

## CHAPTER 6: RULES/EXAMPLES OF GOOD FEEDBACK

### ROLE OF FEEDBACK

Every parent wishes his children don't quit when facing difficult school and life challenges. In other words, parents want their children to be equipped with a growth mindset when facing challenges. Motivating and encouraging teenagers is not an easy task. Teenagers go through an emotional roller coaster. They are not willing to non-critically listen to advice from adults, especially if advice is given in too critical and too direct a way.

Researchers in the growth mindset field put an extra emphasis on the feedback that promotes development of new skills and keeps a high level of engagement.

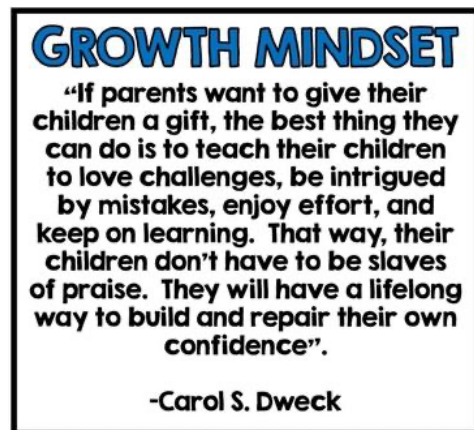
### PARENTS' MINDSET, CHILDREN MINDSET

Do you genuinely believe that abilities, personality, and talent are things you can't influence? Do you remember how hard you tried to learn physics and chemistry and it just didn't work out for you? When your child is facing similar problems, it must mean that he inherited some of your traits, right?

That's one possible explanation. We can also say he learnt and copied your attitudes towards physics and chemistry. If we believe we can't do anything, we will not do anything. Children's attitudes and behaviours are shaped and enforced by the words their parents use.

How often do you use the following statements when providing feedback to the teenagers?

- You are so smart!
- This is just too hard! I understand your pain.
- It's easy for him. He is so intelligent!
- You have a real talent for drawing. It looks beautiful!
- That was really hard. I'm so glad it's over and you don't have to do that again.
- It's not that hard. You should solve that task in a minute.



All above mentioned sentences contain elements of a fixed mindset of communication. Although they look motivating and comforting at the first sight, there is a catch. They carry a hidden message "**No extra effort is needed if you want to reach your goal**". If those messages are repeated consistently, parents make a small contribution towards the children' fixed mindset perspective.

Children (especially younger ones) are great at copy-pasting. When they hear something from their parents, they internalise the message. Think of the dad, who uses the following sentences:

- *No, no. I'm not dancing. I have zero talent for that activity.*
- *Why should I learn to cook? It is much easier to order food online.*
- *Company sent me to the training, but I refused. I am too old for that.*



Language becomes attitudes, attitudes become beliefs and beliefs become the truth. If we want to become a good role model, we should be more mindful about the way we speak not only with children but also among ourselves.

Making effort part of the everyday conversation is another option for parents. How often do we start our communication about the day in the school like this:

*Dad: "How was your day in school?"*

*Daughter: "It was fine dad".*

Instead you can try one of the following sentences:

- *"What did you learn today?"*
- *"What did you try hard at today?"*
- *"Did you try anything completely new today?"*
- *"Did you make any mistakes today? What were they?"*
- *"Will you do anything in a different way tomorrow? What?"*
- *"Is there something you'd like to be better at? What could you do to make that happen?"*



## PROVIDING FEEDBACK

For many parents changing communication patterns is easier than changing their beliefs. Feedback techniques are the central theme in the growth mindset. It doesn't take a lot of effort to master some of them. Here are the few rules for effective feedback:

- If possible, start with the positive. It positively influences the further desire to listen.
- Focus on the process, not just on the outcome (*"Great, you got the best result in the class. That is really something special"* □ *"Great, you got the best result in the class. I noticed you put a lot of effort in that activity. Well done."*)
- When giving praise, focus on the effort, not on the talent (*"What a game that was. I always knew you are a top talent in basketball"* □ *"What a game you played today. I was so proud of your fighting spirit when your team fell behind the opponent"*).
- Focus on the things that can be changed, not on those that are fixed (*"I believe your essay is marvellous. I don't know why teachers didn't recognize that"* □ *"Your essay is very logical and strong in arguments. I feel you could make it even better with more coherent structure."*).

Even if our teenagers are genuinely smart and talented it does no harm if they focus on the effort and further improvements. They will find more satisfaction in doing things (process is much more enriching than the result). Even tough school activities will become more self-rewarding and

engaging. Through time, “I can” attitude develops, and students become more open – minded when they face demanding challenges.

### Practical activity:

1. Choose an ordinary day and write down all the praises and criticisms that you gave to your children.
2. At the end of the day analyse them. Were you focused more on the negative or the positive? Did you focus on effort or talent and abilities?
3. Ask your children how they felt when they received certain types of feedback. Were they willing to invest more energy and try harder, or do they try to maintain their social image and reputation?
4. Try to reshape your sentences into a growth mindset language. Be natural as teenagers might be sceptical if your communication becomes too artificial.

Sometimes it is more difficult to provide the right response. Although each child is different, there are some general guidelines that usually work. How would you naturally respond to the following situations?

- Child put some effort but didn’t make any progress in learning.
- Child got the good result for the task that was too easy.

Now compare your responses to the following responses:

- Child put in some effort but didn’t make any progress in learning. □ Recognise the invested energy. Help them see the (in)effectiveness of the strategies and motivate them to try something new. For example, *“It’s great to see you working so hard on such a challenging task. You’ve tried several things, but not all are working. What other strategies could you try?”*
- Child got the good result for the task that was too easy □ Our praise must recognise the part we want to encourage, while also directing their energy towards effective effort. We could recognise the time they have spent on the task. However we also emphasise that learning occurs only when we are working on tasks that challenge us.

To Help Develop a Growth Mindset In Your Child....	
Say This!	Not That!
"Wow! You really worked hard on this!"	"Look at how smart you are!"
"Why don't we try a different strategy?"	"Maybe you're just not very good at this. Let's do somethin else."
"I had fun watching you do that activity."	"Man, you're a real natural at this!"
"I know this is easy for you, but let's try something more challenging to help grow you brain!"	"You got that done so quickly! Great job!"
"I see you're having a hard time with this. You didn't get it the first try, so why don't we use a different strategy?"	"Nope! That's wrong! Try harder. Maybe if you paid more attention in class and tried harder, you'd get this."
"I know this was difficult, but your hard work paid off. Next time, we're ready for a real challenge!"	"That was way too hard. I'm glad it's over with. I hope we never have to do that again!"

Idea for Poster Came From [www.mindsetworks.com](http://www.mindsetworks.com)

## GROWTH MINDSET FOR TEENAGERS

Fixed Mindset	Growth Mindset
Abilities, talents, skills and intellect can't be changed.	Abilities, talents, skills and intellect can be developed through effort.
I'll never be smart. I'd rather just give up.	I'll keep working hard. Mistakes help me learn.
He/she's a better athlete. They were born talented.	My true potential is fully in my control.
I didn't get the job. I must not measure up.	I learn from experiences. Failure isn't permanent.
I'm such a loser. I can't get anything right.	My challenges and failures don't define me.
I feel like other kids are always judging me.	I'm not looking for the approval of others.
This is hard and it's probably a waste of time.	I know it's not easy. There is always something I can learn.

Raising Teens Today

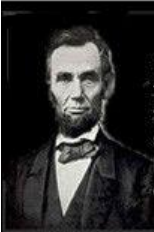
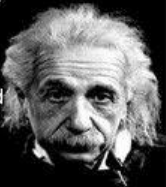


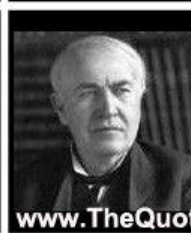





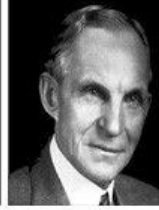





We all like stories of success. Every media is full of stories of successful people. Parents naturally assume those people are idols to whom children strive. What they usually don't hear is all the hard work successful sportsmen, singers, movie stars, businessmen and scientists had to invest to succeed. They are not familiar with the mistakes, rejections and failures people needed to overcome to achieve greatness. Sometimes it helps if we break the myth of success as something that is linear and oriented only forward.

- Share your personal experiences. Explain what was hard for you and focus on how you stood up and continued your path.
- Ask your teenager who is his role model. Google his personal story. Find out if there were some mistakes and failures that celebrities needed to overcome. Discuss them with children.

# FAMOUS FAILURES

www.TheQuotes.Net

 <p>Failed in business three times and failed campaigning seven times prior to becoming President of the United States</p>	<p>He did not speak until he was four years old. His parents thought he was "sub-normal." He was expelled from school and his teachers described him as "mentally slow,"</p> 	 <p>Michael Jordan was cut from his high school basketball team for a "lack of skill."</p>
 <p>Bill Gates was a Harvard University dropout and his first business, Traf-O-Data, was a failure.</p>	 <p>Thomas Edison's teachers told him he was "too stupid to learn anything."</p> <p>www.TheQuotes.Net</p>	 <p>At 30 years old he was left devastated and depressed after being unceremoniously removed from the company he started.</p>
<p>She had a rough and abusive childhood and was fired from her job as a reporter because she was "unfit for TV."</p> 	<p>Rejected by Decca Recording studios, who said "we don't like their sound" "They have no future in show business"</p> 	<p>Marilyn Monroe was dropped by 20th Century-Fox after one year because her producer told that she wasn't pretty or talented enough to be an actress.</p> 
 <p>Fired from a newspaper for "lacking imagination" and having "no original ideas".</p>	 <p>Henry Ford was a failure at three businesses before finally succeeding with Ford Motor Company at age 53.</p>	<p>Colonel Harland David Sanders (KFC) couldn't sell his chicken. More than 1,000 restaurants rejected him.</p> 
<p>Stephen King's first book, Carrie was rejected 30 times. He proceeded to throw it in the trash.</p> 	<p>Soichiro Honda was passed over for an engineering job at Toyota and left unemployed.</p>  <p>www.TheQuotes.Net</p>	<p>J.K. Rowling was unemployed, divorced and raising a daughter on social security while writing the first Harry Potter novel. Her novel "Harry Potter" was rejected by 12 publishing houses.</p> 