

CULTIVATING A GROWTH MINDSET

For some people, the fear of failure or making a mistake is a barrier to growth. It's easy to get stuck imagining the worst-case outcomes, especially during challenging or uncertain times in life. Our brains are wired to perceive threats and while this can be helpful as a protective measure, it doesn't contribute to creative thinking, growth or productive decision-making.

Professionals trained to spot and solve problems are particularly good at seeing obstacles and predicting negative outcomes. While this mindset may have helped you to succeed as a technical expert, it won't serve you as well if you want to grow and progress into more of a leadership role in your career.

Reframe how you think about failure. Your mindset is something you can shift with careful attention and practice. A growth mindset means you believe you have the capacity to change, learn and develop. Mistakes are part of the growth process. To cultivate a growth mindset, notice if you give up when things don't go as planned or blame yourself for a failed attempt. Instead, try to see setbacks as a way to learn to do things differently.

Practice letting go of what is beyond your control and dedicate your efforts to taking action where you can. Get comfortable with experimenting and letting go of perfectionism. Start to shift your attention to discovering new ways of thinking, being and doing.

Apply the power of the word "yet". If you find yourself saying I can't do that or it will never work...insert the word YET. I can't do that "yet" or I haven't tried that "yet."

What is your biggest fear about taking the next step in your career?

How does fear get in your way?

If you let go of fear, what would you be doing differently?

What haven't you tried yet?

REWRITE THE STORY

If you find yourself ruminating on all the things that could go wrong, paralyzed by fear, or too stressed to think clearly about a way forward, you are not alone! Acknowledge these feelings are real, hit pause, and explore your thoughts and default response before taking further action. Then try to rewrite the story you are telling yourself. There is more than one way to respond, even in the most challenging situations. Being mindful and choosing carefully how you respond to adversity is a learned skill that will serve you well throughout your career and life.

When faced with a challenging situation, imagine there are at least three outcomes. Notice if you tend to default to the worst-case scenario. Allow yourself to describe it and then give equal energy to describing a best-case outcome and most likely case. By training your mind to imagine three different outcomes before you take action, you will start to overcome the negative prediction loop that can interfere with your effectiveness as a leader.

Try this: Describe three possible outcomes and consider the evidence for and against each one. Then explore steps you can take to prevent a worse case outcome AND what you can do to move towards a best case or most likely case outcome.

WORST CASE SCENARIO:	What is the evidence for and against?	How can I prevent or fix this outcome if it happens?
BEST CASE SCENARIO:	What is the evidence for and against?	One thing I can do to move closer to this outcome?
MOST LIKELY CASE SCENARIO:	What is the evidence for and against?	One thing I can do to move closer to this outcome?