



## Gooderstone Church of England Primary Academy

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### The Learning Pit.

Dear Parents/Carers,

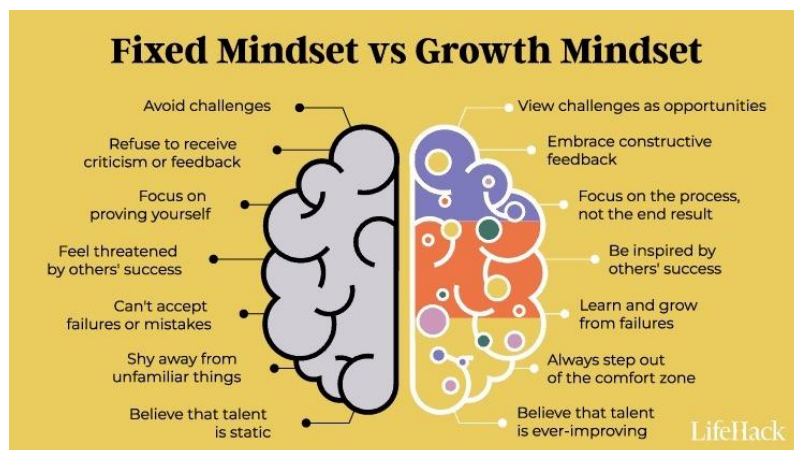
As you know we have been focussing on various themes for our first week back assemblies. We have looked at being resilient, taking accountability for our behaviour and having an attitude of gratitude. This half term you may have heard your children talking about Mindsets and the Learning Pit our latest assembly focused on how we learn and the difference between having a fixed or growth mindset. As part of this assembly we watched the following short clip:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rUJkbWNnNy4>

There have been lots of studies that show children and adults with a growth mindset achieve better and are happier in their working and personal lives.

#### The research:

Carol Dweck, a Psychologist and Professor at Stanford University became interested in students' attitudes about failure. After studying thousands of students, she noticed that some students rebounded, while other students seemed devastated by even the smallest setbacks. Her research led her to formulate the terms, fixed mindset and growth mindset to describe the underlying beliefs people have about learning and intelligence. These beliefs are how we perceive ourselves intellectually and what we feel can be achieved, these influence the way we think and affect our actions.



**Fixed mindset** - is the belief that intelligence, ability and talent are fixed and static. Meaning that there is a threshold to what we can achieve making challenging events or new events stressful to deal with. The following attitudes are common: effort is pointless, feedback should be avoided, challenges should be avoided and that you should not persist at something you can't already do.

The good news is our mindsets are changeable as our brain is a highly adaptable organ despite our age. In school we are working hard to train the children to reframe their thinking and the following phrases are becoming our school's mantra...

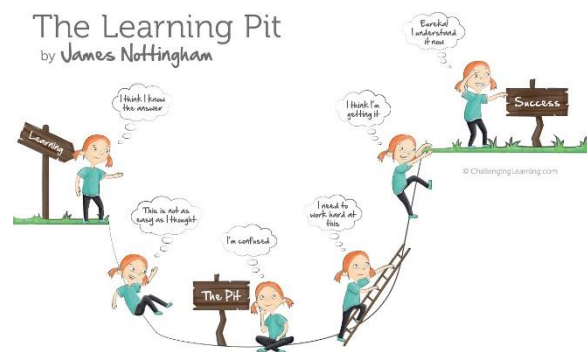
**'I can't do it... YET!!'** Adding the word 'yet' to that phrase automatically moves thinking from a fixed to a growth mindset.

**'Practice makes progress.'** Trying to be perfect in anything is like running a race without a finish line. Making progress is what we strive for, making incremental gain towards our goals.

By reinforcing these phrases and through our work on the learning pit we hope to develop all children to have a...

**Growth mindset** – this is the belief that intelligence, ability and talent can go up and down when approaching new things. A growth mindset is knowing that effort and persistence is required to master a new skill or even an old skill. In this mindset feedback is accepted as part of learning and used to improve. People with growth mind-sets know that mistakes are to be learned from, therefore the fear of failing or being wrong is reduced and they are happy to learn through trial and error. Attitudes towards challenges are more positive and this in turn pushes us to do more than we think.

### The Learning Pit.



The Learning Pit theory was developed by James Nottingham, a former teacher, and school principal. The theory suggests that learning is like a journey, and students often encounter challenges or obstacles that can make them feel stuck or frustrated. Nottingham visualizes this journey as a pit, and students who are struggling with a difficult task are said to be "in the pit."

Being in the pit is a natural part of the learning process. It's where students engage in deep thinking, critical reflection, and problem-solving. However, it's important to note that students can get stuck in the pit and feel overwhelmed, discouraged, or even give up on the task, this is where our work on growth mind-sets and resilience comes in. When students understand that getting stuck in the pit is a normal part of the learning process, they are more likely to persevere, learn from their mistakes, and take risks, instead of getting frustrated and giving up.

**For more info visit:** <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3IMUAOhuO78>

Each class, from Reception to Year 6, has a Learning Pit in their classroom. They were made with the children and are all different in design but all work the same in showing the journey through the same pit in the same way. Day to day we are encouraging the children to articulate where they feel they are in their learning journey. We encourage them to keep trying, support where needed and get them through to the other side. Our hope is that all children in our school develop this positive mindset over time.

Throughout the coming weeks I will be adding further information about the above and how you can support your children in further developing a growth mindset.

Best wishes,

Mrs Godbold