



A WEEK IN *Learning*

ARTICLE

EMBRACING THE POWER OF "YET"

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Nobody aims to miss the mark. In our work and personal lives, we strive to show others and ourselves that we are competent rock stars ready to take on any challenge. However, whether due to competing priorities, unforeseen obstacles, or lack of experience, we sometimes come up short. This is where the concept of "yet" can transform our perspective and fuel our growth.

The Growth Mindset

The idea of "yet" is rooted in the growth mindset, a concept popularized by psychologist Carol Dweck. A growth mindset is the belief that abilities and skills can be developed with time, effort, and dedication. In contrast, a fixed mindset assumes that our talents and intelligence are static traits that cannot be changed. When we adopt a growth mindset, we view challenges as opportunities to learn and improve rather than as impossible obstacles to overcome.

Dweck explains, "In a fixed mindset, people believe their basic abilities, their intelligence, their talents, are just fixed traits. They have a certain amount and that's that, and then their goal becomes to look smart all the time and never look dumb. In a growth mindset, people understand that their talents and abilities can be developed through effort, good teaching, and persistence. They don't necessarily think everyone's the same or anyone can be Einstein, but they believe everyone can get better if they work at it." By changing the language we use to conceptualize challenges, obstacles are transformed into opportunities to learn and grow.

The Power of "Yet"

Incorporating the word "yet" into our vocabulary can be a game-changer. Instead of saying, "I can't do this," we say, "I can't do this... yet." This simple addition shifts our mindset from one of limitation to one of potential. It reminds us that our current inability to perform a task or achieve a goal is temporary and that with effort and perseverance, we can accomplish anything.

For example, consider a situation where you're learning a new skill, like coding or speaking a new language. The early stages can be frustrating and filled with mistakes and misunderstandings. It's easy to become disheartened and think, "I'll never get this." However, by adding "yet," as in "I haven't got this yet," you acknowledge that mastery is a future possibility, encouraging you to keep pushing forward.



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Dweck highlights this idea: "This is the mindset that allows people to thrive during some of the most challenging times in their lives. A growth mindset creates a passion for learning rather than a hunger for approval. Its hallmark is seeing opportunities in setbacks."

Embracing Failure as a Learning Opportunity

Failure is an inevitable part of life. When we miss the mark, it can be tempting to see it as a definitive statement about our abilities. However, failure is often a more valuable teacher than success. By viewing setbacks through the lens of "yet," we can extract lessons from our experiences and use them to improve.

Thomas Edison, one of history's most accomplished inventors, famously said about his struggles to create the light bulb, "I have not failed. I've just found 10,000 ways that won't work." This perspective embodies the power of "yet." Each setback was not a failure but a step towards eventual success.

Dweck emphasizes this by stating, "You don't know what your abilities are until you make a full commitment to developing them. You try something, it doesn't work, and maybe people even criticize you. In a fixed mindset, you say, 'I tried this, it's over.' In a growth mindset, you look for what you've learned." Embracing setbacks as stepping stones on the road to success is the true power of "yet."

Practical Steps to Embrace "Yet"

1. **Self-Reflection:** Regularly take time to reflect on your experiences. Identify areas where you feel stuck and consciously add "yet" to your self-assessment. Instead of saying, "I'm not good at public speaking," say, "I'm not good at public speaking yet."
2. **Set Incremental Goals:** Break down your larger goals into smaller, manageable steps. Celebrate each milestone as a success, recognizing that each step brings you closer to your ultimate objective.
3. **Seek Feedback:** Embrace constructive criticism as a tool for growth. Ask for feedback from colleagues, mentors, or friends, and use it to guide your improvement.
4. **Stay Persistent:** Understand that progress may be slow and that perseverance is key. Remember that each effort, no matter how small, contributes to your growth.
5. **Encourage Others:** Foster a growth mindset in your team by using "yet" language and encouraging others to do the same. Celebrate progress and effort, not just results.

The power of "yet" lies in its ability to transform our mindset from one of limitation to one of potential. By embracing the concept of "yet," we can create a growth mindset that views challenges as opportunities for learning and growth. This shift in perspective can help us overcome obstacles, learn from failures, and ultimately become our best selves. So the next time you face a daunting challenge or experience a setback, remember to add the word "yet" and embrace the journey of growth and self-improvement. As Carol Dweck puts it, "No matter what your ability is, effort is what ignites that ability and turns it into accomplishment."

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