Growth mindset

Many of us learn that "ability" in a particular area is innate. That means, you are either born with the ability or you are not, and therefore practice will never truly help you improve. Unfortunately, this creates a paradox: without practice, skills will never get better. If a belief that practice is futile exists, then practice will never start.

A growth mindset (Dweck, 1999) offers a different viewpoint that has been shown to lead to enhanced rehearsal and through that, enhanced performance.





BELIEFS

Skills are something you're born with. You *can't* learn or grow.

Skills are something you build over time. You *can* learn and grow.

FOCUS

Only the *outcome* matters. Don't let yourself look bad!

Only the *process* matters. Use it to keep getting better!

WORK

Ability is something you're born with, so work won't help.

Work is the only path to improvement. Use it to keep improving.

CHALLENGES

Challenges are threatening and should be avoided.

Challenges offer focused opportunities to improve. Embrace them.

MISTAKES

Mistakes are frustrating and should be avoided.

Mistakes offer opportunities to learn. Embrace them.

FEEDBACK

Feedback is hurtful and should be avoided.

Feedback is always appreciated and can be used to get better.

Important points:

- Mindsets are on a continuum. You don't have to be all fixed or all growth.
- Work still takes time. The belief that you can *do* the work provides the fuel to pursue it.
- You don't have control over obstacles, but you can control your response to them.
- In the context of growth, what you *are* is less important than what you *do*.
- Having a growth mindset doesn't mean "you can do anything you set your mind to."
- Part of practice is making changes to what's not working. Persistence for its own sake is unhelpful.

