

Mindset Moment for January

Mistakes Help Me Grow!

Let's face it, learning is messy! We often view the mistakes we make as failures or setbacks. Brock and Hundley explain it this way. "When people with a fixed mindset make a mistake they're often unwilling to change the behavior or action from which the mistake resulted or acknowledge a mistake was made at all. They avoid challenge and stay rooted in their comfort zone: never risking looking stupid, but forever missing out on new and different results. Growth mindset, on the other hand, is characterized by a willingness to try new strategies to find a better result."

Real learning is messy, loud and unpredictable. Mistakes will happen and that is OK! We as parents and teachers can help harness the power of mistakes by doing three things:

- Normalize mistakes
- Value mistakes as learning opportunities
- Coach students through setbacks

We want students to know that everyone makes mistakes and it is a totally normal process. But realizing they have made the mistake is only the first part. We also need them to learn from it. This is not simply a time to swoop in and tell them the answer. It is to coach them along, encouraging them to try a different strategy or idea. One of the most effective ways to do this is to ask open ended questions. "Why do you think that happened?" "How might you avoid this next time?" "What's another strategy you could try?"

This leads us to a difficult but ESSENTIAL idea as parents. It is a natural instinct to want to swoop in and protect our children from failure. However, when we do this, we are actually doing them a great disservice. We need our students to learn HOW to fail in a way that is productive and meaningful. This is the idea of "productive failure". It simply means teaching kids that mistakes and setbacks are valuable learning opportunities. Researcher Manu Kapur has studied this idea and his research shows that if students have struggled their way through a problem to a solution, they can better apply the hard won solution the next time it is needed. (I think we can all probably think of some personal life lessons where we have found this to be true! Once we learned it the hard way, we remember and learn from it! ;))

Students need opportunities to struggle and fail because only by making mistakes and persevering through them will they develop the strategies and skills needed to be successful, not only in elementary school, but in life!

~Mrs. Aker

Positive Ways
FAILURE AFFECTS THE MIND

- LEARN LESSONS**
Learning lessons nurtures the brain physiologically, which encourages mental health.
- BUILDS EMPATHY**
It helps people learn how to better express empathy and compassion when others do not achieve their goals.
- CREATIVITY**
Failure forces the failed to re-evaluate what they want and how to get it.
- HUMILITY**
Failure deflates the ego in people who might be in need a bit of perspective.

Sources: blogs.hbr.org | phys.org | upstart.bizjournals.com

miStAkEs
are proof
that you are
TRYING