

EQUIPPED to INNOVATE

Mindset, Resilience, and Grit (Part 2)

Kevin D. Washburn, Ed.D.

THE OLD STORY

Belief influences effort; effort influences achievement; achievement influences confidence.

	INTELLIGENCE IS FIXED	INTELLIGENCE CAN BE GAINED
BELIEF	a person cannot make him/herself smarter no matter how much effort he/she gives	a person can become more intelligent through targeted effort
GOAL	to look smart or talented so pride or entitlement can be gained via comparison	to learn; failing <i>is</i> learning
PERSPECTIVE	working hard=not being smart; smart doesn't need to work hard, and having to work hard reduces me	you learn via effort; try, because even failure helps you learn how to do it better the next time
RESPONSE TO SETBACK	give up rather than risk failure; smart doesn't make mistakes and failure is "fatal"	examine the error, confront weaknesses, & gain insight into how to improve
FOCUS	"Am I right or wrong? If I am wrong, who or what can I blame?"	"Where and how can I improve?"

THINK & INTERACT

Sort it out. Succinctly contrast these beliefs by identifying one idea or image (e.g., metaphor) that captures the essence of each "side." (Do not use "nature vs. nurture.") Record your ideas in the blanks below.

_____ vs. _____

Share and discuss your ideas with your colleagues.

EFFECTIVE FRAMING

“A word out of your mouth may seem of no account, but it can accomplish nearly anything—or destroy it!”

- ▶ Create and maintain a classroom environment that emphasizes intelligence gained through effort
 - welcome error as a gateway to learning
 - challenge students sufficiently: “In a series of studies involving middle school and high school math classes, students who were forced to struggle on complex problems *before* receiving help from teachers outperformed students who received immediate assistance...Skills come from struggle” (Stulberg & Magness, 2017)
 - change strategies, not students: “The way you are trying to (throw the ball, form the letter a, solve the equation) isn’t working. Let’s figure out why. Then we’ll change the way you are trying to (throw the ball, form the letter a, solve the equation) so that you can do it better.”

What are three important framing messages this approach communicates?

- be cautious with competition
- ▶ Be intentional in your comments. Praise the effort-result relationship rather than “natural ability”
 - “Look at what you’ve accomplished. I can tell you worked hard on this!” rather than, “You are good at math!” or “You are gifted at drawing!”
 - “Whoops, I guess that was too easy. I apologize for wasting your time. Let’s do something you can really learn from” (Dweck, 179).
 - “I like the way you tried all kinds of strategies on that math problem until you finally got it. You thought of a lot of ways to try it and found one that worked!”
 - “You put so much thought into this essay that it made me think about *Romeo and Juliet* in a brand new way!”
- ▶ Give the student a sense of autonomy, especially when giving “bad” news—e.g., “Here is your test score. Would you like to review study habits with me? I’d be happy to do it.” (Bhanji, 2014)
 - Approaching feedback this way—no “sugar coating” but with a specific way you may help—is more likely to activate the student’s ventromedial prefrontal cortex, a part of the brain that helps regulate emotion and promote flexibility in response

- ▶ Explain the truth about intelligence to parents (and students)
 - Use guiding questions to redirect student thinking:
 - Right now, what are you thinking about yourself and your ability to learn this material/skill?
 - How can you change your self-talk to influence your thinking about yourself and your ability to learn this material/skill?
 - How would your actions change if you believed you could learn this material/skill?
 - Goal: to equip each student with the ability to self-direct thinking and adjust behavior accordingly

THINK & INTERACT

Imagine a student has handed you work to review. What statements (i.e., What actual words) may provide a frame that encourages a positive response from the student?

- ▶ the student’s work is correct and required minimal effort
- ▶ the student’s work is incorrect despite obvious effort
- ▶ the student’s work is correct as a result of good effort

RESILIENCE & GRIT: A THREE-PART ABILITY

The underpinnings of resilience and grit:

- ▶ **Imagination:** specifically, the ability to generate mental images of situations that do not currently exist
- ▶ **Reflection:** the ability to monitor one’s own thinking and engage strategies that make positive adjustments
- ▶ **Attention:** directing one’s “cognitive flashlight” to focus his/her mental field of vision

THE BRAIN FACES A CHALLENGE AND A CHOICE



TRAINING IMAGINATION (THE FUTURE COMPONENT)

Being able to imagine a future generates hope, which sparks and sustains effort.

- ▶ “Put Yourself in the Picture”
 - provides an opportunity to practice motivational or instructive self-talk
 - establishes reference points of resilience
 - encourages a positive and effective response to challenge
- ▶ Guide student thinking
 - emphasize a motivational image
 - emphasize a strategic “mental movie”

TRAINING REFLECTION (THE PAST COMPONENT)

Self-awareness is not the mind’s default state, but such awareness precedes positive adjustment.

- ▶ Strategy

Error primes the mind for insight, and analyzing the error invites it.

- get the student talking, specifically to think aloud: What are you thinking about yourself as you try to complete this task?
- keep the student talking, using instructive self-talk, talking through the details of how to complete the task, NOT self-esteem boosting messages

thoughts → feelings → performance

- get the student to examine and discuss what went wrong; avoid telling the student what went wrong and how to fix it (at least initially)

TRAINING ATTENTION (THE PRESENT COMPONENT)

When our minds wander, brain circuits that produce “chatter” immediately become active. Attention strays when it’s overwhelmed.

- ▶ Strategy
 - focus on just the next step
 - advertise progress

BRINGING FUTURE (IMAGINATION), PAST (REFLECTION), AND PRESENT (ATTENTION) TOGETHER: AN EXAMPLE

HELPING STUDENTS FIND RESILIENCE

- ▶ Foster resilience by directing student thinking...
 - to the future to propel directed effort—“Here is what you can do!” or “Here is what you’ll be able to do!”
 - to the past to promote learning by examining error—“Let’s figure out how to change the strategy so that you are successful.”
 - to the present to focus attention on next steps—“Just focus on the first step and complete it.”

THINK & INTERACT

Discuss the following with your colleagues:

Imagine a student has handed you work to review. What statements (i.e., What actual words) may help the student find grit and resilience?

- ▶ the student’s work seems scattered, as if he/she does not know how to get a good start
- ▶ the student’s work is mediocre and suggests a lack of focus and/or effort
- ▶ the student’s work (or behavior) suggests he/she is overwhelmed with the work required to produce a good result
- ▶ the student’s work is exemplary

REFERENCES

- Afremow, J., *The Champion's Mind: How Great Athletes Think, Train, and Thrive* (New York: Rodale, Inc., 2013).
- Afremow, J., *The Champion's Comeback: How Great Athletes Recover, Reflect, and Reignite* (New York: Rodale, Inc., 2016).
- Bhanji, J. P. & Delgado, M.R. (2014). Perceived control influences neural responses to setbacks and promotes persistence. *Neuron* (<http://www.sciencedaily.com/releases/2014/09/140904131146.htm>).
- Brooks, R., "Nurturing Positive Emotions, Purpose, and Resilience in Schools" (presentation at *Learning and the Brain: New York City*, April 2018).
- Brooks, R., "Mindsets for School Success: Effective Educators and Resilient, Motivated Learners" (presentation at *Learning and the Brain: Using Brain Research to Enhance Cognitive Abilities and Achievement*, November 2007).
- Brooks, R., & Goldstein, S., *Raising Resilient Children* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 2001).
- Brown, J., *The Runner's Brain: How to Think Smarter to Run Better* (New York: Rodale Inc., 2015).
- Burnett, D., *Idiot Brain: What Your Head is Really Up To* (New York: W. W. Norton & Co., 2016).
- Coutu, D., "How Resilience Works" in *Emotional Intelligence: Resilience* (Boston: Harvard Business Review Press, 2017).
- Davis, D. H., & Wadell, P.J., Educating Lives for Christian Wisdom. *International Journal of Christianity & Education* (Vol. 20, Issue 2, July 2016).
- Diaz, M.R., Metacognition: A Pathway to Motivation. *Think Differently and Deeply* (Vol. 2, 12-13).
- Duckworth, A., *Grit: The Power of Passion and Perseverance* (New York: Scribner, 2016).
- Duckworth, A. L., "Self-discipline, IQ, and Academic Achievement (presentation at *Learning & the Brain: Using Emotions Research to Enhance Learning*, November 2008).
- Duckworth, A. L., & Seligman, M. E. P. (2006). Self-discipline gives girls the edge: Gender in self-discipline, grades, and achievement test scores. *Journal of Educational Psychology* 98(1), 198-208.
- Duckworth, A. L., & Seligman, M. E. P. (2005). Self-discipline outdoes IQ in predicting academic performance of adolescents. *Psychological Science* 16(12), 939-944.
- Dweck, C.S. (2007). *Mindset : The new psychology of success*. New York: Random House.
- Ericsson, A. & Pool, R., *Peak: Secrets from the New Science of Expertise* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, 2016).
- Fitzgerald, M. *How Bad Do You Want It? Mastering the Psychology of Mind Over Muscle* (Boulder, CO: VeloPress, 2015).
- Goleman, D., "Resilience for the Rest of Us" in *Emotional Intelligence: Resilience* (Boston: Harvard Business Review Press, 2017).
- Goleman, D., *Focus: The Hidden Driver of Excellence* (New York: HarperCollins, 2013).
- Grant, A., *Originals: How Non-Conformists Move the World* (New York: Viking, 2016).
- Hanson, R., "Unshakeable Core: Growing the Inner Strengths of Resilient Wellbeing. (presentation at *Learning and the Brain*, April 2018).
- Hanson, R., *Resilient: How to Grow and Unshakable Core of Calm, Strength, and Happiness* (New York: Harmony Books, 2018).
- Hoerr, T.R., *Fostering Grit* (Alexandria, VA: ASCD, 2013).
- Hatzigeorgiadis, A., as quoted in Afremow, J., *The Champion's Mind: How Great Athletes Think, Train, and Thrive* (New York: Rodale, Inc., 2013) 39-40.
- Hutchinson, A., *Endure: Mind, Body, and the Curiously Elastic Limits of Human Performance* (New York: William Morrow, 2018).
- Immordino-Yang, M. H., *Emotions, Learning, and the Brain: Exploring the Educational Implications of Affective Neuroscience* (New York: W. W. Norton & Co., 2015).

Jabr, F., "Speak for Yourself," *Scientific American Mind* (Jan/Feb 2014), 45-51.

Miller, C.A., *Getting Grit* (Boulder, CO: Sounds True, Inc., 2017).

Nilson, L.D., *Creating Self-regulated Learners* (Sterling, VA: Stylus Publishing, 2013).

Pink, D.H., *Drive: The Surprising Truth Behind What Motivates Us* (New York: Riverhead Books, 2009).

Sandberg, S., & Grant, A., *Option B: Facing Adversity, Building Resilience, and Finding Joy* (New York: Knopf, 2017).

Shenk, D. (2010). *The genius in all of us*. New York: Doubleday.

Shenk, D. (interview). <http://www.npr.org/templates/story/story.php?storyId=125021837>

Stulberg, B., & Magness, S., *Peak Performance* (New York: Rodale, Inc., 2017).

Tough, P., *How Children Succeed: Grit, Curiosity, and the Hidden Power of Character* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 2012).

Washburn, K.D. *The Architecture of Learning: Designing Instruction for the Learning Brain*. (Pelham, AL: Clerestory Press, 2010).