



# Flexible Mindset

Research tells us that the mindset we adopt has a profound impact on our success in work, and life. For years, psychologists have observed a link between the way we think and how we operate. Imagine, for example, if you wake up thinking that 'today is going to be a terrible day'. Thinking this way is likely to make us more aware of all the things that could go wrong, highlighting them in our mind. It would be no surprise then that your day wouldn't be great. Alternatively, if we think 'today I am going to achieve something', we are likely to be more motivated and to actively engage in goal-directed activities. All of this makes it more likely that we will actually achieve a positive result.

Ultimately, our mindset plays a big role. Broadly speaking, research has found that there are two different mindsets we can adopt: an Adaptive (Growth) Mindset, and a Rigid (Fixed) Mindset. The role of mindset in predicting achievement and success has been heavily researched, most notably by Carol Dweck, a world-renowned Stanford University Psychologist. Someone with a Rigid Mindset believes that they have no control over how things turn out. This means they often blame outside forces for their losses, or credit luck to their wins. In contrast, an Adaptive Mindset is marked by the belief that we have some capacity to influence the things around us. As a result if we set out with an adaptive mindset, we tend to take responsibility for our actions, good or bad, and work hard to achieve the things we want. At the end of the day an Adaptive Mindset has the ability to reflect, learn and grow, in comparison to someone with a Rigid Mindset who is not able to change, because they had a perception that they had no control in the first place.

It is fair to say that most people do not have an Adaptive or Rigid mindset 100% of the time. However, we know that people who spend more time applying an Adaptive mindset tend to be happier, healthier and more successful.

For example, if something unpleasant happened to someone with an Adaptive mindset they might look at how they could change the situation to make it more palatable. Whereas, someone with a Rigid mindset might give up and simply complain. Similarly, if someone with an Adaptive mindset was to be diagnosed with an illness, they wouldn't dwell on the negatives but instead look at what changes they could make to their lifestyle to help their recovery. While someone with a Rigid mindset might believe there is nothing they can do to improve the situation, leaving them feeling hopeless and helpless. Even research into elite athletes has shown that those who adopt an Adaptive mindset after a loss are more likely to achieve a win in their next competition.

## So, how might you adopt an Adaptive Mindset?

The first step is to realise when your mindset isn't helping. No one will have an adaptive mindset all the time, however by reflecting we can recognise when we might be operating from a rigid mindset, which then gives us the opportunity to think differently.

One of the best ways to train ourselves to think differently, is to start by asking ourselves questions. Questions naturally get the mind turning, and can help us see problems in new ways. Below are some questions you might find helpful:

What do I have no control over?  
How useful is it for me to focus on the things I can't control?  
What do I have control over?  
What might I be able to influence in this situation?  
What do I really want to achieve?  
How can I choose to respond in this situation?  
Is there another way I can look at this?

The great news is that the brain can learn and change. So, the more you practise asking yourself these questions, the more adopting an Adaptive mindset will become your norm.



### Want to know more?

Contact Assure Programs for more information on 1800 808 374 or [info@assureprograms.com.au](mailto:info@assureprograms.com.au)