

A stylized sun in the top right corner and several blue and white clouds in the top left corner. The background is a blue gradient with a faint grid pattern.

# Making Sense of Mindset

Professor Kathleen Vokoun, MA

# Who is this crazy lady?

-More than 20 years of experience working with infants through 5<sup>th</sup> grade, with a focus on early elementary ages

-I hold degrees in Psychology, Education and Early Childhood Education from CSULB and UCLA

-I have a multiple subjects teaching credential with CLAD

-College professor, classroom teacher, reading specialist, interventionist, and mom!



Zoe: 11

Mia: 8

Wes: 6



...and baby Sam: 3

## My Child Development Case Studies

(a.k.a. my children)



# Bringing Mindset Back to Birth

## Debunking *doula* Myths



### #1 Do doulas deliver babies?

NOPE! In fact, they play zero, zip, nada role in medical decision making of any kind. In fact, they play zero, zip, nada role in decision making...period. Instead, they work hard to support mamas in their own decision making, as well as their medical teams, and help them emotionally and physically through the decisions they make, or in the outcomes that the wild world of birth takes them through.

### #2 Do doulas are anti-intervention, anti-medicine, anti-everything...except granola and coconut oil?

NOPE! They are simply pro-mamas. They support mamas where they are, with what they want, through emotional, physical, and informational support of mama's choosing, and work with support teams and families to create positive environments and outcomes for everyone. Seriously.

### #3 Do doulas can only provide support to mamas choosing natural births?

NOPE! Doulas support woman through planned and unplanned cesarean births, planned and unplanned medicated births, and births of every kind. Doulas support women. Period. They also support woman prior to baby's arrival and with settling in at home, including breastfeeding support.

### #4 Do doulas come with an agenda?

NOPE! Doulas come in open to your agenda and support you through your plans, even when things don't go as planned (because they rarely do).

### #5 Do doulas are just birthing coaches, like my friend or partner?

**SORT OF!** A trained and educated birth best friend and partner to you and your entire family, allowing your partner to be free to fully engage in their birth experience with you. A doula's specific role and responsibilities are written by you, and change with each individual birth. These include meetings during your pregnancy to help you determine your birth wishes, answer questions, and help you prepare for your baby's arrival. This also includes availability 24/7 for questions, concerns, and curiosities, and providing you with an abundance of resources and a network of professionals in your area. During labor, I provide trained emotional and physical supports for the family, helping to support you and your birth wishes, and can adapt quickly to the emerging needs of mama and baby.

Once home, I can support you in establishing breastfeeding and support you with questions and concerns.

Find out more at [www.ouceuponatimebirths.com](http://www.ouceuponatimebirths.com)

## Meet the Doula



I am Kate. I am a woman. I am a mama. I am an educator. I am a server of women.

### *I am a doula.*

After spending almost two decades as an educator and a professor of child development, and earning graduate degrees in child development, education, and psychology, I went into my labors feeling confident in my motherhood manuscript and my ability to author it. Yet, it was through my own four very different birth stories, I came to learn that birth is always written by the babes. Through my education, experiences, and specialized training, I look forward to supporting you as you draft your own birth story, and look for the love and lessons in how it unfolds. As your doula, I look forward to providing you with the educational, emotional, and physical support during your pregnancy, birth, and breastfeeding to help you fall in love with your own individually authored birth story and find your own happily ever after.

## Client Reviews

"We will be recommending Kate to every pregnant lady we know.

She ~~have~~ had such a positive impact on my pregnancy and we are forever indebted to her.

Kate, you are officially part of our family now."

"She is amazing! I don't even know what we would do without her."

"Kate went above and beyond for my husband, my son, and myself.

She had a tremendously positive impact on my pregnancy, and I would not have had as successful of a pregnancy, labor, or new mama experience without her."

## Let's Talk

(562) 548-0374 / [ouceuponatimebirths@gmail.com](mailto:ouceuponatimebirths@gmail.com) / [www.ouceuponatimebirths.com](http://www.ouceuponatimebirths.com)

What is at the heart of your parenting?

happy

successful

confident



independent

smart



# What if...

... when we try too hard to help them get to that heart, we might just be blocking their path

...telling them they are those words that are at the heart of your parenting, we might actually stop them from becoming them

...the language at the heart of our parenting could be the stepping stone or roadblock to your children's mindset

# Mama Mindset Challenge



Imagine for a moment that your child was on her way to her first gymnastics meet. Flexible and energetic, she was perfect for the sport and loved it. Of course, she was a bit nervous about competing, but she was quite good and felt confident. She even thought about the perfect place to hang the medal she would win.

In the first event, she performs first. Although she did well, so did many of the other girls, and she lost. She also did well in other events, but not well enough to win. By the end of the meet, she received no medal at all and was devastated.



# What would you do?

Please choose the best choice from the options provided.  
Take a risk. If you won't, you might just have a fixed mindset ;)

- A. Tell her you thought she was the best.
- B. Tell her she was robbed of a ribbon that was rightfully hers.
- C. Reassure her that gymnastics is not that important.
- D. Tell her she has the ability and will surely win next time.
- E. Tell her she didn't deserve to win.



# Let's Get Personal:

Sort the following statements

Agree

Disagree

I am a good writer.

I am a mathematician.

I am smart.

I am naturally good at making friends.

I am a born athlete.

I am good looking.

# Let's grow our mindset

No matter how you sorted your statements, you just demonstrated characteristics of a fixed mindset. By making a decision about which statements you are or are not, even when they are positive statements, you are setting yourself up for less skill building, lower self-esteem, and limiting your success.

**I am a good/bad writer =**

I enjoy writing/I am working on writing.

**I am/am not a mathematician=**

I enjoy math/I never give up in math.

**I am/am not smart=**

I enjoy learning/I work hard through challenges.

**I am naturally good/bad at making friends=**

I enjoy socializing/I make an effort to be friendly.

**I am/am not a born athlete=**

I enjoy athletics/I like challenges in sports.

**I am/am not good looking=**

I like taking care of the way I look.



# So what exactly is Mindset?

## FIXED vs. GROWTH MINDSET



### Fixed Mindset

Either I am smart, or I am not.

I am born with certain amount of my abilities.

Smart is making no mistakes, going fast, and being perfect.

Failure is an identity.

If I fail, people may find out I am an imposter and I may not be worthy of being loved.

### Growth Mindset

Being challenged is the smart thing to do.

Success is a result of perseverance.

Brains can become "bigger."

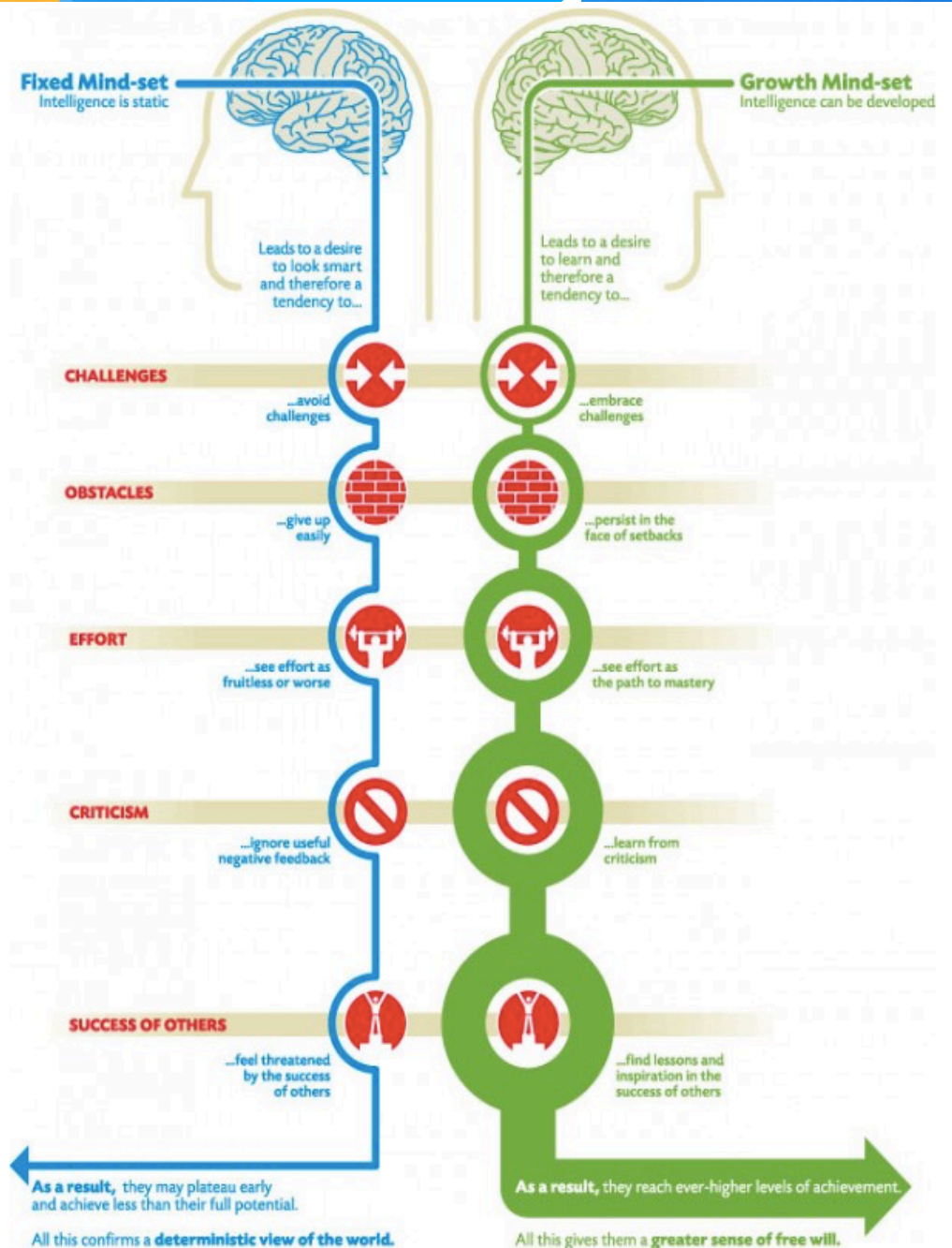
Progressive failure is progress, which is good!

Effort is a constructive force.

# Does it really matter?

According to Dweck's research

“This belief limits our potential or enables our success. It often marks the difference between excellence and mediocrity. It influences our self-awareness, our self-esteem, our creativity, our ability to face challenges, our resilience to setbacks, our levels of depression, and our tendency to stereotype, among other things.”



# Fixed vs. Growth: The Breakdown

| When faced with... | Fixed Mindset     | Growth Mindset     |
|--------------------|-------------------|--------------------|
| Challenges         | Avoid             | Embrace            |
| Obstacles          | Give Up           | Persist            |
| Effort             | See It As Useless | See It As The Path |
| Criticism          | Ignore            | Learn              |
| Success of Others  | Feel Threatened   | Feel Inspired      |

# How did we get fixed on fixed mindset?

## The True Story of Middle School

| When you...   | It sounds like...   | And results in...   |
|---|---|---|
| Use negative fixed language   | "You are so dumb. What is wrong with your brain."   | Low Achievement, Poor Self Esteem and FIXED MINDSET   |
| Allow students to give up on challenges before experiencing success   | "Don't worry about it. If it is too hard, we can stop."   | Low Achievement, Poor Self Esteem and FIXED MINDSET   |
| Provide growth language WITHOUT providing the skills necessary to achieve the task<br>*Remember good ol' ZPD and scaffolding! | "If you just work hard, you can get this."<br>*After providing a kindergartner a middle school novel to read. | Low Achievement, Poor Self Esteem, and FIXED MINDSET  |
| Positive fixed language   | "You are so smart! You were born for this!"   | Temporary High Achievement, Invisible Self Esteem Struggles, Gifted Underachievement, and FIXED MINDSET |

The (possibly) True Story of My Diet Adventures



# Starting Them Young

*According to Dweck's research, 4 years old are already demonstrating fixed or growth mindsets.*

**“We offered four-year-olds a choice:**

**They could redo an easy jigsaw puzzle or they could try a harder one.**

**Even at this tender age, children with the fixed mindset – the ones who**

**believed in fixed traits – stuck with the safe one. Kids who are born**

**smart “don't make mistakes,” they told us.**

# Erik Erikson's Stages of Pscyhosocial Development

| Stage       | Age  | Tasks                    | Theme and Question                  | Adult Supports  |
|-------------|------|--------------------------|-------------------------------------|---|
| Infancy     | 0-1  | Trust vs. Mistrust       | Hope:<br>"Is the world dependable?" | Meet child's needs first, provide physical touch, be patient and feed on demand   |
| Toddlerhood | 1-3  | Autonomy vs. Shame/Doubt | Will :<br>"Can I do things myself?" | Encourage self-help skills, welcome mistakes, be patient and allow all forms of expression in pretend play                            |
| Preschool   | 3-7  | Initiative vs. Guilt     | Purpose:<br>"How can I be good?"    | Give opportunities to take on new challenges, look for responsibility seeking in "misbehaviors", be patient and allow extra time      |
| School Age  | 7-10 | Industry vs. Inferiority | Competence:<br>"What am I good at?" | Use growth mindset language, focus on mastery vs. fixed pacing, be patient and use data and observations vs. grades to guide learning |



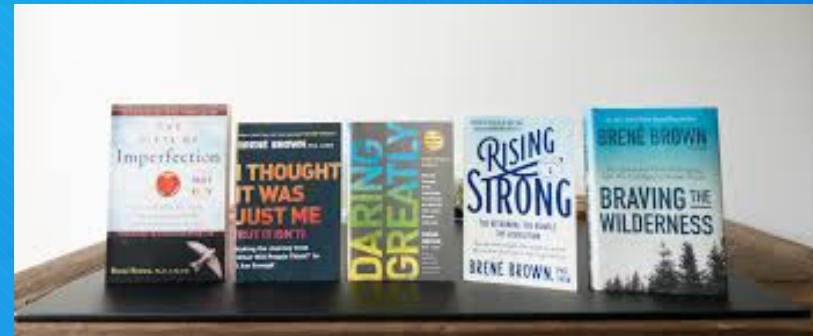
# The Foundation for Growth: Initiative in Children

| Initiative is...                | I can support this by...  |
|---------------------------------|---|
| <b>Independence</b>             | <b>Provide more freedom of choice; “Pick Your Battles”; Ask yourself, “Is this important? Why?”</b> |
| <b>Assertiveness</b>            | <b>Accept their initiative and allow healthy conflict and child led resolution</b>                  |
| <b>Eager for Responsibility</b> | <b>Give opportunities for challenging, but achievable responsibilities; Provide Time</b>            |
| <b>Self-Judgment</b>            | <b>Using Growth Mindset Language; “Don’t Cry Over Spilled Milk”</b>                                 |

# How did we end up here?

According to Dweck, larger society has said, “Success is about being more gifted than others, that failure measures you, and effort is for those without talent.”

- We are a part of an Independent and Individualistic Society.
- We are product driven.
  - Compounded by social media
- We don't talk about vulnerability.
  - Dive into Brene Brown's work for more on this.





# Discipline: A Misunderstood Dirty Word

The Dirty Version of Discipline  
**PUNISHMENT!**

The True Definition of Discipline  
**TEACH!**

# Why We Do It: Behaviorism 101

- Punishments vs. **Reinforcements**
- **Positive** vs. Negative Reinforcements
- Extrinsic vs. **Intrinsic** Positive Reinforcement and the inverse relationship
- **Natural** vs. Logical vs. Illogical Consequences (a.k.a. punishments)



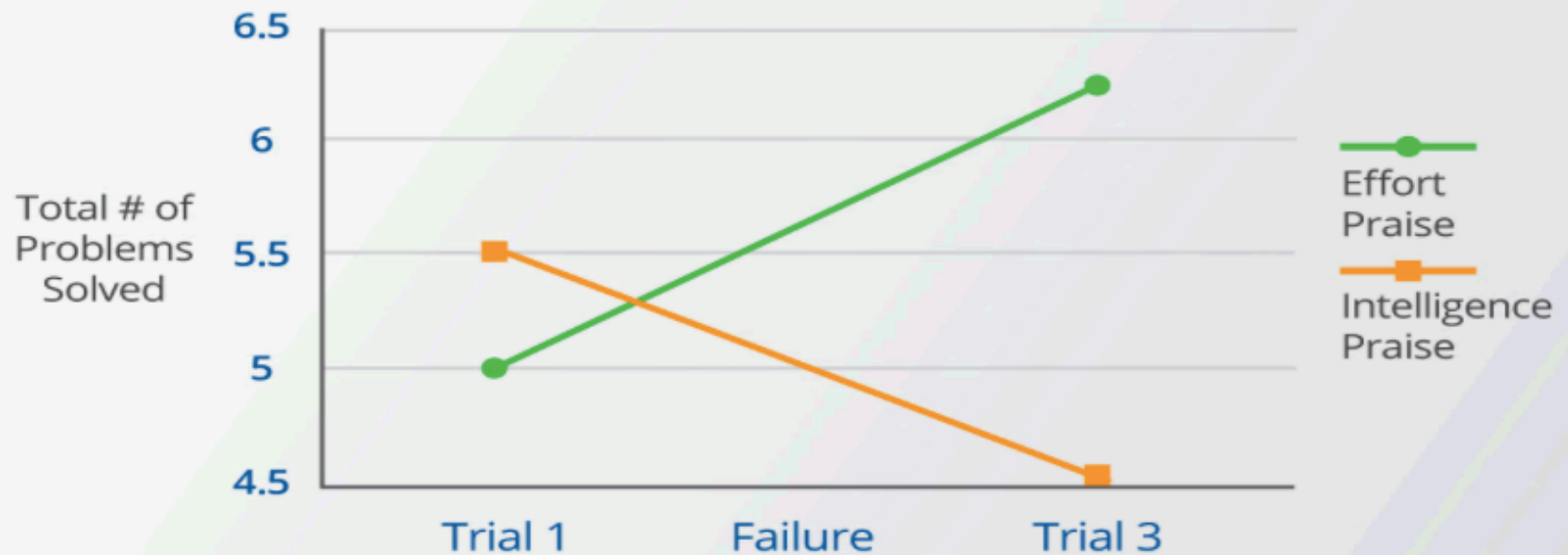
# Growth Mindset Mamas LOVE Natural Consequences



| Situation   | Using Rewards  | Using Punishments | Using Natural and Logical Consequences                              |
|---|--|-------------------|---|
| Child refuses to brush teeth                      | Extrinsic – Sticker Charts or Praise<br><br>Intrinsic – Affirmations | Time Out ☹️       | Natural – Cavities or Stinky Breath<br><br>Logical – No Sugar       |
| Child leaves jacket and sweater at friend's house | Extrinsic – Sticker Charts or Praise<br><br>Intrinsic – Affirmations | Time Out ☹️       | Natural – Cold<br><br>Logical- Has to figure out how to get it back |

# Intelligence vs. Effort Praise

Impact of Praise on Resilience After Failure





# Instead of “Good Job”

## Affirmations vs. Praise

Affirmations are specific, authentic, and guiding towards goal vs. “Good Job”

Try...

I noticed you \_\_\_\_\_.

Can you tell me more about \_\_\_\_\_.

# Let's Try It

## Getting a Picture of Mindset Language

I noticed you \_\_\_\_\_

Can you tell me more about \_\_\_\_\_

I noticed you \_\_\_\_\_

Can you tell me more about \_\_\_\_\_

I noticed you \_\_\_\_\_

Can you tell me more about \_\_\_\_\_



Not  
Yet

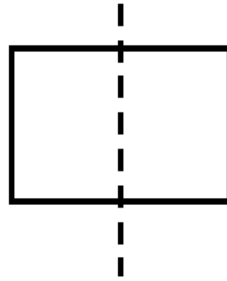
# Instead of “Bad Job”

- Focus on “Not Yet” language
- Ask questions and avoid judgment (i.e. “How do you feel about this?”)
- Use the power of integration through personal storytelling of challenges
  - Dive into Dan Siegel’s work

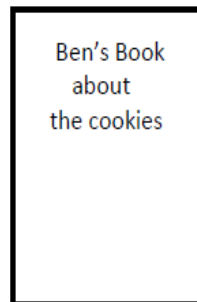
# Growth Mindset and Empathy: Empathy Books

Here's how you make an empathy book:

Fold a piece of paper in half.



Write the child's name on the front of the book and what the book's about.

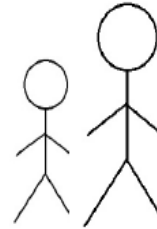


## Step 1

Using simple pictures and words describe what happened (what you observed) and what feelings you saw expressed.

## Step 3

Ben wanted cookies.  
Mom said "After dinner."



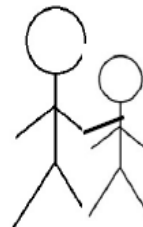
1

Ben started crying.



2

Mom hugged Ben and  
they made a book.



3

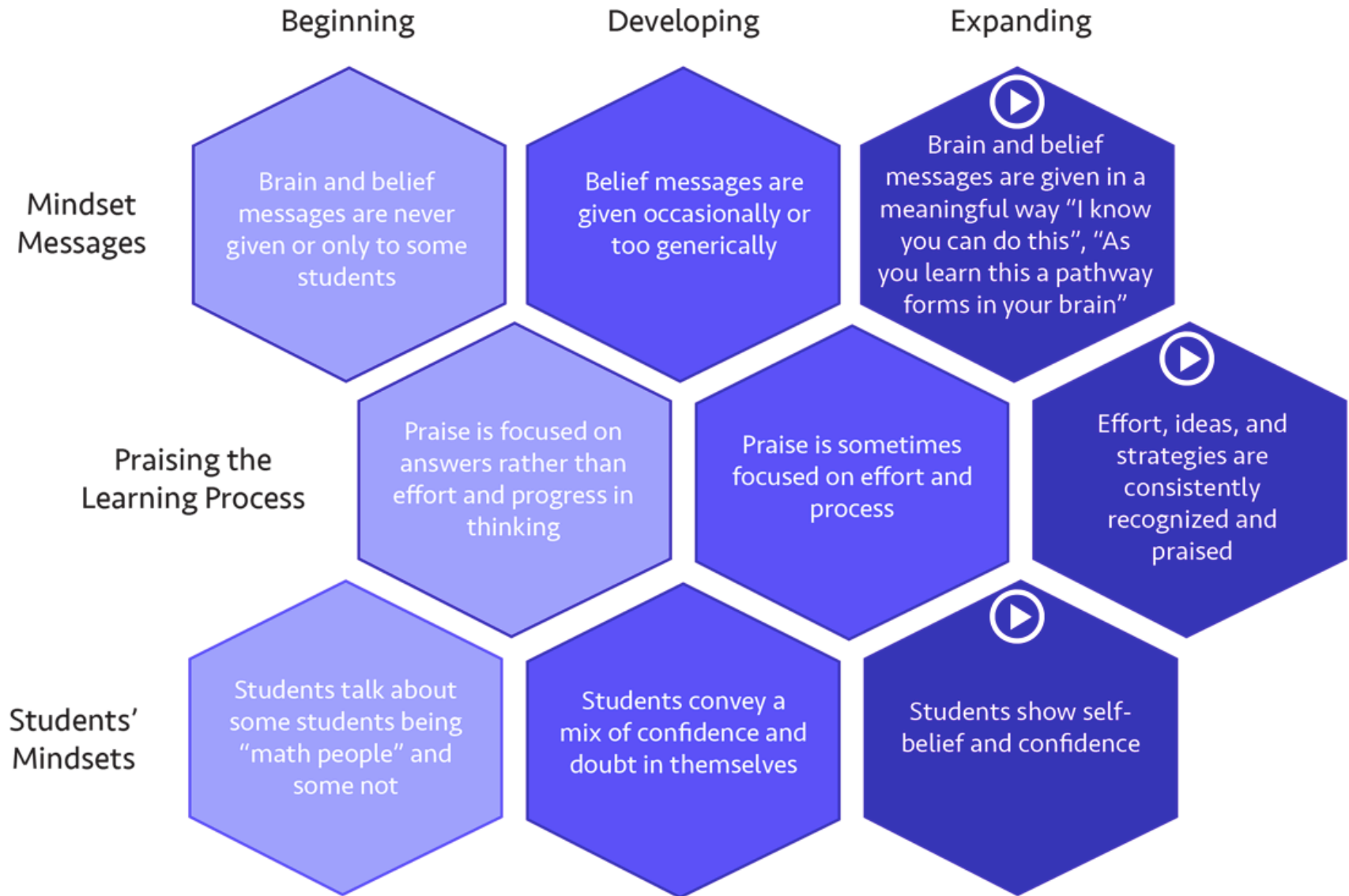
## Step 2



# The Power of Productive Failure

- Frame failure as part of -learning and not shameful
- Provide challenging task with multiple solutions that activates prior knowledge (scaffolding)
- Embrace Constructivism, as creativity suffers if you teach children the answers instead of allowing them to discover them

# Characteristics of a Mindset Environment



Encourage Challenges

Team Opportunities

# Opportunities for Authentic Autonomy and Perseverance



Odyssey of the Mind



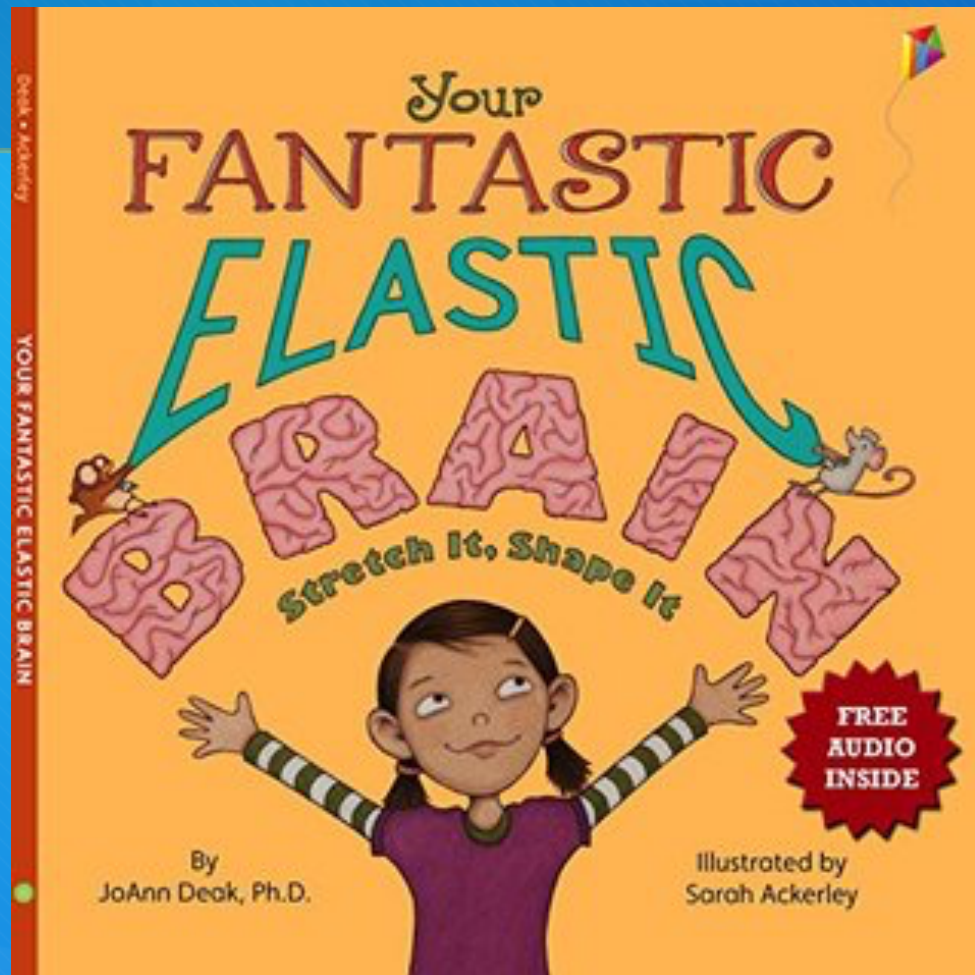
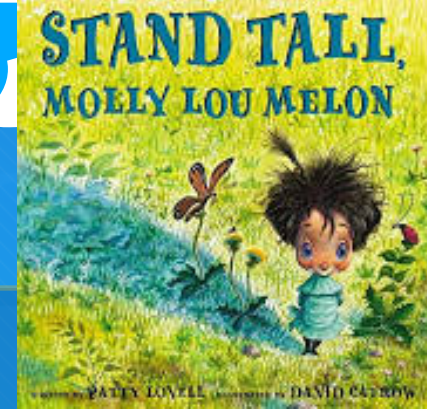
Habits of Heart and Mind

Da Vinci Connect



# Grow their Growth Mindset

*Research shows that teaching children the science of mindset can actually help grow their growth mindset skills*



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# You Can Learn Anything

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Would you like to learn more?

## Long Beach City College

Child Development and Educational Studies Department

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