

Mindsets for Self-Improvement

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Carol S. Dweck's empirical work has revealed that when we see ourselves as possessing fixed attributes, we blind ourselves to our potential for growth and prematurely give up on engaging in constructive, self-improving behaviors. In contrast, seeing the self as a developmental work in progress can lead to the acquisition of new skills and capabilities. This theoretical framework has been used to address a variety of societal concerns, such as achievement gaps between ethnic or gender groups. Dweck finds that victims of negative stereotypes who have (or are taught to adopt) a growth mindset can then take a more mastery-oriented stance to achieve their goals even in unfavorable learning environments. As a result, they can often excel despite the obstacles they face. The impact of Dweck's work has spread to other domains beside academic achievement – including willpower, conflict resolution in the Middle East, racial prejudice, and adolescent aggression. Her rigorous research has been applied extensively in schools and organizations to empower children and adults around the world, and she is a recipient of an APS 25th anniversary [James McKeen Cattell Fellow Award](#) for bridging disparate fields of developmental, social, and personality psychology. Read more about Dweck's research [here](#).