

The Resilient Mindset

Andrew Fuller and John Hendry

Research on 193,000 young people has revealed a cluster of factors that together create the 'resilient mindset'.

The Resilient Mindset extends the concept of a Growth Mindset to make it more applicable for teachers and parents. Growth mindsets relate to self-efficacy and beliefs about personal capacity. Growth mindsets are differentiated from fixed mindsets in which the person believes they have a fixed level of intelligence and competence.

The modelling of the data indicates that the fixed/growth dichotomy is too simple. Students are rarely one mindset or the other. It is not a case of either/ or.

The Resilient Mindset is specifically attuned to learning and behaviours in classrooms. Resilient Mindsets are differentiated from anxious mindsets and avoidant mindsets.

The results of the research is that there are key actions to be taken by teachers, parents and students to develop a resilient mindset.

The establishment of a resilient mindset is related to increased engagement in learning, motivation and academic success. It also relates to the factor that most predicts success in life and in relationships- the ability to regulate our emotions.

The resilient mindset relates not only to how we see ourselves but also to how others view us as we attempt new tasks, make mistakes and learn new skills. Thus is why is directly relates to the cultures of schools and classrooms. Mindsets are developed in and

outside the classroom, in the corridors, on the sporting fields and at play

To create resilient learners, we have to deal with the ability to form relationships. Applying the research findings we can group students into 3 mindsets:

Anxious
Avoidant
Resilient.

The Anxious Mindset

The anxious mindset is where students' habitually freeze in the face of new challenges. Their levels of arousal overwhelm and panic them and they shy away from new experiences and opportunities for learning. Feelings of nausea, shaking, fear and panic often accompany this state. Other students in this mindset may attempt a task but rush through it get it over and done with as quickly as possible

Experiencing anxiety at these levels interferes with memory functioning and thinking.

The Avoidant Mindset

Students in this mindset are escapees from the demands of school. Habitually they respond to challenges with fight or more commonly flight. They may distract, dissemble, question the validity of the work, become angry, distant, incommunicative. The level of avoidance means these students become disengaged and distracting to others. Their anxiety can lower the motivation of other students.

The Resilient Mindset

Shifting the appraisal of challenges that invoke anxious or avoidant responses into a resilient mindset requires a positive, trusting relationship between teacher and student.

This is the art of great teaching.

Being able to reframe tasks, to create support that overrides fear, to have students that have a sense of success and mastery is the basis of establish a resilient mindset.

The Resilient Mindset - Indicators

Anxious	Resilient	Avoidant
Reluctant to attempt challenging pieces	Has a go and persists	Gives up easily, shuts down.
Freezes in the face of challenges. Doesn't know where to start. Feels incapacitated	Gets stressed but resolves it through support (while there may be times of freeze or flight, the eventual strategy is tend, mend and befriend)	Flight. When confronted with a challenge, avoids, procrastinates or distracts.
Sees mistakes as personal failings	Sees mistakes as necessary to learning	Sees mistakes as not worth replicating
May blame self for difficulties. Feels ashamed and worries	Doesn't use blame/ shame	May blame others for difficulties. Feels ashamed and avoids it.
Energy is focused on pleasing people	Energy can shift appropriately	Energy is overly focused on escaping
Concentration is often focused on other people and their judgements	Concentration can flexibly shift between focused and diffuse; externally focused and internally reflective	Concentration is wariness. Vigilant
Sleep is often lessened through worry	Sleeps well	May sleep too long or be up playing computer games
Resilience fragile and dependent on social support.	Resilience is robust enough to overcome challenges and upsets. Resilience is present in the absence of social approval.	Resilience may appear good but be fragile in crises due to inability to rely on others
Decision making- seeks out others input, worries about what others might do	Decision making – can make independent decisions and can seek the input of other when useful	Overly self-reliant on making decisions alone. Reluctant to seek help from others
Feedback – seeks reassurance and may feel helpless	Feedback- seeks feedback in order to improve	Avoids feedback and may feel judged and threatened

Stay in touch with Andrew and receive updates

On face book [andrewfullerpsychologist](#)

On Linked in [and at](#)

The Learning Brain

www.andrewfuller.com.au