

Book Review

Mindset – Changing the way you think to fulfil your potential

Dweck, C. (2017). Random House.

Initially I thought this would be yet another “self-help book”, but I was pleasantly surprised when I read this book. The information the author offers is not new, but it is reasonably easy to read and traverses a number of topics that would appeal to business coaches, teachers, parents and health professionals.

Dweck examines how our conscious and unconscious thoughts affect us, and how something as simple as wording can have a powerful impact on our ability to improve. She stresses that how you view yourself profoundly affects the way you live your life. She describes how the power of our most basic beliefs about ourselves, whether conscious or subconscious, strongly “affects what we want and whether we succeed in getting it.” She argues that what we understand about our personality comes from our “mindset,” which both propels us toward, and prevents us from fulfilling, our full potential.

Dweck provides exercises and insights to help reinforce change and embed new learning.

I found the exercises and prompts at the end of each chapter thought provoking and extremely useful, but this book is not a panacea to cure all problems. We know that there are many obstacles in the way of change, including past trauma, ingrained habits and an environment that often reinforces the status quo and is therefore hostile to change. Real change takes an incredible amount of time, commitment, energy and effort.

However, there are some excellent resources and observations in this book which may help shine a light on why we do what we do, think how we think, and respond as we respond. For anyone looking at these dynamics, and the impact they have on us, then Carol Dweck’s book is a great guide. It will help you explore your ‘fixed mindset’ and offer suggestions on how you can challenge your thinking. While it may be a catalyst for the beginning of a host of different thoughts and actions, ultimately we need to make the journey ourselves. That is the real challenge.

Reviewed by Vivienne Martini.

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