

ACADEMIC ADJUSTMENT

Apply the new information you learned (see, you're smarter already) about growth mindset and grit.

You can challenge these negative beliefs and move forward by remembering the following:

- ☀ Finding material challenging doesn't mean you're stupid
- ☀ Difficult academic tasks require effort and persistence
- ☀ When learning is difficult, don't get discouraged. Get gritty!
- ☀ Grit is an important predictor of success
- ☀ If your mom says you're all gritty and that you should take a shower, you stare her dead in the eyes and say, "That's just who I am, Barbara. I'm going in gritty and I'm coming out the same way."

STAY CONNECTED

For more information on these topics, search for work about mindsets by Dr. Carol Dweck and about grit, by Dr. Angela Duckworth.

To access other **Psychtools for School** resources please visit: <http://tinyurl.com/hbw7zff>

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Project Creators:

Dr. April McGrath, Dr. Amanda Clark, Dr. Kelley Robinson



The Importance of
Grit to Succeeding
in School

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SITUATION

Dan had a tough time understanding his school material. He'd read something a few times but usually didn't get it. And when he did get it, the celebration was short lived because he would turn the page and discover a brand new 'it' that he had to get! Sometimes there were two or three! He thought he wasn't smart and from this he felt incredibly discouraged.

PSYCHOLOGY CAN EXPLAIN THAT

Researchers have shown that beliefs about intelligence can be as important to success as actual IQ scores. In other words, the mindset you have about learning actually influences your learning outcomes.



If you view intelligence as a fixed characteristic then you may be less likely to try and succeed at a difficult academic task. A better way to think is to adopt a growth mindset. Basically, you take anything that Arnold Schwarzenegger has ever said about getting jacked and replace that word with 'smart'. Most of his advice will still be accurate. Think of the brain as a muscle that can grow and become stronger.

Another consequence of the fixed-intelligence view is that it leads people to interpret effortful learning as an indication of lacking intelligence. The opposite is actually true. A growth mindset means that intelligence is strengthened by effort. Learning will be challenging and that is OKAY because achievement is reached by hard work. In psychology that concept is called **grit**.

Yeah, grit. Is that not a serious enough sounding academic term? Well, that's what it's called and it might be the greatest of all characteristics. Why does grit matter? Because grit is how the job gets done. Grit means staying focused and working effortfully toward your goals. Learning isn't handed to you; it is something you have to work at.

CONSEQUENCES

If you didn't know these research findings about growth mindset and grit, you may think the following when confronted with difficult material:

- ☀ I'm not getting this; I must be stupid
- ☀ Everyone else must be finding this easy; they are smarter than me
- ☀ This is too difficult; why am I even trying
- ☀ These beliefs are likely to lead to less engagement and effort, leading to poor performance

“NEGATIVE BELIEFS ABOUT YOUR INTELLIGENCE CAN LIMIT YOUR LEARNING. REMEMBER, LEARNING TAKES EFFORT AND PUTTING EFFORT INTO YOUR WORK IS A STRENGTH NOT A WEAKNESS.”