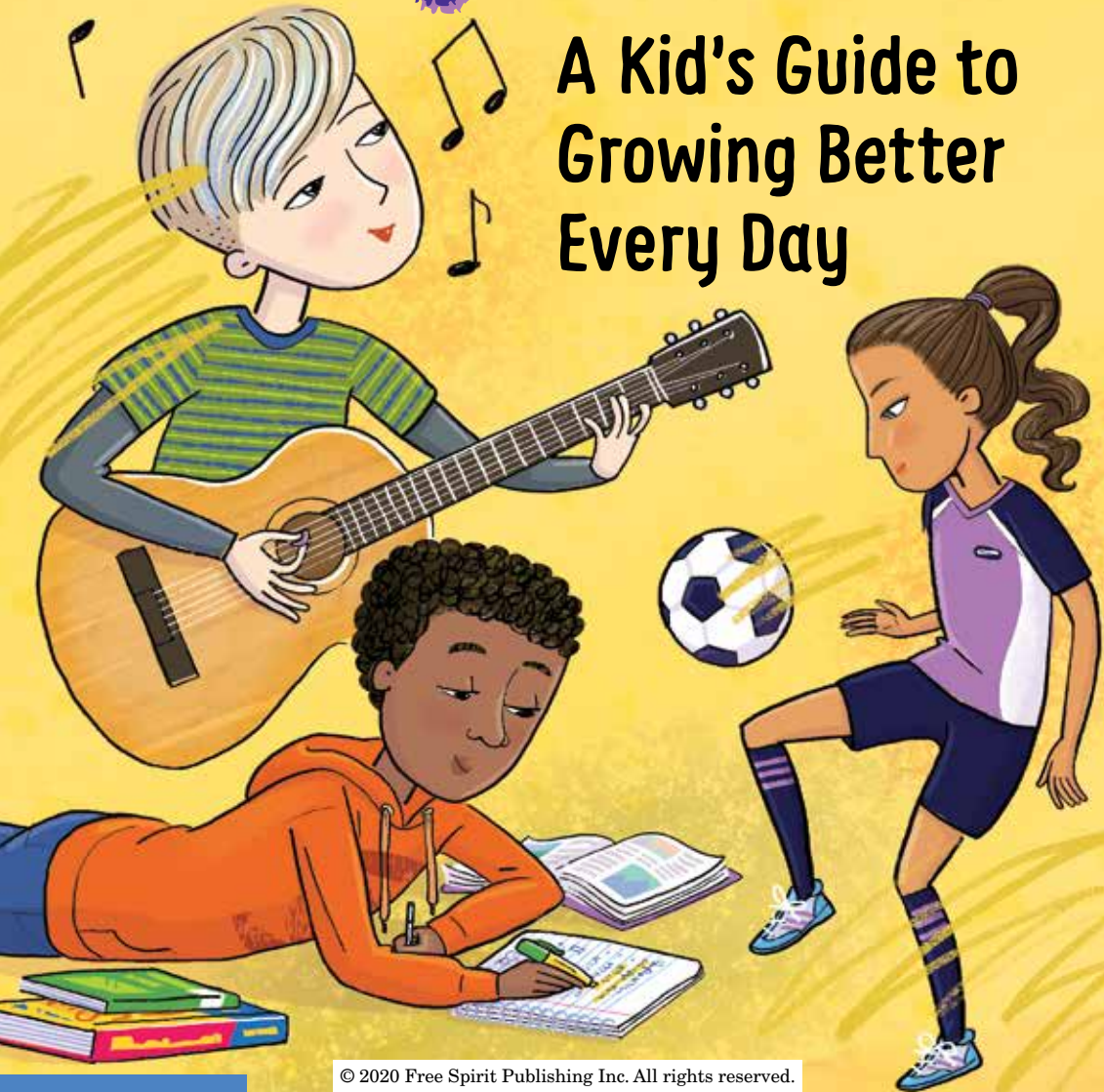


MINDSET

POWER

A Kid's Guide to
Growing Better
Every Day



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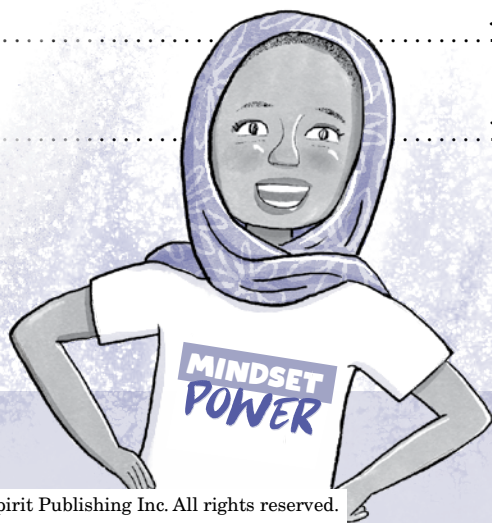
Shannon Anderson

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CONTENTS

Introduction Growing Better All the Time	1
About This Book	3
Chapter 1 Change Your Thinking to Change Your Life	6
Frustrating Fears and Dastardly Doubts	7
Talking Back to Negative Feelings.....	9
Chapter 2 What Is a Growth Mindset?.....	12
Gradual Growth.....	17
A QUIZ-icle Look at Growth Mindset	18
Which Way Do You Lean?.....	27
Turning Setbacks into Set-UPS	30
Chapter 3 Brain Boosting.....	37
An Inside Look at Your Brain	38
Use It or Lose It!.....	40
Building Skills on Top of Skills.....	42
Strategies for Building Strong Brain Connections	46
A Recap on Your “Thinking Cap”	52
Chapter 4 The Power of Positivity	53
Positive People Persevere	55
How Positive Is Your Attitude?	57
Strategies for Adding Positivity to Your Life.....	58

Chapter 5 Setting Your Goals	74
Ready, SET, Goal!	75
Take Action on a Goal	82
Success Cycle	86
Be a Goal Keeper.....	88
Chapter 6 Hocus Pocus, Time to Focus.....	90
Steady as You Go.....	91
Ways to Keep Your Focus	94
Chapter 7 Destination: Determination	102
Stick to It to Do It	103
Strategies for Sticking to It	116
When the Goal Is Not Your Own	123
Chapter 8 Your Best Is Yet to Come!	126
Your Thoughts Are Powerful.....	129
Resources	132
Index	134
About the Author	137



INTRODUCTION



Growing Better All the Time

Let's start with a positive thought: You will *never* reach your full potential. Munch on that for a moment . . .

What? You don't think that seems very positive?

This isn't a trick. It actually *is* good news. It's fantastic news! It means you can always keep learning and you don't have to worry about your brain getting too full. The sky is the limit!

You began learning before you were even born. You learned to recognize voices and started developing your senses. You weren't

2 Mindset Power

just getting bigger fingers and toes, you were growing your brain. And your brain keeps on growing your whole life—as long as you continue to do things that make it stronger.

One way you and your brain get stronger is by facing challenges. As you go through life, you face a lot of challenges, from little ones to big ones to *super* big ones. Sometimes you might really struggle. Maybe you'll have a hard time with a certain subject in school. When you have a lot of assignments and tests, you may feel overwhelmed trying to keep up. If you play a sport, you'll probably deal with disappointing performances or losses. As you meet new people, you may struggle to figure out how to act or who to hang out with. Maybe you wish you were better at playing the guitar, but learning it is really frustrating. Maybe you love baking, but all your cakes come out flat.

This book will show you how to change the way you think about your challenges so you can grow from them, feel better about yourself, and get better at the things you try.

You can learn to think of your challenges as *opportunities!*

This doesn't mean that you will win every game, get all A's, and be the most popular kid in school. No book can make you perfect, because there are no perfect people. What this book *can* do is help you always improve and believe in yourself.

About This Book

Mindset Power is a guide to help you think about your daily choices in different ways so you can be the best you. By developing positive habits and learning how to use mistakes and failures as a way to grow better, you can do just about anything you set your mind to. That's called having a **growth mindset**, and that's what this book is all about.

Here's what you'll find in *Mindset Power*:

Chapter 1, Change Your Thinking to Change Your Life. Everyone faces struggles and challenges that can cause them to doubt themselves or feel like they aren't capable of certain skills. This chapter shows you that you have the power to choose how you react to challenges. Positive reactions can lead to positive outcomes.

Chapter 2, What Is a Growth Mindset? You'll learn how the right mindset, or mental attitude, can help you overcome setbacks, achieve goals you care about, and believe in yourself.

Chapter 3, Brain Boosting. This chapter is about the brain research behind growth mindset, and also about how to take good care of your brain. Many complex things happen in our minds as we make decisions throughout the day. Learn what to do to help your brain change and grow.

Chapter 4, The Power of Positivity. People feel better and do better when they have—and spread—a positive vibe rather than a negative one. This chapter is packed with ideas for staying positive.

Chapter 5, Setting Your Goals. Setting goals is an important first step in the process of learning something new. This chapter shows you how to set goals and build a plan for success. Without

4 Mindset Power

a goal, you don't have a target. Without a target, it's a lot harder to improve and make progress.

Chapter 6, Hocus Pocus, Time to Focus. Once you've set your goals, the next challenge is to stay focused on them. It's easy to get distracted or forget your purpose for working so hard. Read about ways to help you stay on track—and get *back* on track when you lose your way.

Chapter 7, Destination: Determination. There is power in determination. This chapter will give you strategies for sticking with things that are important, even when you have setbacks or make mistakes.

Chapter 8, Your Best Is Yet to Come! This chapter sums up how boosting your brain power, using a growth mindset, staying positive, and focusing on your goals can help you be your best yet.

Be sure to check out the resources in the back of the book. You'll find a list of recommended books and videos with even more information about the power of a growth mindset.

As you read, you'll find lots of opportunities to practice your new skills and write about what you learn.

When you see a box that says **JOT YOUR THOUGHTS**, grab a notebook or a device and write your answers to the questions. You'll also find activity forms you can photocopy or print. (All the forms can be downloaded at freespirit.com/mindset.) Boxes



titled **SOMETHING TO TRY** provide ideas for practicing what you're learning. All that practice and note-taking will help you process and remember what you learn. And it will help you make progress toward your goals and learn to boost your mindset power.

You'll still face lots of challenges every day. Everyone does! Some of them will feel really big and overwhelming. Challenges, setbacks, disappointments . . . these are all normal parts of life.



They're also how you grow. And with your new skills and a growth mindset, you'll be better able to do just that.

I would love to hear how the ideas in this book work for you. Write to me at the address below. Tell me about how your growth mindset helped you and let me know if you have other strategies.

Shannon Anderson

help4kids@freespirit.com

CHAPTER 1

CHANGE YOUR THINKING TO CHANGE YOUR LIFE



Have you ever had any thoughts like these?

- “It’s hard for me to make friends. That’s just how I am.”
- “I stink at soccer.”
- “I’m just not a good reader.”
- “I’ll never learn how to do long division!”
- “I might as well quit the violin—I’ll never be good enough.”

Maybe you want to be a great soccer player, but you struggle to get better. Or you love stories and wish you could be a writer, but the idea of becoming a published author seems out of reach. Maybe you want to answer questions in class but are too nervous to raise your hand.

Frustrating Fears and Dastardly Doubts

There are so many hard things you have to work through—at school, at home, in life. Things that can be frustrating and seem unfair. How do you learn to handle this tough stuff?

Jagger wanted to run for student council. Last year, he saw the student council members show new students around, introduce speakers at school assemblies, and organize fundraisers that helped people in his community. Not to mention, they had cool shirts.

Only one student from each classroom got to be a representative. Jagger really wanted to represent his class and be a part of this important club. However, doubt crept in when he realized there were a lot of other kids in his class who would run—kids who were more popular. He thought about how much time it would take to prepare a speech and a poster. He worried that whatever he said in front of his classmates wouldn't be good enough to convince them to pick him over the other kids.

Doubt was almost like a person who was saying things like this to Jagger: "Who do you think you are that *you* should win the

8 Mindset Power

election? Don't you know that Abby is running? All of the girls will vote for her. And Lakin, the soccer king, is running too. The jocks will vote for him over you any day. Josh, the brainiest kid in class, is running. He's way smarter than you. Besides, what would you even say in your speech? What if you forget what you're supposed to say? You can't draw. How are you going to make a poster? What if kids laugh at you and your poster? What if they whisper about you while you are talking? You should sit this one out."

Jagger was starting to think the doubt was right. Maybe he shouldn't run for student council.

Jagger was letting his doubts talk him out of trying something he wanted to do. He didn't know if he would win the election, but one thing is for sure: He definitely wouldn't win if he didn't try!

Have you ever experienced something like this? Has doubt or fear "talked" to you and tried to control your thoughts? It can be hard to ignore doubt and fear. They are powerful feelings. Thankfully, you are the boss of your brain. You get to choose what you focus on. Your choices can help or hurt you. For example:

- You have the power to choose how you react when you start to feel doubt or fear.
- You have the power to choose your goals.
- You have the power to choose how hard you work toward those goals.
- You have the power to choose your attitude toward things you have to do, like homework or chores.

In all these cases, your choices can influence how you feel about yourself. Some choices can lead you to feel unhappy or anxious. They can lead you to limit yourself. Other choices can help you feel confident and happier with your outcomes. Those choices can help you face your problems with strategies that point you toward solutions.

Talking Back to Negative Feelings

When Jagger's doubts were "talking" to him, he felt uncertain. What if he could talk back to his doubt and tell it to go away?

Jagger realized he was letting negative feelings hold him back from trying something he really wanted to do. So he decided to talk back to his doubt—literally. He typed the following letter:

Dear Doubt,

You don't know that all of the girls will vote for Abby just because she's a girl. Boys won't vote for Lakin just because he is good at soccer. Even though Josh is really smart, he doesn't have a better chance than I do if I work hard.

No one will even see who votes for which candidates, so kids will probably vote for the person they think will do the best job, not who is the most popular or the smartest.

I want to be a candidate for important reasons, and it means enough to me to practice hard and get some help on my poster. If I mess up my speech, I can clear my throat and keep going. If I mess up my poster, I can start over on the back side. People will see my desire to do well and the hard work I put in, and that is what gives me a good chance at winning. If I don't run for the position, I have no chance at all.

So, Mr. Doubt, you can just go away. I won't be needing you. I've got some work to do.

(Not) Your friend,
Jagger

Jagger still didn't know how he would do in the election, but he chose to give it a shot. Win or lose, he would know that he tried hard, and that made him feel good about himself.



When you learn more about the power of your own choices, you can start to feel better about yourself too. Whether you want to make your own graphic novel or beat your dad at chess, you have the power to choose your attitude. That's what a growth mindset is all about.

JOT YOUR THOUGHTS



Think of a time you had a doubt or fear that took over your thoughts and caused you to question yourself. Write a letter to that doubt or fear, telling it why you don't believe what it's saying to you. Write about all the positive reasons you should take a chance anyway.