



How to Develop your Mindset

Can we improve on who we are by retraining our thinking? Apparently so, as **PETER RAJ** discovers, talking to the Founder of Mindsetmax.com, *John Rhodes*, about having a fixed mindset and how we can go about changing it.

Q | What does it mean to have a 'mindset'?

John : My definition of a mindset is: A set of assumptions and thought processes that create a strong motivation to continue to acquire new - or accept previous behavioural patterns. Also called "mental inertia". So having a mindset means, to act from a set of core beliefs and values, that enhance your state of well being regardless of what is going on in the external world of business, personal relationship hassle or what the broadcast media choose to show you that day.

Q | How fixed is our mindset and how much of this is caused by activity on a conscious level?

John : According to the German physicist Albert Einstein: "A problem cannot be solved at the same level of consciousness that created it", which in another way means that it is almost impossible for us to think out-of-the-box when we have created a problem for ourselves from within our conscious boundaries.

Furthermore, our core belief and value system has been created mostly during our childhood (without upgrading much since), and this kind of relatively obsolete foundation is what we do our best with until we are inspired by another person's approach to a given problem.

Q | What are the ways in which we can transform our mindset

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and thereafter, transform our approach?

John : Learning to implement appreciative inquiry at the micro level, meaning to champion our successes and progress, however small they may seem – is a transformational strategy that can become a self-fulfilling prophecy for most people. Furthermore, to erase words like "impossible" and "difficult" from the vocabulary may spark a new beginning searching for words to describe a given problem in a new and productive way.

Q | How much of our mindset is affected by the nature of things ie our DNA (the way we've been created) and by nurture?

John : According to the American developmental biologist Dr. Bruce Lipton, genes and DNA do not control our biology. Instead, DNA is controlled by signals from outside the cell, including the energetic messages emanating from our positive and negative thoughts. Dr. Lipton's profoundly hopeful synthesis of the latest and best

research in cell biology and quantum physics is being hailed as a major breakthrough showing that our bodies can be changed as we retrain our thinking.

So retracing the earlier statement from Albert Einstein: "A problem cannot be solved at the same level of consciousness that created it", also means that what we learn receiving nurture has a profound impact on our mindset and how fixed this is, until we are inspired (usually by somebody else) to change.

Q | Is it really possible to change our mindset and what are three critical issues we need to keep in mind, if we are to do so?

John : Changing our mindset is possible, and requires focused conscious attention, like any other new kind of strategy that requires implementation. The learning period is individual and affected by the urgency with which we value the change. Any effective strategy can be divided into three simple steps:

- Why?

- How?
- Outcome?

An *effective why* is usually phrased positively and with a certain passion for changing the previous strategy. Focus on what you want to work, rather than “don’t want to”.

An *effective how* incorporates selective systems ie externally referenced persons or interactive points (social media) that ensures progression and stamina are a “public” matter.

The *outcome* is the motivation, and is usually most effective when described as “a feeling of ...”, since our body chemistry in general overrules what the brain wants us to do.

Q Can you tell me a little bit about the theory of planned behaviour?

John : The theory of planned behaviour (Icek Ajzen) specifies the nature of relationships between beliefs and attitudes. Human behaviour is guided by three kinds of consideration, “behavioural beliefs,” “normative beliefs,” and “control beliefs.” As a general rule, the more favourable the attitude toward behaviour and subjective norm, and the greater the perceived behavioural control, the stronger the person’s intention to perform the behaviour in question should be. Finally, given a sufficient degree of actual control over the behaviour, people are expected to carry out their intentions when the opportunity arises.

Q What do some of the more current trends in psychology and neuroscience indicate in relation to developing mindsets?

John : What we think, we become (Buddha, 500 B.C.). Today positive psychology is growing, NLP is growing, Mindfulness is growing and I believe that Dr. Robert O. Young has stated that our thoughts create two to three times more acidity in our bodies than our diet does. We think between 12-50.000 thoughts each day (The National Science Foundation, USA) – so choose wisely.

Therefore the current trends about developing mindsets - the new frontier - are beginning to agree upon:

- Choose why you think (is it worth the brain energy?)
- Choose what you think (is it supporting your equilibrium?)
- Choose how you think (find the positive if possible).

Q People want to choose for themselves what they believe in and they also want as much control over their own life as possible. To what extent do you believe developing the right mindset has a part to play in this?

John : A mindset transcends a quote I read once: “Do not make a permanent decision, on a temporary emotion”. Therefore a mindset is more like the ultimate guidelines or toolbox containing an individual value codex and relevant supporting beliefs, to the extent of assisting with navigating throughout the numerous interactions

with other people, maybe searching for the one thing that you can contribute with.

Joseph Campbell once wrote: “We must give up the life we have planned, to really experience the life that is waiting for us”. So control means a secure comfort zone. And comfort zone is inside the box. And inside the box is a fixed mindset.

Q If people change best when the desire for it comes from within and the change is initiated slowly, one step at a time, consistently, what are three things you would suggest for anyone interested in changing/developing a mindset about something in particular?

- John :**
1. Get serious about the “why-how-outcome” and treat your plan for action with urgency. Without the passion and motivation, stop wasting your time.
 2. Interview 3-5 experts in the given area that you want to develop a specific mindset for. Always talk to the experts that have hands-on experience in their field, stop listening to “free advice”.
 3. Engage in a like-minded network of people changing/developing mindsets. Learn from the experts taking the steps, regardless of their content – or you may even get interested in their mindsets.

Q Organisations and the leaders within, are now increasingly called upon to act and work in domains of ambiguity and to accept this as normal. How much impact can organisations have on their people, in terms of developing the right mindset in them, that can help align the goals of the individual employees with that of the organisation?

John : Depending upon the level of ambiguity and what impact it has, I would suggest that definitely a well defined mindset will help the individual employee to become self reliant and even proactive towards the goals of the organisation. The leaders have the responsibility of clear and precise communication and delegation at the relevant time, the employees have the responsibility of interacting with the leader according to the consequences at their task level. ■

John Rhodes is an HRD consultant, HR Coach, NLP Trainer, Enneagram Trainer, Building Excellence Trainer and the Founder of Mindsetmax.com specialising in optimum learning conditions and developing mindsets for sustained growth.

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