say about growth mindset

Why are you pursuing your goals? Try to keep the big picture in mind rather than getting caught up in temporary setbacks.



For a complete list of references check out the Reference List page at [www.engineeringresilience.ca](http://www.engineeringresilience.ca)

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