

# 065-mindset-carol-dweck-productivity-book-group

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## SPEAKERS

Raymond Sidney-Smith, Frank Buck, EdD



Raymond Sidney-Smith 00:00

Welcome to productivity book report. I'm your host and facilitator Ray Sidney-Smith. Thanks for joining me here for productivity book groups discussion of mindset, the new psychology of success by Dr. Carol Dweck, a little bit about the author and the book first. This is all being pulled by the way from Amazon's descriptions, so do credit there. Carol Dweck, PhD, is a widely regarded leading researcher in the fields of personality, social psychology and developmental psychology. She has been the William B. Radford, professor of psychology at Columbia University, and is now the loosened Virginia Eaton professor of psychology at Stanford University, and a member of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences, our scholarly book self theories, their role in motivation, personality and development was named a Book of the Year by the world education fellowship. Her work has been featured in publications such as the New Yorker time, The New York Times, the Washington Post, and the Boston Globe. She's Of course appeared on today in 2020 and She lives with her husband in Palo Alto, California. So she is also a Californian there, Linda. A little bit about the book from the book description on Amazon. After decades of research world renowned Stanford University psychologist Carol Dweck discovered a simple but groundbreaking idea, the power of mindset. In this brilliant book, she shows how success in school work sports, the arts, and almost every area of human endeavor can be dramatically influenced by how we think about our talents and abilities. People

with a fixed mindset. Those who believe that abilities are fixed, are less likely to flourish than those with a growth mindset. Those who believe that their abilities can be developed mindset reveals how great parents, teachers, managers and athletes can put this idea to use to use to foster outstanding accomplishment. This is the updated edition that we're going to be talking about where Dweck offers new insights in her now famous and broadly embraced concept. And so with that, let's get the conversation started with just understanding the way the book is organized. The book has eight chapters, where she talks about the different mindsets, she makes her way through explaining the mindsets more in depth. In chapter two, she talks about the truth about ability and accomplishment in chapter three, she then covers particular paradigms kind of areas of human activity, sports, business relationships, and then what parents, teachers and coaches can do regarding those mindsets. And that's chapters four through seven. And then she talks about changing mindsets in the final chapter. So let's start off discussion with what are your initial thoughts? What What were your initial kind of experiences, as you read mindset, the new psychology of success? Yeah,



Frank Buck, EdD 02:47

I'll jump in, of course, and I come from the background of education where, you know, our whole business is thinking that that students can improve that they can be better, that were sort of the great equalizer. Rather than the talents or ability that they that they bring with them. So this, you know, really plays well into what great teachers are always thinking and the good ones, you know, can point to student after student after student after student that maybe didn't experience success, other places, but they flourish in one particular classroom in one particular subject. Sometimes much to the amazement of other people.



Raymond Sidney-Smith 03:30

Absolutely. Yeah. I think that there was a time when we started off thinking that we should just praise students, call them smart, call them talented, and somehow they would they would flourish in that perspective. And it turns out that from the research, Dr. Dweck has has uncovered this really fundamental piece, which is that when we tell children that they're smart and talented, without praising them for effort, and for strategy and progress They fail more often. And I think this is really important for not only educators but I think for those of us who are aware of our own performance and want to enhance in that space, that we need to make sure that we're not holding tight to those things that we once we once heard, I mean, I know this very, very personally, I was raised in an environment where I was a smart kid. And my parents always identified me as that I'm one of six. And when

you're the smart child in a family, and everyone has high expectations of you, it's very difficult when you fail, because that is a it takes you completely out of psychological safety. You are your safety and is gone immediately. As soon as someone tells you that you have to study for a test. Otherwise you'd fail because no I'm in I'm intelligent. I don't just study you know, those things really compromise you when you start to see any any chinks in the dike and and so I had to learn very early on that When I did fail, and I didn't put in effort, that was why, as opposed to not just the effort, but also my intellect was at challenge, right and connecting those two pieces of the puzzle was very difficult for me and took a lot of emotional, you know, healing over time. But I wish I I wish someone had told me that up front, but it had nothing to do with my intellect had nothing to do with my smarts at everything to do with the amount of work that I put in. That meant more to my ultimate success. On the other side, anyone else with with initial thoughts,



05:34

almost like increasing self confidence also increases ego fragility?



Raymond Sidney-Smith 05:40

I would, I would, I would be curious whether that's true. I don't know that confidence necessarily is in, you know, like in particular areas, right? We can we can think about them in very, very specific areas.



05:52

I think I'm speaking specifically with that fixed mindset idea where you're praising you know, a particular person, it's not even instance here but it's just that you're you're focusing on the wrong thing. And as you yourself described, you get stressed you get worried as there's there's this performance thing. That's that is based on some wrongheaded thinking that fixed mindset versus the open mindset where it's all potential to learn.



Raymond Sidney-Smith 06:29

Right? And people respond so very differently to when they feel their intelligence challenged. In my case, it was it was definitely, you know, emotional it wasn't, it wasn't responded in terms of lacking and wanting to go back out there and do more work. Thankfully, I just have that charge associated with it. But um, I know that for me, it was

then an inward low mood problem, right. So then I would get depressed I would feel all of that internal turmoil that wasn't good for me, even though I would continue to keep kind of operating. And and I think that it was very damaging, you know, and I don't feel you know, I don't blame my parents, they were doing the best they could with what they had with what they knew at the time, right? You know, you do what you what you can. But if I had been told upfront, that effort mattered way more in the long term. You know, in the next 4050 years of my life, I would have never, never even given thought once to my intellect and to all of the talk around me. That was constant. I mean, like, I always heard it, and to this very day, you know, if you ask my mom, she'll, she'll tell you very plainly Oh, yeah, he's the smart one. And it's, she doesn't really quite she doesn't quite get it. You know, she was raised in that space, right where where you praise your children for what they what towns they show up front and and she thinks that that's the only piece for it. And I don't think she's actually a fixed mindset. I really don't think she she is but you know, that's how it goes. Brian, you had a thought you wanted to share?



07:59

Yeah. So I read the book about over a decade ago, and then I've just been keeping up with what Carol said. And it had an impact on me when I read it, I checked it out of the library, and it was like, kept the book for a couple of months and stuff. And just just a connection with like identity and ego development. And even Albert Bandura his ideas with self efficacy, he's at Stanford, Albert Bandura, that kind of thing and even Angela Duckworth, work on grit. So all of these things kind of go together, even though they're different researchers and different things. It's kind of fascinating to see how all these kind of streams Connect.



Raymond Sidney-Smith 08:32

Yeah, Duckworth sat up, and I think, yeah, somebody get here. Yeah, absolutely. Linda.



08:38

Well, I was just gonna say what you were talking about. I think there's a difference between praising the child and praising what the outcome or what is the the product and the the identification we have with product with self like what we produce is us so therefore, it has to be something particular. Otherwise, it's a reflection on on us. And I think that part of people not getting that straight when when we're children and telling us, oh, you're smart, instead of this is really fine work that you've done. You know, I'm very impressed with your work I'm very impressed with, with what your or the way you're

performing is really is really good, as opposed to saying, You're very fast, you know, or whatever the, you know, sports or whatever. But I think that focus on praise being focused on who you are, as opposed to, you're worthy because of these traits that you have, as opposed to just focusing on Hey, let's let's focus on what we see and what we like about that, as opposed to saying it's some kind of identification with yourself that you're good or bad because of your talents or whatever.



Raymond Sidney-Smith 09:46

Exactly. And that's what Dr. Dweck is really trying to get at, which is that when we praise children for things that they inherently don't have control over, they're going to feel less capable of, you know, experiencing what locus of control They have. And so if we reward and praise for effort, strategy and progress, which are the three areas, she really focuses on telling folks to, we're going to be far better off. And so that, of course, works and helps in raising and rearing and teaching children. But we're all adults. And unless anyone listening to the podcast is you're really young and the rest of us listening are adults also. So I'm really curious in terms of from the books perspective, what can we all do to use this material what can we actually gain from knowing this in our own worlds, and of course, the book touches on these different areas right, you know, sports performance, in our in our business and professional lives and our relationships. And you know, especially if you are of the growth mindset perspective, or learn to be growth mindset oriented, and you live with someone who is perhaps fixed, mindset oriented. talking for a friend. And so you know, you need to, you need to be mindful of how you can use these tools to be more productive. And and you know, not just with yourself because there is a lot of self discussion and self dialogue that needs to happen in terms of moving from fixed to growth mindset, even in areas where you might feel like, I'm actually of the opinion that we all have fixed and growth mindsets, based on particular categories of our lives. And so in one area of your life, you might think you're very fixed, or you might be very fixed and in another area might be very growth mindset oriented. And so we have to have this ongoing dialogue of challenging ourselves to say, what can I learn what can I do? How can I grow in this particular area? And so I'm just curious what areas of your own world and life do you feel like you are perhaps more growth mindset oriented or more fixed, mindset oriented? And how how would you like, how would you transition yourself to a more growth mindset perspective and for everyone's edification, right, so fixed mindset is you believe that You have a fixed set of traits that are unchanging. And growth mindset means that you can develop your abilities through effort. That's really the the clear differentiation or contrast between the two. What areas do you feel like you are fixed or growth? And how would you change that? This is Lily,



12:17

I'll jump in.



12:19

I have had to have a growth mindset for work for my entire career. I'm an IT person. And I've worked in all kinds of roles from hands on technician to various leadership roles. The technology changes so much that even if you're staying within the same company or even the same job,



12:46

what you get to do



12:50

requires you to keep learning things all the time. I mean, lifelong learning is a wonderful thing anyway, but in the technology field, it's a survival trait, you cannot, you cannot succeed



Raymond Sidney-Smith 13:07

without constantly learning new stuff. And so you have to have the growth mindset that, okay, I don't know how to program in this language. But now I have a project where I'm an expert in it, whether I am or not, and I have to go learn it. So you have to stay in the room. It's really interesting. I've heard over and over again, in the software development field, that engineers think about themselves being either good at their own personal productivity systems or bad at it, but that the work itself challenges them to, to kind of self organize, there's a structure that's usually provided by the environment that they work in, whether that be you know, they work in an agile Scrum environment where they are forced to basically have this output. So they they're, it's like, the the structure from the organization provides them a personal level of organization. It sounds to me like what you're saying is that also having to keep Keep up to date with regard to the languages kind of also forces you into that perspective as well. It's, it's something that I'm fascinated by and consistently paying attention to, as we kind of, as I, as I see different industries that are, that perpetuate good parts and have perpetuate bad parts to but you know, mostly perpetuate good performance parts.



14:20

So there was there is at least historically a bad part on the mainframe. Lots of people defined them with the mainframe. When people started working in programming on the mainframe, it was a black art, and it was a very small minority of people. And so people tended to identify heavily with what they did and their specific skills in that area. And it was it's been a very interesting thing as folks got to my age, lots of folks had very fixed mindset around I can't learn this new stuff. And it was a real challenge to keep people to move people out of that fixed mindset. I can share. I just



15:11

had a fixed mindset experience just a couple minutes ago, and I'm taking a lunch break here. And I have my work laptop next to me in the inbox, and I got an email from somebody that I had not met yet. And saw in their signature block after their name a whole bunch of different initials and letters and stuff. And I'm thinking, there's somebody who's got a show what they've done, as opposed to saying, Hey, here's somebody new with a lot of experience. I bet I can learn something from him as he learned something from me.



Raymond Sidney-Smith 15:46

You actually bring up a very, very good point, and it's something that I actually do pay attention to is people's email signatures and whether they put their credentials everywhere and anywhere they can, you know, and it's very interesting to see who puts what Where? And yeah, so, um, just as a quick side note, just administrative note for those who are dialing in by phone, you can use star six to unmute yourself if you do want to join the conversation at any point. So star six, and so back on to the conversation. I'm really curious if you experience this with others. So it's it's one thing to see yourself in, in and to do self analysis, you know, and it's another to kind of identify it from others. But I'm curious what and how you see others around you with fixed and growth mindsets, and not just to like pick on people I don't want you to think about like, Oh, I see this person, they're a fixed mindset and that's negative, because that can actually be a very protective layer for them kind of like myelin sheath thing in your brain, you know, like, people will hold to a fixed mindset because it's what they know it's and it keeps gives them a sense of comfort, and maybe they don't want to grow in that particular area. And that's perfectly fine. But I'm so so don't think about it more from someone's good or bad, but more from the negative and positive experiences you have with people who have fixed or growth mindsets. I know that for some people who have growth mindsets, they sometimes forget

that the ground is hard. And so they just keep hitting the ground. And they forget that at some point, they're going to break a bone, you know that that that bruising is one thing, but breaking bones is harder and to heal from. And so, you know, we do have to remember that there are kind of boundaries to all of this, even when we think about the growth mindset being something powerful and useful to us. And I'm just curious about what your own personal experiences well, as Derek noted, of, of coming into contact with people who might be fixed for growth mindsets, and some of the pros and cons there.



Frank Buck, EdD 17:47

Well, I'll jump in there, right. I think really here as so many other things. There are extremes and the extremes are the ones to avoid, and that he has been Franklin used to talk about The modern PC and all things. So you know, just as we don't want someone just stuck saying, you know, it can't get better. I can't do this, I can't do that. We also don't want to be with that person that says, Oh, yeah, I do anything. The other one that says I have on my Superman cape, therefore I can jump off the house and I can fly. Well, no, you won't do that. There needs to be a balance between the two. So the people I interact with I'm sort of looking for that I don't want the that eternal optimist where nothing can possibly go wrong, or the one that nothing can possibly go right.



Raymond Sidney-Smith 18:38

I always say that I'm I delude myself on the side of positive, right, which is that there's negative in the world. I'm not I'm not completely bothered by the fact that there's negative in the world. I know it exists, but I'm not going to lean into it. And so you know, if I'm going to if I'm going to be delusional in one, and I'm going to go toward the Don Quixote side, so not to the point of delusion, right, but like just positivity. deluding myself just a little bit on that side so I can stay positive. And I think that's what keeps me mostly optimistic. Danny, you wanted to say something before?



19:08

Yeah, I found it interesting that Professor Dweck kind of downplayed CBT. But as compared to the more expansive ability of looking at mindsets, though, in a way it also made sense. Like, you know, CBT is like the emergency room where you're, you're really addressing an immediate need and that you know, more demanding mindset that is impacting you emotionally. Whereas the mindsets they are looking to move toward a growth mindset is more about the long term treating a disease as opposed to a close in wound an emergency does so I got on board with her once I once I saw that I was at first



a little Negative about her and just saying that no cognitive therapies, you know, insufficient compared to what I'm talking about. I think it's really they both have their place,



Raymond Sidney-Smith 20:08

I would fully and completely agree. I think that one of the things we have to understand that is, like in the in the back world, which is Dr. Aaron Beck, you know, the progenitor of CBT, you know, the whole thought was to be able to help someone who was, you know, mentally unwell, and helping someone who is in a state of unwellness. We tend to think about this from like, if you chopped off my arm right now and saw me gushing blood, you'd be like, Oh my gosh, let us help him. He is gushing blood. You know, let's get him to a hospital. We think about mental health. And we think, you know, he's not feeling well, he should just Buck up, he should just go get himself better. You know, maybe take a day off. Like we don't quite think about mental well, wellness, mental health in the same way. And there is a pervasive problem there. And so back in And I put a note here for the feeling good handbook by Dr. Burns, who was an acolyte of Dr. Beck. And you know, we need to start thinking about this from the perspective that there is, as you said, Derek, kind of like this is the the triage necessary to help stabilize people, and ultimately help them over time worked themselves out of it. But Dweck is really talking about something that's not only about being curative, it's all about also about performance enhancement. It's about making people better once they are stable. And that can't be kind of counted out as less or counted as less because we have to think about it from the perspective that if you make me resilient over time, I'm going to be ill less that from my physical biological health, and also my mental health. And so resilience is really the the point here. And I think that Dr. Duckworth talks about this a little bit in terms of grit, you know, this is where some of these pieces start to kind of blend over one another. But you know, we really need to consider Both the the immediate treatment for people who are unwell. And then of course the long term benefits of building resilience building a protective sheathing around our, our mental capabilities. And that allows us to be not only better, but also protected as well. Linda, go for it.



22:18

I was just gonna say there's a lot of fixed mindset about mental health. And that once you have episode of not dealing well with cutting your arm off is not a good analogy for this. But let's say you broke your arm, we're going to get you to the hospital and get it taken care of. And you're not forever the person who broke their arm. And that's what defines you. And that's all there is to you and you're just a broken arm person. But with mental

health, if you have any kind of crisis, you're forever that person in our society, there's a very fixed mindset. That's the way you are for the rest of your life and there's no fixing it. There's no changing, there's no growth. It's just you are what you are and you're stuck with it. So I think that's it. That's a problem. I think that needs to be fixed because a lot of people would probably grow much more quickly if there wasn't this idea that there's something wrong with you. If you seek assistance when you have a mental issue,



Raymond Sidney-Smith 23:14

I'm of the opinion that everybody should have a some kind of counselor or therapist who can help them and guide them in life. Just the same way that you would think about getting a fitness coach or a nutritionist or a registered dietician to be able to help you with your nutrition. The same way you would have a doctor help you with your ongoing regular checkups every year, a dentist, optimal ophthalmologist or optician who helps you with your eyes. I mean, we don't see problems with it in that world. But there's such a stigma as it relates to mental wellness that I think, you know, people really don't, don't, don't get it and i and i think you know, to Hillary and Derek's point, I think it's really important for us to really try to shut down those barriers and break down the barriers and have more open dialogue about it. I mean, you know, I've I've probably noted this on the podcast before You know, but struggling with depression is, is a very, very common thing. And and when we do many times, just like with anything else, I too had a fixed mindset around it right, you know something about me is broken, and therefore I can't fix it and therefore, you know, it's just the way I am. And thankfully, I came into Dr. Dweck material very early on. And so, you know, I was able to understand that, you know, what, no, I'm not broken, you know. And, yes, thank you. Go ahead. Yeah,



24:31

I'm just saying, but if we all were equipped with the tools to help you with any kind of mental, you know, that kind of fixed mindset, if there's not something wrong with me, or you know, the things that people get into when they are depressed or have other mental health issues, if we taught the tools to everyone, we could prevent people from going so deep. And if there wasn't stigma around it, and everybody had the tools, there'll be a lot less of it in society, I think because people would be Able to preemptively help themselves before they got so bad they need, you know, serious help,



Raymond Sidney-Smith 25:07

right? And people would be more aware faster, that there was something going wrong.

And that's, that's my issue is that so many times the problem is more severe than it needed to be because I wasn't aware, you know, I, I'm more than happy to step in and say, Hi, do you need to talk, you know, and just having a one to one with someone who's who's in my life, you know, one of my siblings, or my parents or a friend or peer or something like that I have no problem with spending 15 minutes if it means, you know, someone's life being better. And we we just don't, we don't share enough, you know, and I'm actually particularly private person. So I don't share enough just generally, I don't like people to know things about me. And so, you know, I'm in the wrong world. being who I am, everybody, you know, knows me, they can Google me, but you know, it's like, I'm still fairly private and so it's very difficult for me to share and and I know that that in many ways, is is something that other people do and have to, you know, kind of break down that that first layer of protective you know, coding because of society you know, because society's ill toward anything that that makes you that makes you think that you are mentally unwell or unfit in some way, shape or form.



26:19

And we we in society say, it's okay but we don't act like it is. So people don't believe that little talk that people say that Oh, it's fine. If you're mentally ill, you should seek help but we don't act like that we treat people differently once they are diagnosed with a mental illness. And if that changed, then people wouldn't be afraid to talk about I mean, I was in a funk yesterday and I can say I was in a funk and I know now why I got into a funk and I just treated myself really well. I said you know what, you're in a funk. Just chill out and find out what's wrong. It'll come to you but don't, don't push yourself beyond the funk and the funk is now gone. And, but I didn't abuse myself about it. Which I think Our society likes to encourage



Raymond Sidney-Smith 27:02

Yeah, yeah, absolutely. And we need to, we need to arm, others, you know, so that so that everyone, including children are taught skills for being able to provide comfort and compassion in those environments. And we just don't have that kind of care treatment. I know that I don't, you know, I'm probably a little bit more educated about this stuff, considering my background. And I know that in my own personal life, I don't practice it as as good as I could, or as well as I could. It's just very difficult to step up and say, Okay, I'm going to bring the better part of myself to the table. There's so much societal stuff that that makes you want to say, you know what, we can set aside the emotion right now. And we can focus on the logic and be, you know, we can focus completely on the things that are logical, and then set aside the emotional stuff. And really, if we actually brought the

emotional stuff back to the fore, we might be able to solve it and that problem wouldn't be here over and over again. I want to talk about some of the ways in which we deal with this and kind of our own performance and productivity systems, what ways can we invest in this understanding of our fixed and growth mindsets so that we're able to be more productive? That's the name of the game here at productivity book group. So what what and how can we add this into our ongoing, either personal development plans into our own professional development plans? What can we do here to use this material wisely going forward?



28:27

From growth mindset? just starting out with weekly review, David Allen's getting things done weekly review, there's things that you're going to see that need to do need to be better, you need to do better and just say, Hey, here's an opportunity, how can I fix this sort of thing? How can I actually more successfully do my weekly review, but what systems do I need to put in place a process in order to better address this or that so it's that open ended piece of growth as opposed to beating yourself up that you didn't get. You didn't stick to your context as much as you should have built too many to do lists or something.



Frank Buck, EdD 29:12

And I think it's important to narrow things down probably all of us if we started to list all the ways within which we could get better, it would be a very long list.



Raymond Sidney-Smith 29:22

But to just take two I can show you mine.



Frank Buck, EdD 29:27

Just like you know, two or three to concentrate on and with, you know, with what, what can I do today to move this thing a little bit forward? Who are the people in my life that I could reach out to who could help me do this? You know, there's the reticular activating filter, you know, you buy, you buy a red car, and then all you see on the highway are red cars, you start to see all of those things that are out there start to become obvious to you. So I think when you start to identify This is where I want to get better. The world kind of conspires to help you,



30:03

I just actually just did this for my productivity but of not looking at it as an improvement, but as a growth which to me are two different nice ways of thinking about it. So I don't need to be improved, I'm fine the way I am. But I would love to grow, I want to expand I want to do more I want to be able to do I want to be better and better. I'm so entrenched in that idea that there's something wrong with me and I need to fix myself but I'm really had that switch this morning. So I was working on planning my next 12 week year and I looked at it and said, I'm all about there's something wrong with me. Um, you know, I had a doctor's appointment on Monday so I was all about something wrong. And I said no, I'm gonna make a focus on growth. How can I have a real positive and I am a born again, optimist because I spent a lot 99 points percent of my life pessimists you So now I'm an optimist, and I'm trying to be optimistic and, but I really see a big difference there between that growth and improvement. And if you can switch over to that growth and get away from this idea that there's something wrong you need to fix. That is a fixed mindset, that, that we're, we're somehow flawed. I love



Frank Buck, EdD 31:20

the language that Linda use. And I think that's something that we can use with other people. You know, if you're a manager, to say to your other pig, you know, if I say, here's an area where you can improve Well, that makes it sound like you're just not that good. You know, you need to get better. you're you're you're below the line. But if we want to grow you, that sounds like wow, I'm important to the organization. I have a future here. I'm promotable. Yes, I'm on board. I want to grow.



Raymond Sidney-Smith 31:48

I always say, I always say that I was thankful, at least from the perspective that my mother would always say that your whole your whole person is number one. There's never a part of you. That's not hold. And, and so it's it's interesting how you're like I'm, I'm a whole person in the sense that I'm a unique individual, right. And I think it's really important for people to understand that that you can, you can grow, you can develop, but there's no lacking in me like I've always felt full. I've always felt like my life is full. And and I don't know how to pay that forward necessarily in terms of explaining that feeling to others. That sense that I don't feel at any point in time that I was ever not. Not not good enough because I've definitely felt that that I've never felt like there was some part of me that wasn't enough to be fully me. Right. You know, there's like that little kind of internal feeling that there's just something there and I feel like they're two different pieces to me. In that sense. I don't know how to explain it, but it just it definitely comes to resonance of that,

that piece that like you're not void you're not you're born into the world. fully capable and, and to want to grow from there, you're at 100%. And what Linda's talking about is going to 105 or maybe going to 110. And that feeling inside of me has always been there with all of the challenges and I think that's really really good for you to have where we're getting to that perspective and using it I think absolutely key



33:23

Are you are you are paying it forward Ray, I mean, you have done that with me, you've called me on it when I've used myself on calls and and you are paying it forward because you believe it. So the fact that you believe it about yourself, you believe it about others and so others get that from you, and you are you don't even you don't have to articulate it in any other way other than just living it.



Raymond Sidney-Smith 33:45

Well, good. I'm I'm glad to model at the very least. So other ways in which you are capable of using this material in your productivity system and I'll preface this with just A way that I have. So I was jokingly saying to Dr. Buck that, you know, I'll make, I'll show you my list. But I actually do have a list. Because, you know, I'm a GTD er, that's what I do. And so I created the list of areas, systems to optimize. And I consider this optimization, right, you know, the system is good, but it can be better. And I am fine with that language. I guess I'm still steeped in that world. But, you know, like optimizing is is how I how I see it. And so I will look at any particular system during my weekly review. And if I see some way in which it could be better, I will track it on that list, and then decide what system is needed or what steps what subsystem is needed for myself to grow. How do I get how do I get better in that capacity? And that's been really useful for me because it's a cue. It's not all immediate active stuff. It's all Sunday, maybe. Right? So in my case, it's a Sunday and I know That if I decide that some part of me needs to be optimized, some part of me needs to grow, I can then say, okay, that's on the list, and I'll get to it. But I don't have to worry about it anymore, because I've got it tracked and maintained out of my head in a system that I trust. And I know that when I'm ready to deal with it, then I will elevate that to an active project or some active, you know, system part of my system and create a sub system to be able to support myself there. And so that's been really useful to me is just to start to become aware of the areas where I might have certainly fixed mindsets, and and then where I, I then recognize that I can grow in that area, tracking and maintaining that list of of growth opportunities has been really useful for me. So just having that list, it also helps in tools. So there are just certain parts of my my system that are functional tools where I say, Oh, you know what, this is a beer. This app that I have set up is not working. It

does some part of the piece, but it's not facilitated in keeping me. So I will then also track those systems that are technological based, and where they're maybe not working the best and keep track of those as well. So that's sort of helpful, not growth, mindset oriented, but just like I try to keep a track of those stuff to optimize. And those two lists run concurrently, the things that are me that need to be worked on, and then the stuff that's outside of me that are external, they need to be worked on as well.



36:24

So Steven Hayes, a psychologist, and he created acceptance and Commitment Therapy, which is kind of CBT along with mindfulness, and I'm reading his latest book, I'm just a couple chapters into it, but it's called a flexible mind. And what he sees is like the, his psychological flexibility, he says that this is like a key trait that that he sees in people, and that I was just connecting that to the growth mindset about how key psychological flexibility and the growth mindset are connected to psychological flexibility is that you don't see yourself as being fixed psychologically based and how that intersects with with Carol Dweck. sword



Raymond Sidney-Smith 36:58

Yeah, we have to we have to remember that like Gritten perseverance and what you're really talking about, which is what they call resilience. And, and, and that kind of perspective. They're, they're different things, but there's so much overlap, that we have to remember that there's like growth is different than resilience, which is different than than perseverance or grit. And but they all work to actually create, you know, a better you. So I think that's all great, but great books exist. Great books suggestions. So Dr. Hayes work is good, anyone else? Thoughts?



37:30

And when I was progressing through the business sections of the book, I couldn't help but also think about appreciative inquiry from organizational improvement. And actually before the for the session here, I googled work and appreciative inquiry and in the positive psychology movement, they almost run in parallel. There's a lot of overlapping associated work and I think, a lot of the vocabulary she uses is in line with appreciative inquiry and seeks to have the same sort of goals at an organizational level but can also be brought down to a personal level.



Raymond Sidney-Smith 38:10

Right. And anyone who's interested in looking at what is the David Cooper writers work on appreciative inquiry, so definitely worth checking out.



38:17

Well, it reframes failure. So failure isn't the end of the process. Failure is part of the process. So I think that way, I mean, failure isn't like you stopped because it's not working failure is your take that in as learning basically.



Raymond Sidney-Smith 38:30

Yeah, there's two, two levels there. Right. So think about, we don't always fall, right. We sometimes stumble. And we forget that the language that we use about what we're doing when we're working towards something is also important. And so I frequently have to, when I'm, when I'm talking to a client, I'm always like, wait, you just said that you failed in this business, but the business is still alive. And it's like, it's not it's not over? It's still a going concern. So it's not a failure, because then you just shut down the business, right? So no, it's it's actually the business stumbled, right and maybe handicapped in some way, shape or form. But we now we now start from that basis that you stumbled. And like any person when we stumble, we then write ourselves and bring ourselves back up, right? When we fall, we fall. And you know, we take the hit, and we figure out how to get back up and brush ourselves off and move on. I remember that they're kind of different stages of tripping up, you know, so to speak, to keep the analogy going. Frank?



39:26

Yeah. And it's the ability to say, not yet.



Raymond Sidney-Smith 39:31

Yeah. Dr. Dweck talks about that that phrase of using the not yet or yet she she has this little clip that she talks about this high school Chicago high school that says that when students don't pass their their exams at the end of their, their time there, they will, they don't get a grade of failing, they get a grade of not yet. I thought it was just such a wonderful, you know, perspective there. We do treat children Sometimes in inappropriate ways, we grade them in ways that are not useful to them. And I love that not yet. And I want I want the not yet for almost every part of my life now. And and I've been actually



using that lately, having read the book many years ago now, just to coming back. And here, I've watched a bunch of her, you know, TED talks and videos and whatnot in preparation for today. And it was just really wonderful to be like, you know what, I'm going to start using that in my own world in languages like, Oh, you know what, that didn't work out so well last week, not yet.



Frank Buck, EdD 40:32

And you know, and not yet actually hold you to a higher standard. You know, the easy thing is to say, Okay, you've got an F, you've got a zero. We'll move on. You don't have to think about that anymore. But not yet says the works not done.



Raymond Sidney-Smith 40:49

Yeah, that's gonna be really difficult for me because I actually use the language of grading people all the time. I will say to people like, oh, if you were being graded in school, that would be a D Right, you know, and so like, I know that I'm doing it myself and so I need to, like, retrain myself to use that language more thoughtfully. And using not yet I think is just going to be really, really great for me, Linda,



41:11

but it's it's really you know, when I was a child, they tried to redo the grading system so that they didn't do grades and we just got little checkmarks and they tried to make and this is really an the antithesis of the extremes of grading and then the other extreme of everybody's great Don't worry about it. You're all good. You all get a trophy. Everybody's wonderful that not yet is is nice, because it's a challenge. It's not like you're good, you're bad. This This one's smart. This one's dumb. It's y'all gonna do it. It's just not some of you haven't done it yet. So it's okay. You still have time and and are also are pressure in society to perform on a certain time schedule to be I mean, I'm, I'm a 55 year old woman who's just trying to figure out what she wants to do with her life. So I am the took this, of this, you have to achieve something by a certain age, and you better hurry up and do this. Otherwise, you're going to be behind everyone else. And I don't subscribe to that anymore.



Raymond Sidney-Smith 42:11

No one else should no one else should. I mean, you know, like I've seen, I've seen people at

every age, make remarkable progress and do remarkable things. And we, we sometimes forget that, you know, many of the greatest accomplishments in life came very late in life for many people. You know, I think the biggest example is like Ray Kroc, he didn't start McDonald's until after he was in his late 50s, something like that. So, you know, like, time and time again, we we presume that there is some early talent that precipitated great success. And that is just the myth of accomplishment. It's the myth of ability, ability develops, it's not born into us. And so we, we have to, we have to, you know, mold our capabilities, and you know, and not worry so much about These things we call talents. You know, I don't even like the the term talent. Certainly not after having just read mindset again. So I wanted to talk about any of the greatest takeaways that you had from the book before we close out the discussion. What was your greatest takeaway from the book from from mindset?



43:21

To me, just like how important it is to start early in terms of teaching people. So she talks about how the babies that were punished for crying, immediately kind of showed that aggression to their baby peers. And, you know, in the past, people thought that maybe it would come out later in life. It actually the impact is immediate, and just how important it is to have people at an early age go in with the growth mindset.



Raymond Sidney-Smith 43:59

Yeah, it's so So there's actually quite a bit of child psychology around these topics of what happens in early life being, you know, kind of, then ripples out to the rest of your life. And it's so fascinating to see how all of those pieces work themselves out, you know, but psychological safety being that first thing, children, when when, when a baby looks back at its mother or father, and crawls away and learns to walk is it's it's immediately correlated, right? You know, the child looking back and knowing that the parent is there allows them to take the risk. And we need to remember that as adults, we need to be able to give ourselves safety, this this concept of psychological safety, to take risks to know that there's a safety net of our peers and our support network to be able to go out there and take healthy progress oriented risk. And and that, you know, we have to remember that maybe we didn't have that when we were young, and that's going to be an anchor back to negative association with risk and reward. And we have to we have to kind of unchained ourselves We need to take ourselves away from that a little bit to be able to, to grow. So great, great point, Hillary. Others, what was your greatest takeaway from the book?



45:10

That's a big growth mindset thing to be able to unchain yourself from those things that you perceive were or are holding you back. A lot of people will stay in that fixed mindset that this is the way I am. And that's just the way it is. Maybe they don't want to change. But when we get stuck on those things that happened to us the way that we were perceived as children, you know, that's a really good way of getting getting a growth mindset is by letting those things go even if they are still



Raymond Sidney-Smith 45:41

haunted. And it's not instant. It takes time and be compassionate with yourself and you know, all of that stuff. So



45:47

so my biggest takeaway from this conversation since I didn't read the book, is that not yet. I'm going to start using that on everyone I love



45:55

so in the context of not yet both on a personal and an organizational faces in the startup food Co Op. I'm on the board of. We're beginning our journey tonight, with our first discussion on how we change our orientation and our involvement of people of color. There's actually in oddly enough food Co Op started out as a black, organized form of business over a century ago, and yet today, most food co ops are heavily white. And so we're having as an organization and as a co op movement in general, to confront essentially a fixed mindset of this is how co ops look, and, and trying to change culturally and personally and organizationally to have an open mindset in this space. And so For me, as we've learned, the real takeaway is not yet



Raymond Sidney-Smith 47:04

it's really difficult. And it takes time to sit with discomfort, right? Because these are big things and big topics for many of us to deal with. And, and they could be with a co op, but they could be just yourself working on yourself. These are you have to sit with that discomfort to figure out what is the right choice, what's the right way to move, and you need to feel that discomfort and that's okay.



47:28

I mean, yeah, we both we were looking at it that way as both personal and organizational growth.



Raymond Sidney-Smith 47:35

Fantastic. Fantastic. Did I see Frank, did you want to give us a closing thought in terms of greatest takeaway?



Frank Buck, EdD 47:41

Yeah, well, I just have to echo the not yet. And I think those two simple words, you know, makes all the difference between you know, you're a failure, you didn't do it. And the future, you know, I think not yet makes it part of your future. Rather than part of your path.



Raymond Sidney-Smith 48:01

Wonderful with that I'm going to close with a quote from the book because I think it really encapsulates a lot of what Dr. Dweck is trying to put here. And so what better way than to close us out with her own words? So quote, when you enter a mindset, you enter a new world. In one world, the world of fixed traits, success is about proving you're smarter, talented, validating yourself and the other. The world of changing qualities is about stretching yourself to learn something new, developing yourself. In one world. Failure is about having a setback, getting a bad grade, losing a tournament, getting fired, getting rejected, it means you're not smart or talented, and the other world failure is about not growing, not reaching for things you value, it means you're not fulfilling your potential. In one world. effort is a bad thing. It like failure means you're not smart or talented. If you were you would need effort in the other world. effort is what makes you smart or talented. You have a choice mindset. are just beliefs. They're powerful beliefs, but they're just something in your mind. And you can change your mind and to quote. And so with that, we've reached the end of our discussion today about mindset, the new psychology of success by Carol Dweck PhD. I've got a few announcements, and then we'll close out our conversation today. So first, we host these live quarterly discussions. So if you're listening to the recording, you can join us simply head over to [productivity book group.org](https://productivitybookgroup.org). And you can see the upcoming books page with all the details. And so I will put up the next discussion on that page. And you can find out the details and join us next time. They're on [productivity book group.org](https://productivitybookgroup.org). You'll find all of our past discussions, summary reviews,

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50:33

Thanks, right