### Article #1 - A Winning Mindset

No competitor likes to lose, but the best competitors in every sport see a loss as an opportunity to improve. Even if you do not compete in martial arts, you can apply the same lesson to any challenge or undertaking: You are not shaped by a particular loss or failure, but by what you do with it.

Research conducted by Stanford psychology professor, Carol Dweck has shown that most people have one of two types of “mindset”: Fixed mindset or Growth mindset. Those with a fixed mindset believe that their positive traits and potential for success are essentially fixed. You have them – in whatever amount - or you do not. On the other hand, those with a growth mindset believe that positive traits and skills can be developed and that they can overcome failures to ultimately achieve success.

In rebounding from a loss, your mindset will affect how you understand and explain what happened. Developing some explanation – for yourself and for others - for the loss is usually the first step in determining whether and how you will move forward. Losing can be devastating for a fixed mindset competitor because they will assume they lost because they were “just not good enough.”

Georges St Pierre demonstrated the advantages of a growth mindset after losing his UFC title to Matt Serra. St Pierre consulted a sport psychologist who helped him realize that “it isn’t always the best team that wins the game, it’s the team that plays better." GSP modified his personal explanation for the loss, saying: "I truly believe I’m the best fighter in the UFC but, that night, Matt Serra fought a better fight than me."

When questioned about why he did not fight to his potential in that match, Georges said: “I forgot what was my number one priority. My number one priority is to stay champion and being the best in the world. I forgot that. I paid for it, I made a mistake. But I’m the type of guy that never makes the same mistake twice." His conclusion was "I truly believe that this loss is probably the best thing that ever happened to me."

Being an effective competitor in martial arts (or doing any challenging task for that matter) requires that you develop faith in yourself and in your ability. Having faith means that you can believe in yourself when you are consistently landing your strikes and when you miss them. Although you missed the last takedown attempt, you are confident that you will get the next one. The key to bouncing back from a loss is never to lose faith in yourself.

Different people recover from setbacks in different ways, but here is a

| Compare a **growth** mindset and a **fixed** mindset |

| A fixed mindset competitor says they are “just not good enough” when they lose. How would a person with a growth mindset respond in the same situation? |
quick formula that you can adapt to your own needs.

First, you will have to develop an explanation to understand the loss. Try to explain it from a growth mindset, rather than a fixed mindset. It is natural and acceptable to feel disappointment, but keep it in perspective and try not to think about it too much. Disappointment, not devastation. If you let yourself spiral down into a self-critical cycle, it will undermine your faith and confidence. Maintain your belief in your ability, grieve the loss, and move on. Some athletes say that if you have never lost, you are not competing against the best people.

Second, develop a plan for what and how you can improve. If you identified any “holes” in your game, work with your coach or training partner on strategies to fix them. Reflect on your loss – not the emotional or self-critical part – but like an outside observer. If you were coaching yourself, what would make you better?

Third, think of that plan working. Once you have a clear explanation of what went wrong and an idea of what needs to change, spend some time visualizing what your game will look like after you successfully enact your plan. In your mind, take time to see and to feel the success of your plan. Image what you will be like when you have taken your game to the next level, then step inside that image. Experience the unwavering confidence and faith in your ability.

Finally, move forward with confidence. The loss was an event. You disappointment was just a mental event. It does not define you and it does not determine your future. Part of the “envisioning” is to set yourself mentally on a forward-moving path. That vision contains everything you need to retain from the past event. It is over and reliving the negative emotions will not improve your performance.

Your task is to implement your plan with faith and a positive focus. Scientists suggest that the human brain is naturally “wired” to be negative. If you do not take control of your thoughts, and emotions, you might have to spar a couple of more rounds with the “what ifs.” But you can think about what you say to yourself and the emotions that you generate. Reduce the negatives and create positive messages, images and emotions. With resilience, you can grow as a person and create a mindset that will accelerate your path to success.

Article #2 - Why You Must Have A Growth Mindset

Do you ever catch yourself thinking about someone who gets more compliments than you and saying: "He's a natural," or "She's a lot smarter than me," or "That person is so much more experienced than I am"?

Even worse, have you ever said: "I don't have that in me."

Most of us have. But don’t worry these people have learned their skills somewhere along the line and you can too - but only if you believe it is within you.

What we tend to do is put the 'naturals' on a pedestal based on qualities they have that we think we don't have. For me, when I was newer to the business world, that person was Lorelle. Back then, I thought she had a natural gift sales. She was very good -- better than anyone I knew.

I told myself that she had a more charming personality than me. She was more business *savvy* than me. She could speak better than me. She was better looking than me. These were just excuses.

Looking back now, I can reflect differently. Lorelle had been in sales for over 15 years compared to my 1 year. She was highly *motivated* (as was I) and had much more training and read dozens more books than me. She had had a lot more time to practice what she had learned.

Personality and looks - yes, I thought she had both but these are *subjective* qualities. Not everyone would have agreed. And why should the rest of us walk around as though we are *inferior* because we don't look like models? These things are not going to stop you from great success.

Getting good at sales is a learnable skill.

The only people who cannot acquire this skill are those who:

Believe that business skill and intelligence are basic fixed things that can't be changed much.

There are two mindsets (fixed and growth) that people have about intelligence and other skills and talents (such as business, artistic, sporting ability etc). A mindset is a powerful belief.

If I had a fixed mindset/belief about sales, I could not have developed
myself because I started out so badly. I'd have taken one look at
Lorelle and either given up at getting good at my job, blamed my
parents or teachers for not giving me the skills because they weren't
in business or sales, or found a way to look superior to Lorelle ('I'm a
better writer than she is - who cares about sales!' etc).

Luckily, a growth mindset/belief meant I was willing to struggle for
awhile, willing to work hard at getting better, and open to taking risks
and failing from time to time.

The key word is belief. Since all our results come from our beliefs,
we have to change that first. If you believe that you might reveal your
inadequacies by taking risks, experiencing weak results, and
working hard, you will not do what is needed to get great results. On
the other hand, if you believe your qualities can be developed, these
new actions can move you in the right direction.

The good news is you can change your mindset/belief. It starts with
simply knowing about the two different mindsets and then thinking
and reacting in new ways.

Fixed mindset: If I have to work hard, it makes me feel like I'm not
smart. Growth mindset: The harder I work, the better I get. The fixed
mindset is afraid of challenges and sees failure as making a mistake -
as revealing that you are not perfect and smart all the time. The
growth mindset sees failure as growing (learning) and struggle as part
of that process.

I cannot emphasize how important this is. Without a growth mindset,
you will never be successful at getting better at anything. There is
nothing worthwhile in life that doesn't take tremendous effort.

Which do you believe:
"Your intelligence is something very basic about you that you
can't change very much." OR
"No matter how much intelligence you have, you can always change it quite a bit."

Why?

**Anderson, Matt.** "Why You Must Have A Growth Mindset." *The Referral Authority.* 05
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Article #3- Change Your Mind

Turns out the cliché—"you can do anything if you put your mind to it"—is true. Research reveals that, if you teach students that their intelligence can grow and increase, they do better.

Research psychologist Carol Dweck from Stanford University and her colleague Lisa Blackwell from Columbia University worked with hundreds of seventh graders, and found out which believed their intelligence was fixed and which thought that it could increase. The “fixed” group floundered over the next two years, while the others thrived. The researchers then predicted that they could help by teaching the children who had the fixed mindset that they could actually grow their intelligence.

The struggling kids were divided into two groups: One was given a course in good study habits. The other was given an elementary science lesson about how the brain forms new connections every time you learn something new, which, over time makes you smarter. The second group showed remarkable improvement while those who'd learned new study skills did not.

Dweck extended what she's seen in her childhood-development research to apply to the population at large. Her recent book, *Mindset: The New Psychology of Success*, divides people into those who believe they are who they are, and go through life avoiding challenge and failure; and those with a growth mindset, who view themselves as fluid and life as being filled with opportunity.

In business, a "fixed" mindset causes the sort of leadership that relies on intimidation (that supposedly proves how "smart" the leader is). A "growth" mindset views challenges and setbacks as an opportunity to learn and to improve through experience.

Google may be the poster-child for tapping the growth mindset of its organization—it was number one on this year's Fortune list of best companies to work for and also made the Fortune 500. The company is notorious for its "20% time" policy, through which all Google engineers are encouraged to spend about a day a week on independent projects. Interestingly, this "independent study" doesn't lead to defection, as several successful Google services like Gmail, Google News, and AdSense grew out of these efforts.

Article #4- The Power of Positive Thinking

There may be nothing more important than positive thinking during the teen years. During the new year, people generally make new year resolutions and feel optimistic about the life ahead of them. However, as time goes on, they may start to lose hope and their positive thoughts begin to deteriorate. It is important to practice positive thinking habits during the teen years because this is a time when your habits, plans, and goals will be set, and will likely follow you throughout your life.

You might be asking the question “What exactly is positive thinking?” Positive thinking starts with capturing negative thoughts, stopping them in their tracks, and turning them into something positive. For example if you fail a test, you may tell yourself “I’ll never get it right.” But what you should do is replace that thought with, “I tried my hardest and next time I’m sure I can do better.” Or perhaps you talk down about yourself while looking into the mirror with comments like “If only I was a few pounds lighter.” But these are thoughts which need to be replaced immediately. Once you are able to change your thinking habits, you may find yourself experiencing the world in a whole new light.

Another way to practice positive thinking is to set goals for yourself. These don’t have to be long term goals. Maybe your goal is simply to become more involved in your community. You could achieve this by making it a priority to volunteer once a week or once a month. Setting a goal and reaching it will make you feel like a whole new person, and give you the confidence you need to reach long term goals. You could also start a new hobby. Don’t be afraid to sign up for a dance class you’ve always wanted to take, or join a new club.

Why is it important for teens to practice positive thinking?

How would you define positive thinking?

What is a goal you currently have?
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You won’t know what you’re good at unless you try it.

If you still feel like you are being brought down by negative thoughts, make a list of strengths and weaknesses about yourself. If there is a particular weakness that you feel you just can’t get over, make a plan of steps you will take to overcome that weakness. If you do make a mistake or don’t reach a goal, don’t be brought down by it. Take a day or two to reflect on the mistake, but then focus on the future and move on.

Finally, try to tell yourself at least three positive things that happened to you each day. This will help you develop the confidence you need to achieve your goals and dreams in life. Having confidence and self esteem will allow you to respect yourself and others, and become a positive influence in your family, school, and community. So live life differently and think positively, because positive thoughts create positive results.

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**Article #5- Training in Positive Thinking May Help Anxious Teens**

New research suggests that training kids in a positive thinking style about interactions with other people could help them overcome anxiety and prevent such problems from continuing into adulthood. Researchers from Oxford University in the United Kingdom found that training youth to bring a bias toward either positive or negative social situations could influence their mood.

"It's thought that some people may have negative interpretations of ambiguous situations," said study leader Jennifer Lau, of Oxford University's Department of Experimental Psychology, in a university news release. "For example, I might wave at someone I recently met on the other side of the street. If they don't wave back, I might think they didn't remember me -- or alternatively, I might think they're snubbing me."

People with anxiety -- an estimated 10-15 percent of teens -- are more likely to assume the worst in such a situation. "These negative thoughts are believed to drive and maintain their bad mood and anxiety," Lau said. "If you can change that negative style of thinking, you can change mood in anxious teenagers."

In the study, researchers attempted to train 36 teens to boost their thinking -- in either a positive or negative direction -- through a computer program. Those who got the positive training became more positive themselves; the reverse was true for those who received the negative training.

"Although these results are early, and among a limited number of healthy teenagers, we hope this approach to encourage positive interpretations of events will prove to be a powerful tool," Lau said. "If we are able to intervene early and effectively in teenagers with anxiety, we may be able to prevent later adult problems. The next steps are to give people with high levels of anxiety these training tasks to see if it helps change their mood time."

**What is a bias someone could have that might influence his or her thinking? Try to use a personal example.**

**How can you change your thinking to have a more positive outlook?**

I wish I could make the universe deliver wonderful things to my doorstep just by imagining them. I can't--and neither can you, no matter what anyone tells you. There is not a single piece of hard evidence that "visualizing success," and doing nothing else, will do a damn thing for you. In fact, there is plenty of evidence that it will leave you even worse off than when you started. Scientifically-speaking, focusing all of your thoughts on an ideal future leads to lower achievement. In other words, you are less likely to achieve your goals when all you do is imagine that you already have achieved them.

"Negative" thinking, on the other hand, has gotten a bad reputation. This is mostly because the people who advocate "positive" thinking put all the "negative" thoughts together in one big unpleasant pile, not realizing that some kinds of negative thoughts are actually necessary and motivating. There is a big difference between "I am a loser and can't do this" (a bad, self-defeating negative thought), and "This won't be easy, and I'm going to have to work hard" (a very good negative thought that actually predicts greater success).

In fact, study after study shows that people who think not only about their dreams, but about the obstacles that lie in the way of realizing their dreams--who visualize the steps they will take to make success happen, rather than just the success itself--vastly outperform those who sit back and wait for the universe to reward them for all their positive thinking. Whether it's starting a relationship with your secret crush, getting a job, recovering from major surgery, or losing weight, research shows that if you don't keep it real you're going to be really screwed.

A new set of studies by NYU psychologists Heather Barry Kappes and Gabriele Oettingen offers insight into why this kind of thinking isn't just useless, but actually sets you up for failure. These researchers found that people who imagined an uncertain and challenging future reported feeling significantly more energized, and accomplished much more, than those who idealized their future. Kappes and Oettingen argue that when we focus solely on imagining the future of our dreams, our minds enjoy and indulge in those images as if they are real. They might be reachable, realistic dreams or impossible, unrealistic ones, but none of that matters because we don't bother to think about the odds of getting there or the hurdles that will have to be overcome. We're too busy enjoying the fantasy.

Admittedly, there are some people that might experience a benefit...
from visualizing a positive future. People who are depressed, or have very low self-confidence, are more likely to think about obstacles, and only obstacles. They may need to be reminded that a positive future is possible. Believe me when I tell you that I truly wish Hogwarts was a real place and that Antonio Banderas was my next-door neighbor. But wishing will not make it so, and that's exactly my point.

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