Building a Tougher Learner

Research-Based Models and Practical Strategies

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No disclosures

How do your learners respond to...

- Mistakes or failures?
- Challenges?
- Corrective feedback?

Survey of Pediatric Faculty

Not Great

- Blow it off
- Be hard on themselves
- Make excuses
- Get defensive/scared
- Talk a lot/loudly
- Get tearful/overwhelmed
- Act disinterested

Pretty Well

- Acknowledge the mistake
- Rise to the challenge
- Ask for help
- Be receptive
- Incorporate the feedback
- Act appreciative

How do your learners respond to…

- Mistakes or failures?
- Challenges?
- Corrective feedback?

Have you noticed changes over time?

Peter Gray Ph.D.
Freedom to Learn

Declining Student Resilience: A Serious Problem for Colleges

College personnel everywhere are struggling with students' increased neediness.

Posted Sep 22, 2015

f **SHARE**   🐦 **TWEET**   ✉ **EMAIL**   ◁ **SHARE**

A year ago I received an invitation from the head of Counseling Services at a university to join faculty and administrators for discussions about how to deal decline in resilience among students. At the first meeting, we learned that eme to Counseling had more than doubled over the past five years. Students are i seeking help for, and apparently having emotional crises over, problems of ev Recent examples mentioned included a student who felt traumatized because roommate had called her a "bitch" and two students who had sought counseli they had seen a mouse in their off-campus apartment. The latter two also call police, who kindly arrived and set a mousetrap for them.

The Myth of the Ever-More-Fragile College Student
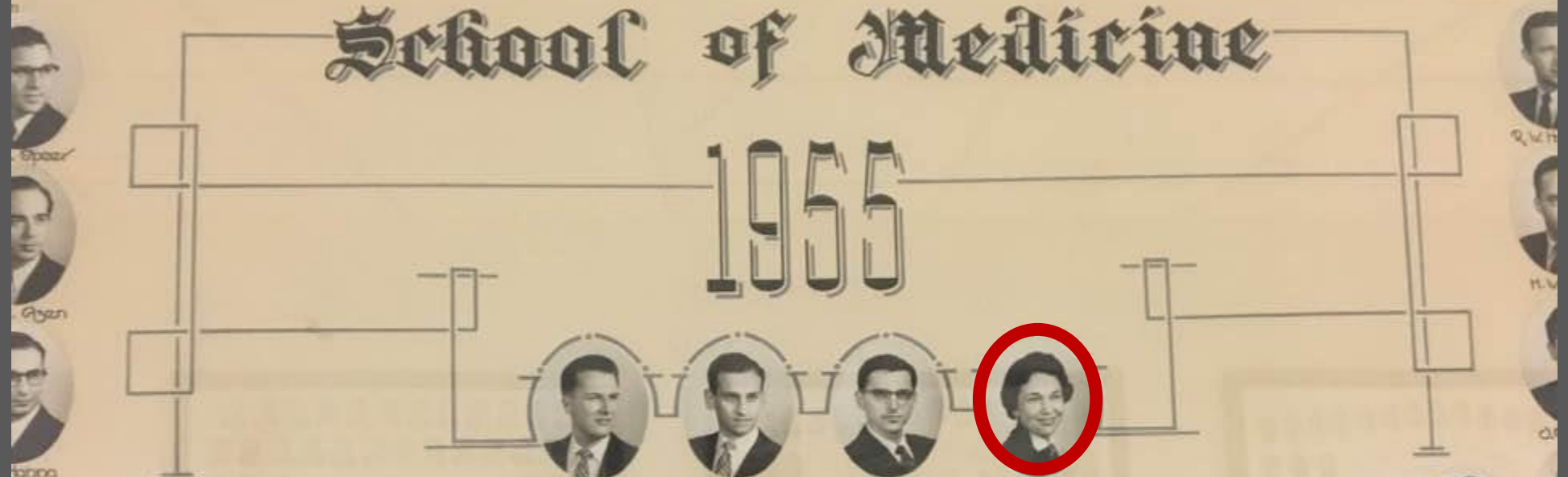
By **Jesse Singal**

2015

Photo: Matthieu Spohn

Over the last two weeks, the news has been dominated by coverage of two very different instances of campus turmoil at Yale and the University of Missouri. In both cases, students are protesting over what they see as administrations that turn a blind eye to the problems faced by marginalized students on their campuses. Some of the students involved have gotten upset or confrontational, leading to dramatic YouTube videos that are hard to watch.

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Students today

- 20% are 30+
- 70%+ work 30 hours/week
- 25% work full time
- 25% have dependent children
- 37% attend college part time
- 36% are first generation
- 25-33% meet clinical criteria for anxiety and depression

Objectives du jour

- Distinguish the characteristics of a growth vs. fixed mindset.

- Discuss evidence-based interventions shown to build resilience.

- Identify 5 practical teaching strategies.

Mindset Research

Group 1
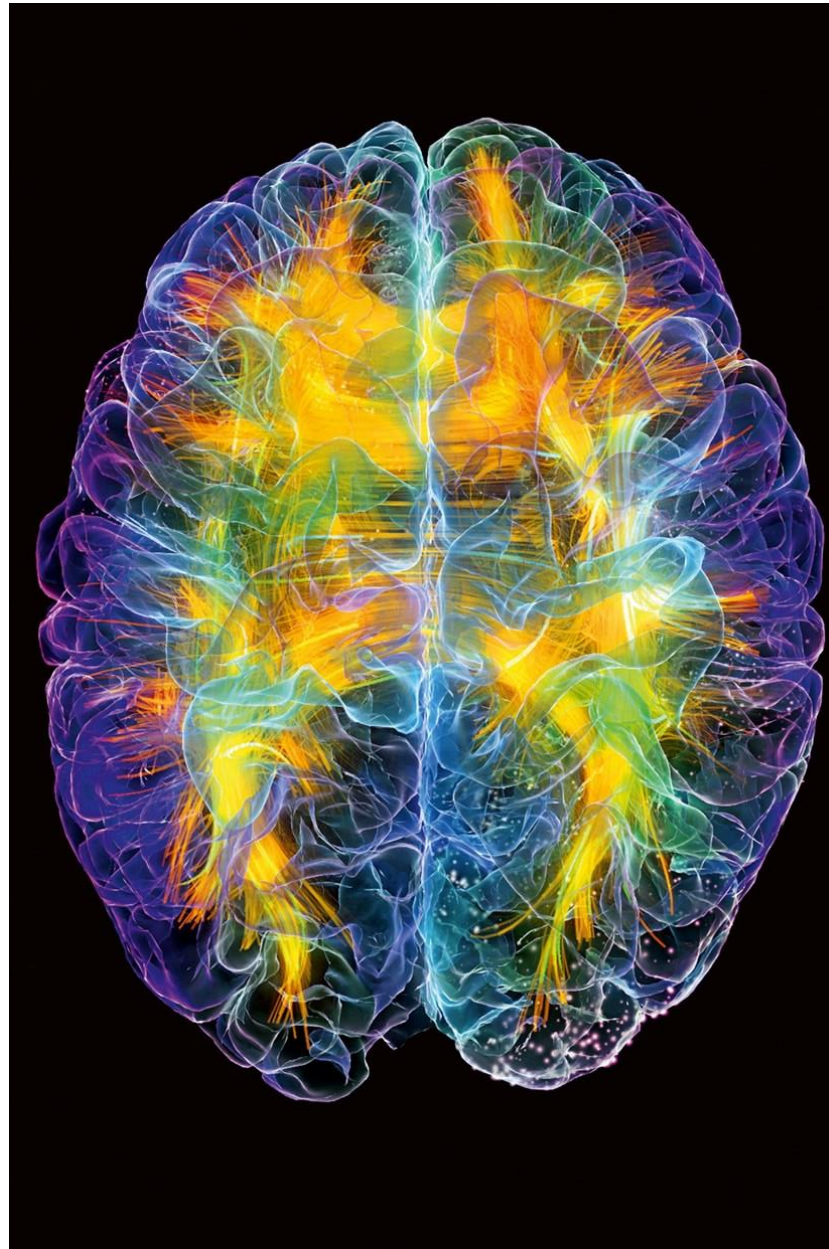Brains lit up when they encountered errors.

Failure made them curious.

Group 2
Little brain activity when they encountered errors.

Failure made them disengage.

Fixed Mindset

Motivation
• Desire to appear smart, talented, skilled

Growth Mindset

Motivation
• Desire to learn and develop knowledge and skill

Mindsets are powerful.

They affect:
- Self-efficacy
- Persistence
- Resilience
- Achievement

Questions

Do you see fixed mindsets among your learners?

What factors have contributed to forming them?

Can they be changed?

Mindsets *can* be changed.

Simple interventions have demonstrated *dramatic* results.

Yeager & Walton, 20111

Malleability of Intelligence Interventions

Aronson, Fried, & Good, 2002

Focus = Changing learners' beliefs about intelligence.

Students who wrote letters to younger students explaining that intelligence is malleable:

- Got higher GPAs than a control group

- Were more engaged academically

- Identified more with their university

Affirmation Interventions Miyake et al, 2010; Cohen et al, 2009

Focus = Refocusing learners' attention on core values/goals.

When students were asked to write about values
that were personally important to them…

Eliminated a significant gender gap on a
nationally normed test.

Reduced race-based performance gaps.

Belonging Interventions Walton & Cohen, 2011

Focus = Demonstrating that feelings of not belonging are common.

Students were asked to:

- Reflect on other students' feelings of not belonging
- Write an essay and prepare a presentation for incoming students

Black students who did this:
- Earned higher GPAs over their entire college careers
- Cut the racial achievement gap by 52%
- Were more likely to be in the top 25% of their class
- Reported higher levels of happiness and well-being

Attribution Interventions

Focus = Changing how learners explain academic struggle.

New students who watched older students discuss initial academic struggles (on video)...

- Outperformed a control group on the GRE
- Earned higher grades
- Were 80% less likely to drop out

"I didn't": A Faculty Montage of Failure and Growth

https://vptl.stanford.edu/resilience-project/video/i-didnt-faculty-montage-failure-and-growth

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The Resilience Project

THE RESILIENCE PROJECT combines personal storytelling, events, programs, and academic skills coaching to motivate and support students as they experience the setbacks that are a normal part of a rigorous education. We help students learn from failure and hope to instill a sense of belonging and bravery. Our goal is to help change the perception of failure from something to be avoided at all costs, to something that has meaning, purpose, and value.

If you would like to talk with us about rejection, failure, setbacks, or definitions of success, please contact **Adina Glickman**, director of The Resilience Project at adinag@stanford.edu
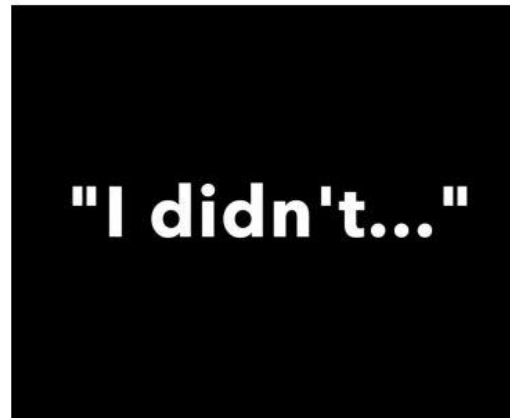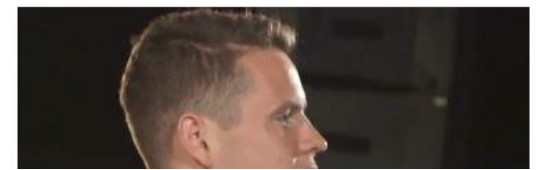
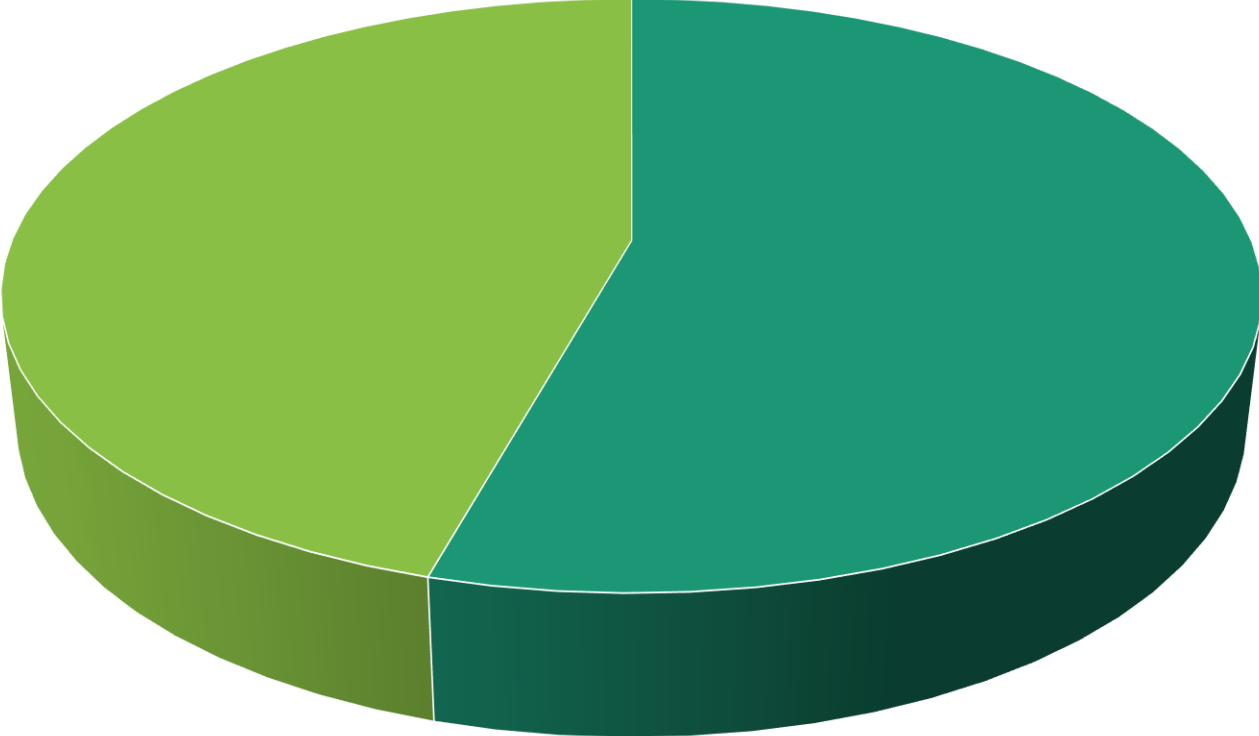"I didn't" - a Faculty Montage of Failure and Growth

A Quick Look at Stories of Resilience

Abby Belani: On Not Getting Into Medical School

WE ARE ONLY HUMAN

Survey of Pediatrics Faculty

■ Fixed Mindset ■ Growth Mindset

Teaching Mindset

1. I am comfortable taking risks in my teaching.
2. I am forgiving of myself when I make mistakes.
3. I am willing to ask my colleagues for help and advice.
4. I am comfortable admitting to students when I don't know something.

Myths about mindsets

- People have either a FM or a GM.

- You can't be successful with a FM.

- GM means you should never stop trying.

- GM means you can succeed in everything.

- We should give As for effort.

Beware of False Growth Mindset!

What strategies can *you* use to build growth mindsets?

Small group discussion

In 5 minutes, how many strategies can you think of to build growth mindset among learners?

Don't give empty praise

Invite learners to share challenges

"I don't want to know what you found easy; I want to know what you got wrong, because that's what you'll learn from."

Respond positively to productive struggle

"I'm **so** glad you told me you were confused instead of just bluffing your way through."

Praise progress, process, persistence – not intelligence

Well done! You're a natural.

I'm impressed by how thoughtfully you considered all possible explanations.

Our trainees are smart.

Our trainees are determined and hard-working.

Affirm values

Ask learners to reflect about what attracted them to their field and what motivates them to stick it out when it's hard.

Model a growth mindset

- Talk about overcoming challenges
- Help to set realistic expectations
- Describe your own setbacks
- Describe your own growth
- Solicit feedback

…But be patient with yourself if a FM occasionally creeps back in.

5 Strategies (Recap)

1. Don't give empty praise

2. Commend progress – not intelligence

3. Invite learners to share challenges

4. Provide opportunities to affirm values

5. Model a growth mindset

Take-Aways

Mindsets have profound effects on students' confidence, achievement, resilience, and persistence.

You can help your students build a growth mindset – starting by building your own.

You can work together to build a "growthier" departmental culture.
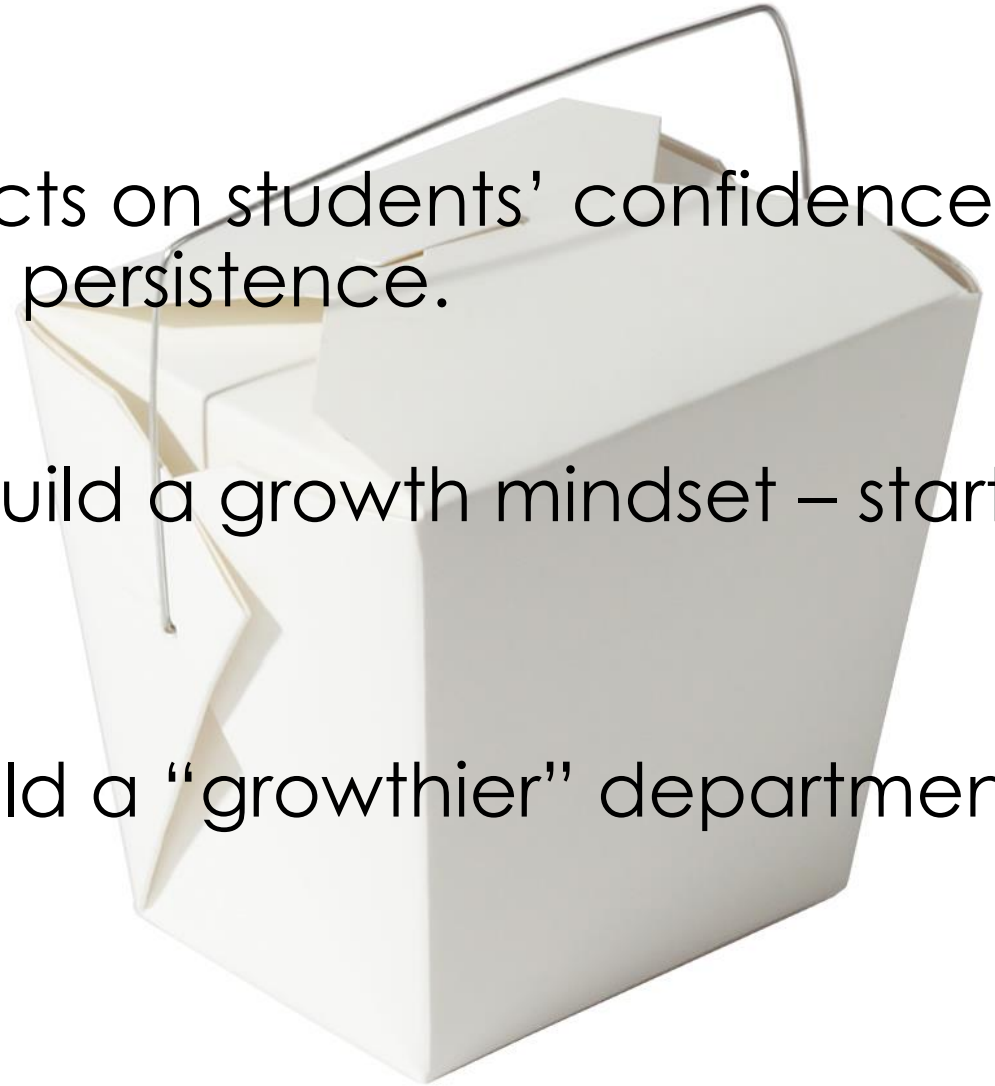
Questions?
Thoughts?

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