

Mental fitness course: Building a resilient mindset

Workplace training for individuals

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Developing a resilient mindset

This course can help you to be more resilient and protect your mental health. Just as you exercise your muscles to become stronger, through focus and practice you can modify and strengthen your mindset and thinking style to help when applying for jobs, as well as managing situations at work and bouncing back from any setbacks and challenges that could come your way.

How good we feel about ourselves and how resilient we are to pressures and stresses around us depends largely on how we see ourselves. Mindset is often a key factor in performance and reaching your potential – whether you believe that there are certain things you ‘can’t do’ and will never be able to do, or if you see your skills as a constant work in progress. Our mindset can evolve over time with learning and practice. This course aims to help you to enhance the quality and impact of your thinking and become more successful as a result. We always have a choice about the view we adopt for ourselves and it’s never too late to change.

The learning in this course has been developed in partnership with [Symbia](#) and is divided into four short modules each accessed from the menu tab, so you can dip in and out as it suits you. They take between 5-10 minutes per module and we recommend you complete them in order. It is interactive, and you can input text into available form fields to capture your learning. Videos and resources are accessed through links, so you’ll need an internet connection to view and listen to these.

What will I gain from this course?

- ✓ Build a healthy mindset and safeguard your mental health, wellbeing and resilience
- ✓ Enhance your performance at work
- ✓ Understand how your mindset helps shape your world
- ✓ Understand growth and fixed mindsets and how they impact your performance
- ✓ Identify and challenge your empowering and limiting beliefs
- ✓ Build essential skills to manage your limiting beliefs and cultivate a growth mindset



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Creating a healthy mindset	The Ladder of Inference	The mind-body connection model	Summary
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Module one aims

This module will help you to:

- ✓ Understand how to build a healthy growth mindset and protect your mental health
- ✓ Increase awareness of how our beliefs, thoughts and feelings affect mindset
- ✓ Understand why human beings have a tendency to think negatively
- ✓ Develop an ability to choose your response
- ✓ Learn tools to help manage your mindset 'in the moment'

Creating a healthy mindset

If you could be sure that your thoughts and feelings were working for you, not against you, how might that change your life? This is the power of the 'inner game' – everything that goes on in our minds: our thinking patterns, emotional regulation, beliefs, mindset and so on.

Perception is key


Perception is the key to increasing our ability to build a healthy mindset. We think that our perception of events is objective, but in fact, we often don't see the objective 'reality', we see our own 'interpretations' of our world. When we experience something externally, our brain 'filters' that information by checking it against our previous experience to form our own interpretation, or story. Our brain is often filling in the gaps, using our assumptions and biases to interpret the world around us.




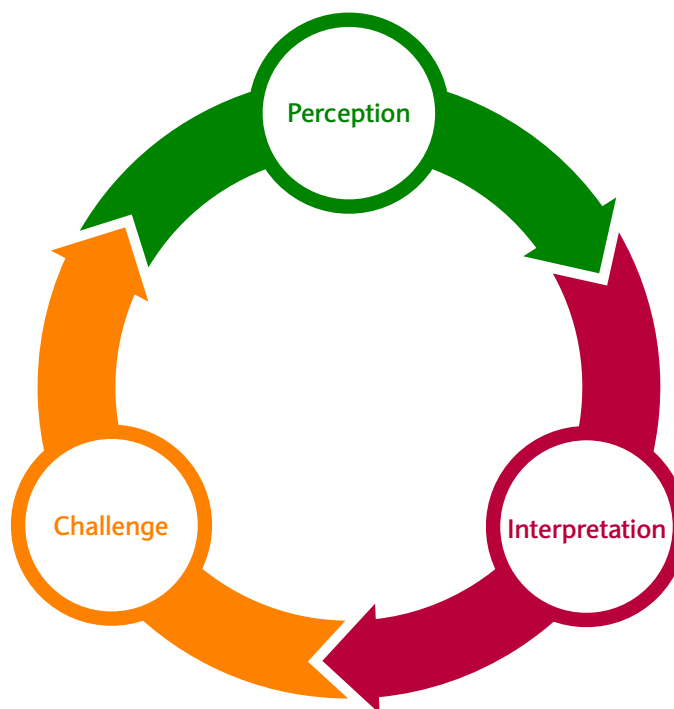
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Our interpretation of the world therefore is unique to us and influenced by who we are, our emotions, beliefs, physiology and past experience. This means, we sometimes attach meaning to things when it doesn't always exist. This can lead us to decisions or behaviours that may or may not be appropriate for the situation.

In order to challenge our perception, it helps to become aware and curious about our 'inner world' and how we typically behave in a given situation. We can then begin to challenge our perception and open up more and more possibilities for ourselves.

 Click to watch this video and find out more from human behaviour and psychology expert Jodie Rogers about how perception works and why it isn't 100% reliable.

 The Ladder of Inference is a really simple tool that can be used to help apply this thinking to your life. This video explains more about the tool and how it can be applied in challenging situations.



Overcoming negativity bias

Why do we sometimes tend to jump to the worst-case scenario? Having negative thoughts and reactions from time to time doesn't necessarily mean that you're a negative person. There's actually a neuroscientific reason why we tend to focus more on the downside of a given situation: it's called the negativity bias.

The negativity bias is an evolutionary response; we are programmed as human beings to see threats in the environment. The original purpose of this was to keep us safe; in the past, it allowed our ancestors to pay more attention to threats like predators, which was essential for staying alive.

Now, our survival isn't under threat from saber-toothed tigers, but the neurological survival mechanism still exists. Today, the negativity bias is more likely to make us feel anxious when we receive an email from our line manager saying 'I need to talk to you'.

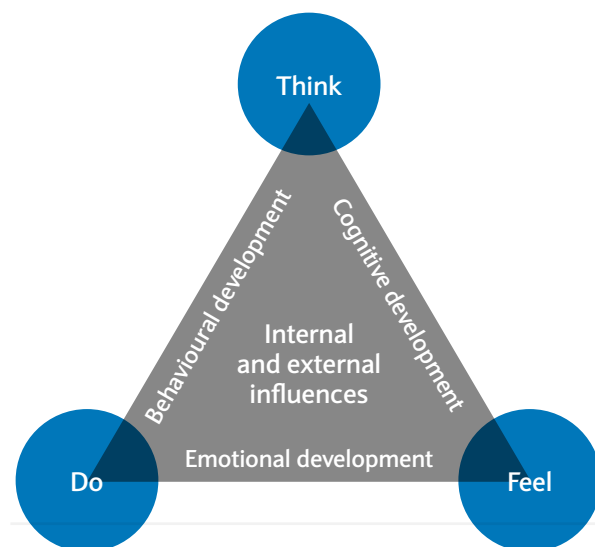
This is entirely normal, however it's important that we learn how to manage this natural tendency instead of overreacting to it.



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The mind-body connection model

Whether we're conscious of it or not, our thinking and feelings are connected. Our decisions are based on how we think and feel, which affects what action we take. This mind-body connection is affected by internal factors like physiology (feeling tired/hungry/relaxed), our past experiences and beliefs and external factors (the weather/economy/society).



Case Study: Emily

When the cruise ship Emily was working on had to stop operating, the termination of her employment led to a period of uncertainty. The idea of looking for a new job was scary, but with no prospect of any income beyond the short notice pay that was provided, Emily made the decision to stop dwelling on her negative thoughts and start focusing on the positives.

“Although it was a scary situation to be in, I thought this could be an opportunity to try different sectors and learn new skills. Even if I didn't have the required qualifications or experience, it was important to remember everything that I could do.

It's been a struggle, but a bit of an adventure too because I had so many choices to get stuck into. My positivity and persistence paid off eventually as I have secured a job in sales and retention.”

Connection between thoughts, feelings and behaviour

We tend to consider our thoughts, feelings and actions separately from one another. If we 'follow our head' when making decisions, we often ignore the fact that our feelings may also have affected our thinking and, subsequently, the choices we make.

For instance, if we're unsure of ourselves or stuck in a loop of negative thinking, our emotions often follow suit. So, thinking 'I didn't spend enough time preparing for this presentation' could cause you to feel anxious, nervous or insecure.

Equally, our feelings affect the way that we think about situations. Research has found that if we're feeling good, we are more likely to interpret new information in a positive way, such as giving people the benefit of the doubt in an ambiguous situation. For instance, if someone doesn't say 'hello' to us, and we are feeling good, we would think 'they are having a bad day, I'll make them a cup of tea,' rather than 'they don't like me'.



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Choice – Your response influences the outcome

Consider this simple equation from Jack Canfield:



The outcome of a situation is a combination of the event as well as our response to it. We can't change the event or what happens to us, but we can have control over how we respond to it.

By choosing how we respond to the event, we have the power to influence the outcome, feel in control and protect our mental wellbeing.

The challenge is this: our brains respond so quickly that we don't often recognise that we have a choice. The trick is to learn to create a space between an event and our response so we can choose our response.

The good news is that it's possible to 'rewire' our brains to change the way we habitually respond. Our brains continue to develop throughout our entire lives – a process called Neuroplasticity. We can (and do) create new neural pathways in our brain in as little as 20 days, just through practice. So, we can build the capacity to deal more easily with setbacks and adapt to change.

Summary

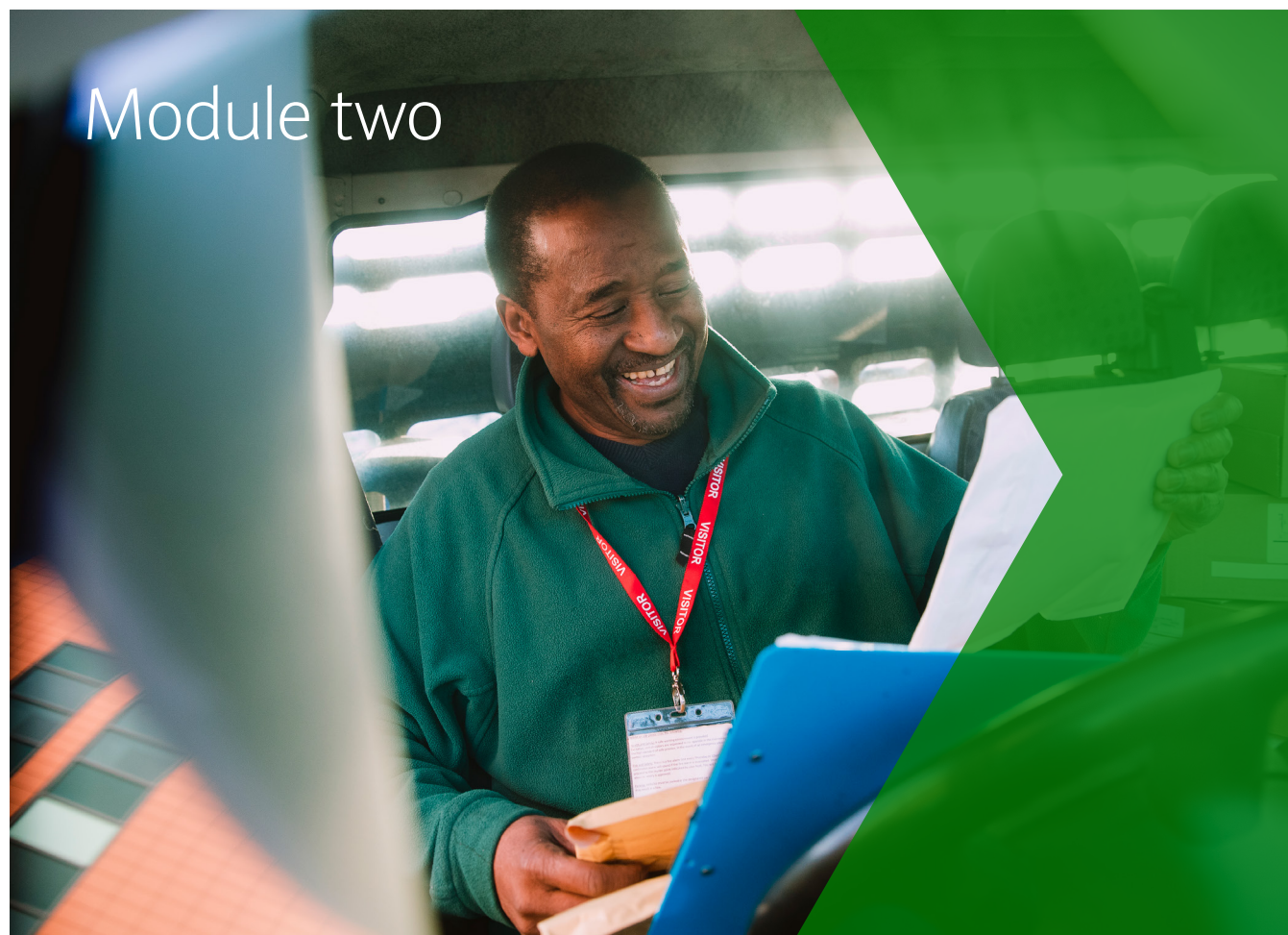
- ✓ We can learn to build our mindset and mental fitness, it's changeable
- ✓ Perception is not objective – we build our own interpretation, influenced by who we are
- ✓ Our thinking, feeling and behaviour are all linked
- ✓ As human beings, we are naturally programmed to see the worse, called the negativity bias
- ✓ Being aware of our thinking patterns can help us create a space to pause and respond in a way that is helpful rather than reactive

The difference between people who achieve their goals and those who don't move forward is often the voices in their head. If you can master your thinking and your mindset, you can release confidence and potential you didn't know was there.



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A quick quiz	1	2	3	4	5	Questions	What does this mean?
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What's my mindset: A quick quiz

You've seen that our brain constantly learns. This short quiz will help you discover what mindset you have, at this moment in time. Don't overthink this, a spontaneous answer will give you a closer reflection of your current mindset. There are no right or wrong answers and remember mindset can change over time.

Read the questions and consider whether you strongly disagree (a), disagree (b), agree (c) or strongly agree (d). a = 1 point, b = 2 points, c = 3 points and d = 4 points.

Make a note of your answers and total your score as you go so you can to review your feedback at the end.

Module two: What's my mindset?



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A quick quiz | 1 | **2** | 3 | 4 | 5 | Questions | What does this mean?

1. 'The harder you work at something, the better you will be at it.'

- A Strongly disagree
- B Disagree
- C Agree
- D Strongly agree

2. 'You can always substantially change how intelligent you are.'

- A Strongly disagree
- B Disagree
- C Agree
- D Strongly agree

3. 'Human beings are essentially good, but sometimes make terrible decisions.'

- A Strongly disagree
- B Disagree
- C Agree
- D Strongly agree

4. 'No matter what kind of person you are, you can always change substantially.'

- A Strongly disagree
- B Disagree
- C Agree
- D Strongly agree

5. 'All human beings without a brain injury or brain condition since birth are capable of the same amount of learning.'

- A Strongly disagree
- B Disagree
- C Agree
- D Strongly agree

6. 'Musical talent can be learned by anyone.'

- A Strongly disagree
- B Disagree
- C Agree
- D Strongly agree

Module two: What's my mindset?



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A quick quiz | 1 | 2 | **3** | 4 | 5 | Questions | What does this mean?

7. 'Some people are good and kind, and some are not – but people can change.'

- A Strongly disagree
- B Disagree
- C Agree
- D Strongly agree

8. 'Anyone can learn to be good at sports – you don't need to be born with it.'

- A Strongly disagree
- B Disagree
- C Agree
- D Strongly agree

9. 'You can learn new things, and change how intelligent you are.'

- A Strongly disagree
- B Disagree
- C Agree
- D Strongly agree

10. 'Truly smart people also need to try hard.'

- A Strongly disagree
- B Disagree
- C Agree
- D Strongly agree

11. 'I don't get frustrated when I get feedback about my performance.'

- A Strongly disagree
- B Disagree
- C Agree
- D Strongly agree

12. 'You are a certain kind of person, but things can be done to change that.'

- A Strongly disagree
- B Disagree
- C Agree
- D Strongly agree



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A quick quiz | 1 | 2 | 3 | **4** | 5 | Questions | What does this mean?

13. 'Trying new things is stressful for me but I don't try to avoid it.'

- A Strongly disagree
- B Disagree
- C Agree
- D Strongly agree

14. 'By doing things differently, you can change certain parts of who you are.'

- A Strongly disagree
- B Disagree
- C Agree
- D Strongly agree

Feedback

If your total is between 0 and 14

Your answers indicate you have a strong fixed mindset.

This means that you have the tendency to believe that basic qualities, like intelligence or talent, are simply fixed traits or something people are born with. You are likely to believe that you are just the way you are and many outcomes are out of your control. You may well be holding yourself back from opportunities because you believe you are not able to do them. The good news is that there are simple techniques you can use to cultivate a growth mindset, like reframing limiting beliefs, and knowing how to deal with setbacks. We cover a number of these throughout these modules. Practicing these new techniques will open up many more opportunities in your life.

If your total is between 15 and 23

Your answers indicate you have a fixed mindset with some growth thinking.

Your mindset leans towards fixed which means that you are likely to believe that you are just the way you are and many outcomes are just out of your control. But the good news is that you also display some growth mindset qualities and the more you can practice growth thinking, the more possibilities you will unlock in your life. It will be important for you to focus on managing some of the limiting beliefs that may stop you from truly achieving your personal or professional goals. There are simple techniques you can use to cultivate a growth mindset, like reframing limiting beliefs, and knowing how to deal with setbacks and we cover a number of these throughout these modules. Practicing these new techniques will open up many more opportunities in your life.



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A quick quiz | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | **5** | Questions | What does this mean?

Feedback

If your total is between 24 and 31

Your answers indicate you have a growth mindset with some fixed thinking.

Your mindset leans towards growth, which means that you probably enjoy learning and growing in the pursuit of developing yourself, you don't let setbacks hold you back in life. However, sometimes you may slip into fixed mindset thinking and let limiting beliefs get the better of you. It probably happens with specific topics where you might feel a bit more insecure. The good news is that there are simple techniques for reframing limiting beliefs, and knowing how to deal with setbacks, even when you are feeling insecure. We cover a number of these throughout these modules. Practicing these new techniques will open up many possibilities and opportunities in your life.

If your total is between 32 and 42

Your answers indicate you have a strong growth mindset.

This means you're constantly learning and growing in the pursuit of developing yourself, you don't let setbacks hold you back in life. You enjoy challenges and believe that intelligence, talents, and abilities can be increased or enhanced through hard work and dedicated effort. Because of your strong growth mindset, you are in a good position to help others cultivate a similar outlook in life. The following modules will help you learn how to do that easily.





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A quick quiz 1 2 3 4 5 **Questions** What does this mean?

Questions

How do you feel about your score and the type of mindset it reflects?

What have you learnt about the mindset type your answers reflect?

How might you use this information when facing challenges and asking decisions going forwards?



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A quick quiz 1 2 3 4 5 | Questions **What does this mean?**

What does this mean?

There is growing research which demonstrates that, through focus and practice, 'talent' can be developed and learned and it is not just something we are 'born with'. Analysing 'talented' people throughout history, across the arts, sciences and sports, we can see they share a commitment to practice and dedication to their field and develop a strong 'inner game'.

In a growth mindset, people believe that abilities can be developed through dedication and hard work – brains and talent are just the starting point. People with this mindset generally have a love of learning and the drive to set big goals and achieve them. They understand that great things don't just happen, they require commitment, learning, and practice – even for 'naturals' like Michael Jordan or Mozart.

With a fixed mindset, however, people tend to believe that everyone is born with fixed qualities and talent and nothing can change that.

Don't worry if you fall more on the fixed end of the spectrum, as we saw in Module one, it's possible to develop your mindset. Learning to have more of a growth mindset creates motivation and productivity. It is a mindset that isn't deterred by setbacks, in fact, having a growth mindset allows people to recognise there is always the opportunity to learn and improve, often leading them to thrive even during challenging times. We will learn more about that in the next module.



Module three: Growth mindset – turning obstacles into opportunities



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Module three aims

Growth mindset: Turning obstacles into opportunities

We've seen that our mindset impacts how we make sense of the world, and our mental wellbeing. It's formed from our unique attitudes and beliefs that shape our thinking patterns and ultimately influence how we interpret what happens around us. Mindset isn't fixed though; it shifts throughout life. What's your mindset today? What could it be tomorrow?

Mindset, perseverance and perspective all contribute to our potential and performance. Whether our mindset is fixed or growth orientated. Whether we are naturally optimistic or pessimistic. Whether we naturally strive to complete or are more likely to quit if faced with challenges.

This module will help you to:

- ✓ Know how to recognise a fixed and a growth mindset
- ✓ Understand the benefits of a growth mindset
- ✓ Know how to develop a growth mindset

Module three: Growth mindset – turning obstacles into opportunities



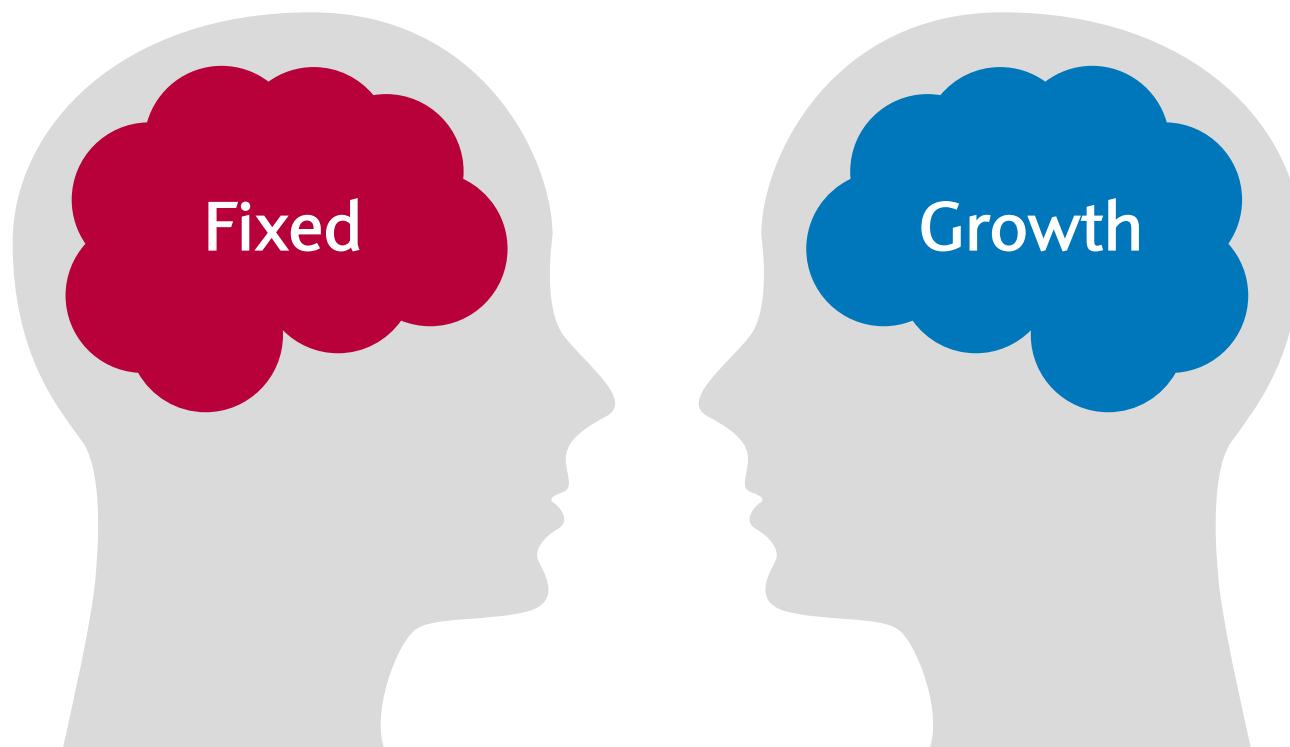
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Turning obstacles into opportunities 1 2 How to cultivate a growth mindset

The most widely used model of mindset is from psychologist Carol Dweck (1999, 2006). It focuses on different attitudes towards ability and challenging situations. People with a growth mindset understand that ability can change with effort and failure is not a permanent position, whereas fixed mindset people believe that ability and failure are innate. We'll be taking a closer look at growth and fixed mindsets in this module. Find out how a growth mindset can help you to respect and expect the best in yourself and others.

Growth vs. fixed mindsets

In the last module, you discovered where your current mindset sits on the growth-fixed scale, and we've talked about the main aspects of these mindsets already, so you have an idea of what these mean. But let's take a closer look at some of the key features of growth and fixed mindsets.



Module three: Growth mindset – turning obstacles into opportunities



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Fixed mindset: Leads to a desire to look smart and therefore a tendency to:	Growth Mindset – Intelligence can be developed: Leads to a desire to learn and therefore a tendency to:
<ul style="list-style-type: none">✓ Avoid challenges✓ Give up easily✓ See effort as fruitless or worse✓ Ignore useful negative feedback✓ Feel threatened by the success of others	<ul style="list-style-type: none">✓ Embrace challenges✓ Persist in the face of setbacks✓ See effort as the path to mastery✓ Learn from criticism✓ Find lessons and inspiration in the success of others
As a result, an individual may plateau early and achieve less than their full potential	As a result, an individual will reach ever higher levels of achievement

How to cultivate a growth mindset

If you have aspects of a fixed mindset right now, don't worry – it's possible to change your mindset and move from fixed to growth. Through improving awareness of your own mindset, you can take conscious steps to combat any self-imposed limitations. It's this work that helps us develop a strong 'inner game'.



Watch this video from Jodie Rogers to find out more about how to get in control and practise cultivating a growth mindset.



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Module four aims

This module will help you to:

- ✓ Realise how patterns of negative thinking affect us
- ✓ Learn how our belief system works
- ✓ Understand how we can change our fixed thinking
- ✓ Understand how it impacts our mental wellbeing

Beliefs

How can we avoid slipping into a fixed mindset? One way is to take a closer look at the 'beliefs' or 'rules' we have created for ourselves that we often take for granted and leave unchallenged.

What causes a fixed mindset?

Mindsets are like frameworks that govern our experience of the world; they're influenced by the attitudes and beliefs we hold, which shape the way we think. Fixed mindset thinking often stems from what we call limiting beliefs. These limiting beliefs and 'fixed' thinking have a negative impact on our 'inner game' and overall mental health over time.



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Impact on mental health

Negative patterns of thinking are both a cause and a maintaining factor of depression. Negative thinking also plays a significant role in anxiety. As such, if we make no attempt to work on our negative thinking, our ability to self-regulate diminishes, our emotional resilience becomes fragile and overall our mental 'fitness' suffers, leaving us susceptible to future mental health issues. This article shares six ways you can look after yourself and your mental health at work.

How to break negative thought patterns

Identifying what your limiting beliefs are and knowing how to challenge them will fundamentally help you break negative thought patterns and more easily develop a growth mindset for the future.

What are beliefs?

Before you can address your belief systems, you first need to know a bit more about them.

Limiting beliefs vs empowering beliefs

Each of us hold a range of beliefs or judgements about ourselves and the world, which we assume to be true, even if there's no evidence. Some of these beliefs are useful to us, they empower us, and some are less useful, they limit us. They're the rules that we've created for ourselves, often generalisations and sweeping statements about our abilities or the world. These can also become reinforced over time and through experience.



Watch this video to find out more about limiting beliefs from Jodie Rogers.

Click here to access the [Train your brain toolkit](#).

Where do beliefs come from?

Beliefs are often formed and accumulated through childhood and formative experiences. When we do something and it doesn't work out for us, we often create 'rules' to help us avoid the situation in the future. For example, perhaps you got lost once when directing a group of friends to your holiday location. It's possible that you created the belief 'I'm not a good map-reader' or 'I'm no good at navigating' so next time the opportunity arises, you avoid it by vocalising this 'belief'.

How your thoughts and beliefs differ

Because we start to adopt beliefs early in life, they can be so deeply rooted that we don't even notice them. They exist in the background of our minds, colouring our perception and influencing our thoughts and behaviour. Even if you don't know they're there, they will be limiting the possibilities and opportunities in life.

'Whether you believe you can or you believe you can't, you're probably right.' – Henry Ford



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Belief management

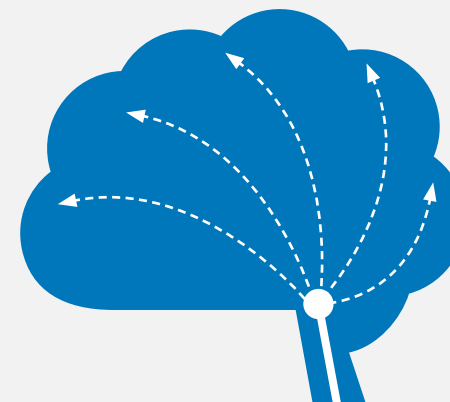
Our beliefs carry a lot of weight – after all, they're rules that we live by, whether we're aware of them being there or not. This is why it's important to examine the kinds of beliefs that we hold and how they might be affecting our lives. Once we know which ones exist, we can begin to challenge and manage them.

How does our focus reinforce our beliefs?

We're bombarded by sensory information all of the time – some (Dr Bruce Lipton) argue up to 40 million bits of data per second. But the reality is we can't consciously 'attend' to all of this information. We can only attend to around 40 bits of data each second. As such, we need filtering systems to help us quickly and easily know what to focus on. The Reticular Activating System (RAS) plays a role in where we focus our attention. It attends to things that appear important to us, such as something personal like our name, and to the things we (perhaps unconsciously) choose to focus on, like something new.

The RAS in action

Remember the last time you were considering buying a car? Suddenly, that particular model (maybe even in your chosen colour) becomes the only car you see on the road. There's one parked beside you at the supermarket; one passes you on the motorway; there's an advert for it on TV. It must be a sign! No – it's your attentional filter. You've told yourself this specific car is important. All of the other car models and colours are still on the road, your brain is just filtering them out. Our thoughts and our beliefs also 'programme' these filters. The more we say something to ourselves, the more important it's considered to be.



Over time, the information that we selectively attend to will reinforce our beliefs (also known as the confirmation bias, as we saw in Module 1). In this way, our limiting beliefs become strengthened over time, because we are constantly seeing information that is consistent with those negative thoughts, which means we tend to accept them and often don't think to question them or challenge them.

For example, if you believe that your writing skills are poor, then you're far more likely to zone in on the one spelling mistake you've made in a document rather than think about the other perfectly worded pages.



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Questions

What are the consequences of negative thinking?

What can help break negative thinking?

How does the RAS reinforce our beliefs?

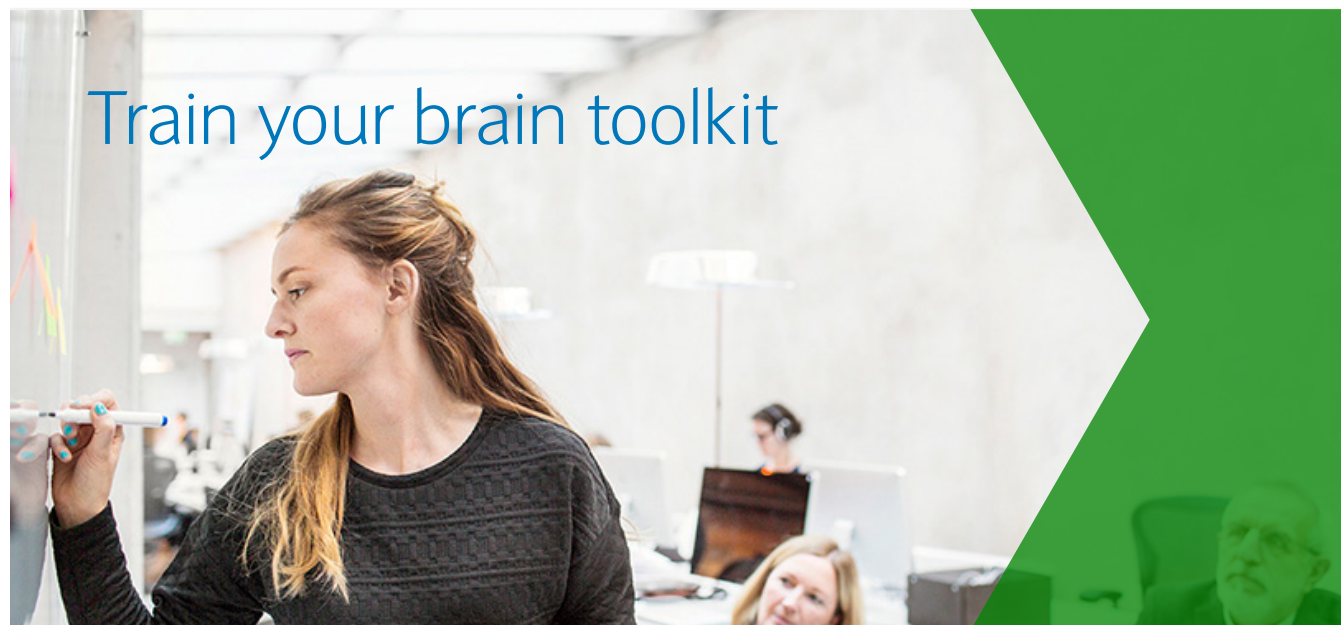
Summary

- ✓ Negative thinking can cause depression and anxiety. It also reduces our emotional resilience and our ability to self-regulate
- ✓ Beliefs can be both empowering and limiting
- ✓ Identifying, examining and challenging limiting beliefs can help break patterns of negative thinking and develop a growth mindset
- ✓ We often use selective information to reinforce our limiting beliefs – this is called confirmation bias



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Challenge your beliefs Summary




Train your brain toolkit

This toolkit will help you to:

- ✓ Learn how to develop a growth mindset
- ✓ Learn how to change your limiting beliefs

Challenge your beliefs

 Watch this introduction from Jodie Rogers to an exercise that you might find useful for contradicting a limiting belief that you hold and replacing it with a more empowering and realistic one instead. Jump to the [Challenging limited beliefs PDF](#) to refer to while watching the video.

Longer term practices and techniques

By developing new, positive habits, it's possible to 'rewire' your brain to move towards a growth mindset – and keep it there. This resource provides a variety of techniques to help you manage yourself in the moment and also practise new habits over time which will help you cultivate a more positive outlook for the future. Just practicing one quick exercise each day for as little as three weeks is enough to make a lasting impact.

Click here to jump to the [Longer term practices and techniques PDF](#) to help guide you through.



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Challenge your beliefs **Summary**

Developing a growth mindset: Namrita

Namrita started her own business two years ago, at the same time as experiencing a lot of change in her life. After being diagnosed with depression, she explains how she used resilience and a change in mindset to overcome these barriers.

“A key change for me was breaking things down into bitesize, little chunks so that it was less overwhelming. I just focused on the things that I really enjoyed and that I thought would add value to my customers. I think that when you enjoy what you do it really shows in your work and when you're talking to people.

Two years on the business has grown so much, we've got employees now and I feel amazing. I feel as though I'm doing what I've always wanted to do, and I've overcome a lot of things that previously I would have thought there was no way to deal with. I definitely feel like a much more resilient person.”

You can discover more about Namrita and watch a video on how she used her resilience to overcome challenges in [this article](#).

Mental health fitness: Summary

Types of mindset

Our mindset is formed from the attitudes and beliefs that shape our thought patterns and ultimately influences how we see ourselves and the world. The kind of mindset we have (whether fixed or growth) will shape/influence our potential. Our mindset can change over time, with practice, and the view that we adopt for ourselves is always under our control – the choice is down to us.

Growth mindset

Growth mindset differs from fixed mindset in terms of how we think of our own abilities. Fixed thinking is the view that ability is innate; we're either good at something or we're not, and failure is a permanent position. Growth thinking, on the other hand, is the view that we're in a constant process of learning and our ability will change over time with effort.

Beliefs

Beliefs can be either limiting or empowering. Limiting beliefs drive fixed mindset thinking and hold us back from achieving our true potential. Our beliefs are reinforced by attentional filters in our brain, which selectively choose to focus on information that supports the beliefs we wish to hold. However, it's possible to be mindful of our beliefs, challenging and reframing those which are not helpful.



Introduction	Module one: Creating a healthy mindset	Module two: What's my mindset?	Module three: Growth mindset – turning obstacles into opportunities	Module four: Beliefs	Train your brain toolkit	Additional reading and finding support
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Additional reading

Check out this list of further resources, from articles to YouTube videos, that will help you to explore the world of mindset further. We've also included references to scientific studies used throughout these two modules, for anyone who wants to dig deeper and read up on the theory and evidence behind the subject. Try thinking about how you can use these resources to support yourself and others to move towards a stronger growth mindset.

Articles

- [How to overcome your fears and realise your full potential](#)
- [Building confidence film](#)
- [Overcoming setbacks – virtual lesson](#)

Books

- 'The Success Principles' by Jack Canfield
- 'The Emotional Life of Your Brain: How Its Unique Patterns Affect the Way You Think, Feel, and Live – and How You Can Change Them' by Richard J Davidson and Sharon Begley
- 'Grit: The Power of Passion and Perseverance' by Angela Duckworth
- 'Mindset: How You Can Fulfil Your Potential' by Carol Dweck
- 'Rainy brain, sunny brain: The new science of optimism and pessimism' by Elaine Fox
- 'Learned Optimism' by Martin Seligman



Additional reading

TED talks

- The power of believing you can improve by Carol Dweck
- Do we see reality as it is? By Donald Hoffman
- 'The Happiness Advantage: Linking Positive Brains to Performance' by Shawn Achor
- Grit: The power of passion and perseverance by Angela Duckworth
- The stories we tell ourselves by Jodie Rogers

Other learning

- Shawn Achor and Oprah Winfrey – 'The Secrets of Happy People' (search YouTube for the audio)
- Shawn Acho and Oprah Winfrey – 'How to Find Happiness in Today's World' (search YouTube for the audio)
- The Talent Myth – Malcolm Gladwell (New Yorker Magazine)
- [Gottman](#)
- [Marcial Losada, Emily Heaphy](#)



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Support and resources

Please be aware of accessing information from the internet or non-expert sources. Treatment advice should only ever be given by a qualified health care professional. These are our recommended additional support services:

- [Time to Change](#): aims to change the way people think and act about mental health problems. Produces a range of resources and research documents for use in schools
- [Mind](#): provides advice and support to empower anyone experiencing a mental health problem. Mind also campaigns to help improve services, raise awareness and promote understanding
- [Rethink Mental Illness](#): a charity that improves the lives of people severely affected by mental illness through local groups and services, expert information and training and successful campaigning
- [Mental Health Foundation](#): provides information, guidance and resources on all aspects of managing mental health at home, at school and in the workplace
- [Action for Happiness](#): focuses particularly on wellbeing and how to lead a happier life. Its Ten Keys to Happier Living is also available as an app
- [Learning and Work Institute](#): offers various mental health resources including for in the workplace
- [Mental Health in Further Education](#): provides a network for those interested in adult education and mental health
- [Samaritans](#): If you're going through a tough time, you can talk to Samaritans free – day or night, 365 days a year



Takeaway exercise: Challenging limiting beliefs

One problem with beliefs is that they are deeply rooted and seem completely plausible to us, so we simply accept them as given. That's where we go wrong.

When you first start to challenge your limiting beliefs, it can be helpful to use a simple exercise like this to guide the process until it becomes a more natural way of thinking. This exercise can help 'reframe' your thinking, giving you a different perspective so you can see that your belief is just one version of the truth and that other, more helpful ones exist.

How to use this exercise

Choose one of your own limiting beliefs that you've become aware of recently and write down the answers to the following questions. See how you can reframe your belief to be more empowering. This exercise can also be used to help someone else challenge and reframe their own limiting belief.

Challenging limiting beliefs

1. What is your limiting belief?	2. What would be the opposite of this belief?
	<i>(Tip: don't simply write the opposite, but think about what the most positive and possible expression of that could be.)</i>
3. Next, list all the evidence you can think of that supports your limiting belief.	4. Then, list all of the evidence to support the opposite, empowering belief.
	<i>(Tip: have a go at this by yourself first, then try asking a family member, friend or someone you work with to help expand your thinking.)</i>

5. What are the action steps you should take to make the possibility of the empowering belief a reality?

What can you do today?

What can you do this week?

What can you do this month?

Example

Here's a worked example, which is presented and explored in the video 'Challenging your limiting beliefs' in Module 2.

1. What is your limiting belief?	2. What would be the opposite of this belief?
"I'm not good enough for promotion."	"I have as much chance as anyone else to get promoted."
3. Next, list all the evidence you can think of that supports your limiting belief.	4. Then, list all of the evidence to support the opposite, empowering belief.
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• I don't think people rate my work• I'm not sure I have the right experience• I don't work on any of the interesting or high-profile projects• I'm not good at self-promotion, I don't like it.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The projects I work on might not be high-profile, but I get praised highly for them• My experience is different from other people which can be an asset for the team• I've only been here a year and I seem to be doing well• There are training programs to help me fill in any gaps.

5. What are the action steps you should take to make the possibility of the empowering belief a reality?

What can you do today?

- Speak to my manager

What can you do this week?

- Explore training courses available

What can you do this month?

- Ask for a mentor.



Train your brain: longer term practices and techniques

It's possible to 'rewire' your brain to move towards a growth mindset – and keep it there. This resource provides a variety of long-term techniques for practising new habits over time which will help you cultivate a more positive outlook for the future. Just practising one quick exercise each day for as little as three weeks is enough to make a lasting impact. You can also use these tools and techniques to support other people in developing a stronger growth mindset.

For tools that help you to manage yourself 'in the moment', check out the 'In the moment tools and techniques' PDF from Module 1.

Show your appreciation

Send a positive message to someone, expressing your appreciation for them and/or something they have done for you. This could be a friend, family member, someone you work with or anyone else you're grateful to.

Deliver the message verbally, face-to-face or over the phone, or even through an email or text message. Choose any communication method you want, as long as it reaches the other person quickly. They will feel great for receiving the message and you'll feel great for sending it!

Gratitude journal

Make some time at the end of each day, whether it's a few minutes on your commute home from work, before going to sleep or even in the bath or shower, to look back on the day while it's still fresh in your mind. It can be helpful just to have this time to reflect and identify anything from the day that you feel grateful for, no matter how small.

If you have a bit more time, then taking it a step further and writing down three things is a great way of solidifying your gratitude journal and helping the habit to stick. Challenge yourself to find a new set of things every day, rather than repeating the same ones.

Finding meaning

Similar to the gratitude journal, sit down at the end of the day and set a timer for five minutes. Write down your most meaningful experience from the last 24 hours and use the whole five minutes to answer the following questions:

- Why was it important? What made this experience stand out to you?
- How did it make you feel?
- What learnings can you take for yourself moving forward?

Meditative breathing

With regular practise, this exercise can help train your mind to focus and resist distractions over long periods of time.

1. Find a quiet place and set an alarm for three minutes.
2. Close your eyes and focus on your breathing for a count of 10.
3. Once you reach 10, go back to one and keep counting back up to 10 again.
4. Each time you notice your mind wandering, simply bring your attention back to counting your breaths.
5. Repeat this until the alarm goes off.

Developing self-compassion

Fixed mindset thinking tends to lead to self-blame when things go wrong. “It must be my fault”, “I’m not good enough”, “No matter how hard I try, I always mess up”, etc. If you find yourself dwelling on self-critical thoughts like this, try considering how you would react if it were a friend in this position instead of yourself. What would you say to them?

Chances are, you would be much more empathetic and less judgemental. Instead of placing blame, you might focus on what they could learn from the difficult experience, the things they did well and how to try again next time. Try extending the same compassion to yourself in these situations and practise speaking to yourself using your growth mindset voice.

Naming your fixed mindset voice

Close your eyes and try locating the fixed mindset voice in your head. When you experience that negative mind chatter, where does it come from? Does it talk to you from the back of your head, or the front? What tone of voice does it have? What kind of things does it tell you? Maybe it’s not a voice, but a feeling in the pit of your stomach, or a presence outside your body.

Next, give it a name – it could be ‘The Gremlin’, ‘Negative Nelly’ or simply ‘It’. Naming it will help you to identify the voice and distance yourself from it. Seeing the voice as a separate entity will make it easier to talk back to it, instead of accepting everything that it says.

Cultivating a growth mindset

As you’ve seen in Module 2, there are four key steps to cultivating a growth mindset:

- First, learn to hear the fixed mindset voice. Learn to recognise it – tune in and even label it (see the exercise above)
- Next, recognise that you have a choice. Just because you have a thought, doesn’t mean it’s a fact
- You can change it by talking back with your growth mindset: “What’s missing? What else do I need to do?”
- Finally, take action. Whatever it is that you need to do in order to move forward, that’s exactly what you apply.