

Presentation Title: Growth Mindset and "Soft Skills": User-Friendly Ideas to Motivate and Encourage all Students to Succeed!

Handouts

Student Success: Going Beyond Academics!

How We Are Using Growth Mindset & Advisory To Teach Crucial Student Success Skills

Beth Bacon, M.S: Certified School Counselor, Fairhaven Middle School, Bellingham, WA

TABLE OF CONTENTS

1. Parent Education
2. Advisory Structure & Character Traits
3. Sample Lesson: Growth Mindset, Part I
4. Sample Lesson: Persistence, Part II
5. Friday Lesson Format
6. Discussion Prompts, Activities, & Miscellaneous Stuff

PARENT EDUCATION

Growth Mindset: How we can help the children in our care grow to be happy, successful adults?

By Beth Bacon, M.S., FMS Certified School Counselor
Some information adapted from www.mindsetworks.com

Children and adults with a growth mindset know that intelligence and abilities are not fixed and can be developed. The brain is a muscle that can be exercised and strengthened through effort, facing and overcoming challenges, and learning from mistakes. This leads to a desire to learn, and a tendency to embrace new and difficult challenges, persist in the face of setbacks, recognize effort as the path to mastery, learn from criticism, and find lessons and inspiration in the success of others. As a result, they reach ever-higher levels of achievement and maintain a greater sense of free will. *We embrace a growth mindset at Fairhaven Middle School!* Mistakes are welcomed and expected, as we help our youngest adolescents deal with the myriad challenges of middle school, including the highs and lows of puberty, making and keeping friends, learning how to work with different teaching styles and temperaments, facing academic challenges and figuring out how to self-challenge and go above-and-beyond when facing lessons or topics they may not find naturally challenging or particularly interesting. Through this process, we help each student develop the self-confidence and the resilience to keep going when things get tough. For more information on how to nurture a growth mindset in your child, please give me a call or drop me an email, visit: www.mindsetworks.com, or read "Mindset" by Carol Dweck or "How Children Succeed" by Paul Tough.

WELCOME TO COMPASS!

COMPASS is a new advisory program we are piloting at Fairhaven this year. Advisory programs are an effective way to support the unique developmental needs of middle-level students, and we are excited to be providing our students with this new opportunity. COMPASS groups will meet at the end of the day, and each child's advisor will support them and follow their progress through all three years of middle school.

Here at Fairhaven, our COMPASS groups have 3 primary goals:

1. Build Supportive Relationships:

- a) Provides students with a caring adult advisor.
- b) Gives students the opportunity to build positive relationships with, mentor, and learn from, students across all of our grade levels.

2. Promote Individual Growth:

Through discussions and activities based around the 7 character traits of COMPASS, as well as team-building, instruction in student success skills, and academic, social, and emotional support, COMPASS will help each child grow and develop as a student and as a whole person.

3. Build School Community:

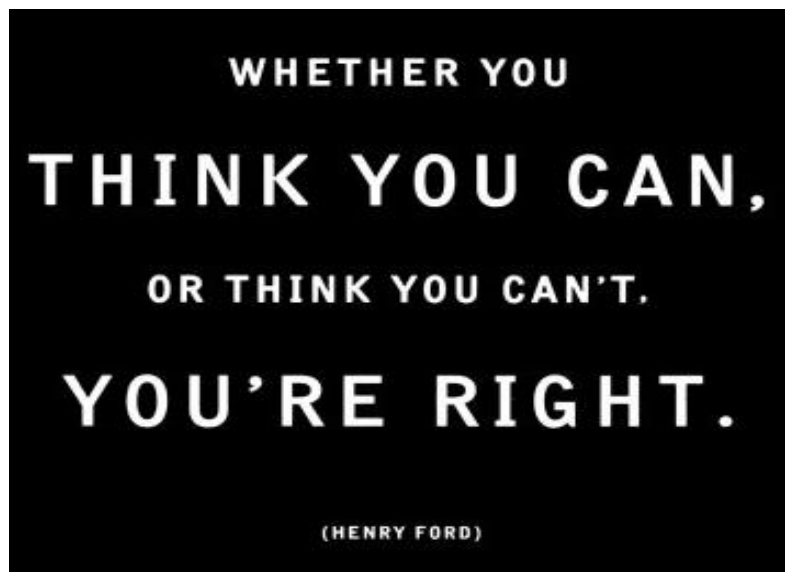
- a) Share common lessons, discussions, and activities in all COMPASS groups throughout the school – building consistency in expectations, values, and priorities, and promoting school pride.
- b) Provide different grade levels more opportunity for interaction and relationship-building.

COMPASS STRUCTURE

- Mondays: School wide theme based on one of the COMPASS Character Traits
- Tues/Thurs: Menu of options including: Team-building, supplemental activities delving more deeply into the weekly theme, D.E.A.R. (Drop Everything And Read), Peer tutoring.
- Fridays: Friday Reflection & Weekend Planning, Assemblies & School Wide COMPASS activities take place during Friday COMPASS.

COMPASS CHARACTER TRAITS

- Curiosity:** Questioning, participating, actively listening
- Optimism:** Positivity, confidence, resourcefulness
- Motivation:** Recognizing that what I do now makes a difference in the path of my life
- Persistence:** Falling down, getting up, trying harder
- Appreciation:** Recognizing and expressing gratitude for others and for opportunities
- Self-Control:** Managing my own behavior: Being safe, responsible, and respectful
- Social Intelligence:** Respecting others' feelings and rights, managing conflicts, including others



THEME: GROWTH MINDSET – PART I

Objectives:

- Introduce the concept – “You can grow your brain & abilities.”
- Guide students to an understanding that practice and making mistakes are valuable ways to expand your knowledge and abilities.
- Stress that our FMS culture embraces a growth mindset.

Introduction:

- Tell students that today you’ll be talking about intelligence. Share the following with the group:
 - People used to think that intelligence is fixed and doesn’t change – that people are born smart, average, or dumb, and that they stay that way for life. BUT, brain research shows that the brain is like a muscle that changes and gets stronger the more you use it. That is known as a growth mindset. You CAN grow your brain! We know that to be true, and we will help you to grow your brain here at Fairhaven.

Activity/Discussion:

- Put the attached hand out up on the doc.cam or make copies for your students to read along with, individually. Your preference.
- Go through the whole growth mindset sheet with your students, preferably asking students to read portions of it. Pause to allow for discussion and sharing of ideas as you progress through the different concepts. Encourage all students to actively participate in the discussion. If you feel comfortable, share examples from your own personal or professional life.

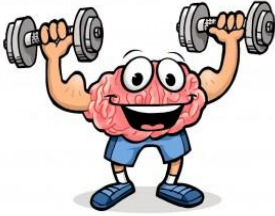
DISCUSSION PROMPTS (if needed):

- What is something you know now, that you had to practice and practice to learn?
- What did you do when you made a mistake as you were learning?
- Talk about a time you challenged yourself to learn something that was hard for you?
- Can you think of anyone famous who grew his or her brain through practicing, making mistakes, and challenging themselves?
- What is something you are going to learn this year that will take practice and determination to master?

Follow Up Goal: As you face difficult learning challenges during this new school year, remind yourself that you can grow your brain by practicing, making mistakes, and not giving up. If you are feeling discouraged or find yourself thinking that you are “dumb” or “stupid”, come talk to me, see one of your school counselors, or talk to another trusted adult for ideas and support.

You CAN Grow Your Intelligence!

The brain changes and gets stronger, when you use it!



Inside the cortex of the brain are billions of tiny nerve cells called neurons. The neurons have branches connecting them to each other in a complicated network. Communication between these brain cells is what allows us to think and solve problems. When you learn new things, these tiny connections in the brain actually **multiply** and get **stronger**.

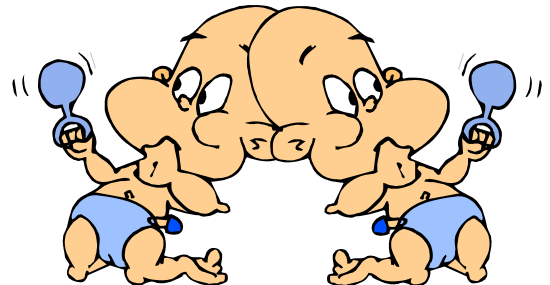
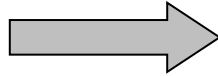
The more you challenge your mind to learn, the more neuron connections you make in your brain.

If you continue to strengthen these connections, things you once found very hard to do – like remembering information for a test or doing algebra or playing the trumpet – become easier.

Why? You are creating a stronger, smarter brain.

THE REAL TRUTH ABOUT “SMART” AND “DUMB”

Nobody thinks babies are stupid because they can't talk or walk or read, right? They just haven't learned yet.



But some people call themselves, or others, “dumb” or “stupid” if they can't solve math problems, spell very well, or read quickly – Even though brain research proves that all of these things can be improved and learned with **practice**.

*So... How do you grow your brain? **What do you think?***

GROW YOUR BRAIN?

- ❖ Challenge it!
- ❖ Solve problems!
- ❖ Make mistakes!
- ❖ Practice, practice, and practice some more!

THEME: PERSISTENCE – PART II

Objectives:

- Continue to deepen student understanding of PERSISTENCE as a valuable tool for growth & success
- Support students to explore tools that will motivate them to persist in the face of failure or difficulty

Introduction: Tell students that today you'll be continuing to talk about PERSISTENCE more deeply, and that the goal for today will be for all students to find ways to motivate themselves to persist, even after experiencing a failure.

Discussion:

- Write the word PERSISTENCE on the board/doc.cam. Ask students to brainstorm as many synonyms for persistence as they can. Encourage as much participation as possible and write their ideas down where all students can see. (Ex: tenacity, steadfastness, perseverance.) When you have a good list of synonyms, move on, leaving the list up where students can see it.
- Break students into small groups and ask them to think about the people you discussed in the last lesson, or others they may know – people who faced failure after failure and became successful through persistence. If you feel comfortable, share a personal story of a time you persisted in the face of failure. Ask them to brainstorm and record a list of reasons why some people persist in the face of failure. What motivates them to keep on trying? Ask them to also brainstorm and record a list of reasons why some people give up when they experience failure. (Allow students at least 10 minutes to complete this activity. You may need to move from group-to-group to offer suggestions and prompts.)
- First, ask students to share their ideas of why some people give up. Allow time for comments and discussion. Ask if anyone would like to share a time they gave up on something for one of these reasons. If no one wants to share, move on.
- Next, have students share their ideas of what motivates people to persist and to continue moving forward. Ask if anyone would like to share a time they persisted and ask them what motivated them to continue moving forward.
- Read the following quotes about persistence and invite students to make comments or share insights:
 - It's not that I'm so smart, it's just that I stay with problems longer. - Albert Einstein
 - Look at a stone cutter hammering away at his rock, perhaps a hundred times without as much as a crack showing in it. Yet at the hundred-and-first blow it will split in two, and I know it was not the last blow that did it, but all that had gone before. - Jacob A. Riis
 - What do you do when you first learn to swim? You make mistakes, do you not? And what happens? You make other mistakes, and when you have made all the mistakes you possibly can without drowning – and some of them many times over – what do you find? That you can swim. Well – life is just the same as learning to swim! Do not be afraid of making mistakes, for there is no other way of learning how to live!" – Alfred Adler
 - Money grows on the tree of persistence. – Japanese Proverb

Follow-Up Goal: Think of one or two things that would motivate you to persist, even after failing. The next time you face a situation that makes you want to give up, try using one or two of these ideas to motivate yourself to continue. If you need help, come talk to me, one of your school counselors, or another trusted adult.

THEME: FRIDAY REFLECTION

Objective

- Reflect on the week
- Plan for weekend homework completion
- Set goal for following week

Ice-Breaker

Have students sit or stand in a circle or some way that lets them see one another easily.

Go around the circle and ask each student to rate their week with: 1) Thumbs up for “great”, 2) Thumb sideways for “just OK”, or 3) Thumb down for “lousy”. You go first. If you feel comfortable, let the students know why you rated your week the way you did, then ask the next person to go. As each person goes, ask them if they’d like to share what made their week that way. Encourage sharing and open discussion as much as possible.

Weekend Planning Activity

1. Ask students to pull out their binders or other materials and make sure they know what assignments they need to work on over the weekend. Have them write down what they need to do!
2. Once all students have organized themselves, ask if anyone has activities or events coming up over the weekend that could make it hard to get their homework done. If yes, ask them how they will work around it to make sure they get their work completed. You can do this out loud with the whole group or check in individually with each student as they are organizing themselves.

Goal for the Week

Tell students that you want them each to set an individual goal for the following week. Give some examples, such as “Talk to 3 kids I don’t know very well,” “Talk to my math teacher about the problem I don’t understand,” “Finish my essay on capitalism,” etc., etc..... Have them write down their goal for the next week and 3 steps they can take to achieve it. Students can share or keep it to themselves. If you have a goal for yourself, feel free to share.

IF TIME ALLOWS....

Weekly Mistakes

Tell students that mistakes are welcomed and expected at FMS, because that’s how we grow our brains and expand our knowledge – by taking risks and learning from the mistakes we make.

Now ask, “Who made a mistake this week besides me?” Ask if anyone would like to share the mistake they made. If they are reluctant, share a mistake you made and what you learned from it.

End each week by telling your students how happy you are to have had them in your COMPASS class and how much you look forward to seeing them the following week. You are the last person they will see as this week, so do the best you can to send them out the door with a message of positivity and strength.

COMPASS LESSON INFO., ACTIVITY EXAMPLES, & DISCUSSION PROMPTS

G: Get back up

R: Review the situation

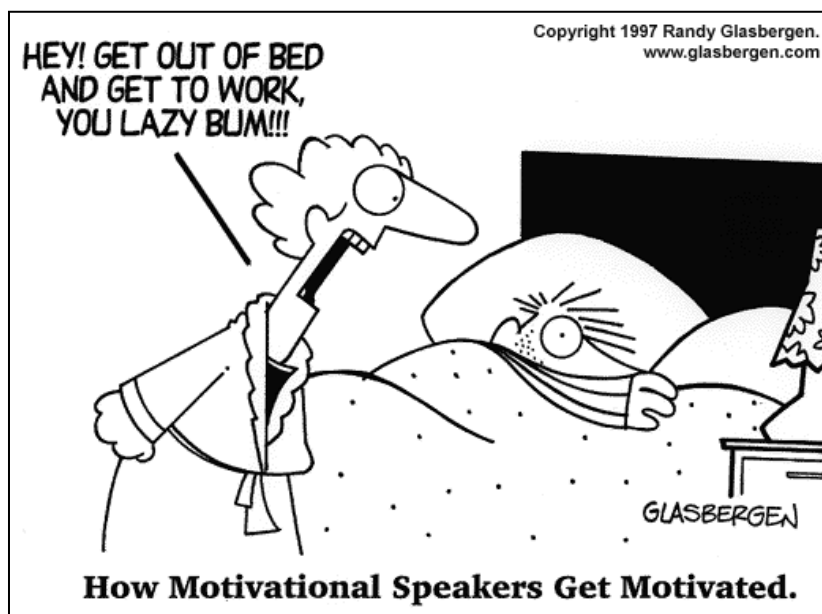
I: Identify a new strategy

T: Try again

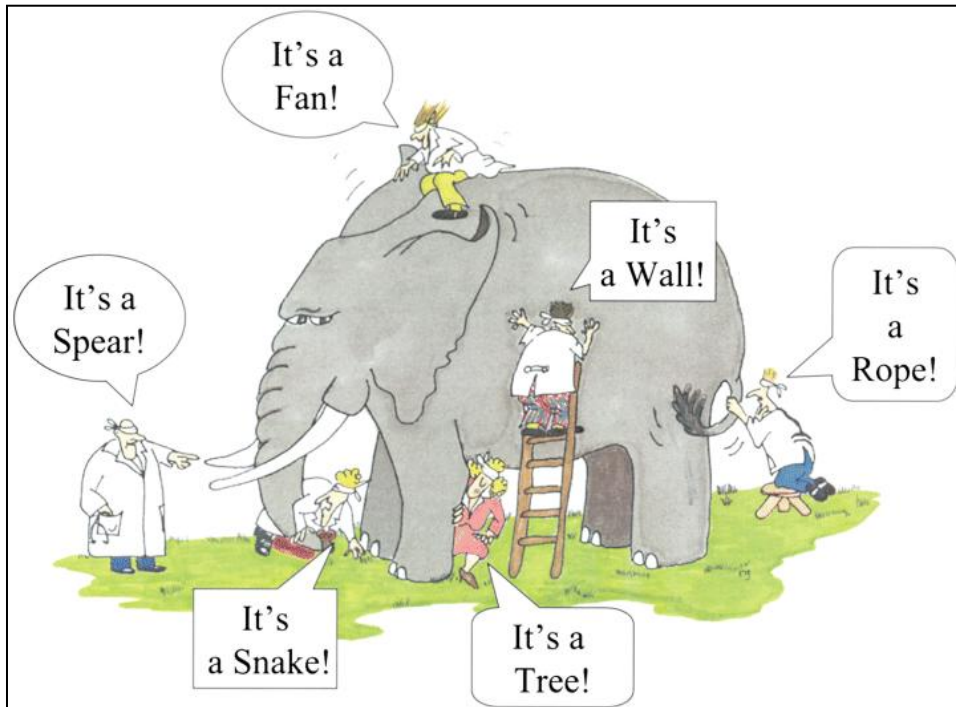
GRIT – The **RESILIENCE** to keep going, the **PERSISTENCE** to try new and improved strategies, the **DETERMINATION** to view failure as a path to new learning.

MORAL COURAGE: Scenario 2: One day you and one of your friends are at the mall. In one of the stores you notice your friend sneak some items into their pockets and walk out. You plan to stay at the mall for another hour and go to several more stores. In each store your friend steals some merchandise. What do you do?

MOTIVATION:



CURIOSITY/PERSPECTIVE:



DREAMS/MLK:

A Dream I Have For Myself	A Dream I Have For My Family
A Dream I Have For My Community	A Dream I Have For My World

Dreams were shared in an assembly, and we created a dream wall in our lobby that now has all dreams posted.

APPRECIATION:

Assembly on ways to Pay It Forward in the world: Read to Feed, Heifer International, Food Drive

Pay it forward activities at school, at home, and in our community.

Month-Long theme following MLK Assembly

My Contact Information
Beth Bacon, M.S. Certified School Counselor, Fairhaven Middle School
Beth.bacon@bellingshamschools.org