



## The Deliberate Creative Podcast with Amy Climer

### Transcript for Episode #020: How Mindsets Impact Success

October 8, 2015

**Amy Climer:** Hi everyone, welcome to The Deliberate Creative Podcast [episode #20](#). In today's episode we are going to talk about mindsets and how your mindset impacts just about everything. It impacts your work, it impacts your relationships at home with your spouse, with your kids. It impacts how you approach your projects at work or even home projects. It really impacts your success in all these different areas of your life. It's actually pretty amazing.

[1:09]

I want to start out talking about the research from Carol Dweck. She is really the pioneer in all this research about mindsets. Carol Dweck is a researcher at Stanford University and she started out a number of years ago very curious about failure. She wanted to know what happens when people fail and what are the different reactions they have and potentially why do they react the way they react. So she devised a simple study with kids where she brought 10 year old kids in a room one at a time. She set them down at a table and gave them a puzzle to solve. And once they solved the puzzle, she gave them a harder puzzle. And once they solved that one she gave them an even harder one. And essentially what she was trying to do was get them to a point of failure. And she was then going to see how they respond to this failure. What happened? Well, like many research studies, the results were not quite what she expected. And she was pretty surprised with some of the reactions from the kids. For instance, one ten year old boy was in the midst of doing this puzzle which was pretty difficult for him and he just looks up at her and said: "You know, I love a challenge." And then another kid as he working on some of the puzzles he looks at her and says "I was really hoping this would be informative." And Carol was thinking "What's wrong with these kids?" But actually these kids understood something that Carol didn't, at least she didn't at the time. They knew that even qualities such as intellectual skills, level of creativity, these things could be cultivated through effort. And not only will they not get discouraged by failure, they don't even think that they were failing. That didn't even cross their mind. They thought of themselves as learning, which of course they were learning. Of course, not all the kids responded the way I just described. Some of them had a more predictable response and did get frustrated when they weren't able to complete a puzzle. And so what Carol



realized is that these kids were exhibiting essentially two different mindsets. Which she called the fixed mindset and the growth mindset. The fixed mindset is where you believe that your basic qualities such as intelligence and personality attributes are static and they cannot be changed. Essentially that talent is born and innate. That this is just the way it is and this is the way it's gonna be. So that's the fixed mindset. Then there is the growth mindset, where you believe that your basic qualities can be cultivated through effort, including intelligence, creativity, academic aptitude, your personality, that you can impact these with effort and practice and you can change this over time. And that was the mindset that those kids who are commenting in to Carol there in the puzzle study, that was their mindset. They knew that if I keep working on this puzzle I'm gonna get better on this certain type of puzzles and that made them really excited.

[4:18]

So Carol devised a simple mindset quiz with four questions and for each question you are going to answer True or False. Here is the first question.

1. Your intelligence is something basic about you that you can't change very much. Do you think that's True or False?
2. You can learn new things but you can't really change how intelligent you are. Is that True or False?
3. No matter how much intelligence you have, you can always change it quite a bit. True or False?
4. You can always substantially change how intelligent you are. True or False?

So if you answered True to numbers 1 and 2 that tends to be more of a fixed mindset. Whereas if you answered True to numbers 3 and 4, that tends to be more of a growth mindset. And you can take the same quiz and instead of the word intelligence, you can change and insert in any word in there. Number 1 for instance, could be: Your creativity is something very basic about you that you can't change very much. I know that from some emails that I got from some of you that before listening to these podcasts, that was your belief. A belief that creativity was a static trait that you either have, or didn't have or have a little or you have a lot. Many of you after starting to listen to this podcast realized that creativity can be developed and can be cultivated through some intentional effort and practice. I think of creativity just like anything else.

[6:01]



Now let's go back to intelligence for a moment. Some of you may be thinking, but what about IQ tests. Doesn't that measure intelligence? Well I think it's really interesting that the person who designed the IQ test, his name is Alfred Binet, he intentionally designed this test as a way to assess kind of where students were at in Paris in the early 1900. I guess In Paris they were trying new educational approaches so they were trying to look at which kids are doing well and which kids are not. With the kids that are not doing well, what do we need to change in our educational approach in order to better meet their needs, in order to help them become smarter and more intelligent. Really, I think that Alfred Binet would be rolling in his grave if he knew how we were using his IQ test today as a static measure. Here's a quote from Alfred Binet that sums it up well:

“A few modern philosophers assert that individual's intelligence is a fixed quantity. The quantity which cannot be increased. We must protest and react against this brutal pessimism. With practice, training and above all method, we manage to increase our attention, our memory, our judgement and literally become more intelligent than we were before.”

Alfred Binet said that in 1911. And here we are a hundred years later, Carol Dweck is doing this research and finding that actually yeah that's true. That if you have this growth mindset and believe that you can become more intelligent, believe you can improve your skills, your abilities, then in fact you can. And so much of it is about our beliefs in ourselves.

[7:49]

So another way to think of the fixed mindset and growth mindset is that fixed mindset constantly trying to prove that we are better than others. Whereas, in the growth mindset, we're just constantly trying to improve.

I'm going to give you an example in my own life where I on hindsight realized that I had a bit more of the fixed mindset. I do believe I've shifted quite a bit since then. When I think about high school I was told that I was smart. I did really well in school, mostly A's and a few B's here and there. I really to be honest, I didn't really worked that much in high school it was fairly easy for me. I believe this was just because I was smart. In fact there were times where I know I could have improve my grade in class but I just really didn't care that much. It was like I'm going to get a B and that's fine. Well then I went to college. And many of you who had this experience where you go from high school to college and you've got a little bit of a shock around the academics. Well, that was my experience. My first semester grade weren't that good. I don't think I got a single A or maybe one, I don't remember. But what I realized is that you have to work a lot harder



when you are in college. And it took me a little while to figure that out. And even once I figured it out, It didn't always stick. For instance, I was a Biology major and I had to take a year of organic chemistry. Organic chemistry has a reputation of being this really difficult class. I struggled with Organic and somehow managed to get a C in both semesters. But when I look back on my study habits, they were atrocious. I had a friend that I would study with and she was such a better studier than I was. We would meet to study and she would have read the chapters. She would have done the problems at the back of the book that were assigned and I had like skimmed the chapter, maybe read one out of three and I have done a problem. Actually when I look back why did she even study with me? I don't know I guess we had good conversation on the process. But I often think to myself, even though I haven't looked at chemistry in 20 years I know that if I were to take organic today, I would do so much better. I actually would learn the material and understand it rather than just going to the motion and trying to pass the test. I realized that I had a pretty fixed mindset and I just believed that I actually wasn't very good at chemistry. I also believe it didn't matter because I was gonna go and have a biology degree and chemistry wasn't really all that important. That may or may not be true because I ended up not having a career in Biology. But my point is that If I had shifted my mindset and realized that my goal is to improve it would have been much more positive outcome and I would have done better more importantly I could have learned some material. I couldn't tell you a darn thing about organic chemistry at this point. 6 months after the class I couldn't tell you anything about it. In fact I do remember one day in class, I think we were doing a lab, I think I asked the teacher something about the difference between acid and base which is a very basic chemistry concept. He got so frustrated with me that he yelled at me "Climer!" and he threw a pen at me, which I had to duck to avoid getting hit. But you know when I looked back I think I can't blame the guy because I mean, how frustrating that we're months into this higher level of chemistry class and I'm asking him a super basic question because I really have this fixed mindset. And this concept of the fixed mindset is that you are trying to prove that you are better than others, whereas the growth mindset where you are constantly trying to improve. I was not trying to improve. However, I also, it's not so much I was focused on how I was better than others, but it was really easy to say "Oh yeah, I didn't really study so no surprise I didn't do well." And so I was able to explain away my lack of success versus if I have really studied hard and I didn't do well it would have been a little bit more of an ego blow. So in some sense I did had that fixed mindset trying to prove that I'm better than others because I blew it off and I didn't care. That's a common rouse of someone who has a fixed mindset.



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Now the good news is that you can change your mindset. And you could also have a different mindset in different areas of your life. So for instance you could have a growth mindset perhaps in your academic pursuits but then you have a fixed mindset in how you approach relationships or vice versa. Your mindset can vary from one area to another. But you can change your mindset. So Carol Dweck explains this study that they did which I thought was really brilliant where they decided “Let’s see if we can teach people how to change their mindset and what impact that has on their academics. So they got together 7th graders. They divided the 7th grade class in half. Half of the students received some tutoring during the school day, I suppose. They receive regular tutoring. The other half of the students also received tutoring, but a part of their tutoring was teaching them about mindsets and about how the brain works, and helping them understand the difference about the fixed and growth mindsets. Now the teachers, they were teaching the regular class not the tutoring class, they didn’t know which students were in which tutoring session. So they kept the study blind with the teachers. Well, one day with one of the tutoring sessions with the mindset group, this little boy Jimmy, who was in 7th grade, as he was listening to all these he starts crying. He looks up at her and says “you mean I don’t have to be dumb?” And here’s this kid who for whatever reason his whole life at this point, he had been taught that he was dumb. And he believed that with all his might. Well sure enough, Jimmy changed his mindset. He realized that if he started working at this stuff he can actually learn it. He started staying for school. He approaches his teacher for extra help. The teachers were rather shocked because before he was not a motivated student. And this concept of changing his mindset really built in motivation for him. So you kind of see where this is going. The group of students who were going on a tutoring session where did learn about mindset, their grades skyrocketed. But it wasn’t just the grades, it was their engagement, their motivation, how much they actually learned, because you know grades and learning aren’t always connected. Whereas the other group, they had some improvement because they were tutoring, but not the level of the kids who learned about mindset had.

[15:20]

I love this story and I feel like what an impact this could have if we start teaching kids about it. I do know that there are some school programs that are teaching this which is really cool. What I love about learning about mindsets is it really explains this idea that if you want to get better or good at something all you have to do is put in the work. I think this coincides with the lines that 10,000 hours rule, where once you get that 10,000





hours into something you are actually an expert. So let's say by the time I logged in 10,000 hours of podcasting, I'm going to be an expert at podcasting. However, I would also say that is true if as long as you have this mindset of constantly trying to get better and looking on what can I do to improve? So what areas of your life, you want do you want to get better at? What areas do you have fixed mindset and what areas you have growth mindset?

[16:24]

So we've been talking most about intelligence and academics, but this applies to everything. This applies to creativity. This applies to relationships you are in. Do you have this mindset that the way this relationship is, is just the way it is? The relationship with my parents, I can't do anything about it - the relationship with my siblings, with my spouse, my kids. No, you can change it because you can change your behavior. You can impact the relationship by making some changes. It could just be really a small thing. I think what happens is we have stories that we tell ourselves about ourselves. And we believe them so wholeheartedly that even when there is evidence to the contrary, we don't let go of that belief, that initial story that we have. Mindset in some ways is about that if how can look at how can I build a growth mindset around something that I'm stucked in. What can I do to work harder to motivate myself? I think the results can be pretty phenomenal.

[17:33]

I'm going to share one more story with you about mindsets. This is a story about my dad. So my dad is in his late 60s, at least at the time of this recording. He really did come in technology a little late in his life. It was not long ago when he sent me his very first email. It was a few years ago, maybe 5 or seven. Maybe 10 years ago, but it was definitely way after everybody else was using email. So he comes with technology pretty late in life. He also owned a real estate school where people who wanted to get a real estate license to sell real estate they will go to a real estate school. This was called Climer Real Estate school in Orlando Florida. Somewhere along the line he learned about search engine optimization, SEO, or he calls it google juice. Which is basically how your website rank during a search for a particular keyword. So most of you probably know we don't venture much past that first page, so if you want to get your website to be viewed you have to do something to get to that first page during search. Well he learned that You tube videos are one way to do that. Well, you know for someone who doesn't even know how to put an attachment on email, but he figured out how to record You Tube videos, how to post them on You Tube, how to put them on social





media, how to put them on his website, and the results were amazing. To this day he probably has over a hundred You Tube videos, mostly teaching various aspects of real estate teaching like the math portion of the real estate exam. Well, people started watching his videos, started getting some attraction, eventually people are coming from all around the state of Florida to his real estate school. People were driving from the Florida key to Orlando which was an eight hour drive and I assure you they passed 20 real estate schools on their way. It's crazy to think about and so cool because he had this growth mindset around technology and was incredibly determined that he's going to learn how to do this and how do it well. You can go Google his videos. Look for Ron Climer under You Tube and you'll see the videos are not professional quality. He has a camera on a tripod. You can see him push play and you can see him walk around to the table. He talks and he has his whiteboard behind them so there's no editing at all. But I think what people love is it real, it's just him. He's not trying to prove himself. He's focus on teaching and he's focus on helping others. That's very much a growth mindset. If you're so focus on how can I look better and be better than other people, then you missed the point. The point is usually how to be helpful. How can I impact change? Same with creativity. You know if you're so focus on like I have to come up with the most creative idea that can usually negatively impact coming up with the most creative idea.

[21:02]

So another way to look at these mindsets is when you have an experience where it does not go well. Do you think to yourself "I failed" or do you think to yourself "I am a failure?" Huge differences in those two things. I am a failure is long lasting. Well that means I'm a failure because I mess something up. That's gonna have a big impact versus I failed, yup. Messed that one up alright. What do I need to do to fix it? How do I do this better next time? If you're thinking "I am a failure," you're not gonna necessarily looking at what to change next time. You are gonna be wallowing in anger, pity and frustration. So thinking about how can you look at something, an experience you had, a specific static experience and what can you learn from it versus applying that experience to your entire human being and thinking of yourself as a failure. That is really not helpful. It's definitely not gonna help you be more creative. The question is why waste time proving over and over how great you are when you could be getting better.

[22:12]

So what is your story? What is the story you tell yourself about yourself? So your challenge for the week is to think about that. Think about what if you are really honest



with yourself there's probably one area of your life where you hold a fixed mindset. Identify that area and see if you can begin to shift your thinking to build a growth mindset. Awareness is the biggest thing. Notice what changes for you. What behaviors can you change? What actions can you take that would be more in line with someone with the growth mindset?

[22:50]

Alright you all, I hope that this is helpful. I hope that these ideas around mindset will really get your brain turning and churning and thinking about how can I become more creative? How can I become more intelligent? How can I become a better writer? How can I become a better artist? How can I become a better partner in my relationships? Thinking about how can you bring that growth mindset to your life can be incredibly powerful!

[23:20]

I've included a few resources for you in the shownotes. So if you head on over to [climerconsulting.com/020](http://climerconsulting.com/020), you will find a link to [Carol Dwecks' book](#) her mindset book, great read, highly recommended it. You'll also find a link to [Carol Dwecks' TED talk](#). Really helpful and gives a nice summary. The book really goes in depth though. If you really want to dive into this I highly recommend the book. She wrote a good book on that. Also on the website you'll find number of other resources - links to all other podcast, there's a lot of freebies on there you can search around for so enjoy that I hope that is helpful if you really enjoyed this podcast or other episodes please write me a review on iTunes. You can follow me on Twitter. My Twitter handle is [@amyclimer](#). You can also follow me on Facebook which is at [Climerconsulting](#). Y'all hope you have a wonderful week. Hopefully you'll be more creative this week. Talk to you later. Bye!