

Reaching for Growth Instead of Results

By: Melanie Dabb, *USU Extension Assistant Professor*

We often get told if we work hard, we will always reach our intended outcome. We are conditioned to believe that if we do A and B, we will be guaranteed outcome C. But what happens when this isn't the case? In their book "The Power of Moments" authors Chip and Dan Heath explain how we have been taught to believe that not reaching outcome "C" is a failure. They, along with Carol Dweck, author of "Mindset: The New Psychology of Success", argue that failures offer valuable opportunities for growth and personal insight, just as much as successes do. The key is to learn to think of setbacks and disappointments as moments of insight or growth instead of failure.

One effective way to shift towards reaching for growth instead of focusing only on results is by reminding yourself that abilities and talents are not fixed. Some people mistakenly believe that if success does not come easily the first time, they must lack the talent. In reality, most skills and abilities can be developed over time with work and effort. Even if success isn't the immediate outcome of your efforts, you can still find value in the insights gained about yourself.

To foster personal growth in more ways, consider taking healthy risks and seeking out new challenges, and understand that success may not always be the end result. Instead, the result may be insight into your individual strengths and weaknesses. Focus on recognizing the effort you put in rather than only looking at the outcome. Accept mistakes and failures as normal and part of learning. Seek out useful feedback from those around you and draw inspiration from the success of others. It will also be important to stick with it and be patient with the journey.

Remember, growth is an ongoing process that requires both time and effort. Be open to trying new things, accepting setbacks as part of the experience, and embracing the feedback and knowledge gained along the way.