

A MINDSETS IS TO A MENTAL MODEL WHAT A FILTER IS TO A CAMERA LENS

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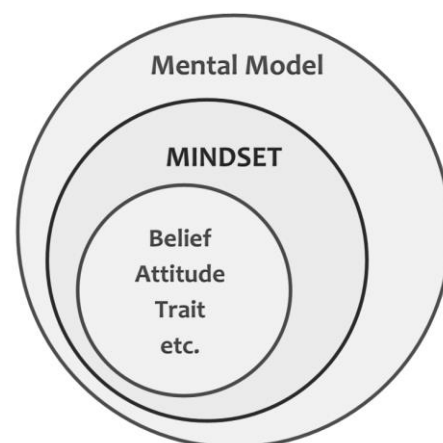
A mindset is a set of ideas, beliefs, or attitudes with which you approach situations or people—or through which you view them. Mindsets determine how you interpret events and respond to them.

Mindsets have something in common with habits since they tend to be habitual, which means they are largely unconscious. A type of mental shortcut, they operate based on assumptions, and they generate expectations.

You can have mindsets about yourself, other people or groups of people, places, situations, events, political organizations, types of music—actually just about anything. A mindset is not just an opinion, though. Nor is it a personality trait or a single idea, attitude, or belief.

Mindset is not synonymous with mental model.

Your mental model is the internal model of the world the unconscious part of your brain (System 1) constructs and maintains. It represents what's normal in the world *for you*. It's a combination of genetics, experience, education, beliefs, and intentions. It's the lens through which you view the world. (You see through it; you can't look directly into or at it.) Your mental model includes a number of different mindsets, which you could think of as being similar to camera lens filters.



Fixed vs. Growth

Some mindsets have more profound effects on our lives than others. In her 2007 book *Mindset*, Carl Dweck described a pair of mindsets she referred to as FIXED and GROWTH.

In a nutshell, people with a FIXED mindset believe their basic qualities, like intelligence or talent, are stable or permanent traits. They focus on documenting their intelligence or talent instead of developing it. They also tend to believe that talent alone creates success. If you have talent, you don't need to expend effort.

Those with a GROWTH mindset believe that their most basic abilities—and their intelligence—can be developed through dedication and hard work. Brains and talent are just the starting point. This view often leads to a love of learning as well as to resilience.

Be Good vs. Get Better

Following in Dweck's footsteps, Heidi Grant Halvorson describes these two mindsets as BE GOOD and GET BETTER. People with a BE GOOD mindset are invested in proving themselves, demonstrating their skills, and comparing themselves to others. They seek external validation. Those with a GET BETTER mindset are focused on improving, rather than proving, themselves; developing, rather than demonstrating, their skills; and comparing their current performance to their own past performance rather than to others' performance.

People with a GET BETTER mindset generally handle challenges better, get less upset when things go wrong, don't give up as easily, are more comfortable with the new and the unknown, and find more interest and enjoyment in what they do. People with a GET BETTER mindset use whatever happens to them—the good, the bad, and the ugly—as well as their own missteps and miscalculations, to help them GET BETTER.

The BE GOOD/GET BETTER mindset isn't all or nothing, however; it's more of a continuum. You can have a BE GOOD mindset about some things and a GET BETTER mindset about others. And there are some situations where it's preferable to BE GOOD: an actor in a performance, a surgeon repairing a vital organ, a nuclear power operator, or anyone interviewing for a job they really want to get.

But it's generally desirable to cultivate a GET BETTER mindset in as many areas as possible. Even in the above situations, you're more likely to BE GOOD at the critical moments if you continually aim to GET BETTER during the non-critical ones.

According to Halvorson, with the BE GOOD mindset:

- Your goal in whatever you're doing or working on is to show that you're good.
- You view your success or failure as a reflection on you.
- You're always trying to prove yourself to yourself and others.
- You compare yourself to others and try to outperform them.
- Any negative feedback you receive leads to self-doubt.
- When things don't work out, you think something is wrong with you.

With the GET BETTER mindset:

- You focus on *improving* yourself instead of proving yourself.
- You work on *developing* your skills instead of demonstrating them.
- You try to perform better than *you* did in the past instead of comparing your performance to others.

Since the purpose of the BE GOOD mindset is to demonstrate ability, performance decreases in the face of challenges. Attention is focused on reducing errors. With the GET BETTER mindset, the purpose is to learn and problem solve, so *performance improves in the face of challenges*. The focus is on making discoveries.

If you're operating from the BE GOOD mindset, the more upset you are, the LESS likely you are to take action. If you have the GET BETTER mindset, *the more upset you are, the MORE likely you are to take action*. The GET BETTER mindset is an adaptive way of reacting. When you encounter a bump in the road, you look for a new strategy.

Which mindset do you think is more likely to help you get your juicy desired outcomes? Which is more likely to support transformational change? Which is more dominant for you?

While it isn't always easy to recognize or change a mindset, you can do it. And it's worth the effort to open your mind, shift your perspective, and learn how to adjust your personal camera lens filters so you aren't stuck with whatever lenses you happen to have developed over the course of your life.