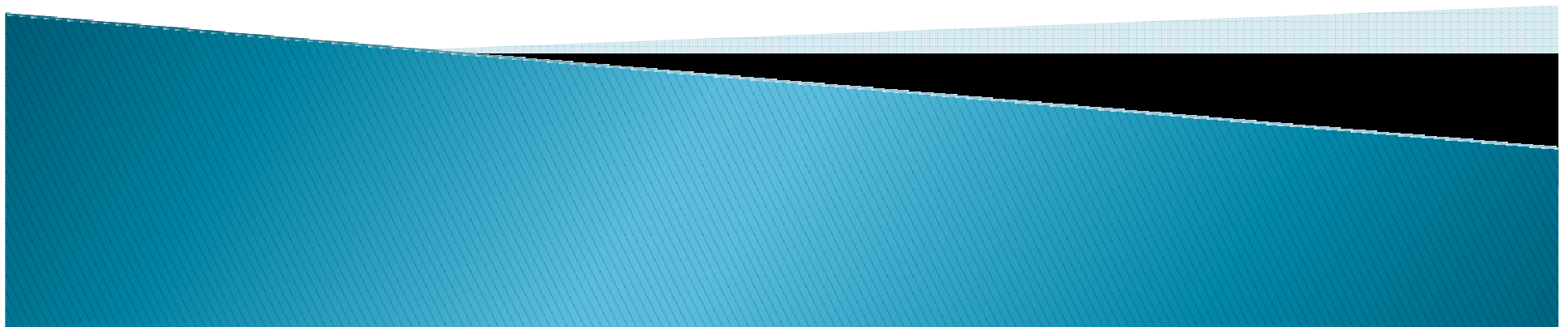


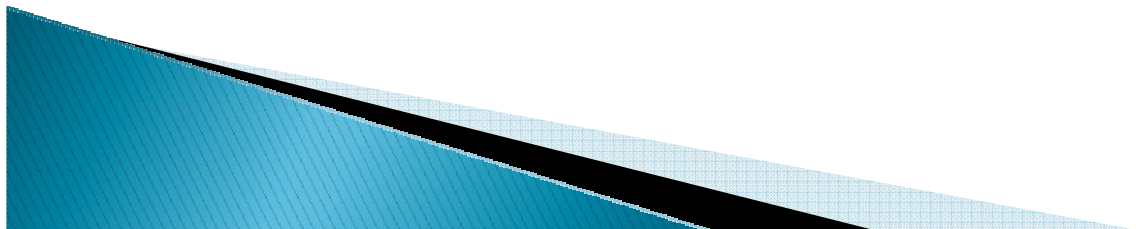
Praise the effort, not the brains!

Presentation to parents
5th October 2011



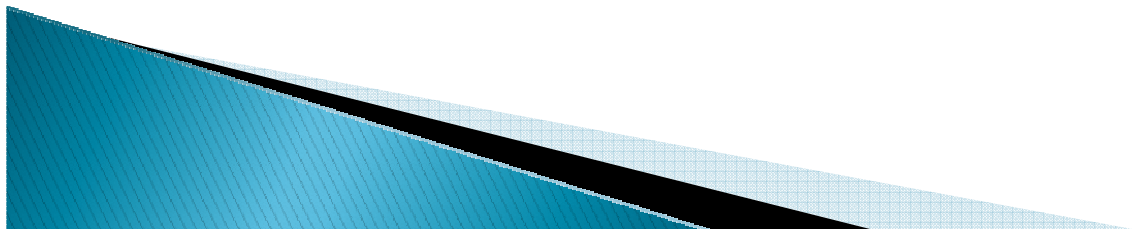
A true story...

Nine-year old Elizabeth was on her way to her first gymnastics competition. Tall, flexible and energetic, she loved the sport. Despite her nervousness, she knew she was good and she felt confident about doing well. She knew where she was going to hang her ribbon in her room. In all her exercises, Elizabeth did well, but not well enough to win. By the end of the competition, she had received no ribbons, and was devastated.



As a parent, what would you do?

1. Tell her you thought she was best.
2. Tell her she didn't deserve to win.
3. Reassure her that gymnastics isn't a matter of life or death.
4. Tell her she's got the ability, and she'll win next time.
5. Tell her she was robbed of a ribbon that was rightly hers.



Some context...

School development plan aims:

- ▶ As a school community, we will strive to:
 - ✓ develop a curriculum to provide purposeful and enjoyable cross curricular opportunities for **all children to develop their skills to think creatively and apply their knowledge to solve problems**
 - ✓ help children understand what makes a good learner and to understand their preferred learning style
- ▶ As a result, we will maximise the proportion of children who make 2+ levels progress across a key stage by **enabling children to improve their confidence and achieve more than they thought possible.**

Attainment in Maths AT1 compared to attainment in Maths overall



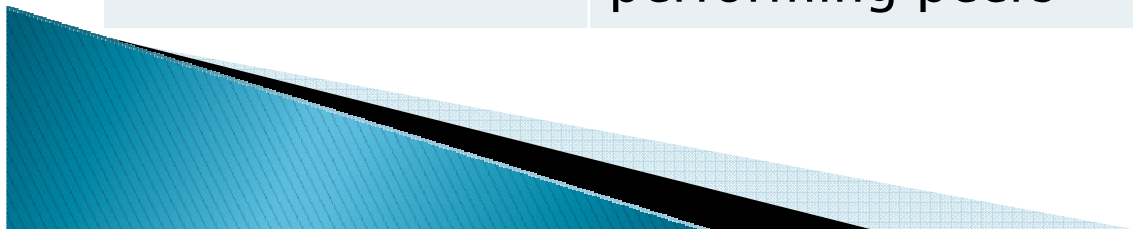
How can we help children achieve?

- ▶ ‘Fixed’ and ‘growth’ mindsets
- ▶ Fixed mindset:
 - intelligence and various talents are set in stone; you either have it or you don’t
- ▶ Growth mindset:
 - these qualities can be cultivated through their efforts
- ▶ Praise the effort, not the brains!
 - ▶ Emphasising effort gives a child a variable that they can control
 - ▶ Emphasising natural intelligence takes it out of the child’s control, and it provides no good recipe for responding to a failure
- ▶ Nothing shocking so far, right?



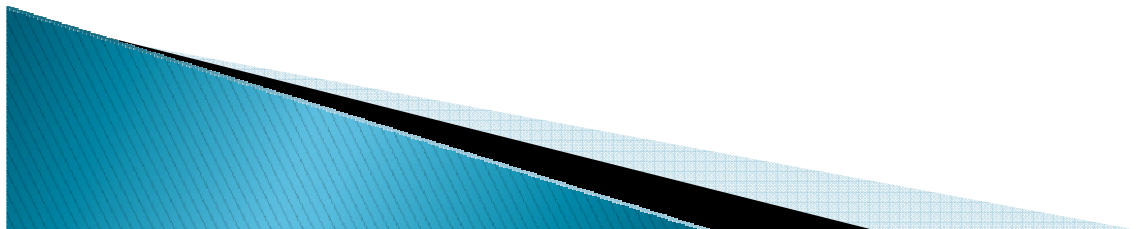
What's the difference?

| Mindset | Fixed | Growth |
|-------------------|---|---|
| You believe that: | Intelligence is a fixed trait | Intelligence is cultivated through learning |
| Your priority is: | To look smart, not stupid | To become smarter through learning |
| You prefer: | Easy, low effort successes and outperforming others | To engage fully with new tasks, exert effort, stretch yourself and apply skills |
| You avoid: | Effort, difficulty, setbacks, higher-performing peers | Easy, previously mastered tasks |



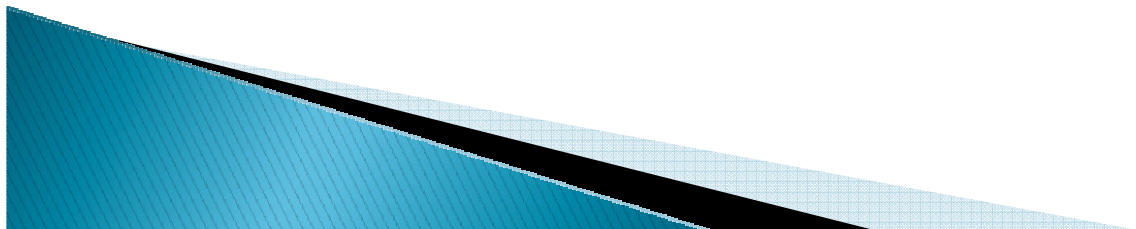
What does this mean for us?

- ▶ “You’re so clever!” v. “You worked so hard! You thought of different ways to do it and found the one that worked.”
- ▶ Praise the process!
- ▶ But the praise must be sincere!
- ▶ Developing a growth mindset can help the transition to secondary school



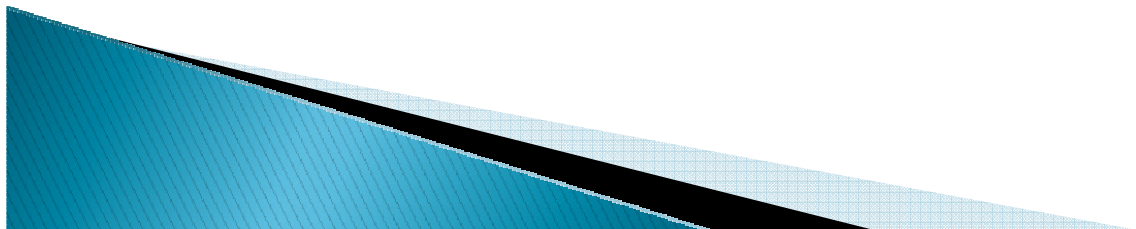
How can we do this?

- ▶ Avoid...
 - Intelligence and ‘goodness’ praise
 - ‘You’re brilliant!’
 - ‘What a clever girl!’
- ▶ Reinforce...
 - The seeking of challenge
 - Effort and persistence
 - Reflections on different strategies
 - Skills
 - Risk-taking



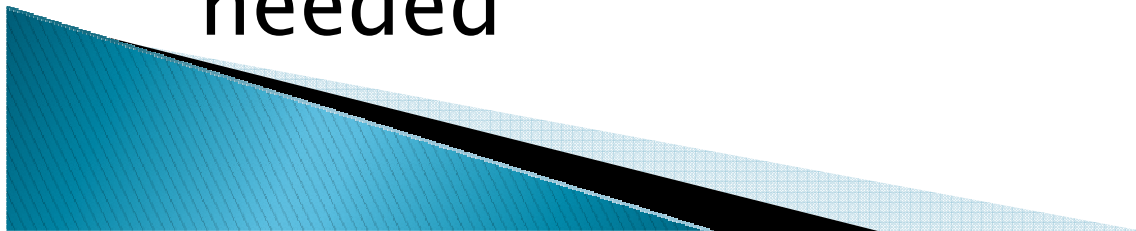
But changing how we praise is not easy!

- ▶ Make it personal to your child
 - If they are easily distracted, praise their concentration
 - If they struggle to listen to instructions, praise them when they do
 - When they are playing a sport, make it specific, not general
- ▶ Focused praise helps children to see strategies they can apply the next day



Carol Dweck's growth mindset route to creating high self-esteem

- ▶ Be candid about children's current skills
- ▶ Help them to identify the skills needed to pursue a goal
- ▶ Help them to identify what they need to do to build those skills
- ▶ Help equip them with the attitudes, work habits and learning strategies needed

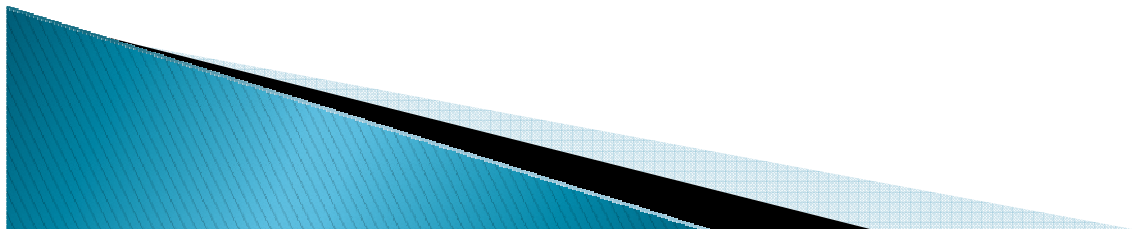


A thought...

“Those not tested by setbacks
when young may never learn how
to rebound from defeat”

Farson and Keyes:

Whoever makes the most mistakes wins



Elizabeth part 2...

- ▶ Would your response be different now?

