

**The today reading is taken from:**

**Mindset: the new psychology of success by Carol Dweck**

**Chapter 2 : Inside the Mindsets. Is success about learning – or proving you are smart?**

Benjamin Barber, an eminent sociologist, once said, *'I don't divide the world into the weak and the strong, or the successes and the failures... I divide the world into the learners and the nonlearner.'*

What on earth would make someone a nonlearner? Everyone is born with an intense drive to learn. Infants stretch their skills daily. Not just ordinary skills but the most difficult tasks of a lifetime, like learning to walk or talk. They never decide it's too hard or not worth the effort. Babies don't worry about making mistakes or humiliating themselves. They walk, they fall, they get up. They just barge forward.

What could put an end to this exuberant learning? The fixed mindset. As soon as children become able to evaluate themselves, some of them become afraid of challenges. They become afraid of not being smart. I have studied thousands of people from preschools on, and it's breathtaking how many reject an opportunity to learn.

We offered four year olds a choice: They could redo an easy jigsaw puzzle or they could try a harder one. Even at this tender age, children with fixed mindset – the ones who believed in fixed traits – stuck with the safe one. Kids born smart 'don't do mistakes,' they told us.

Children with the growth mindset – the ones who believed you could get smarter - thought it was a strange choice. *Why are you asking me this lady? Why would anyone want to keep doing the same puzzle over and over?* They chose one hard one after another. *'I'm dying to figure them out!'* exclaimed one little girl.

So children with the fixed mindset want to make sure they succeed. Smart people should always succeed. But for children with the growth mindset, success is about stretching themselves. It's about becoming smarter.

One seventh grade girl summed it up. 'I think intelligence is something you have to work for...it isn't just given to you...Most kids, if they are not sure of an answer, will not raise their hand to answer the question. But what I usually do is raise my hand, because if I am wrong, then my mistake will be corrected. Or I will raise my hand and say, 'How would this be solved?' or 'I don't get this. Can you help me? Just by doing that I'm increasing my intelligence.'

**Question:**

**How do we get those who are 'nonlearners' to understand that getting something wrong is not a negative?**

Dweck, C.S., (2006) *Mindset: The New Psychology of Success*. New York: Ballentine Books