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EAP EMPLOYEE ENHANCEMENT NEWSLETTER



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DEER OAKS EAP PRESENTS:

March On-Demand Seminar

*From Tired to Inspired:
Keeping Engaged and
Preventing Burnout*

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Change Your Mindset and Grow

When psychologist Carol Dweck was studying how children respond to new challenges, she noticed something interesting. Some hung back or gave up easily while others appeared to enjoy the experience, persisting even after repeated failures. She and her research colleagues came up with a model to explain the differences they were observing: fixed and growth mindsets.

Dweck's mindset model has proved to be a valuable tool for understanding adult behavior, too. You can use it in your own life to learn, stretch your abilities, and grow for greater success.

What is a fixed mindset?

A fixed mindset is the belief that your intelligence, abilities, and other qualities are set, or have limits that can't be overcome, even with effort. A fixed mindset can be reinforced in school or through life experiences when someone tells you that you're either good at or not good at something. That might be math, writing, singing, sports, social relationships, or anything else.

When you have a fixed mindset and are faced with a new task, you have a tendency to either prove that you can do it well—demonstrating your ability—or avoid it—to hide a possible weakness. When you try and fail, you're not likely to persist. Your inner voice tells you that this is one of those things you're just not good at and are unlikely to master no matter how hard you try. With a fixed mindset, it's more comfortable to give up in the face of failure than to keep trying.

With a fixed mindset, your goal is to show off your natural strengths and hide your natural deficiencies. That can limit you and keep you from trying new things, learning, and growing. It can be a real obstacle when you're faced with a significant change.

What is a growth mindset?

A growth mindset is the belief that you can hone your intelligence, abilities, and other qualities with practice, training, and help from others. With a growth mindset, you understand that people have different talents and strengths, but that these are just the starting point and can be built on and improved. They are the floor rather than the ceiling.

When you have a growth mindset, you welcome new challenges as opportunities to learn and grow. Trying and failing is not discouraging enough to stop you. Rather, each attempt is a learning experience, informing your next effort. When you can't overcome a problem, you don't hide your

failure. Instead, you examine what went wrong and try again with a different approach. You might ask for help and guidance from someone with more experience or expertise.

With a growth mindset, you're less concerned with what others might think of your failed attempts than with what you can learn from those failures as you try again.

Everyone moves between fixed and growth mindsets.

A key to benefiting from the concept of fixed and growth mindsets is to understand that people are not all one or the other. As Dweck explained in a 2016 interview in *The Atlantic*, "...nobody has a growth mindset in everything all the time."¹

You might have a growth mindset when engaged in some activities, but a fixed mindset in others. You might have a growth mindset when you're calm and well rested, and a fixed mindset when you're tense or exhausted. Think how you might behave under extreme time pressure compared to when you're working with more time. Think, too, about how you might approach different activities, such as public speaking, playing a musical instrument, solving a business problem using higher levels of math, or looking at the programming code behind a website. In some activities and at some times, your curiosity and drive to learn might have the upper hand—a growth mindset. In other situations, your fixed mindset might take charge.

How Adopting a Growth Mindset Can Help You Succeed

Adopting a growth mindset in more areas of your life—whether it's work, relationships, creative endeavors, or anything else—can lead you to new knowledge and new skills while deepening your understanding of who you are and all you can be. Recognizing the situations and triggers that tend to push you into a fixed mindset can help you be more self-aware and better able to consciously change for the better.

The more you approach life with a growth mindset, the better you'll be at overcoming obstacles, navigating change, and seizing new opportunities. In short, cultivating a growth mindset can help you thrive in all aspects of your life, especially when faced with new challenges.

Charles Kettering, one of the most successful inventors of all time (his 186 patents include the electric starter for cars, an incubator for premature infants, and ways to harness solar energy), wrote this: "Every great improvement

has come after repeated failures. Virtually nothing comes out right the first time. One fails forward toward success.”²

Ways to Get Into a Growth Mindset

Accepting that you operate in both fixed and growth mindsets is the first step in using this concept to your advantage. The next is to notice when you shift between the two mindsets. Even if you are a person who is naturally curious, open to new experiences, and driven to learn, you’re bound to face situations or have times when you feel insecure and defensive. Those might include criticism, conflict, or failed efforts. These are the triggers that push you into a fixed mindset. Pay attention to your fixed-mindset triggers. When you catch yourself giving up too easily or trying too hard to show off known abilities, make a conscious effort to get yourself into a growth mindset—experimenting, taking risks, and learning from your attempts and failures.

Moving to a growth mindset is a journey that takes time and requires self-examination. Here are some ways to help yourself along that path:

- When faced with an obstacle or a setback, pause and consider the opportunities it might present.
- When you try something and it doesn’t work out as expected, examine what went wrong. Adjust your approach and try again.
- When you find yourself focusing narrowly on the negatives of a situation, expand your view to look at other possibilities. Is this a roadblock, or just new information that gives you a clearer picture of reality? How might you respond creatively to make progress?
- When fear of failure keeps you from trying something new, consider how you might benefit from learning a new skill. Think, too, about the worst outcome, should you try and fail. It’s usually not such a big deal, even if it takes a few failed attempts to make progress.
- If everything you do comes easily, you’re probably avoiding important challenges and opportunities. Seek out assignments and activities that stretch you and make you a bit uncomfortable.
- Commit yourself to lifelong learning. Learning doesn’t stop when you leave school. Cultivate your curiosity, too. Learning can be fun.
- If you’re stuck, ask for help. It’s not an admission of failure. It’s a sign that you’re committed to succeeding.

- Be tenacious. The important successes in life take hard work. They often require that you overcome obstacles and make many failed attempts, sometimes a great many, before you succeed.

For More Information

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Source: Morgan, H. (2021, October). *Change your mindset and grow* (C. Meeker & B. Schuette, Eds.). Raleigh, NC: Workplace Options.

National Nutrition Month

March 2022

Grab the Fork By the Handle: Choose Good Food!

Eat more fruits and vegetables.

March is National Nutrition Month, and having a healthy diet and exercising are components of a healthy lifestyle. A recent study by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) showed when, where, and how adults and children in the United States have a healthy diet.¹ People who do not eat enough fruits and vegetables can take small steps to meet the recommended daily amount, such as adding more fruits to your usual breakfast or more vegetables to your meals. Having a diet rich in fruits and vegetables can help reduce the risk of many of the main causes of illness and death, add important nutrients to your diet, and help control your weight.

The recent CDC study shows that adults consume most of their fruits during breakfast and as a snack, and eat less than the recommended amounts.¹ People who do not consume enough fruit may try to add more to their breakfast or their snacks, such as a small apple or banana. On the other hand, children tend to eat fruits throughout the day. Children who aren't meeting their daily required portions could add more fruit to their breakfast, lunch, or snacks.

Adults and children tend to eat most of their vegetables at dinnertime. However, people who do not eat enough vegetables could try adding them to their salad at lunchtime or to their sandwich (e.g. slices of tomatoes or small carrots), or they could mix them with what they eat at dinner (e.g. add broccoli to the noodles).

Are you consuming enough fruits and vegetables daily?

The amount of fruits and vegetables you should eat varies by age, sex, and activity level. Click on the links below to find out how much fruit (<https://www.choosemyplate.gov/fruit>) and vegetables (<https://www.choosemyplate.gov/vegetables>) you need to consume every day.

You can also check the latest edition of the Dietary Guidelines for Americans. These recommendations were created to provide a better understanding of food and nutrition, so that you can make informed decisions about healthy foods and drinks. They also give you the flexibility to choose healthier foods that are right for you and your family. The 2020–2025 Dietary Guidelines for Americans is available at <https://www.dietaryguidelines.gov>.

The Division of Nutrition, Physical Activity, and Obesity of the CDC supports the people of the United States in their attempt to have good health by working in the following environments:

- Educational centers for child care providers—CDC works in each state to help education and child care providers meet national nutrition standards.
- Schools—CDC partners with collaborators nationwide to increase the number of salad buffets donated to schools by the private sector.
- Work sites—CDC offers help on how to adopt and implement healthy food-service guides at work sites.
- Food retail stores in the community—Full-service grocery stores, farmers markets, and other retailers that sell healthier foods and beverages, such as fruits, vegetables, whole grains, and low-fat dairy products, are not found in all neighborhoods. CDC collaborates with states and communities to increase healthier food options in these community retail environments.

Reference

1. Moore, L.V., Hamner, H.C., Kim, S.A., & Dalenius, K. (2016, October). Common ways Americans are incorporating fruits and vegetables into their diet: Intake patterns by meal, source and form—National Health and Nutrition Examination Survey 2007–2010. *Public Health Nutrition*, 19(14), 2535–2539. doi: 10.1017/S1368980016000586

Source: U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), National Center for Chronic Disease Prevention and Health Promotion (NCCDPHP), Division of Nutrition, Physical Activity, and Obesity. (2019, November). Grab the fork by the handle: Choose good food! (B. Schuette, Trans.).

Get the Most Out of Savings: Smart Savings Tips for 2022

So often, people are bombarded with messages regarding finances, such as, “Save 20 percent of your income,” “Make sure you have a minimum of \$1,000 in your emergency fund,” “You should save and invest!” The list goes on and on, from financial gurus to your neighbors’ advice; sometimes misinformation never ends. Everyone has an opinion on how to maximize your savings, but which is the right way?

Just as there are multiple routes to a destination, there are many acceptable ways to save money. The difference really comes down to the circumstances of the individual. A single individual making \$100,000 a year and living with roommates will have a starkly different savings strategy than a couple making the same amount of money but with a mortgage, student loans, and children. Baring that in mind, this article will look at three steps that will help you save more in 2022.

Check your expenses.

Every structure needs a foundation. To make sure you are financially sound, a budget is needed. A budget helps you to clearly see how much money is flowing in and out of your household. Many people are surprised at the amount of money that goes to miscellaneous spending. Having a detailed budget—one that accounts for more than just food, housing, utilities, and gas—will allow you to better manage your money, address debt, and reach different financial goals (e.g. saving).

Select a specific goal.

Saving is great, but if you aren’t saving with a goal in mind, chances are it will be hard to put something aside regularly. There are a number of goals that fall within the saving realm. Some may include

- Emergency funds
- Short-term goals of less than two years (e.g. vacation, paying off a small debt)
- Long-term goals of two to 15 years (e.g. college, buying large-ticket items in cash)

Whatever your goal may be, it is important to break goals down into smaller goals to keep your momentum. An example may be saving to buy a car with cash. Your ultimate goal is to save \$10,000, but you will aim to save \$850 a

month. You get paid bi-weekly, so you will then put away \$425 each paycheck for the next 12 months.

Pay your future self first.

You work hard for your money. Because you work hard, of course you deserve to treat yourself. Treating yourself is fine as long as you aren’t stealing from your future self. Most of what you buy today won’t do anything for you in the future. Paying yourself first is easy if you use automation. Every time you get money direct deposited, have your account send a predetermined amount over to your savings account. You won’t miss it.

Lastly, it is recommended that you look into putting your money in a high-yield savings account. The standard savings account will give you a return of 0.01 to 0.09 percent. Most high-yield savings accounts are hovering around 0.50 percent interest. Since your money will be sitting in your savings account for a while, why not give it an opportunity to make you a little more?

These three steps seem so simple, but, when applied to everyday finances, you will see the difference. Taking stock of your finances, setting reachable goals, and paying yourself first will have you on the way to saving more than you thought you could. You will have less debt, you will no longer be blindsided by car repair expenses, and your future self will thank you.

Source: Surles, J. (Revised 2021, November [Ed.]). Get the most out of savings: Smart savings tips for 2022 (B. Schuette, Ed.). Raleigh, NC: Workplace Options (WPO).