

# SELF-MANAGEMENT



## 22. GROWTH MINDSET POWER QUESTIONS

- ▶ **WHAT?** Students embrace discomfort as an opportunity for growth by creating an inner dialogue T-chart and turning challenge stressors into power questions that engage the creative, problem-solving mind.
- ▶ **WHY?** One of the best ways to cultivate a growth mindset is to help students shift their language from being fixed-minded and critical, to more growth-minded and self-compassionate. Our inner language is so powerful in that it directly influences our thoughts, shifts our emotions, behaviors, future thoughts, and even our beliefs.
- ▶ **WHEN?** To start or end class or when student work seems to get more challenging and potentially frustrating.

### MATERIALS

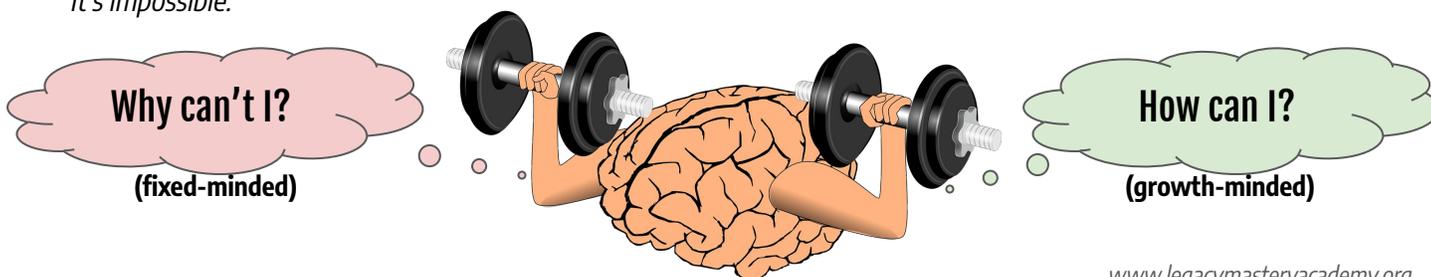
- ❑ One chart paper and marker for creating a class anchor chart.
- ❑ One whiteboard or sheet of paper for each group of 3-4 students.

### SEL FOCUS

- **Self-Awareness:** Growth mindset and identifying roadblocks and solutions
- **Self-Management:** Developing self-discipline, motivation, initiative, grit, and resilience

### Launch Activity (18min+)

- I. 3min- Class Discussion:** Write on the board: **“Growth only occurs in a state of discomfort.”** Students discuss: What does this mean, what are some examples of this, and why is this empowering for you to know? Examples might include: building muscle, learning to be good at something (playing an instrument, driving, learning a language, public speaking, self-discipline, or any skill), eating healthy, fitness, palm trees and strong winds, memorizing, challenges in life, overcoming stresses, financial success, caterpillars becoming butterflies, overcoming setbacks, etc. Students should see a plethora of evidence that discomfort is a sign of a growth opportunity to get better.
- II. 8-10min- Challenging Content Area Experience:** Provide students a very difficult challenge related to your content area that is not impossible to figure out, but not easy enough that many students are solving/figuring out, so that students experience **productive struggle**- the process of effortful learning that develops grit and creative problem solving skills. This ultimately results in long-term retention and deep understanding. You want few, if any, to figure it out. (Ex: Math problem, ELA/History/Spanish reading text/document or text-based analytical discussion, scientific diagram or text analysis, a tough physical education exercise circuit, and artwork analysis slightly beyond their skill level).  
**Students will verbalize their thoughts and emotions** in writing or out loud (if it is a discussion) as they engage in the challenge. The group will then discuss and a scribe will document their language. Ex: Math students are solving a tough problem and verbalizing their thoughts. One peer says, “This is really tough. I don’t even know where to start.” Another says, “We can figure this out, we just need to take a deep breath and be patient. What’s the first thing Ms. Thompson always says we should do when reading a word problem?” Meanwhile, another peer is documenting the group’s statements.
- III. 3min- Group Discussion:** The group then discusses and records their teams’ language on a sheet of paper/whiteboard. They put a plus “+” sign next to empowering language and a minus “-” sign next to disempowering language. Ex: **Empowering:** “This is tough, but I’ll try a different strategy. I can do this. Let’s not give up! Let’s reread it. Let’s break it down.” **Disempowering:** “This sucks. This is boring/too hard. I quit. I can’t solve this. I’m not smart. I wish it were easier. It’s impossible.”



# 22. GROWTH MINDSET POWER QUESTIONS

- Continued -

- IV. 4min- Teach:** “We learned that growth occurs through discomfort and if we shift our inner language to help us see the opportunity in discomfort, then we can accomplish anything! Without judgment, raise your hands if you persisted through the 10 minutes without quitting. Raise your hands if you gave up sooner? Is there a connection between our language and how long you persisted? Our inner critic can be self-defeating, but highly successful people have an inner-dialogue that is compassionate and coaches them to succeed. We’ll create an anchor chart. **Empowering language** is growth-minded and pushes you to learn from mistakes, see challenges as an opportunity to learn, and helps you stay optimistic and focused until you reach your goal. This is exactly how you’d encourage a person you really care about. **Disempowering language** is self-critical, fixed-minded, fearful, hopeless, pessimistic, negative and discouraging. This is definitely not how you would talk to someone you care about, but we might do it to ourselves without thinking. What is some fixed minded language we use and how can we make it empowering? Let’s create a list of these and add them to our chart. We’ll review this daily to make shifts in our inner and outer language.

THE POWER OF YOUR INNER-TALK: Your inner-talk shapes how you think, feel, and respond to challenging or stressful situations	
Disempowering, Fixed Mindset Language: Instead of saying this	Empowering, Growth Mindset Language: Say this
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• I’m never going to get this.</li> <li>• This is too difficult.</li> <li>• I just can’t do this.</li> <li>• I wish this was easier.</li> <li>• This is too stressful, uncomfortable, and difficult!</li> <li>• It’s so easy for her/him.</li> <li>• This will take forever to learn.</li> <li>• What if I fail or make mistakes? I hate looking stupid!</li> <li>• This better be perfect.</li> <li>• I have to perform well. I hope I don’t fail!</li> <li>• My answer is fine the way it is as long as I get credit.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What shall I try instead?</li> <li>• How can I break this down into easier parts?</li> <li>• I’m going to have to practice this.</li> <li>• I need to get stronger and learn some things.</li> <li>• I’m glad this is tough. It means I’m learning and getting better.</li> <li>• I’m learning at my own pace and I want to learn from them.</li> <li>• I will take the time needed to master this.</li> <li>• Learning requires mistakes. Not trying or quitting is the only failure.</li> <li>• It’s all about progress, not perfection.</li> <li>• I care about learning and improving. Doing my best is enough.</li> <li>• How can I improve my answer and learn more?</li> </ul>

## SEL Routine (10min+)

- 1. 5min- Create Power Questions:** Most times, we give up because stress builds up in our minds and we don’t articulate what the stressors are. Once stressors are clarified and written or stated as **power questions**, they activate the mind to try and solve them. Provide students a challenging learning experience that induces productive struggle. During the challenge, when students feel stressed, overwhelmed, or make mistakes, have them write their concerns as follows:

CREATING POWER QUESTIONS	
1.	<b>State specific concern:</b> <i>I’m stressed/nervous/stuck/concerned because _____.</i>
2.	<b>Turn the stressor into a power question that they can solve:</b> <b>Power questions start with “who can I”, “what can I do”, or “how can I” and are connected to a specific goal.</b> <i>How can I?/What can I do to/If this were easy, I’d _____.</i> <i>Who/what can help me figure this out? What else can I try? Students use the anchor chart for ideas and write questions that motivate them to feel differently.</i>  <i>Ex 1: I’m stuck on what this word means because I’ve never seen it before. How can I figure out new words when I’m reading? Who can I ask for help? Ex 2: This math problem is tough because it’s different from what we’ve practiced. What step do we usually start with? If this were easy, I’d _____.</i>  Remind students of <b>ineffective questions</b> that reinforce limiting beliefs and are pessimistic by nature. <i>Ex: Why can’t I _____? Why am I _____? Why do I always _____? Why do I keep _____?</i>

- 3. 5min- Students discuss** their roadblocks and ideas with peers for feedback and to gain new ideas/questions.

## Extensions

- 1. Language Pattern Interruption:** Students interrupt their inner dialogue and shift their language through predetermined growth-minded affirmations, counting backwards, thinking of their values, etc. Students can also create growth-mindset language goals or assign language monitor roles who will remind their peers when their language is fixed-minded.

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