

How do I Help Promote a Growth Mindset?

Literature circulated to staff after workshop

1. Have daily learning discussions.

In form or lessons share the answers to these types of questions:

“What did you learn to day?” (*so much better than “How was your day?”*)

“What mistake did you make that taught you something?”

“What did you try hard at today?”

It’s really important says Dweck that we share what we learned, too. This models for children that we learn new things every day, even learning from failures.

When learners share, you can reply like this:

“You certainly did get smarter today.”

“I like the way you tried all kinds of strategies on that maths problem until you finally got it right.”

“We all have different learning curves. It may take more time for you to catch on to this and be comfortable with this material, but if you keep at it like this you will.”

“Everyone learns in a different way. Let’s keep trying to find the way that works for you.”

(These are direct quotes from *Mindset* by Carol S. Dweck, Ph.D.)

2. Give feedback on process only.

[Praise effort](#), persistence, strategies, seeking challenges, setting goals, planning, or using creative strategies.

Don’t praise personal abilities like being smart, pretty, or artistic. This kind of praise actually can [lead to a loss of confidence](#) since kids won’t be smart at everything. They’ll doubt their ability to be good at something that is difficult initially.

[Salman Khan recently wrote](#) that he will never tell his son he’s smart for this very reason. He shares, “*Between the deep body of research on the field of learning mindsets and this personal experience with my son, I am more convinced than ever that mindsets toward learning could matter more than anything else we teach.*” The research Dweck did on our feedback to kids is fascinating.

3. Do you know brains can grow?

Explain to kids how the [brain can grow stronger](#) and that intelligence can improve throughout your life. **Intelligence is not fixed.** It's changeable. This is called [brain plasticity](#). (Aren't you so glad!?)

What's more, [learning CHANGES our brains](#). (Again, three cheers for brain growth!) Kids need to know this is possible.

4. Encourage risk, failing, and learning from mistakes.

Now is the time to let our kids risk and fail. **Failure teaches our kids important life lessons. For one, it's how they learn r resiliency**

But we often want to prevent our kids from failing, from feeling upset or sad.

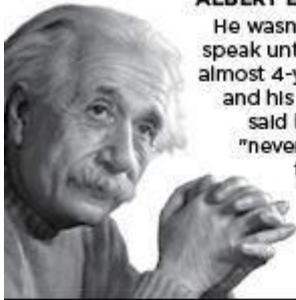
Don't.

We must let our kids fail now so that they can strengthen their growth mindset muscles. If we don't, they will be adults with no perseverance, with no belief in their abilities to work hard and succeed.

In [The Blessings of a Skinned Knee](#), Wendy Mogel says to be compassionate and concerned but not enmeshed.

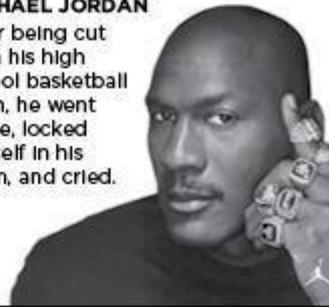
Let's keep each other accountable on this. This is hard but so important.

FAMOUS FAILURES



ALBERT EINSTEIN

He wasn't able to speak until he was almost 4-years-old and his teachers said he would "never amount to much"



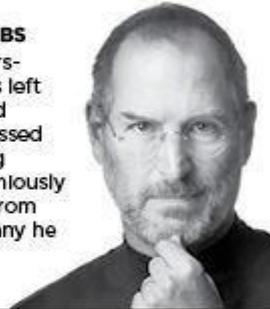
MICHAEL JORDAN

After being cut from his high school basketball team, he went home, locked himself in his room, and cried.



WALT DISNEY

Fired from a newspaper for "lacking imagination" and "having no original ideas."



STEVE JOBS

At 30-years-old he was left devastated and depressed after being unceremoniously removed from the company he started.



OPRAH WINFREY

Was demoted from her job as a news anchor because she "wasn't fit for television."

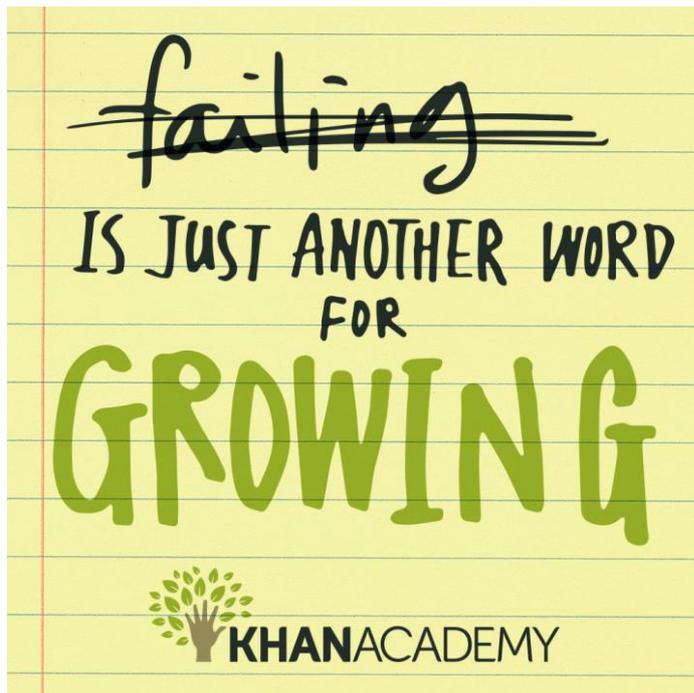


THE BEATLES

Rejected by Decca Recording Studios, who said "We don't like their sound—they have no future in show business."

**IF YOU'VE NEVER FAILED,
YOU'VE NEVER TRIED ANYTHING NEW**

And **# when** your child fails, celebrate the lessons in the failure. Tell them about all the [famous people who failed](#) and didn't give up.



Then check out the [“You can learn anything” movement](#) that the Khan Academy is doing. Are you in? [Go here.](#)

5. Encourage and model positive self talk.

Finally, I think it's worth sharing this [self-talk chart from Fieldcrest Elementary](#). Our **self talk** is where it all starts to shift.

