

Introduction – Shifting Mindsets

Ultimately, this program is designed to help you make better choices -- choices that will lead you into a life of abundance, love, happiness and well-being. Yet in order to make wiser choices, we need to deepen our understanding of what's behind the choices that we make. Where do they come from?

Our day-to-day decisions, both conscious and unconscious, are fundamentally determined by our mindsets. Our mindsets, according to dictionary.com, are “fixed mental attitudes or dispositions that predetermine a person’s responses to and interpretations of a situation.”

In other words, our life experiences are largely determined by how we think, so in order to reshape our life experience, we must reshape our thinking.

This will be a core theme that runs through this program as we explore some different tools we can use to help us understand how this happens, and we practice shifting our own patterns of thinking and behaving to improve our lives and the lives of others around us.

To begin, it will help for us to become familiar with some common mindsets and reflect a little about what our current mindsets look like.

So let's take a quick look at 15 common mindsets. It's important to recognize that we may carry a mix of these, and that they may show up in our lives in different ways and in different situations. As you click through each, ask yourself: “Do I sometimes, or even often, have this mindset? When and where does it come up for me? How does it affect my life?”

(User will click through a series of layers, each with an image/text and a short voiceover).

1. The Growth Mindset

With a growth mindset, you believe that you can learn and change throughout your lifetime. You see obstacles and challenges as opportunities to grow, and often face difficult challenges head-on. You embrace the possibility of failure as a learning experience, and are not afraid of taking risks as you know that no matter what, you can learn and grow.

2) The Productive Mindset

With a productive mindset, you are focused on taking action and getting things done. Your attention is often on setting and meeting goals and making forward progress. You are conscious of how you are using your time and energy, and when you set your mind on doing something, you follow through and do it.

3) The Social Mindset

With a social mindset, you are focused on interacting with others. This can help you make connections and new friends, learn from others' stories, and get new perspectives on things. However, if your focus remains only on others, you may begin to rely on them for your own sense of happiness in an unhealthy way, or may become overly concerned with how others view you or think about you.

4) The Fear Mindset

With a fear mindset, your attention is often focused on what might go wrong. While fear is a natural part of helping us protect ourselves from danger, it can easily become irrational and prevent us from enjoying our lives, making connections with others, or taking on challenges that will lead to growth and fulfillment.

5) The Lazy Mindset

With a lazy mindset, your focus is often on short-term satisfaction at the expense of longer-term success. You put off important tasks, you engage in unhealthy activities and eat unhealthy food because it feels good in the moment. Though you might be good at avoiding stress and finding joy in the present, getting stuck in this mindset usually leads to poor health, lack of financial success, and a lot of wasted time.

6) The Envy Mindset

With an envy mindset, you are focused on others who have what you believe you want. While this can be inspirational and fuel your motivation to achieve more in life, when you are stuck in an envy mindset you may become bitter and resentful. With your attention on what others have and what others are doing, you become unfocused in your own life and work, and you find it difficult to be grateful for what you do have. This often leads to difficulty with relationships and a general sense of unhappiness.

7) The Business Mindset

With a business mindset, your attention is firmly on your career and your professional life. This can lead to having a successful career and making money, but if you're not careful, it can also lead to a 'workaholic' pattern where your personal life and relationships may suffer.

8) The Dreamer Mindset

With a dreamer mindset, you are focused on the future and the life you'd like to create for yourself and others. You believe in your ability to create this future and you think big. This is an important mindset for those who want to change their circumstances and improve their quality of life. However, getting stuck in dreaming about the future can lead to inaction in the present, or a disconnect with reality and a lack of ability to move forward toward your vision.

9) The Follower Mindset

With a follower mindset, you are constantly looking to others for direction. This can be a good thing when you are surrounded by positive role models and mentors, but when you get stuck here it can lead to following others down unproductive, unhealthy, or dangerous paths. You may not develop your abilities to think for yourself and make your own decisions, and your quality of life will be largely determined by those around you.

10) The Greed Mindset

With a greed mindset, you are focused on getting more and more. This may lead you to financial success and material abundance, but it can also be very destructive and lead to

profound unhappiness if you remain stuck in this mindset. You may find that nothing is ever enough, that you are focused mainly on yourself and struggle to maintain meaningful relationships, and that you compromise your values, or even risk your freedom or your life, to get more. This usually leads to loneliness and unhappiness at best, and jail or an early death at worst.

11) The Gratitude Mindset

With a gratitude mindset, your attention is on being grateful for what you have - and who you have - in your life. Most would agree that this mindset is fundamental to happiness, fulfillment, and well-being. While there is no real down-side to being grateful for what you have, when you are only content with what is, you may miss opportunities to make the changes you need to make to live a better life. It is in finding a healthy balance for gratitude for what is, and working toward what could be, that success is typically found.

12) The Confident Mindset

With a confident mindset, you are focused on what you know you can do well. Having this confidence allows us to take on challenges and helps us to lead others. This is an important mindset to have for anyone who is determined to be successful in life, regardless of what your definition of success may look like. Yet when you are overly focused on your own ability, you may slip into being over-confident or even arrogant in situations that call for humility and a recognition of what you don't know. This can lead to recklessness and potentially disastrous consequences, lost opportunities to learn, and strained relationships.

13) The Creative Mindset

With a creative mindset, you are always looking for new ways to do things or exploring possibilities. You are focused on solving problems and building the world that you really want to live in. This is an important way to think for anyone looking to take charge of their own life and make a meaningful contribution to solving the world's problems. Yet it is also possible to get stuck in a 'reinventing the wheel' pattern, where you may ignore existing solutions that are suitable for the problem at hand, and instead focus on creating everything yourself - wasting time and energy and in some cases, ending up with less effective solutions. You might also have a tendency to unnecessarily complicate things, making it hard for others to work with you and making you less effective in your work.

14) The Short-Term Mindset

With the short-term mindset, put simply, your attention is focused on the short-term. This can be useful for staying focused on what are doing or meeting daily goals, for example. Yet it can also lead to problems such as ignoring the long-term consequences of activities that may bring short-term pleasure or satisfaction, or focusing on activities that are not helping you move toward a long-term vision of a successful future.

15) The Angry Mindset

With an angry mindset, you are focused on how things are different than you would like them to be. This tension can lead to productive action aimed at creating the world you want to see, but if not managed carefully, it can also lead to unhappiness, stress, and a lack of energy to make a

meaningful contribution to building that future. When you're stuck in the angry mindset you may also make impulsive decisions that lead to negative consequences, and others may find that you drain their energy with your negativity, which can lead to a lack of meaningful relationships and loneliness.

(Another short video/voiceover)

You may have noticed that the words 'attention' and 'focus' were used a lot when describing these different mindsets. The reason is that our mindset is largely determined by where our attention is focused at any given moment. For example, if it is focused on what a situation is trying to teach us, we have stepped into a growth mindset. If it is focused on everything that might go wrong, we have slipped into a fear mindset.

The first thing to recognize is that we can learn how to direct our attention, and in doing so, we can develop control over our mindsets, and therefore our decisions and our actions. Doing so is simple, but that doesn't mean it's easy. It takes a lot of practice to develop this skill well -- in fact, if you decide to, you can continue to practice this essential skill throughout your life, getting better and better at it, and making wiser and wiser choices as your life becomes richer and richer.

This practice is about:

1. Becoming aware of how you are thinking, or creating space to observe your own thoughts
2. Recognizing when you are stuck in a pattern of thinking that is not serving you well
3. Choosing to think differently, shifting into a new mindset, or balancing your thinking with elements of multiple mindsets

It is very easy for any of us to lose this awareness and slip into familiar mindsets that feel comfortable for us. The practice is all about checking in with yourself and asking, "Where is my attention focused right now? What mindset am I in? How is it affecting my ability to make wise decisions that lead to the life I want to live? How can I look at this situation differently, or where can I shift my attention to in order to balance my thinking?"

Now that you are familiar with these different mindsets, you can use them to help you do this. As you move through your daily life, remind yourself to check in. You might even use sticky notes or some other type of visuals placed in your locker, bathroom mirror, or elsewhere to start to build this habit of observing your own patterns of thinking.

When you do so, if you find yourself stuck in a certain way of thinking, name the mindset, and then name another mindset that can help balance your thinking. For example, if you find that you have been focusing too much on someone else and have been jealous, you might say, "ok, I'm stuck in the envy mindset. I will shift into the gratitude mindset and bring my attention back to what I'm grateful for in my life. Then I'll take what it is I'm jealous about and bring in some of the productive mindset, directing my attention to setting some goals for what I want to achieve. I can bring in some creative mindset as well, figuring out what I'll need to do to reach my goals, and some growth mindset, finding the courage to embrace the challenge and the fear of failure by recognizing that no matter what, I'll learn and grow through the experience.

Building your literacy with these mindsets and your ability to use them as a reference for shaping your own thinking patterns is an incredibly powerful skill that you can use throughout your lifetime as you navigate your way through the world.

Remember, your energy follows your attention -- and you can learn to control where your attention is focused through practice.

The following exercises are designed to help you begin to explore your own mindsets and thinking patterns. If observing your own thoughts is new to you, and feels strange, don't worry. Just do your best for now and know that this is the beginning of a whole new world of building your ability to have more control over your experiences. As you get better at it, your life will become more interesting, enjoyable and fulfilling.