

Every Child Included: The Time Has Come

Meet the Urgency of Education through Secondary Public Schools

By J. Bert Freeman

Excerpts from: "How to Help Every Child Fulfill Their Potential" a video by Professor Carol Dweck and "Every Child Included - The Systemic Discovery" by J. Bert Freeman

The education of the youth in this country is as critical as it has ever been in our history. It seems as though technology is moving faster than we can learn to apply it. However, we must be available and knowledgeable *to* apply it. Many of us have just become parents of school-aged youth. Many of us have children who are about to graduate from high school and everything in between. Some of us are educators; some are school and school district administrators as well as administrators in state departments of education.

We must be ready to support, encourage and mentor the effort that is necessary for all of the young people in this country to be available and employable for the educational and career opportunities that are emerging.

In addition to working with corporate, non-profit and government organizations, I have been working with educators for 27 years. Even today, there are still overwhelming numbers of African American, Hispanic and Low Income students who are most in need of academic improvement, in their schools, in their districts and in their states. This is true, and has been for decades, in urban areas throughout the United States. It is like a perennial epidemic.

In recent months I have been looking at the work spearheaded by Dr. Carol Dweck of Stanford University. It is called Growth Mindset. In her book *Mindset* (2006), she explains that people live with "Fixed Mindsets" or "Growth Mindsets". She explains how people with Growth Mindsets are more likely to succeed at what they do than those with Fixed Mindsets. She shows that the key to such success is *effort* more than intelligence. For many, perhaps most of us, our mindsets date back to our childhood.

Carol Dweck has devoted most of her time in recent years to students in K-12 schools and districts. She has found that students with Growth Mindsets outperform those with fixed mindsets. Moreover, when children learn that focused effort builds brain connections and makes them smarter, they have stronger tendencies to put forth the effort to succeed at what they are doing or need to do. This work has been done with students of many different backgrounds including inner city youth. It has become clear that students (and adults) with fixed mindsets, in the words of Carol Dweck, "think that intelligence is a fixed trait; you have a fixed amount, and that's that..." They pay more attention to the status of their knowledge than the strength of their efforts. Students with growth mindsets "...believe that intelligence can be developed through effort..." They pay more attention to the strength of their efforts. Effort builds the neural capacities of the brain.

Based on the research, children who are rewarded, complimented or praised at early ages for their intelligence more often than for their effort, are more likely influenced toward developing fixed mindsets.

As parents, grandparents, other caregivers and educators we can influence growth mindsets in our children by complimenting and emphasizing *effort*. Here are a few links

to video presentations by Dr. Carol Dweck that show the value of developing “Growth Mindsets”.

Professor Carol Dweck – How to help Every Child Fulfill Their Potential – 21 minutes

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PVhUdhZxbGI&feature=player_detailpage

Professor Carol Dweck - A study of Praise on Mindsets - 5 minutes

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NWv1VdDeoRY&feature=player_detailpage

Professor Carol Dweck – Mindset the Champion Newsletter 11 minutes

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=y5ZBItSb7jw&feature=player_detailpage

The time has come. Remembering the two essential actions that must take place simultaneously (Every Child Included: The Systemic Discovery by J. Bert Freeman), we must add one more. We must: 1) Accelerate the academic achievement of children most in need of improvement; 2) Accelerate the *systemic* know-how of our educators and community organizations to function at that new level every day, at the inclusion of every student rather than at the expense of any student; **3) Increase the assurance that students value effort, focused on academic achievement.**

That way, we expand the availability and employability of the children in this country to take on the demands of emerging industries as well as those that already exist.

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