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| Title of TED talk | The power of believing you can improve - Carol Dweck |
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| Summary of talk <i>Write a short summary of the TED talk, the speaker's points and opinion.</i> |
| <p>Dweck begins by talking about the power of yet, and gives a short anecdote regarding a school that instead of giving out 'fail' as a grade, they would give out 'not yet'. She then moves onto speaking about how children perform when they are given tasks that are just a little too difficult for them. The point that she makes is that there are generally two types of mindsets with regard to learning: fixed and growth. She highlights the difference using the examples of the children, saying that those who had a fixed mindset generally responded negatively to not being able to complete the task and were focused on the '<i>tyranny of now</i>'; whereas those who reacted positively with phrases such as, 'I like a good challenge', viewed it more as a learning process and subconsciously focused on the '<i>power of yet</i>'. She also noted that there was a difference in the amount of brain activity between those with fixed and growth mindsets.</p> <p>From here, Dweck moves into talking about education and how children are raised looking for that A, almost obsessively. She emphasises her point by highlighting that many people believe that we have raised a generation of children who '<i>can't get through the day without an award</i>', meaning that we are always looking for validation. But she also states that this mindset in our children can be changed through a number of different ways:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Praise: praisingly learners because of the processes they go through in order to achieve something. Dweck calls this 'process praise'. - Reward: Rewarding the 'yet', i.e. acknowledge that children have made progress, rather than simply viewing the answer as a right or wrong dynamic. She uses the example of a game that was created for children studying maths - it rewarded children for correct answers, but it also rewards them for their working out and how they got to their answer, even if the answer was wrong. This, in turn, increased motivation and learner engagement. <p>Dweck makes pushes the point that children can and should be taught this mindset of 'not yet', i.e. growth mindset, as it leads to higher grades, more resilient children, and even equality (she highlights some studies to support this).</p> <p>Dweck finishes her talk by reflecting on her own life and the time she has wasted by not living with a growth mindset. She also says that everyone has this ability to grow, and, indeed, it is everyone's right to grow by taking on the power of yet.</p> |
| My opinion <i>Write your opinion on what was said in the talk. Do you agree/disagree with the speaker? Can you relate to any of the points spoken about?</i> |
| <p>I found this talk fascinating and really relevant. Firstly, I really like how Dweck pushes the point that abilities can be improved - we are not simply gifted with greatness, it is learnt.</p> |

Secondly, looking at the context in which I teach (Spain), it's really easy to see how learners can get trapped in this fixed mindset - the country is very much exam-focused, and learners expect to get that 10/10 (or at least close to it). One thing that shocks many learners when they begin to take on Cambridge (or any other) exams is the fact that they are not getting 10/10 - generally nowhere near it. I've actually had young learners leave the classroom crying when they received a 70% overall on their Preliminary exam (which in this case was a pass). This, in turn, has resulted in learners feeling they are 'stuck', or they are not made for English (or other languages). If I think back to when I was a child growing up in Australia, one of the main arguments that people gave for not wanting to learn a second language was that we Australians are bad at learning languages - we simply aren't gifted with the language learning prowess that other countries and their people possess (oh, how wrong we were!!!!).

I also found Dweck's remarks regarding **praise** and **reward** very interesting. I myself have been guilty of it in the past and I have observed many teachers doing the same thing as well - over-praising, or simply praising for getting something completely right (I also recognise that it is often hard to identify what should be praised!). There certainly is a need to give praise that is much more focused and 'effective' (I use effective here in the sense that the praise will actually result in raised motivation, etc.). With regard to rewarding - we all know that errors are a necessary step in the learning process. In fact, they are an integral part (think of noticing, interlanguage, etc.). But rewarding the process that learners go through in trying to achieve is vital in creating the conditions for learners to want to continue and to ensure that they know that the errors they are making are an indication of their progress. While watching the video I actually thought about how we write report cards - more often than not we have these phrases like, '*John is a strong speaker but needs to improve his writing*'. Perhaps we should try to rephrase these sentences and phrases we use to emphasise the 'he/she is not there YET' and encourage both learners and parents to focus on and, indeed, praise and reward the process?

Reflecting on my own life (personal, social and work), I would say that I generally have a growth mindset. This being said, perhaps this idea of the mindset comes in waves and is very much influenced by motivations for doing whatever it is you are doing. That is, simply taking on this 'not yet' attitude is not enough - there are other factors to take into consideration as well. I say this because there have been times in my life in which I wanted to try something new, began and then lost interest. I certainly had the 'not yet' attitude, however what I was trying simply didn't interest me enough. It may sound like I am trying to reduce the value of the growth mindset, although this is not the case. On the contrary, I believe that having this mindset is a primary factor in being able to succeed and continue forward; however, we need to consider other factors that may influence one's attitude towards whatever it is they are doing.

Vocabulary

Identify three new words or phrases from the TED talk that you are unfamiliar with. Write them here and then write their definition and translation.

Fixed mindset - If you have a fixed mindset, you believe that your abilities, traits, intelligence, etc. just ARE. What you have is what you have. These cannot change.

Growth mindset - If you have a growth mindset, you view your abilities, traits, intelligence, etc. as things that can be improved through a gradual process. You know that your effort has an effect on results and, ultimately, your success.