What You Can Do: Growth and Fixed Mindsets

• **Be good or get better?** In this chapter, we focused on the difference between goals that are about proving yourself (being good) and goals that are about improving yourself (getting better). At work, in school, in your relationships—do you see what you are doing as trying to become the best, or showing everyone (including yourself) that you already are?

• **Be good to perform well.** Wanting to be good is very motivating and can lead to excellent performance, provided that things don’t get too difficult. Unfortunately, when the road gets rocky, people who are focused on proving themselves tend to conclude that they don’t have what it takes—and give up way too soon.

• **Get better to improve performance**. When we focus on getting better, we take difficulty in stride—using our experiences to fuel our improvement. People who pursue growth often turn in the best performances because they are far more resilient in the face of challenges.

• **Get better to enjoy the ride.** When your goal is to get better rather than to be good, you tend to enjoy what you’re doing more and find it more interesting. In other words, you appreciate the journey as much as the destination. You also engage in deeper, more meaningful processing of information and better planning for the future. You are even more likely to ask for help when you need it, and more likely to truly benefit from it.

• **Get better to fight depression**. People whose goals are more about self-growth than they are about self-validation deal with depression and anxiety in more productive ways. Feeling bad makes them get up and take action to solve their problems, rather than just lie around and feel sorry for themselves. Not surprisingly, their depressions tend to be both milder and shorter than those of people who are constantly trying to prove they are capable and worthy.

• **Get better to achieve more**. The bottom line is, whenever possible, try to turn your goals from being good to getting better. Rather than lament all the ways in which your relationships aren’t perfect, focus on all the ways in which they can be improved. At work, focus on expanding your skills and taking on new challenges rather than impressing everyone with how smart and knowledgeable you are. When your emphasis is on what there is to learn rather than what there is to prove, you will be a lot happier and will achieve a lot more.