How Hope and Mindset Impact College Success

**Hope**

Hope in the academic context “reflects individual’s perceptions regarding their capacity to (1) clearly conceptualize goals, (2) develop the specific strategies to reach those goals (pathways thinking), and (3) initiate and sustain the motivation for using those strategies (agency thinking)” (Snyder, C. R., et. al, 2003).

\[ \text{Hope} = \text{agency} + \text{pathways} \rightarrow \text{goals}^* \]

**Goals**

Setting specific and challenging goals motivates people to take action to start on a pathway toward achieving those goals (Halvorson, H. G., 2010).

**Agency**

Recognizing that you have the capability and responsibility to start moving towards your goals gives you agency.

**Pathways**

As you move toward your goals, you need to know how to get there (specific action steps) or how to find the resources, tools, and strategies to help you get there. Pathways thinking also involves finding ways around obstacles that you encounter as you move toward your goals.


**Mindset**

Your mindset is determined by how you think about your basic qualities (intelligence, talent, character, athleticism, etc.). If you believe these qualities don’t really change much, then that belief tends to lead to a ‘fixed’ mindset. If you believe these qualities can change with the right amount of effort, practice, process, knowledge, and strategy, then that belief tends to lead to a ‘growth’ mindset. Many people may have a growth mindset in one area of their life and a fixed mindset in another area. Research has shown that people who approach a goal with a growth mindset are much more successful and happy in the long-term perspective.

**How are mindsets formed?**

Mindsets are formed out of our experiences and responses to praise, reward, failure, and our environment as they are filtered through our personalities. When we are praised for being smart or talented as natural, then we can sometimes begin to believe that our value as a person is directly tied to being ‘naturally’ smart or talented. We can then falsely make the assumption that success is directly related to natural intelligence or talent instead of hard work, practice, strategy, and growth.

**Can you change your mindset?**

Mindsets are based on our basic beliefs about ourselves and learning, so we have the ability to change our beliefs and, as a result, our actions change as well.

Hope = AGENCY + PATHWAYS → GOALS

Hope/Mindset Matrix

High Hope/Growth Mindset Beliefs:
* Basic qualities are just the starting point for development
* I can nurture my basic qualities with effort, practice, and strategy
* I feel confident about my ability to learn and grow
* Failures provide good learning opportunities

High Hope/Growth Mindset Behaviors:
* Enjoy and seek challenges
* Set challenging goals
* Continue pursuing goals despite obstacles
* Seek and use feedback to improve
* Express confidence

Low Hope/Fixed Mindset Beliefs:
* Intelligence, talent, etc. can’t really change much
* Effort is not necessary for natural intelligence/talent
* Obstacles are signs that I shouldn’t pursue that goal
* Failure reflects on my value, intelligence, and/or talent

Low Hope/Fixed Mindset Behaviors:
* Avoid challenges/ don’t take many risks
* Set easy-to-achieve goals
* Give up easily when things don’t go my way
* Need to prove myself to others often
* Tend to blame others for failures
* Don’t use feedback/ argue over feedback
* Express insecurity or high anxiety

What are your goals? How can you reach them?
How can you get more feedback on your learning/ progress toward your goals?
How can you change a fixed mindset when you recognize it?

Created by Cindy Walker, 2012
| Harness Your Strengths          | • Discover your passions, interests, strengths, and learning strategies  
|                                | • Examine how you became good at something and apply those strategies to something you’re struggling to learn |
| Overcome Obstacles             | • Predict possible difficulties or obstacles you might face and seek out tools, resources, and people who can help you overcome these potential obstacles.  
|                                | • Think of alternate pathways to achieve your goal. |
| Plan and Prioritize            | • Use planning tools, lists, etc. to help you keep track of and be prepared for due dates, tests, assignments, etc.  
|                                | • Always keep your goals in mind. Consider ways that your classes and assignments can help you reach your goals. |
| Embrace the Journey            | • Approach learning with a growth mindset  
|                                | • Remember that learning is a process – enjoy the journey  
|                                | • Be prepared to work hard  
|                                | • Learn as much as you can from mistakes |
| Focus on your Progress         | • Track your own progress in your classes  
|                                | • Look closely at graded work that your instructors hands back to you – make an effort to understand the feedback/grade  
|                                | • Celebrate your successful completion of tasks, assignments, etc. and see them as one step closer to achieving your goals |
| Utilize Resources              | • Learn about and try new study/organizational strategies  
|                                | • Find a mentor, tutor, or teacher to guide you in your journey  
|                                | • Be creative and resourceful. Seek out solutions to any problems you might be facing.  
|                                | • Use Chaffey’s resources to help you achieve your goals (Success Centers, SI, library, financial aid, Career Center, Counseling, health services, etc.) |
| Live Out Your Dreams           | • Find meaningful ways to celebrate your progress and achievement of your goals  
|                                | • Keep going! Once you’ve reached a goal, set a new one. |

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Specific goal: _______________________

Actions I need to take this week
1. 
2. 

Actions I need to take this month
1. 
2. 

Actions I need to take this semester
1. 
2. 

Obstacle 1: ____________
Obstacle 2: ____________
Obstacle 3: ____________

Resources:

People:

Strategies:

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On the way goal: Reward:

On the way goal: Reward:

Semester Goal: Reward:

Fixed-Mindset Statement

Growth-mindset statement

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