

**BUILD A
GROWTH
MINDSET
IN YOU**

**A GUIDE TO DEVELOPING A
SUCCESS-FOCUSED LIFE**

a publication of Growth Consulting Asia

Is this e-book for you?

This is an introductory e-book. In just **60** pages, we will uncover the fundamental ideas of the growth mindset and its application, and lay them out in a simple format for anyone to learn, apply and grow. Anyone interested in developing themselves, learning better and growing faster should find this e-book helpful.

Here's what we will be covering...

- ✓ The makings of a growth-mindset thinker
- ✓ Why the growth-mindset is the preferred mindset for learning?
- ✓ Ways to develop the growth mindset
- ✓ Applying the growth mindset in daily work situations
 - In leading
 - In planning
 - In problem-solving
 - In communicating
 - In innovating

Ready? Let's get started...



Build a Growth Mindset in YOU

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Introduction

What makes a person successful and another not so? Is there a magic formula that allows one person to continuously gain from his/her circumstances? As it turns out there is, according to research from Stanford University professor of psychology Carol Dweck. In her book, *Mindset: The New Psychology of Success*, Dweck shares her twenty-year research on the matter that first started with children in school and then, as she firmed up her hypothesis on what she termed the “growth mindset”, she extended it to working adults and executives. Again and again, she discovered that those who were successful – and who continued to remain successful – were those who adopted the learning mindset – the growth mindset.

Yet this mindset did not simply appear as a result of her research and has been rooted in many historical figures like Sir Isaac Newton, Albert Einstein, Christopher Columbus and Benjamin Franklin. Coming closer to the present, famed entrepreneur Richard Branson, Alibaba founder Jack Ma, and Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau all embraced the growth mindset. One of the things that set them apart was not that they were smart or rich but that they were willing to learn, and the best way to learn was to fail. They did not see the stigma of failing as a setback, but one to cherish and learn from. And that is the key to enduring success; to embrace failure, learn and move on.

This e-book hopes to shed more light on the subject.

Chapter One

The Makings of a Growth Mindset Thinker

A tale of two Chaps

Meet Dan and Ben, two very different people in the same company tasked with growing new business.

Dan graduated top of his class in engineering and went on to earn an MBA from a premier business school. He joined this company upon graduation and stayed in the same department all the past 15 years finally making VP last year. He has deep knowledge for the business, and is the “go to” guy for any problems.

Ben, on the other hand, graduated from a local polytechnic but worked in many different positions, in different companies, working on diverse projects. He rose up the ranks in these companies, finally joining this current company as VP in another department 6 months ago.

Being tasked to grow new business revenue, Dan attacked the project as he had always learnt at business school – through data, analysis, and team discussions. Having a reputation to maintain, Dan made sure that he had all his calculations right, and plans ship-shape, before executing.

Ben, on the other hand, went in search of data outside the company. Having not come from the same industry, Ben had to see for himself what was happening outside, talking to customers, and identifying ways to do things better. Ultimately, he identified a couple of new opportunities and had them tested out.

Being the “go-to” guy, Dan needed to come up with all the “right” answers. If he was not sure of the answer, he preferred to keep quiet, diving deeper into the data. “You can never do enough analysis,” he tells his team.

Ben realised that there was not enough data in the company to support the analysis for his ideas. Consequently, he had to take his ideas to the market to collect the information he needed, launching small prototypes along the way, and adjusting as needed. Some of his ideas were quickly dismissed by the customers, some had good potential and was rewarded with brisk sales. These sales came with in-depth customer discussion to find out what else could be done to make the product better, and this led to even more improvements.

By now, Dan had spent close to 6 months in detailed discussions with his team and a select vendor who, in his words, “had many years of experience in this market” and is able to create the one big successful product that is befitting his stature. Pulling in a few favours, he presented a budget that was so large that it dazzled management, who consequently approved the project. Yet there was no product on the table, not even a prototype. Just Dan’s word as the “go-to” guy – and Dan has not yet failed to deliver!

By this time, Ben had already been in the market 3 months, and starting to build a steady stream of revenue. That was when he hooked up with a major player in the market who liked his idea, and decided to co-create the solution with him to reach out to an even larger market – much larger than Ben had initially dreamed up. Not only did this partner company agree to foot the bill for the rest of the development and the scaling up, they accorded Ben’s company 55 percent of the business! Not bad for someone who didn’t really know what was happening!

Unfortunately, Dan was not having such a great time. By the end of the year, not only did he not bring in any new revenue, he still did not have a clear business idea! Always striving for the “right one”, he was betting big but not moving fast enough. The vendor got cold feet and after

much feet-dragging (and hundreds of thousands of dollars), they pulled out, leaving Dan to fend for himself. Not being able to carry the project on his own, he finally capitulated, and lost his job.

Ben is now overseeing Dan's department as well.

Ben exhibited the growth mindset, while Dan was trapped in the fixed.

So what makes for each of the two mindsets? Let's break them down by different factors...

Knowledge

Dan’s knowledge was considerable. Yet his knowledge was also his “downfall” because he could not risk being seen as a failure; hence his preoccupation with more data, more information. And he needed to create a big project befitting his position in the company. Yet the bigger it was, the greater the chance for failure.

For Ben, he admitted that he didn’t know enough and went outside the company to find it. The more he found out, the better he became; and the better he became, the higher his chances of success.

Bottomline:

Knowledge is only good if it is relevant. Better to not know than to know and realise that you really didn’t!
Be open to new knowledge.

Failure

The very thing that Dan was fearful of – failure – was the very thing that happened to him! The fear of failure stops people from learning because one has to be wrong to fail. Since the fixed mindset does not allow one to be wrong, it will protect itself by sticking to the “tried-and-tested” methods, and for Dan, this meant analysis, analysis and more analysis. This slowed things to a crawl, and finally, led to the project’s demise.

Ben, on the other hand, took “failure” in his own stride, accepting that to learn, one needed to be wrong (after all, there is no learning if you already knew everything there is to know!). This acceptance of failure helped him be more successful!

Do read our blog entitled “[The Paradox of Success – fail more to succeed more!](#)”

Bottomline:

Don’t be afraid to fail – you need to fail fast and fail cheap to learn quick!

Risk

I suppose the fear of failure is linked to risk aversion; although that is not 100% the case. While one would shun risk simply to not fail, fixed mindset people like Dan will stay well away from uncertain areas, preferring to do more analysis to reduce their risk. This risk aversion hinders them from doing what needs to be done, thereby getting overtaken by the market or simply by events.

Ben too does not have a huge appetite for risk, but he does not let that hold him back. Instead, he mitigates the risk by taking small incremental steps, seeking to include his customers to make the moves even less risky!

Related blog: "[I don't gamble but I take risks.](#)"

Bottomline:

Manage risk, instead of avoiding it.

Self-Perception

People like Dan view life as a test, and they cannot jeopardise their test-taking success. Being successful in school in their early days (you will know who they are since they keep on saying they come from Raffles, or Hwa Chong, or some other elite school), they cannot risk their earlier success by being wrong. They are wrapped up in themselves so much that they have a warped self-perception of “perfection”. This self-perception stops them from extending themselves, risking themselves, and allowing themselves to fail. It is as though their very being is defined by their earlier successes that CANNOT be undermined.

Ben, on the other hand, is not enamoured of grades and early successes. He comes into the situation with the mindset to learn and do better, and this is seen in the way he dives into the market to test everything. This ultimately led to his success!

Bottomline:

It is your self-concept that holds you back. Let go, and be successful!

Effort

In Dan's world, everything has to be effortless. After all, if it were effortful, it meant that you were not talented, and talent drives all success in the fixed-mindset world.

For Ben, effort drives learning. Hence, he would not mind rolling his sleeves up, and get down to doing the deeds that need to be done. This allows him to go to market even when he is not totally ready, because he knows that effort polishes imperfection away.

Bottomline:

Effort makes for talent and not talent for effortlessness. To learn, one needs to put in the effort.

Perfection

In the fixed-mindset world, everything has to be perfect; otherwise how would one be able to show one's talent, one's knowledge. Dan tried to get all his ducks in a row before going to market, but since he tried to swallow more than he could chew, he ultimately gagged on it, and it cost him his job. Instead of being a success, he ended up a failure.

For Ben, he realised that good was better than perfect, because it allowed him to achieve his goals faster. He was not locked into the concept that everyone expects perfection, since that did not exist. Just get it out there, and perfect it on the go.

Bottomline:

Seek not to be perfect.

Strive towards it.

Chapter Two

Why the Growth Mindset is the Preferred Mindset for Learning

Let's start with a question

Do you learn more when you are right or when you are wrong?

Of course we know this one! If we are right, we already know the answer, and we don't learn anything new. It is only when we are wrong that we realise that we didn't know it all, that we will be able to learn something from it – we hope. (There are people who don't learn even after realising they were wrong. This is the fixed mindset protecting a very fragile self-concept.)

So we are unanimous – we learn when we are wrong, not when we are right. And if that's the case, then the growth mindset is the one to adopt when trying to learn. Why? Let's count the various reasons...

1 You are energised by the journey

The growth mindset loves the process of learning more than its outcome. It is not that the outcome is not important, but she knows that there is no end to learning, and is invigorated by the process of enlargement.



2 You know you don't know

Psychologists Joseph Lutz and Harrington Ingham developed what is now known as the Johari Window, which went on to map four perspectives of self knowledge. It is only in recognising that there is knowledge that we are not aware of that we can then learn. The growth mindset keeps us cognisant of this.

Related Blog: [How would you know what you don't](#)



3 You want to improve

The growth mindset rewards those who want to improve with new perspectives and knowledge. It is only when we embrace newness will we be able to constantly learn.



4 You believe in effort

Anything worth doing is worth doing well! You enjoy being praised not for the results of your effort, but the effort itself. And the more you are praised for effort, the more effort you put in! That's the growth mindset at work!

Related Blog: [Practise! Practise! Practise!](#)



5 You love the challenge

Growth mindset learners relish not the easy path but the difficult ones. Call them crazy but if the process is too easy, they lose interest. Give them a challenge anytime so that they can stretch their abilities, their thinking and their talent – and they are raring to go!



It should be apparent to you by now that in order to succeed at learning, you need to adopt the growth mindset.

- ✓ Its ability to allow people to “fail” and not look bad;
- ✓ its ability to allow us to take risks and maximise its impact on us;
- ✓ its ability to look at talent development as on-going effort;
- ✓ its ability to take knowledge not as a fixed vessel but an ever-expanding balloon (and one that never pops!);
- ✓ its ability to embrace the idea that our talent is not fixed at birth;

these are the reasons why the growth mindset is the ONLY mindset for learning. Let us now look at ways we can develop the growth mindset in us...



Chapter Three

Ways to develop the Growth Mindset

Suspend Judgement

Even if you think you know the subject matter, suspend your judgement. When you do that, you allow new perspectives to come into your mind, and this will trigger more thoughts. These thoughts will then expand, linking up with other ideas and knowledge, thereby growing into something bigger, often better. You can only get there if you don't pass judgement - both of the message and the messenger!



Deliberately learn something totally out of your comfort zone

Now here's a thought! Go out of your comfort zone and learn something that is totally new, totally outside of our interest and do well at it. Look for instructors whom you seldom pay attention to, like young adults, or members of the opposite gender, or even people from a different country (even better if it were a third-world country!) The more you move yourself outside of your comfort zone and still force yourself to do well, the greater your growth mindset will develop.



Learn to fail

Decide that you will do something so outlandish that you are bound to fail, then do it. Over and over again. Each time you do that, like bungee jumping, or the high rope confidence course, pay attention to how you react to “failing” and then again to how to recover from that “failure”. The more you are in tune to the lessons you learn from “failure”, the better you will be in embracing the growth mindset.



Praise the effort, not the outcome

In each of the activities described above, praise the effort you took to get there. Get someone whom you respect deeply to give you encouragement on the journey, but stay clear of the outcome, even if the outcome was a spectacular one. This will keep you on the up-and-up, ever increasing your capacity for the growth mindset.



Increase risk appetite

We are not talking about being reckless here, but the growth mindset thinker is comfortable with risk, remembering that risk is inherent in a situation and can - and should - be managed. This is in contrast to taking a gamble, which is usually for a payoff. Gambling is a fixed mindset thing, and we don't go for that. But in increasing your risk appetite, you also learn to control your fears, you increase the range of your thinking, and you manage uncertainty better! What a growth development plan!



Developing the growth mindset is not necessarily difficult but it does require determined effort. In keeping up that effort, you are as well keeping up the growth mindset. Here are some of the things you might encounter as you enlarge your growth mindset...

- ✓ discomfort in dealing with failure
- ✓ second-guessing yourself and your decisions
- ✓ oscillation between self-doubt and self-praise
- ✓ questioning the decision to even do this (in the darkest hours of failure)

But take heart! This is the natural course of getting better, of “failing” and picking yourself up again.

Stay the course and develop yourself.

Because you know you are worth it!

Chapter Four

Applying the Growth Mindset in Daily Work Situations

Nothing inherently wrong with the fixed mindset

We come to the final chapter of this e-book. By now you should have a pretty good understanding of the growth and fixed mindsets. Before we go on to see how we can apply the growth mindset in daily work situations, I would like to pause and make mention that there is nothing inherently wrong with the fixed mindset. We are not vilifying people who embrace it, and we even acknowledge that each one of us does have it in us. After all, self-preservation is the result of the fixed mindset and we are here today simply because we have been successful in staying grounded and fixed.

Yet the time has come to move beyond the fixed mindset because its usefulness is only applicable in a stable environment, one where we don't expect that there will be much change from day to day, month to month, even year to year. But that environment has passed us. 2016 is turning out to be an even more turbulent year, with growth expected to decline. Each day will bring new challenges, and we must be able to defend ourselves against these vagaries. This book seeks to offer the means to do that, not so much to abandon the fixed mindset, but to strengthen it with the growth. So in this last chapter, we will look at the applications in different situations at work.

In Leading

Many labels can be thrown at the growth mindset leader:

- ✎ laid back
- ✎ reckless
- ✎ unsupportive
- ✎ ineffective

Interestingly enough, these are all spewed out by the fixed mindset leader. But you can't blame the fixed mindset leader, he just doesn't understand the growth mindset. Let's see if the growth mindset is *really* so bad...

Laid back

How is the growth mindset leader laid back? Simply because he allows things to evolve on their own. So while the fire is raging all around him, the growth mindset leader is looking calm. But is he really laid back? Of course not! Because he embraces failure, and is comfortable with risk, it sometimes seems like he is dallying in front of "death" when in fact he is empowering his people to learn as much from the situation as they can. By laying back, he gives his people the chance to take the bull by the horns and develop their own experience and repertoire.

Reckless

So “laid back” evolves into “reckless” when it seems like he is not doing anything to save the “sinking ship”. One will realise that the growth mindset leader does not overreact to situations. He calmly assesses it, and allows the situation to confirm his judgement. Since he is comfortable with risk, he would allow the situation to slide as he learns more about the root cause, all the while having one hand on the steering and one foot on the brake. There is never a chance that it would fail, but it would get tantalisingly close to it! And that’s what makes him seem reckless - to a fixed mindset boss.

Unsupportive

The growth leader forms an opinion and then goes to market and tests it. He does not take things at face value - certainly not comments that cannot be corroborated, or are not backed by substance. The growth leader has an independent, searching mind, and that allows him to form his own conclusions about matters, and not accept sweeping statements pushed into his face. In the same vein, the growth leader does not push out his own thoughts onto people, preferring them to discover these

on their own. To some, that would seem that he is unsupportive. But that is far from the truth. He is always focused on the big picture which drives him and his people.

Ineffective

If effective means always looking busy, then the growth leader is ineffective. If effective means that he cannot be wrong, and he must always produce results, then he is ineffective. The very nature of business these days is uncertain, and there is no 100% surety in anything. Whatever one does, one needs to expect a certain amount of wiggle, a certain amount of give. To some, that means the growth leader is ineffective. But that again, is far from the truth. The only way for the growth leader to learn is to experiment, and that means accepting “failure” in some instances. But the growth leader will NEVER call any of his staff a failure, knowing full well that growth leadership is a process of learning, falling down, learning more, and getting better.

The growth leader is therefore a developmental leader, empowering his people to form an opinion of situations, going out there and trying new things, improving them along the way. He is not a micromanager, as he knows that the growth mindset needs empowerment and a micromanager disempowers his people. While not all growth leaders may lead from the front, at the very least, he encourages from the rear. As such, the growth mindset leader gains the support and trust from his people not for his charisms, but for his empowerment.

In Planning

Knowing full well that the environment is uncertain, and changes from day to day, planning is done not so much with certainty, but with flexibility. It does not mean that the budget set can be subject to constant changes, but he also understands that what was planned for 6 months ago - well within the budget time norm - might have to change now. So here's how the growth mindset is extremely helpful in planning:

It is focused on the big picture

The growth mindset keeps a constant eye on where the ship is headed. This is his number one priority because all learning is driven by a larger intent. But since there are many ways to reach the top of Everest, there are also many ways to meet this intent. By not being fixated on the means but on the end in itself, the growth mindset planner knows that he needs to be adaptable in his journey to meet this intent.

It is adaptable

As the future is seldom ever clearly defined, the growth mindset planner is highly flexible and adapts to change easily. If one path does not work, he has another path ready for exploration. He is therefore constantly on the lookout for new avenues of attack, while monitoring how the current route progresses.

It is open to new opportunities

To be able to identify opportunities, one needs to have his senses tuned in to them. The growth mindset planner understands that his job is never complete even after the plan is being executed because he understands that new things will crop up once we come closer to them. Having his senses peeled out for them, learning by doing and embarking on entrepreneurial experimentation, the growth planner finds new opportunities where others are blind to them.

It plans contingencies

The very nature of the growth mindset is such that it accepts being wrong and this presupposes that it also plans contingencies. One great way to plan contingencies is using scenario thinking. [Read our blog post about that right here.](#)

The growth mindset planner is therefore a real asset to an organisation for his adaptable manner. Ultimately, it does not matter where the money is coming from, it only matters that it does.

In Problem-Solving

This is where the sparks start to fly! Understanding that the growth mindset is a learning mindset, problem-solving comes in the form of postulating a hypothesis and then going out to test it. It is an iterative process where the lessons learnt in the test reinforces or sharpens the hypothesis, which in turn shapes the next round of testing. This is known as the scientific method.

Why would sparks fly since this is obviously the right way to solve a problem? The issue lies with how the fixed mindset boss views the growth mindset problem solving capabilities. These are:

- ✓ Speed versus surety
- ✓ Caution versus being right
- ✓ Conviction versus confidence
- ✓ Past versus present and future

Speed versus surety

While the growth mindset problem-solver is adamant at solving the problem, he is not in a hurry. This means that he will formulate the hypothesis fast, and test it fast, but he will take his time in getting at the solution. In contrast, the fixed mindset solver mulls over the situation for a long while, trying to cover all the loose ends on his own. It takes a long while for the solution to appear, but once it does, he does not allow for any wavering. Hence the fixed mindset is slow in reaching a decision, but sure

of the solution he decides on. The growth mindset person is quick in putting out a hypothesis, and testing it, but never really settling on the one perfect solution - because there is none!

Caution versus being right

Who's the cautious one, the fixed or growth mindset? Well if you said growth, then you are absolutely correct. He does not want to stake with certainty a claim without ensuring that it is correct. As such, he takes all solutions as a cautious work-in-progress, fully expecting to change it when the need arises. Mind you, cautious does not mean slow; and slow may mean being over-cautious, which is paralysing. The fixed mindset on the other hand, needs to be right. And it will make a decision and formulate a solution to confirm this. However, he fails to recognise when he is wrong, preferring to stick to his guns and insisting that everyone else is wrong. Sparks fly again!

Conviction versus confidence

Since the fixed mindset problem-solver is always right, his conviction to his solution is also resolute. However, since he does not entertain the notion that he can be wrong, he throws all his resources to back this all-or-nothing conviction, sometimes to spectacular losses. For the growth mindset person, it is not so much as he is not convicted, but more so that he is confident.

For him, confidence outweighs conviction because he knows that nothing can be cast in stone, hence the solution might - and probably will - change over time. His confidence lies in his ability to deliver, even in the face of this variability. It's just that the solution may be far removed from the initial hypothesis.

Past versus present and future

One thing is very clear about the fixed mindset problem-solver, he is living in the past. And his solutions are applicable only in the past, when conditions were considerably different. But because he makes decisions to preserve the status quo, to relive his past glories (you can always hear that when they say, "During my time..."), his solutions lack currency, and ultimately, applicability. The growth mindset problem-solver is grounded in the present, and, more importantly, in the future. He knows that there is no permanence in any solution, and what is implemented today may not be able to address the issues of tomorrow. He is thus always on the look out for solution divergence.

The impact of the growth mindset on problem-solving is akin to its impact on innovation. This is not to say that our fixed mindset brethren cannot solve problems, they can. But it would take an army of growth mindset executors to make it happen - and right the wrong - and that is expensive both in time and money.

In Communicating

When speaking to others, your mindset becomes evident to them, though not always to you. In this case, people can pick up your bent, and from there, be able to steer the conversation one way or another. Following are the different scenarios:

Fixed mindset speaking with fixed mindset

If they are both from the same organisation or department, working towards the same goals, you will likely see a power struggle. With both parties sticking to their guns, and wanting to do things the way they have seen to be successful to each of them, and not wanting to shake their own infallibility, they will insist on having things their way. When both of these parties refuse to see the other person's point of view, you get into a stalemate, and they will leave "agreeing to disagree." That is a lose-lose proposition.

Fixed mindset speaking with a growth mindset

The growth mindset communicator will never make a stand at the beginning of the conversation. Formulating a hypothesis about the other party's position, he will let the unidirectional conversation flow, learning more about strengths and flaws of the other person's point of view, before offering his. The conversation moves between them in ebbs and flows, until it is time for the growth mindset person to take a position. This

position is sometimes lost when the fixed mindset speaker is not open to discussion, but prefers to simply “lay it on the other person”, as is quite often the case. When this happens, communication ceases. In time, people will avoid speaking to the fixed mindset person altogether since time is wasted and nothing is ever achieved.

Growth mindset speaking with a growth mindset

Again, sparks will fly! When there is mutual agreement on the outcome of this conversation, you will find an ever-increasing virtuous cycle of ideas and agreement. But it is all not simply a bed of roses and there will be points of disagreement. But these points are negotiated over, and a working solution agreed upon. Both parties listen to each other, trying to understand where each person is at, and offering new ideas and solutions to move the conversation forward. Again, the outcome of the conversation is an important factor here. When two grow-minded persons communicate, it is very often that a workable, win-win proposition is arrived at.

Communication between the two mindsets is further complicated by power politics. There was once a fixed mindset CEO trying to undermine his growth mindset team to disastrous consequences - they all quit on him! There is therefore good reason to be mindful!

In Innovating

Innovation is the predominant focus of the growth mindset. There is no way anyone can innovate with the fixed mindset because that is not the learning mindset. If one does not want to learn, does not want to hear what is not working, does not want to acknowledge that they don't hold all the cards, does not want to admit that they don't know everything, there will be no innovation.

For innovation to work, it requires that:

1. the person puts forward a hypothesis,
2. tests the hypothesis,
3. is quick to admit when he is wrong
4. institutes a correction quickly
5. reapplies the new solution
6. continually refines the process

These are all tenets of the growth mindset.

So what does one test for?

In business innovation, there are four tests that need to be applied and when they pass all four tests, the chances of market success are significantly increased. These four tests are:

1. The Customer Value Test
2. The Execution Test
3. The Scalability Test
4. The Defensibility Test

Let's unpack them one by one.

The Customer Value Test

This is the most crucial of all the tests because if your idea does not pass this, there is no innovation to speak of. Customer Value is basically whether the customer finds the innovation useful to them, and whether they will buy the solution.

In order for this test to be successful, the innovator needs to first identify the customer segment he is reaching out to, their pain points and their gain points, and how he is going to address them.

But not only that. The solution must be provided at a price that they are willing to pay for. Ultimately, if your

solution is not leaps and bounds better than the competition, then chances are you are not going to be able to offer it at a price higher than theirs. And if that price cannot sustain your production costs, then the idea is dead in the water.

The Execution Test

Okay, so you've passed the first big test. Congratulations! But that does not mean that you are home free. The next test you need to pass is the execution test. As mentioned, the price that your customers are willing to pay for your solution must be higher than the cost of producing it. So can you produce it? It is one thing to be able to build a prototype, but it is another to actually pull all your materials together, and then bring it to market. Concept is always only just that until you can pull them all together at the right price. That is your next big test.

The Scalability Test

So, you've passed Test #2. Well done! You now know how to make ONE product at the price that your customer is willing to pay. But can you do 10? 100? 1,000? 100,000? Many businesses fail at this stage

because they realise that they either are unable to meet demand, or there is simply no way to go beyond a certain volume, and at that volume, it is still unsustainable. Scalability is often constrained by key resources, and even before you start your innovation journey, you need to be clear what and where your production bottlenecks are and find a solution to them. And if you can't, it might not be worth the while to go down this path.

The Defensibility Test

Alright! Let's just say for a moment that you have gone past all these constraints and you really are at the point that you can scale up and make tons of money.

Congratulations, because not many people can reach this point and still say they are in business. You are almost home free save for one more test, defensibility.

The question is, to what extent can you protect your market? How long do you have monopoly status - if at all - before the competitors roll in with more powerful guns and bigger ammunition. Patents and intellectual property may help, but it is limited. Why? It will take a long time in court with millions of dollars tied up to protect your intellectual property. If you don't have the resources to last in this game, you will be bled dry long before the

courts rule in your favour. Hence, you might need to build market defences. Sign up all your key distributors way before you launch in the market. Sew up all your suppliers in iron-clad agreements so that potential competitors cannot get at them. Employ all the talent in the market to ensure that you hold all the cards. This will ensure that you have the scale and the defences in the market. But what if you cannot do all that, does that mean that your innovation is doomed?

Not really. There are different strategies that you can use like carpet bombing the market and doing a guerrilla strike such that you earn all that you need in a super short time, and then laugh all the way to the bank while you sit back and watch the competition go at each other. By then you should be on your way to the next innovation, leaving them in the dust.

Ultimately, innovation requires only the growth mindset, so those with the fixed, please step aside and let the experts do the job! The greatest chagrin that growth mindset people feel is when their fixed counterparts come in and try to stir the broth while it is still boiling, mixing in the wrong ingredients and spoiling the whole soup!

Chapter Five

Conclusion

Here's what we know of the Growth Mindset...

It is the learning mindset

It is open to knowledge, even ones we already thought we knew!

Failure is the root to learning - fast fast, fail many, fail cheap!

Learn to manage risk, not avoid it

Inflated self-perception gets in the way!

Effort makes for talent, and not talent for effortlessnes.

Seek not to BE perfect; strive FOR it.

To develop the growth mindset

Suspend Judgement



Learn something out of your comfort zone



Learn to fail



Praise effort, not outcome



Increase risk appetite



I hope we have demonstrated that the growth mindset is THE mindset to adopt in this VUCA environment and that this e-book can help you get there.

**Wishing you a growth-filled
developmental year!**

More resources...

Our BLOG contains loads more information on the growth mindset!

