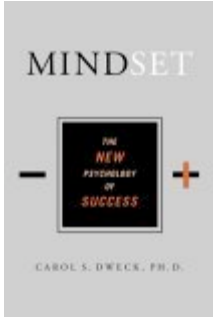


IT'S ALL IN YOUR MIND

By Greg Wiens



Mindset: The New Psychology of Success

By Carol S. Dweck, Ph.D.
Random House, 288 pp.
\$24.95

Carol Dweck is one of the world's leading researchers in personality, social psychology and developmental psychology. In *Mindset*, her first book for lay audiences, she investigates why some succeed in life and others do not.

Dweck's research centers around two different mindsets—we all fall under one of them—the *growth* mindset and the *fixed* mindset.

“Whether people develop and grow in their careers traces back to their fundamental mindsets,” says Dweck. “People with the growth mindset, who believe that they can improve their abilities and accomplishments through purposeful effort, excel. People with the fixed mindset, who believe that their intrinsic worth is cast in stone, stagnate.”

Research for the book shows that although mindset is determined at a very early age, high achievers can be from either. The difference is motivation. Those with fixed mindsets work to maintain a gifted image, while those of a growth mindset want to improve on the smarts they have.

The growth mindset is also willing to risk its image in order to learn more, but the fixed mindset is hesitant to ask questions for fear of appearing dumb. The book highlights a great experiment in which young children are given an easy puzzle to solve. After completing it, they were given a choice between a harder puzzle and a similar puzzle to the first. The children with a

growth mindset chose the harder puzzle so they could grow their skills, but the fixed-mindset children opted for the easy puzzle for fear of being unable to solve the harder one and potentially looking stupid.

Reading *Mindset* will spur creative thinking around motivating a team and how not to play into people's fixed mindsets. A statement like “you are so smart” will cause a fixed-minded person to work only to maintain that image, so saying “you worked extremely hard” is a better motivating phrase, exhorting the fixed and exciting the growth-minded.

Amazingly, according to Dweck, a growth mindset can be taught. She provides specific suggestions that lend themselves well to Christian leaders. As Christians we are cautioned against casting judgment on others' abilities. Growth is a theme throughout all of Paul's epistles, constantly exhorting believers to grow beyond their current state. Naturally God accepts the believer where he or she is, but he doesn't leave it at that. That is what sanctification is all about.

We must be careful not to categorize Christians as having high or low potential. God can use anyone who is committed to following and obeying him. Surely there is work involved, often hard work. But regardless of pedigree or apparent gifts, there is no limit to what God can do. Gideon, David, the prophets, Peter and Timothy are examples of this principle.

Mindset is an enjoyable read with countless examples of normal people who have learned to use their mindset to their advantage. An excellent book for leaders, parents, teachers and coaches, *Mindset* will help bring out the best in your circle of influence.