

I CAN DO THIS!

THE INSIDER'S GUIDE TO
FAST-TRACKING YOUR SUCCESS



brianMJ

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YOUR SUCCESS**

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Introduction

There are times when we consider risking the unknown; it could be taking that new job in that new city, going back to school to study a course you always wanted to take, paying for your dream car or taking out a loan to grow your business, but you find that you become limited by fear of the unknown. Some people may freeze up in the face of difficulty, especially when faced with challenging problems. This is how very successful people are separated from ordinary people who prefer going through life at a pace that they find comfortable. Successful people are not afraid to question everything; they don't run away from challenges. Instead, they embrace challenges, analyze problems, look for a possible solution and if they fail, they learn from failure and go at it again from another angle. They are not afraid to take risks . . . they are go-getters.

According to Dale Carnegie, *"Most of the important things in the world have been accomplished by people who have kept on trying when there seemed no hope at all."*

Most people ask:

- Is there a secret technique to being successful?
- Is there something special that these people have managed to unlock that makes them keep trying, even after so many failures?
- How are they so much better at achieving things than I am?

The answer is pretty simple and not too much of a secret—the *mindset!* The special thing that these successful people have unlocked is the winning/growing mindset. You cannot be successful in any chosen field if you don't have the proper mindset. That being said, I congratulate you on being the latest inductee into the growth mindset as this is what this book is about—teaching you how to tap into the mindset that will help you succeed in all your endeavors. After reading this book, you will be able to slip seamlessly into the growth mindset. You will also learn about the endless opportunities that will open up to you in this mindset, helping you to see the world differently, proclaiming the words '*I Can Do This*' when facing challenges.

What Is Mindset?

Do you know that everything you have done since you were a child, every thought that passed through your mind, every emotion you have ever felt and every action you have taken have all led you to where you are right now? Every decision you have made since you were young and are still making as an adult will guide you towards a result, towards one thing . . . and that is your future. See Figure 1.

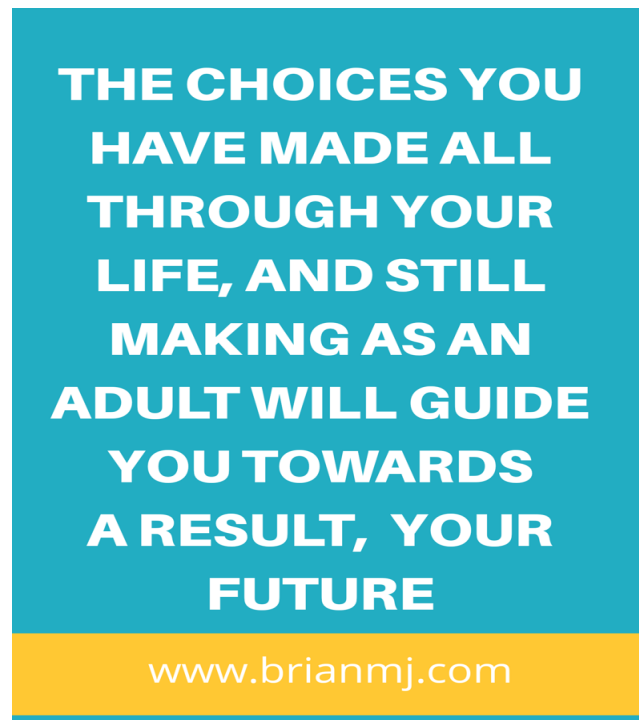


Figure 1

Do you often wonder why your life is the way it is? You don't need to wonder much more because the question is quite easy. Your life is the way it is because you have made it so. You brought yourself to this very point. Let me explain it quite simply. We all started young by setting goals for ourselves. It might have been making the sports team, getting an A in math class, meeting people or starting new friendships. These goals were small but still goals nonetheless. Sometimes you might have succeeded at them, while at other times you might have failed. Success at achieving something is great, while failure, on the other hand, can be a hard pill to swallow. Failure makes some people draw back and give up. For others, failure propels them to try even harder because they believe if they keep trying, they will eventually succeed. Which category describes you best? Do you give things a try and then give up at the first or second hurdle? Alternatively, do you not even bother to try, thinking

that you are not good enough and there would be no point to it as you won't succeed anyway? Welcome to your mindset.

Understanding the Subconscious, the Conscious, and Their Roles in Mindset Development

Research in several fields has shown that the mindset is formed by the combination of regular thoughts that become habitual and the images or emotions that correspond to them. Pioneered by Dr. Candace Pert, scientists have found the correlation between the human body and mind. She discovered how positive emotions and thoughts could activate one chain of biochemical reactions inside the body, while negative emotions and thoughts could set off another chain of reactions. She finally made the correlation between how your emotions and habitual thoughts can physically manifest as biochemical reactions.

She discovered that habitual thoughts and emotions form a neural network that keeps the mindset in place until it becomes automatic. This explains why once a habit develops, such as eating when stressed, over time it may become easy to slip into without first thinking and processing. You have mastered the habit and the neural network has made it automatic.

Constant practice and repetition of the habitual thoughts and emotions develops and strengthens the neural network, which in turn leads to further development of the mindset irrespective of whether those thoughts and emotions are negative or positive. As long as they are habitual, they will keep strengthening the neural network until they register deep in your subconscious and become automatic.

For example, you have a friend who has a habit of borrowing things and never returning them, or another friend who is never encouraging and always complaining about how unfair life is (please get better friends . . . lol). It is only natural that in time, you will have deep negative thoughts of both. Every time they appear, you are likely to be resentful towards them because your subconscious has registered your meetings as a means for that person to use you by borrowing items, or, in the case of the other friend, an unpleasant visit will result in constant negative dialogue. These thoughts have now become hard-wired in your subconscious.

The body is a molecular structure, a mass of energy which is in a very high speed of vibration and reacts according to what happens in the mind. In other words, the body is an expression of the mind. When you impress an idea upon your mind, it alters the vibration of your body. The mind is divided into the conscious and the subconscious mind. The

conscious mind is the thinking mind while the subconscious is the emotional mind, and they are so different.

The conscious mind is capable of thoughts and has the ability to choose, which means it has the ability to accept or reject a thought or situation. The subconscious on the other hand, must accept whatever your conscious mind feeds it, as it has no ability to reject, and whatever is impressed on your subconscious mind dictates your actions. Consciousness might be best described as feelings; when you feel, you are conscious.

When the conscious mind chooses thoughts, they are turned into the form of pictures. These pictures are sent to the subconscious, which then expresses the action. While the subconscious mind is incapable of making thoughts, actions rooted in it are automatic. This is because the subconscious is incapable of differentiating between what is imagined and what is real. When you imagine something happening and you get emotionally involved, it actually starts to happen. See Figure 2.

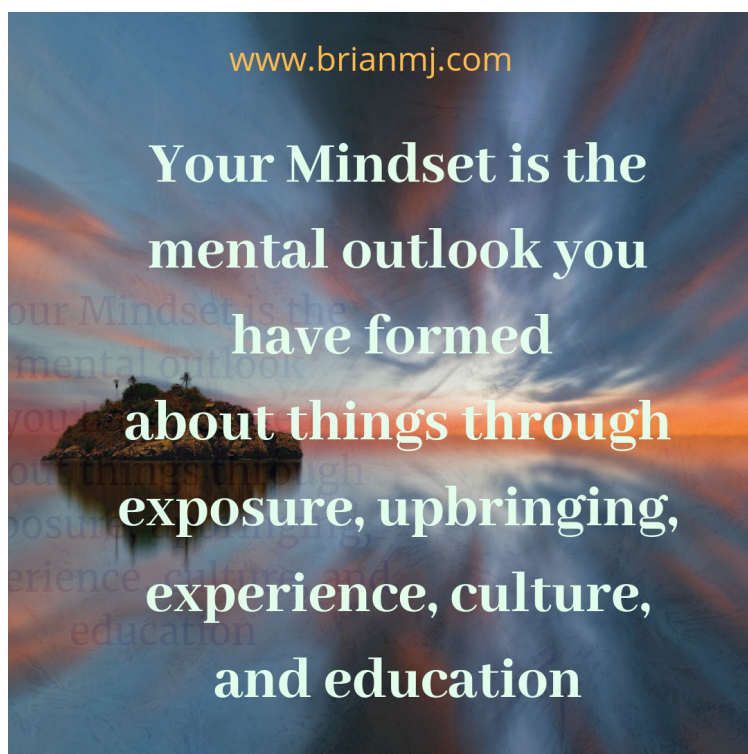


Figure 2.

It is important to grasp how the mind works and understand its relationship to the body. Your subconscious mind is programmed genetically and environmentally, and it cannot tell the difference between what is real and what is imagined. When developing a mindset, the environment is even more important than heredity. As babies, our subconscious is wide open as there is not much of the consciousness at that age. At that time, the subconscious

mind grabs anything that is put into it and it mostly does this by gathering information from the environment and surroundings. In later years, the information rooted in the subconscious is filtered by your developed conscious mind.

Types of Mindset

There are two distinct classifications of mindset; they are the *fixed* mindset and the *growth* mindset.

The Fixed Mindset

People who have a fixed mindset tend to believe wholly that their basic human qualities, like talent and intelligence, are fixed naturally and are unchangeable. They would rather spend time detailing these qualities than developing them. They also tend to believe that these talents alone are capable of bringing them success. This particular mindset can be formed during the upbringing of a child when they are taught to focus on being clever, being the best in class, while neglecting every other quality that needs nurturing and development. They end up becoming more focused on how people see them because they have tried to live up to the expectations of others.

Dr. Carol Dweck from Stanford University undertook comprehensive research on mindsets. She opened up her research by giving two groups of children a tough problem to figure out. One group saw the problem as a learning curve and went at it as a challenge, while the other group got discouraged because they saw the problem as an unmanageable task meant to scrutinize their intelligence. They had a fixed mindset. They believed that anything beyond their knowledge was unachievable. This reminds me of a famous quote by Marshall Goldsmith that states, "After living with their dysfunctional behavior for so many years, people become invested in defending their dysfunctions rather than changing them." People with a fixed mindset become comfortable defending mediocrity because that is what they are used to, instead of changing the things that make them average at best.

The Pros and Cons of Having a Fixed Mindset

Having a fixed mindset is not without its advantages. One of them includes constancy; they are not easily swayed to change on a whim, whether good or bad. They are not plagued with the need to change because they have accepted who they are, faults and all.

While being constant is an advantage of having a fixed mindset, it's a double edged sword as it's also one of its biggest flaws—that aversion to change. When it comes to skill development, having a fixed mindset is a massive con as you end up being satisfied by what you know. There's no yearning to discover more, to develop yourself. You are just stagnant, constant and predictable. You end up celebrating ordinary feats because that is what you are used to; it is all you know. In a work environment, people with growth mindsets are likely to climb the ladder faster than those that possess a fixed mindset, because they are constantly looking for ways to improve themselves by learning new skills and refining the ones they already possess.

Having a fixed mindset also makes it easier to stereotype and label people, because fixed mindset people think the qualities which others possess are also fixed and unchanging. It makes it difficult to learn new information about those people, because they already have an image stuck in their head that refuses to change or be upgraded. It makes them judgmental of others and punish them more harshly and quickly when they make errors. Also, because people with a fixed mindset tend to stop after a failure or be discouraged in the face of difficult situations, they have limited victories and success stories. They also only perform tasks that will earn them validation of their intelligence from others, so if they don't receive that validation, they end up feeling bad. These failures and inadequacies come back to plague them, and the more the negative thoughts settle on them, the more prone they are to being depressed.

The Growth Mindset

People who have a growth mindset believe that these basic qualities can be developed through hard work, determination and commitment. They tend to yearn for more knowledge; desire to discover new things, to test their limits, to face challenges and surmount them, to grow as an individual. People with a growth mindset are not stumped by failure; instead they view it as a learning curve and a chance to change and grow.

How you view your qualities has a huge effect on your behaviors, feelings and performances. If you think your abilities are limited, you are less likely to seek development of those abilities and your performances over time become limited, leading to negative feelings of failure. But if you believe that your abilities can be improved through effort, it fires up your willingness to learn, to persistently seek growth in knowledge and your performances therefore improve over time also. Take for example, the first set of children in Dr. Dweck's research. They accepted the challenge of solving the difficult problem with gusto and while they might not have actually succeeded at it, they would have learned new

things about themselves that will be useful in other endeavors. This set of children are pioneers among their peers that participated in this research. They've managed to stand out and be distinguished from the rest. This is how successful people begin and how they are set apart from others.

"There has to be a pioneer, the individual with the courage, the ambition to overcome the obstacles that always develop when one tries to do something worthwhile that is new and different." **Alfred P. Sloan**

The Pros and Cons of Having a Growth Mindset

The pros of having a growth mindset are seemingly endless. People with a growth mindset tend to go through life happy, no matter how bad they are fumbling. They do not have to be absolutely certain that they are great at doing whatever they want to do, before they set out to do it. Since their focus is on learning new things, they have no qualms about beginning, even if they are absolutely poor in their initial performance. Let's take learning a new dance for example. A person with a growth mindset will go at it with enthusiasm at conquering a new challenge, while a person with a fixed mindset will shy away from it to prevent embarrassment if their performance is poor. A person with a growth mindset tends to be extremely self-confident, because they are aware that their capabilities are limitless. They are confident. Things are different for people with a fixed mindset, not because they are initially less confident than their counterparts with growth mindsets, but because their confidence is easily shaken by failure. They believe their abilities are limited, so in the face of failure their confidence in those abilities disappears.

People with a growth mindset see singular events as just that. They do not define their entire lives and worth based on those events. If they succeed in a particular endeavor, they don't rest on their laurels, rather they continue to better themselves, the same as if they fail. This is unlike those with a fixed mindset, as they define their worth based on those singular events. So if they succeed at any endeavor, no matter how small, they don't feel the need to improve, and if they fail, they give up because they let it define them. People with a growth mindset are impervious to stereotypes and labels and are not quick to judge and label others. They know there is room for improvement and are usually more forgiving of themselves and others. They also don't judge too harshly. See Figure 3.



Figure 3.

They do not live for the validation of others and so are less likely to feel pressure to constantly prove themselves to people. They realize it is not about proving themselves to others but about constantly improving themselves. For people with a fixed mindset, they are always under pressure to measure up to their past successes or to others. However, the con about having a growth mindset is that constant need to change. Their singular successes and failures do not define them, so they continue to seek improvement.

Can a Mindset Be Changed?

Although many alternate between both mindsets depending on circumstances, generally people begin to lean towards one or the other from very early in their lives, based on upbringing and the experiences in their environment. Children who have been allowed to be more explorative from childhood and encouraged to actively participate in challenges and learn from errors tend to develop a growth mindset, while those that are shamed for making mistakes and falling short of expectations develop a fixed mindset.

It might be difficult for people with a fixed mindset to agree with this, but it is possible to change from having a fixed mindset to having a growth mindset. People are capable of

change! Active steps can also be taken by parents to shift the development of their children's mindset to that of the growth mindset, by constantly praising their efforts and encouraging them instead of constantly mounting pressure to achieve results, then judging them based on those results.

Placing focus on the process used in achieving a result will help the children realize their success wasn't by their intelligence alone, but it was a combined effort of hard work, learning, growth and dedication to finishing that project until the end.

So instead of praising a child for being smart when she or he successfully completes a challenge or berating the child for their failure to achieve a result, a parent might consider praising the child for their hard work or technique in performing the project. It is preferable to say where they feel the child has improved, what they think needs more improvement and what they loved most about their efforts.

Technically, the mind is usually in a fixed state which is why it is called mind-set, but events and experiences can shape it to constantly change and improve. The fixed mindset resists change. The changes, if they occur, are usually in bits and happen slowly; mainly if you have nursed that perception and belief for a very long time. It becomes tough to let go of what you know to make way for new experiences. Mindsets form quickly and are resistant to change. Unless there is an absolute irrefutable reason for change, mindsets tend to remain constant. Once a mindset about an experience is formed, it continuously taints your future perception about that experience or experiences similar to it.

Most of us have been programmed to live the way we currently do. The thing is if you want to live differently, you will have to change the program. Nothing different can happen if this program is not changed.

The Role of Perception in Changing Mindset

Sometimes you need to objectively ask yourselves if what you see when you view the world is exactly how the world is, or if your view of the world is based on what you think it should be or not be. Do you have an unimpeded view of the world or are your perceptions of the world limited only to certain aspects? Do you see the endless possibilities the world has to offer, or are you limited to seeing only the parts that don't escape your blind spots?

The view you have of the world will differ completely or in parts from the view that someone else has. The sensory receptors are responsible for collecting information received from the environment in the form of stimuli; the interpretations you give to this information determines

how your interaction with the world will proceed. Perception is the way information from the sensory receptors are consciously coordinated, interpreted and experienced. Your perception is the connection between what happens in your head and what really happens in the outside world. The sense of sight is the most important one; about one-third of the cortex of the brain is responsible for the interpretation of images collected by vision. The common misconception is that what the human eye sees is similar to the mechanisms of a camera (picturing exactly what is and reproducing it) when in reality, the human eye is a camera with different layers of filters. The filters are your previous experiences and your beliefs, so really what you see when you view the world is what you think the world should be based on your prejudices, and not necessarily what the world actually is. This can have negative connotations as you may expect to see the best, while the opposite happens.

The human brain has to sift through much information. The interpretation of what you see at a time is in fractions, so you usually create the picture you need to see at that moment, not necessarily what is actually there. The brain projects your experiences and your habitual thoughts and emotions towards a situation before it is interpreted. This often makes your perception of things jaded; what you see is a function of who *you are* and not *what is*. This is witnessed in the different perceptions that people with the two mindsets have towards a challenge; the experience of people having a fixed mindset is shame in the face of failure, which makes them prejudiced and wary about trying out a new challenge, while the reverse is the case for people with a growth mindset.

Is it possible to improve your perception of the world? The good news is yes. There are ways you can improve your awareness, broaden your horizon, develop experiences that would have an unbiased effect on what you see. You can learn to detect when your view is an illusion and a trick of the mind and also how to actually see what is. Imagine being able to trust yourself and your judgements of situations because you are not only totally aware of what goes on in your mind, but also in the world. Wouldn't this significantly improve your decision-making process? Wouldn't it improve your confidence in taking the right steps that will lead you to what is best for your life? This is the power of perception. If you can adjust your perception to be a little less tainted and a little clearer, the possibilities are endless. It is particularly easier for people with a growth mindset to achieve this because they are constantly seeking to improve themselves, while people with a fixed mindset will have to work on first changing to a growth mindset, before they can be accepting of the changes they need to undergo.

The Role of Paradigms in Changing Mindset

“To be able to shape your future, you have to be willing and able to change your paradigm” -

Joe Barker

As we have already established, everything you have learned, believe and are accustomed to is a result of subconscious programming. This programming is what is called the *paradigm*.

- The thoughts, ideas and images learned from the environment shape the paradigm.
- A paradigm is a multitude of ideas that are fixed in the subconscious mind.
- It is a mental program that has almost exclusive control over your habitual behavior.
- The paradigm controls the actions, and the actions create the result.
- You normally think thoughts which are in harmony with your paradigm.

One of the features of the neural network is that they recall every time they get strengthened and preferably, they choose the same emotions and thoughts for perceived similar situations. This preferential selection is how memories and beliefs develop, as they also shape who you are and your stories. The neural networks also function as the mental lens that filters the things you see, how you see them and how you interpret your experiences. What the mental lens filters for you is what you believe and tell yourself over and over again. This is why people with limited experiences tend to be shortsighted. Their beliefs are formed only from what the neural networks have archived, so if it is limited; there is not a lot of thought and emotion to select from to develop further beliefs.

As a result of the lack of knowledge of the paradigms hindering us from achieving our full potential, we end up creating bad results and this can be frustrating. Many of us are intelligent and hardworking, but we are usually unhappy; we aren't healthy or living our best lives. This is mainly because we have not shifted these paradigms holding us back from our full potential. You will find people who are brilliant and know exactly what to do, but they don't do it. Why is this? Simple. The paradigm controls the behavior. If you want to change your results, you have to know how to change the paradigm. *Changing the paradigm will change your behavioral patterns*. Some people would say change is impossible, but that is another paradigm. Sometimes all you need to change is the belief that it can be done.

Sometimes when you are resistant to change, it is not usually because you are not good enough to actually achieve the change, but because the neural network has strengthened to

the point where that change begins to look like a challenge that you cannot overcome, which makes you give up.

Two popular examples of paradigms many people have been raised to believe are:

- To earn much money, you have to be smart.
- To get a good job, you have to have a good formal education.

However, this is not in any way true as there are people who can't properly read or write but are earning millions. There are people heading large operations who never completed their education. We should look at the results in our lives so far and ask ourselves, "How did this happen?' Results never lie and they never just happen. Many of us are *'limited by weakness of attention and poverty of imagination'* – Neville Goddard. Our paradigms weaken us. Change can only happen if you choose to stay focused and use your imagination to build the world you want. It is time to stop thinking of reasons why you *can't*, and start knowing why you *can*.

Why You Should Embrace the Growth Mindset

Having a growth mindset can benefit one in many ways. This is more than just being wealthy, but enjoying life and living the way you want to live, reducing or eliminating some of the major concerns people face. A few being the following:

They wish to eliminate financial concerns.

Remember that what you habitually think about inadvertently becomes your mindset, so constantly worrying about your finances will make the task of being wealthy appear like rocket science. If you are constantly comparing what you have now to what you wish to have, the difference might discourage you from even trying.

They want to be excited about their day.

Being excited for the day inspires you to try new things. Excitement breeds confidence and confidence in turn builds motivation. You have the mental strength to do everything and address the challenges that you face during the day, but only with the right mindset.

They want to mix with productive people.

Mixing with productive people drives you to be productive. There's a popular saying, that *'you are the average of the five people you spend the most time with'* – Jim Rohn. So it

becomes a given that if the five people you interact with the most are productive people, you will also be productive. There is massive fulfillment from having a productive day and it makes your life wholesome, so analyze your current circles and if necessary, make the changes. Remember, people tend to attract those with similar mindsets!

Benefits of a Growth Mindset

It Frees Your Creativity.

As mentioned before, everyone has a creative mind, but having a limited perception of yourself will make you think that you don't. With a growth mindset, you can express this creativity because you have allowed it to grow and improve. However, it is not too late to spark your creativity if you have suppressed it. You just need to understand the creative force, how to maximize your knowledge and skills to achieve the creative task, and to open your mind to limitless thoughts. You can also improve your creativity by being in an environment that sparks your creativity. That means finding your muse and source of inspiration (usually other people).

It Gives You a More Realistic Perception of Who You Are.

Having a growth mindset will give you a more realistic evaluation of who you really are. With a growth mindset, you can determine what things you find important and can relate to. You begin to understand your personality, the motivating factor behind your beliefs, choices, behaviors, values and decisions. You come in touch with your strengths and weaknesses, and by acknowledging those weaknesses, you can develop a solution for them thereby adding to your strengths.

It Builds Self-discipline

A growth mindset instills commitment to achieving your goals without being swayed in the face of challenges and obstacles. A growth mindset helps you constantly stay on course despite distractions. Self-discipline and perseverance are needed.

It Makes You Proactive

Having a growth mindset means you are proactive by taking responsibility for everything that happens in your life, your actions, beliefs and choices. It means that you are ready to act on any situation because you already understand yourself and are clear on the direction you wish to take.

You Overcome Fear

If not controlled, fear can either derail your success or hinder it. With a growth mindset, you can reach personal mastery; you are fully aware of your limitations and have appropriate steps put in place to overcome them.

You Attain a Certain Level of Positivity

With a growth mindset, you develop the right approach to making decisions and participate in events that improve your life. You master what your best aspects are and successfully reframe the negative aspects into positive ones.

You Can Achieve Success

With a growth mindset, you can achieve complete success in every endeavor you chase. When you completely master yourself, you understand your true purpose, how to maximize your talents, and how to manipulate your strengths to favor you and achieve the goals you set out to achieve.

You Can Gain Complete Happiness and Satisfaction

When you achieve balance in your life, the final destination is contentment and happiness. You have achieved your successive goals; you are completely aware of your potential, your abilities and your capabilities; and you wonder why it is easy for you to find fulfillment and happiness?

HOW TO REPROGRAM YOUR MINDSET

If you have a fixed mindset, chances are that your old beliefs are fueled by negative patterns and this affects your ability to surge ahead. These negative patterns are created and reinforced by habitual, negative experiences, actions, thoughts and emotions. See Figure 4.



Figure 4.

When you work on changing your mindset about these events, you reprogram your emotional responses to them, and the former attachments to them fades, detaching you emotionally and rendering their influence over you completely useless. After the reprogram, you will see the past events in a different light.

Make the Decision

You can keep wishing to change, imagining the person you want to change to, but none of these changes can happen if you don't make the actual decision to change. The quality of life you live is determined by the decisions you make, not by your wishes. The power to change your path is rooted in your decision and commitment to being on that path. To make decisions, you need to be disciplined. Discipline is the ability to give yourself a command and follow through. See Figure 5.

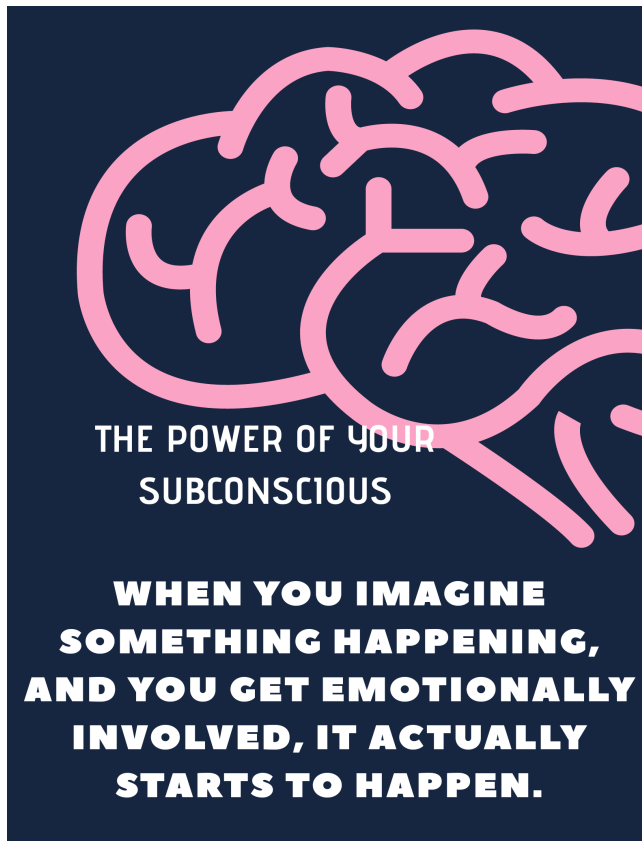


Figure 5.

First off, you have to decide on the person you want to be. A good place to begin is by imagining the person you look up to the most, someone you admire, someone you respect, someone you consider successful. Ask yourself: What are the qualities this person possesses that you would love to emulate? What are the qualities that makes you admire this person? How do they walk, talk and relate with others? Is this person self-confident? Is that what makes them stand out? How do others see them? What are their weaknesses that you need to avoid? What are the talents, strengths and abilities you need to incorporate?

Work to become that person that you have imagined, but try to be realistic in your imagination, because the more tangible and achievable your imagination is, the faster your brain aligns to the picture you have of the person you want to be. This first step is usually the most difficult. It is the place where a lot of people fall off because it involves deliberate actions and not just imagining. It involves commitment and discipline.

When you begin to develop doubts, challenge those doubts by asking “what if” questions like the following:

- What if I told the truth about myself? How therapeutic would that be?
- What if I stopped being unhappy? How would it change my life?

- What if I don't allow myself to be consumed by this doubt? How liberated will I feel?
- What if I had the capacity to change anything about myself. What would it be?

Then, imagine performing these actions every night before going to bed and every morning when waking up. Immerse yourself, soak your subconscious in that imagination until you begin to believe that what you see is real and achievable. In order for this to create long-term sustainable change, keep reinforcing that reality in your subconscious by continuously imagining it until you align with it.

Become Aware

It is important that you visualize the person that you are now, the person that you want to become and the things you want to possess. This is because the more you visualize this, the faster the brain creates mental paradigms of the people, things and places that you have imagined until they finally become part of your subconscious. The more these thoughts and behaviors are repeated, the more the biological associations in the brain are created until it becomes a natural habit. That is, the more you act, behave and think in accordance with your conscious determination, the more the brain reflects those thoughts, behaviors and actions. The constant conditioning of the mind to behave, act and think in the same way sends the same neurons associated with those actions and thoughts to your brain, until they eventually become habitual.

Rewire Your Subconscious

As mentioned before, the subconscious does not choose what actions to perform. Its response is automatic based on the previous information we have impressed on it, by continuously thinking and acting in a particular manner as a response to a particular event. You are your thoughts and if your thoughts are constantly rooted in the negative, you are constantly rooted in the negative. This pattern cripples us from making changes; the subconscious will not let you change what should be an automatic response. Voices in your head will come up with a plethora of reasons why you should not attempt to change the status quo. But since your subconscious is only aware of what you feed it, the only solution for transforming your mind is to unlearn all the habitual thoughts that made you the person you think you are, while developing a new set of habitual thoughts that will create the person you want to be. You must take active steps to create your new mindset to achieve the reality you desire and this involves giving focus to a single part of your old mindset, recreating dominion over your thoughts and emotions daily. In other words, you need to show your

subconscious who is boss. Expect to feel uncomfortable in the beginning, as you are literally going against all your beliefs and everything you are accustomed to. Also expect a little bit of resistance in the process as the mind will want to persuade you to remain in the state you are comfortable with. The good news is that it gets easier as you continue, until you become comfortable doing these tasks. It is like breathing.

The purpose of this step is to memorize the new thoughts you are learning until it becomes habitual; *mastery can after all, only be achieved by repetition*. Eventually, each step in the process of changing your mindset will become coordinated and flow seamlessly.

Practice Meditation

Meditation connects your conscious to your subconscious, which is important because the conscious is where deliberate changes happen and the subconscious is the part that needs to be changed. Programming the subconscious through meditation is best done by focusing on the thoughts of the person you wish to become at night before you go to bed, and repeating the thoughts in the morning when you wake up. This practice will put you on the right path of acting towards being that person. This is also the best time for meditation, first thing in the morning and the last thing at night. To meditate, sit up with your spine vertically straight and with your eyes closed; take calming and focusing breaths and allow your conscious mind to drift into your subconscious. As your body begins to relax into the pose, focus on who you want to become and how you want to act, behave, think and feel as that person. Meditation may be difficult the first time and for people who flit from thought to thought and cannot focus on one thing. In that case, you may wish to try guided imagery to better concentrate.

Change Your Perception

The way you perceive the world is rooted deep in your subconscious. In the process of self-discovery, it is important that you do some internal reflection to better understand yourself and the reason you are the way you are. This is only possible if you are completely truthful in your assessment of yourself. It means that you identify your strengths, your flaws, your weaknesses, your fears, your doubts, your values, your insecurities, your potentials and you acknowledge and *accept them all*. Acceptance helps you form a bridge between who you really are and who you perceive yourself to be. It might turn out that you perceive one of your strengths as confidence when in reality, that is not the case. This false perception of what you are prevents you from achieving your maximum potential. Self-reflection will make

you realize the distance between the person you desire to be and the person you really are. For this process to be effective, you have to do away with your ego as it will only serve as a hindrance to embracing your reality, especially if it is a part of you that you have deeply buried and don't want others to find.

So many people are stuck in a perception of themselves that has been built on the opinions of others. For example, you constantly hear from people around you that you are a failure until you begin to internalize it as the thoughts you have of yourself, and it becomes your perception, when in reality these are the thoughts of people that have been too critical and judgmental towards you. If this happens, you become conditioned to seeing yourself in the present day based on the negative experiences of your past. To change your perception of yourself, you need to first identify those past experiences that still haunt and hold you back, and write down a brief description of the occurrence. Focus on the thoughts you had and how you felt when it happened, especially in relation to how it affected your perception of yourself and how it created your mindset. What were you told that gave you an altered perception of yourself?

Picture the exact moment the experience/statement occurred and remember how it made you feel, all the emotions and thoughts that ran through your head as you heard it. Let it wash through you and picture the moment you accepted the emotions and thoughts and made them your subconscious perception of yourself, rather than letting them go. Think about the person that made the statement. Was it someone in authority? Perhaps it was someone you held in high esteem and wanted to be like—your role model perhaps. Was that perhaps the reason why it was so easy to accept their opinion of you as your own perception?

Continuously tracking your thoughts daily will help you to determine for analysis, what thoughts are consuming your subconscious.

Reframe—Change the Reality

Reframing is a technique used to create a different perspective of a situation, person or relationship. Our minds will sometimes view reality with a much darker and gloomier lens, based on irrational self-sabotaging core beliefs. Reframing to find a more positive outcome to a situation will challenge and encourage you to identify alternative views, by disrupting your current beliefs through questioning and analyzing your interpretation of the event, then creating new beliefs that are more positive and healthier.

Practice reframing by imagining a negative experience. It could be something really nasty that someone said to you and it has been heavy on your mind for a while. Ask yourself these questions, and answer them honestly.

- Was the intention behind that person's act sinister?
- Was there an ulterior purpose to it?
- Did your acceptance of it fit into that person's plan?

Now, convert the experience into a positive one. For example, after the person made that statement, you realized how that person wasn't fit to be in your life and you ended the friendship or relationship. Now, that is a positive connotation; that you got rid of the toxic person hampering your progress with their thoughtless words. You have reframed the experience by creating an alternative positive outcome. Follow these steps to reframe the entire incident.

- Forget about the negative things the person said – *This person told lies to accomplish a negative agenda.*
- Change your perception of the experience by searching for what you find more important in that experience – *That you showed resilience and were able to control your emotions as you calmly listened and just observed.*
- Focus on the positive aspects of the experience – *Your previous suspicions about this person not being an authentic friend were correct. Trust your gut-feelings.*
- Find something that changes the meaning of the experience itself – *A dishonest so-called friend has just been revealed, so ending the relationship is the right thing to do. You were never at fault.*

Your thoughts about a situation are far more important than the situation itself!

Another way to practice reframing is to consider a behavior you have that you don't like and imagine its usefulness in getting what you need. So instead of focusing on what you consider a negative attribute and making yourself miserable, convert it into something positive to make you feel better.

An effective way to imagine the negative experiences that you need to eliminate is to:

- Imagine your experience as a screenplay in a theatre.
- Detach yourself from the scene, as your purpose here is to watch and not participate.

- Play the experience on fast forward and play it in reverse until the images become ridiculous and the scene trivialized.

This method can dismiss every negative feeling you have been harboring about that experience using detachment and trivialization to reduce its importance. You can try it with anything that bothers you.

The examples provided for reframing are not intended as a means to seek comfort in a delusional interpretation of the event, but rather to find an alternative and realistic perspective that provides a positive outcome. Generally speaking, for reframing to work, it must align with your core beliefs. That is, it must have a value you find relevant and can verify.

DEVELOPING A GROWTH MINDSET USING CREATIVE VISUALIZATION

It is practically impossible to create anything without imagination. You have to first see the outcome you are aiming to achieve. This really puts the power of visualization into perspective when you look around and realize that nothing that ever existed happened without visualization. In that same vein, it is impossible to change a past experience if you do not visualize what you want to change about it. You can gain control of your life by visualizing the new pattern you want your life to take. The brain is constantly visualizing things, even when you are not aware. It is usually an automatic function that doesn't require your input, unless you make deliberate efforts of course. See Figure 6.



Figure 6.

Take a look at the world and see how creativity influences it; new techniques are created every day; new technologies refine the older ones; new ideas are created on a constant basis. By allowing the mind to wander, you can achieve endless levels of creativity. There is

literally no limit. The downside is that a lot of people think that only a few people are capable of being creative. Limiting yourself with this assumption limits your imagination and, in turn, limits the number of things you can achieve.

What Is Required to Creatively Visualize?

The first step to acting on your visuals is to understand that thought precedes creation. Therefore to create, your thoughts must be aligned with three basic intricacies.

- The need to turn what you have visualized into a creation.
- The belief in the possibilities you unlock when you visualize, and the certainty that you can achieve those possibilities.
- Believing that what you visualize will shape your goals.

By acting on these three principles, you can effectively accomplish your goals without letting elements like fear and anxiety interrupt your journey. This will make your actualizations and goals so much more real, which will lead to better motivations and higher levels of performance as you work towards achieving your goals.

Anyone is capable of being creative if you take off the limits and allow your mind to explore the depths of the abilities you truly possess. This can be achieved through creative visualization. Creative visualization is a method where the imagination is used to bring goals and dreams into reality. It can improve your quality of life when you truly incorporate its principles. Creative visualization can change the circumstance of your environment and create new circumstances, like attracting success in all its forms, such as having a better career and wealth.

Visualizing a particular event can cause it to happen. This is the *Law of Attraction*. Some people will be skeptical about the results from this method because they feel it has an element of magic to it, which is not true. All that is involved are the natural laws of the mind and the power of your thoughts. Utilizing this method will yield results in your life, results that can be explained and are not due to some kind of wizardry. A lot of successful people use this technique, whether subconsciously or not, to attract success. This power can be yours also, if you understand how it works.

How Does Creative Visualization Work?

Creative visualization feeds your subconscious with thoughts about your future, persistently and continuously, until there is a paradigm shift in your mindset that becomes ultimately reflected in your thoughts, actions, beliefs and habits. The new beliefs, actions, habits and thoughts open up new possibilities; you meet new people and find yourself in situations that align with the goals you have visualized.

Your thoughts are very powerful. Keep reminding yourself of this until you understand and register it. Your thoughts can shape your entire existence by attracting things that align with them. When your mind registers these thoughts, the subconscious begins to automatically search for people and situations that are on the same wavelength. It is almost like there are invisible signals sent out when this happens, as if they are waiting for people who operate on the same wavelength to connect. In the process of the search, your subconscious picks up signals on its wavelength and attaches itself. You are a part of the power in the universe and are made for a high purpose. It is only fair that the universe provides you a means to achieve that purpose.

The universe has given you the ability to create things and you should use that ability in building your powers of visualization. Your thoughts are energy and from basic physics, energy is recycled. So whatever energy you give out, expect to get a corresponding and equal amount in return. If the energy you feed the universe is filled with positive thoughts, the universe will give you positive results and vice versa. To completely explore all aspects of this energy, it has to be well defined, focused and consistent.

DEVELOP A GROWTH MINDSET BY BECOMING A SYSTEMS THINKER

This way of thinking seeks to understand how different parts are interrelated and interdependent, and how these variables influence the system as a whole; In other words, how your thoughts, behavior, actions, and habits interplay with each other, affecting who you are.

Thinking in systems exposes your flaws, usually noticeable in the perceptions of yourself. It gives you a clearer overview of your potentials, your abilities and your capabilities to ultimately achieve the best results. Using this system to solve problems will focus your attention on component parts and the relationship they have with each other; rather than each part in isolation, which can cause unintended consequences.

Systems thinking shifts your mindset because you can actually see how your thoughts, behavior, actions and habits are causing you problems. Understanding and acknowledging the deeper connotations of the person you really are is only possible when you improve yourself to become a new person. Asking yourself this question, “Is it a problem or a symptom of something deeper?”, will help you better focus on addressing underlining issues. Resolving the underlying issues will end the symptoms also.

Systems thinking is way more than just the manner in which your thoughts flow. Through the knowledge you acquire from self-discovery, you can rebrand yourself, and the capacity you have discovered can be used to visualize your future. To some people, life is a series of occasions and for each event that occurs, they think there is an underlying reason for facing those issues. They believe that a higher power is responsible for these events or they have been predestined to happen. This can be a very dangerous mindset as it prevents you from realizing that the patterns of your behavior and thoughts are responsible for those problems.

Some believe they have no power for change as it has been preordained and certain things will happen, whether they try to interfere with the process or not. They usually suffer from a clash of identities; the people they want to be versus the people they have been predestined to be. Someone besides them is always responsible for their misfortune. The same set of people may always wait for divine intervention to force those changes. If you are one of these people, it is time to step up to your challenges and take full responsibility for your thoughts, behaviors, and actions.

Changes, especially long lasting and permanent ones, can only happen with deliberate efforts on your part. Also, you need to accept that you cannot do anything to change events that have happened in the past. But if you refuse to reframe those events by not evaluating them and picking up the lessons you may have missed, you will keep experiencing that event, along with the negative emotions that come with it. This is because you are trapped in a never-ending loop, waiting for someone else to snap you out of it instead of working through the machinations to figure out a way for you to be free. See Figure 7.



Figure 7.

Continuously being committed to learning things about yourself, discovering your capabilities and improving yourself is the only way to flourish and succeed. There is a popular saying that "Today's problems come from yesterday's solution." - Senge. This is valid because the process you used to solve yesterday's problems may open up new problems. Every decision you make today will have its definite consequence in the future, whether positive or negative. The biggest challenge is how to avoid planting the seeds from today's solutions that may grow into tomorrow's problems. This is why for every decision you make, you should anticipate the consequences those decisions can cause. You may not be able to cover every avenue, but at least you will be prepared to tackle most consequences and not be blindsided.

The difference between a growth mindset and the fixed mindset is that the growth mindset looks for better methods to provide solutions after carefully weighing the pros and cons. Its strength is in its ability to think up logical solutions to problems, and not just what feels right. A growth mindset does not dwell on matters that are not important to finding a solution, such as doubts. It sees a problem and critically analyzes it, changing every variable to ensure that all the angles are covered, creating the proper system for solving the issue. If the solution fails as a result of some oversight, it goes back to the drawing board and improves the schematics until it finally gets the result it is looking for. It does not leave anything to chance or to a third party. To be successful, to win, you have to adopt the winning mindset.

Take control of your life; analyze every aspect; pick out the problems; look for a solution to them; prepare a contingent plan in case the solution goes awry; perfect the solution and improve the quality of your life. Sometimes, the system we consider a failure just needs a fresh perspective. When you have faced constant difficulties in solving a problem, maybe it is time to consider that the problem has different aspects and that you are possibly trying to resolve it from only one angle. Trying to solve complex problems like these without a system thinking approach will do more harm than good, despite your good intentions.

Develop a feedback culture and keep an eye on your accomplishments by constantly evaluating your progress—your very own progress report. Developing a feedback culture may delay your progress, but it is important for perfection. After all, what is worth doing is worth doing well. Sometimes, some problems you face follow a pattern from a previous problem. So with the feedback culture, you can determine which past solution best suits your current problem and make appropriate adjustments. Very often, the best place to find a solution to a problem is in the illogical, so it is important to maintain an open mind.

Conclusion

You have learned about the different kinds of mindsets, how your experiences will determine what mindset you will have, the pros and cons of each mindset, how your perceptions shape those mindsets, how to improve your perception of yourself and--most importantly--how to develop a growth mindset and sustain it. I know it is a lot to digest but easy does it. Begin the process from the simple parts; understand why you are the way you are and what events shaped you to be that way. Work on reframing those events and changing your perception of yourself until the person you are trying to become saturates your subconscious. Then you can delve into changing paradigms and system thinking. If you follow the guidelines in this book religiously, then you are well on your way to developing a growth mindset and a better life.

I wish you well on your journey of self-discovery and hope it is an enjoyable experience—discovering the abilities you never knew you possessed and seeing the world differently.