

Feel Good English

# The Power of Believing that You Can Improve



The transcript to episode #37

# The Power in Believing that You Can Improve

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Hello there! Kevin here. With another episode of The Feel Good English Podcast. The podcast that is improving your life and your english all at the same time. Today is a Ted Tuesday lesson and I'm going to talk about the Ted Talk called "The Power of Believing That You Can Improve" by Carol Dweck.

Carol Dweck also wrote the book "Mindset" which is an extremely important book in my opinion. And the overall idea of what Carol shares is that our children need to transform how they react to challenges specifically in school. But it could be out of school as well with sports and anything else that creates challenges. And we need to transform the way that we raise and teach our children so that they won't be afraid of challenge and instead, accept them as possible areas of improvement.

"The Power of Believing That You Can Improve" by Carol Dweck is today's Ted Tuesday lesson. I will talk about the main ideas. Talk about some of the vocabulary that she uses that you might not know. And as always if you want the transcripts to this episode go to [feelgoodenglish.com/member](https://feelgoodenglish.com/member).

And without further delay, let's get into the lesson.

Carol starts off her talk talking about something that really opened her eyes up to a totally new concept. And this came from a school in Chicago that was using a system of grading the students. They would

not give them an A,B,C,D or F as a grade. If they failed, if they didn't do well, they would give the students a grade of "Not yet". Not yet, meaning they didn't understand the concepts yet, but they would have a chance to improve. Traditionally what do we do, you give a student an F if they fail. And that's it. It's over. You failed, you're done. Not yet, shows them that they have the possibility of becoming better. So she started doing a lot of research and this was a turning point in her career. Turning point is when something happens that brings big change. Or that brings big improvements or big transition. It's a turning point. You're going down one direction something happens and then this creates a turning point and you go a different direction. So this was a big turning point in her career and she started researching how children deal with challenges. And by the way "mindset" is a big word that we use here. A mindset is just the way that you look at something. It's your attitude. Could be your mood. We talk about a growth mindset or a fixed mindset.

A growth mindset means your attitude is that you can grow in certain areas. That you can get better, that you can improve. Fixed mindset is that you are where you are and that's it. You will stay there. You will stay fixed in that point. It's a very important concept in Carol Dweck's lessons. So through her research of children, what she did is she gave them a problem, a math problem that was a little bit too difficult for them to solve. And what she noticed is that some of the children were excited and willing to take on the challenge while others would run from difficulties. They would face a difficult challenging test and they would simply run away from challenges, run away from difficulty.

And what about you in your life? If something makes you feel uncomfortable, you avoid that situation. Feeling uncomfortable being out of your comfort zone is a sign that you are getting better. It's a sign that you can improve in that area. Often people escape or run away from these. But through scientific research that Carol Dweck has done, she has shown that our brains actually literally develop neurons when we are out of our comfort zone. Meaning

they're enhancing their power which is pretty unbelievable. You teach children that when they feel uncomfortable, when they feel challenged that might be frustrating, it might be difficult. But they're actually building a stronger, more effective brain. One of the word she uses is to "cope". To cope with something, C-O-P-E. To cope with something is to deal with it, is to handle it. How do you cope with challenge? How do you cope with difficulties? How do you deal with these difficult situations? Do you run away from them? Or do you accept them and use them as areas to grow on.

Later in the talk she gives insights on what we as parents or teachers, can do to help children develop this growth mindset. In the first idea she shares is to praise them wisely. To praise somebody is to give them compliments, encouragement, kind words to make them feel good. And instead of praising them with a grade of A or something else that is simply based on the present moment, we need to praise the process. Process is what should be praised, not the result. And think about this, this is very powerful. If you're out there, you're studying english. You're trying to become a better english speaker, often you're focused on the results. You wanna be fluent now. You wanna be comfortable and confident now. As opposed to focusing on the process, what are you doing everyday to get better? What is the process that you are using to get closer to your english goals? That is a good example of praising the process. And if you have children, or if you're a teacher or you've been a student yourself. If you are praised more on the process you are using, what you were doing when you went home after school, on weekends, during class, that would bring bigger results, better satisfaction and more growth than simply praising the grade you got after the test.

She says kids become more hardy and resilient. Hardy, H-A-R-D-Y means somebody who is capable of enduring difficult conditions. You're capable of getting through very difficult challenging conditions. You're hardy. It's very similar to perseverant. You face challenges, difficult situations but you keep moving forward. A plant can be hardy if it survives out in the winter. That is a very hardy

plant. It survives even in the snowy winter time. And resilient as well, resilient means you, you are able to bounce back. You are able to recover from difficult situations. So, kids that were praised on the process they were using as opposed to the results they were getting became more hardy and resilient. They were able to face challenges. To persevere through challenges more than the traditional approach of simply giving them a grade and then either discouraging them or making them happy and judging them on their performance, not the process.

And lastly, the last thing she talks about is how this teaching of a growth mindset can affect equality. How can have a positive effect on equality. She went into poor neighborhoods, challenged the neighborhoods where kids didn't have a lot of support. Probably parents that weren't very helpful in their schooling. And by teaching classrooms the growth mindset and showing them that when they face challenges, when they're challenged by difficult situations, their brains got stronger. Their brains develops new neurons. The process was praised. The process of learning new things was praised. The results she found in the students was amazing. And they actually out performed students from more affluent neighborhood. Affluent means rich. If you are from an affluent neighborhood, affluent section of Seattle means rich kids in Seattle. And that's why she referred to them as Microsoft kids. Microsoft is in Seattle. People that work for Microsoft probably make a good amount of money and their kids have nice schools to go to. However, teaching a growth mindset, teaching children how to take on challenges in a more resilient way was more important than the school that they went to, than the quality of the school that they went to. It's a very powerful stuff.

So now what do you do? Go watch the Ted Talk. Go through the transcript. Read the transcript while watching the video. You'll see some of the words that I used here. But more than that, I want you to start thinking about the lessons learned in this video. Read the book "Mindset". It is a great book. If you have children, you can start

thinking about how beneficial it would be to show them that the process is what's important. What they do to figure out challenges, to get through difficult moments is what counts. And even for you. Focus on the process of what you're doing. Focus on what it takes. What you need to do everyday to get to where you want to get. Also, another thing- Comfort zone challenges. When you're out of your comfort zone, you will feel frustrated, scared, nervous. This is a sign that you are growing. We need to find challenges. We need to find areas to get out of our comfort zone especially if you're trying to become more confident in english. You need to find situations where you have to use your english around other people that challenges you, that makes you feel uncomfortable. And if you do this a few times, several times, you'll become better at it. You'll become less uncomfortable. And you will level up your english. And then you'll move on to new challenges and you'll keep going forward and moving forward knowing that getting out of your comfort zone leads to progress.

Great book! Hope you enjoyed this lesson. If you want transcripts, again go to [feelgoodenglish.com/member](https://feelgoodenglish.com/member) and you will find out how to become a feel good member which gives you access to free transcripts. So, take on this challenge. Go over to my website and become a member.

And come say Hi to me. I'll be waiting for you. Until then I hope you have a wonderful day. I hope you feel good. I hope you take these lessons and take action so you can lead a more fulfilling, happier life.

And now let me leave you with a joke. A teacher tells her classroom, "Whoever answers my next question can go home". Then one of the boys throws his bag out of the window. And then the teacher says "Who just threw that?" and the boy says "Me! Okay, I'm going home now".

See you all in the next episode.