



The Importance of Perseverance

SEIU

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On Education: The ``Power of Yet`` in the Classroom

Most successful entrepreneurs say they overcame many mistakes, challenges, and setbacks to get where they are.

"I'm convinced that about half of what separates successful entrepreneurs from the non-successful ones is pure perseverance," the late Steve Jobs, co-founder of Apple, is quoted as saying.

Students — from elementary to secondary — can and should learn this grit and determination.

That is the "power of yet" Carol S. Dweck described in her November 2014 TedTalk. Dweck, a professor of psychology at Stanford University, is known for her work identifying the growth and fixed mindsets.

Without the power of yet, students basically are graded on their ability to show their skill or knowledge level. Regardless of pass or fail, they move on to a new topic. The power of yet allows students to progress, to see where they made mistakes, and learn how to correct them.

This is the strength successful entrepreneurs harness, explained Arash Asli, co-founder and CEO of Yocale.com, in his May 25, 2018 post at Forbes.com.

"Much of the entrepreneurial life is about trial and error and mistakes are a natural byproduct of that. But more than this, mistakes are an opportunity for growth. Extract all of the value from them that you can," he said.

If more students understood that mistakes have value and can lead to growth, and were allowed the space and time to experiment with and experience this, the next generation would be better prepared for adulthood.

As an example: in most careers, workers do not receive grades associated with their work, because employees must see a task through completion — not just to a C+ effort. The most successful companies expect their workers to perform well. When employees fumble, managers expect them to bounce back, fix and learn what made a project fail or a product bomb.

This mentality, if better implemented in the classroom, could help students form a growth mindset — one that shows them failure is truly a part of learning.

"[I]f you get a failing grade, you think, I'm nothing, I'm nowhere. But if you get the grade 'Not Yet', you understand that you're on a learning curve. It gives you a path into the future," Dweck said.

Dweck, as part of the Mindset Kit — a free resource for teachers to help them develop the growth mindset in themselves and their students — recently dared learners to stop running from difficulties and failures, but to embrace them.

"If it was easy, well, then you probably already knew how to do it," she said in a Mindset Kit video. "We should have kids asking for harder work, wanting the challenging problem. I want challenge to become the new comfort zone, not easy."

Education circles are still debating how to effectively implement growth mindset training within the classroom. But the power of yet — the power of encouraging and celebrating persistence, of reveling in grit and overcoming obstacles — is still an important lesson we need to teach our children.