

# MISSION: CONTROL!

A BIG FEELINGS ADVENTURE!



## Parent Power Pack

"The Power of Mindset"

By

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### Background

According to research by Carol Dweck, begun about 30 years ago, a person's mindset sets the stage for either performance goals (fixed mindset) or learning goals (growth mindset).

A person with a fixed mindset worries about looking smart, doesn't like to put out effort, stumble, struggle, fail, be confused or frustrated, and is easily discouraged and defensive and may even blame others if not immediately successful when presented a challenge. Failure is perceived to be bad, and a person with a fixed mindset concludes that he or she is incapable and in order to protect the ego, will withdraw, avoid challenges, and lose interest. A person with a fixed mindset appears to others to be unmotivated.

In contrast, a person with a growth mindset approaches challenges in a different way, believes setbacks are temporary and that the brain can grow stronger and smarter, is willing to stretch and take risks and pursue interesting and challenging tasks in order to learn more. A person with a growth mindset persists, tries more than one strategy, accesses resources, and is willing to put forth effort, which results in progress and learning.

### Praise

Research shows that praising one's intelligence suggests that innate talent is the reason for success. In contrast, focusing on the process helps one see that effort leads to success. Ways to praise that lead to long-term benefit include describing

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what effort was applied, strategies used, choices made and persistence displayed. Also, trying different ways, following clues, studying, discovering a strategy that works, asking questions, practicing, and maintaining good sleep and nutrition habits supports a love of learning and promotes resilience in the face of obstacles.

Examples that boost motivation, resilience and learning include:

"You stayed at your desk, stayed focused, and worked until you finished. I liked watching you take on that challenge."

"It took a lot of work – you got your materials ready, you focused on one problem and took a break before starting a new problem, and you asked for help when you didn't understand something. Your brain is growing stronger and smarter."

"Your math is improving. You studied for your test by practicing problems at the end of the chapter and looked at homework to help you understand when you had questions. Looks like those strategies worked!"

## **Application to story**

In *Mission: CONTROL! A Big Feelings Adventure!*, Joseph must overcome a challenge. What did he do that showed a growth mindset? Working together with Gretchen was a strategy that worked for him to do the hard work, to use will power, to be gritty. Although initially, he was not able to control his big feelings, with his mom's guidance and safe space she created for him, he was able to stretch to reach his goal of regaining control of his Big Feelings. At the end of the story, we see some connections were strengthened in his brain, making it just a little easier for him to grow a stronger brain so that tomorrow when he encounters more challenges it will be just a little easier for him to use self-control.

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## Application to a child's life

Messages that may inspire your child:

If you do not give up and keep trying, you can find a way.

When people try hard and learn something new, their brains form new connections that make them smarter.

Everyone has failed.

Success is preceded by failures.

Take a "no" to a "yes".

Failure is an opportunity to grow and learn.

It is when the brain must struggle that learning happens.

Making mistakes means you are reaching for challenges.

Practice makes ~~perfect~~ permanent. OR Practice makes ~~perfect~~ progress.

Knowing it is possible to change the brain through effort is empowering.

Talk back to self-talk that is limiting with self-talk that grows a stronger brain.

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## **Research-based strategies that help children take on challenges (per Ellen Galinski)**

*(How these strategies are incorporated into Mission: CONTROL! A Big Feelings Adventure!)*

Create trusting, caring relationships so children feel safe and secure.

*Did you notice Joseph's mom doing this in the story from the beginning of his Big Feelings to the end? She stayed with him emotionally and physically and Joseph's mission control panel showed he knew his mom was there to keep him safe.*

Reframe situations, turning a negative into a positive e.g. "I see your brother knocked down your blocks. Would you like to ask him to help you rebuild? I wonder what ideas he'll have for building with you?"

*Did you notice how his mom helped him reframe his initial reaction and turn his outburst into a positive connection with his mom?*

Break a task down into manageable steps e.g. make a visual so a child can see start to finish how to do a task.

*Joseph's mom had a poster in his room to help him remember that he can manage challenges and how he can make that happen.*

Provide the opportunity for children to collaborate with a trusted person who can help with coping strategies.

*Joseph's mom did this when she set him up so he would feel ready to try again.*

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Communicate confidence in a child's abilities by noticing their own stress and managing it.

*Joseph's mom told herself to stay calm, reminding herself that there was not an emergency, and that Joseph needed her to stay in control so that he could get back in control himself.*

Encourage children to struggle with challenges and take control of problem-solving.

*Did you notice that Joseph's mom did not solve the problem for him; she allowed him to struggle and stretch and find his way through his Big Feelings.*

Teach children strategies for managing stress e.g. noticing their own state of arousal and taking steps e.g. breathing, mindfulness, doing activities that calm the nervous system.

*At bedtime, Joseph's mom helped him process his feelings and feel ready for what may come tomorrow. During the adventure, Gretchen helped him employ the strategy of breathing in order to manage the stress he felt when the HypnoZoids were winning the battle.*

Encourage children to think of themselves in the third person or as someone they admire such as a superhero.

*The adventure Joseph had was inspired by Spaceman Sam. Imagining himself being Spaceman Sam at the beginning of the book gave him practice taking on the persona of someone who is capable and empowered to handle challenges.*

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## Tips

Research shows that when children understand about fixed and growth mindsets, the belief that ability to learn can change with effort builds grit, a passion and perseverance for long-term goals.

People's beliefs about their intelligence impacts motivation, effort and approach to challenges.

## Challenges

Take on a family challenge that requires that everyone use a growth mind set to cooperatively achieve a goal. Challenges might be clearing the table together after dinner, having fun playing a board game, or making a birthday gift for a family member.

Have your child write down a small goal, take the first step and acknowledge that it was accomplished, evaluate the outcome as it relates to the next step, and then repeat until the last step of the goal is completed. (Think of it as rungs on a ladder that are climbed one step at a time, resting as needed, until the top of the ladder is reached.) Long-term goals might be learning to ride a bike, completing a poster, or learning math facts.

## Quiz

Take a quiz about mindset:

<https://blog.mindsetworks.com/what-s-my-mindset?view=quiz>

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## Poster

growth vs fixed mindsets:

<https://www.mindsetworks.com/Science/Impact>

caption: Dr. Carol Dweck found that people's theories about their own intelligence had a significant impact on their motivation, effort, and approach to challenges. Those who believe their abilities are malleable are more likely to embrace challenges and persist despite failure. This model of the fixed vs. growth mindset shows how cognitive, affective, and behavioral features are linked to one's beliefs about the malleability of their intelligence. The graphic demonstrates this research, and how different mindsets lead to different patterns of behavior.

## Quote:

"What children need most is to feel loved, respected and valued."

Adele Diamond, University of British Columbia

## Some Takeaways:

<https://www.understood.org/en/friends-feelings/empowering-your-child/building-on-strengths/growth-mindset>

Kids with a growth mindset believe their abilities can improve over time.

Praise the way your child approached a challenge – not just the effort.

Talking about learning from failure can help kids develop a growth mindset.

According to Mind in the Making, ([mindinthemaking.org](http://mindinthemaking.org)) life skills are based on executive functions; they bring together our social, emotional and cognitive capacities to problem solve and achieve goals. Studies have found they are critical to success in school and life.

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One of those seven skills is Focus and Self-Control, which is needed to achieve goals. This includes paying attention, exercising self-control, remembering the rules and thinking flexibly.

## Resources and Activities

Everything about mindset

<https://www.mindsetkit.org>

On the Perils and Promises of Praise by Carol Dweck

<http://www.ascd.org/publications/educational-leadership/oct07/vol65/num02/The-Perils-and-Promises-of-Praise.aspx>

The impact of a growth mindset

<https://www.mindsetworks.com/Science/Impact>

15 growth mindset questions

[https://assets.ctfassets.net/p0qf7j048ioq/4S3FmaJLgipoUzJjYKVTY8/ec379c2479556d19ccd4e0c856a86507/15\\_Growth\\_Mindset\\_Questions\\_to\\_Ask\\_Understood.pdf](https://assets.ctfassets.net/p0qf7j048ioq/4S3FmaJLgipoUzJjYKVTY8/ec379c2479556d19ccd4e0c856a86507/15_Growth_Mindset_Questions_to_Ask_Understood.pdf)

Cut and paste activity to learn the differences between fixed and growth mindsets

[https://assets.ctfassets.net/p0qf7j048ioq/3Ksved23rc5yVs9vnkMta8/57479cddd2c0e5150e12c41242a627fe/Try\\_Saying\\_Something\\_Else\\_\\_Understood.pdf](https://assets.ctfassets.net/p0qf7j048ioq/3Ksved23rc5yVs9vnkMta8/57479cddd2c0e5150e12c41242a627fe/Try_Saying_Something_Else__Understood.pdf)

Books on mindset, recommended by Ellen Galinsky

[https://www.understood.org/en/friends-feelings/empowering-your-child/building-on-strengths/growth-mindset-books?\\_ul=1\\*1mt8y1h\\*domain\\_userid\\*YW1wLVFkbWt hN2xfUjF6cGdnOTlFUEZuOFE](https://www.understood.org/en/friends-feelings/empowering-your-child/building-on-strengths/growth-mindset-books?_ul=1*1mt8y1h*domain_userid*YW1wLVFkbWt hN2xfUjF6cGdnOTlFUEZuOFE)

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How to Encourage Your Child to Take on Challenges and Develop a “Growth Mindset” interview with Ellen Galinski

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gshJzvx0Mto&feature=emb\\_title](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gshJzvx0Mto&feature=emb_title)

What you need to know about growth mindset

<https://www.understood.org/en/friends-feelings/empowering-your-child/building-on-strengths/growth-mindset>

Books and tips that promote life skills

<https://www.mindinthemaking.org/book-tips>

Turn challenging moments into skill building opportunities (books)

<https://www.mindinthemaking.org/skill-building-opportunities>

Helping children learn to take on challenges

<https://www.mindinthemaking.org/stories/helping-children-to-learn-to-take-on-challenges>

Experts weigh in: Should I let my child fail?"

[https://www.understood.org/en/friends-feelings/empowering-your-child/self-awareness/experts-weigh-in-should-i-let-my-child-fail?\\_ul=1\\*bip688\\*domain\\_userid\\*YW1wLVFkbWthN2xfUjF6cGdnOTlFUEZuOFE](https://www.understood.org/en/friends-feelings/empowering-your-child/self-awareness/experts-weigh-in-should-i-let-my-child-fail?_ul=1*bip688*domain_userid*YW1wLVFkbWthN2xfUjF6cGdnOTlFUEZuOFE)

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