



MENTOR PROGRAM

HOW TO HELP OTHERS REACH THEIR GOALS

5 Qualities of Positive Role Models who are Mentors

The top five qualities of role models described by students are listed below. These qualities were woven through hundreds of stories and life experiences that helped children form a vision for their own futures. By far, the greatest attribute of a positive role model is the ability to inspire others.

1. Passion and Ability to Inspire

Role models show passion for their work and have the capacity to infect others with their passion. Speaking of several of his teachers, one student said, “They’re so dedicated to teaching students and helping students and empowering students. That is such a meaningful gesture. They are always trying to give back to the next generation. That really inspires me.”

2. Clear Set of Values

Role models live their values in the world. Children admire people who act in ways that support their beliefs. It helps them understand how their own values are part of who they are and how they might seek fulfilling roles as adults. For example, students spoke of many people who supported causes from education to poverty to the environment. Role models helped these students understand the underlying values that motivated people to become advocates for social change and innovation.

3. Commitment to Community

A role model is *other-focused* as opposed to *self-focused*. Role models are usually active in their communities, freely giving of their time and talents to benefit people. Students admired people who served on local boards, reached out to neighbors in need, voted, and were active members of community organizations.

4. Selflessness and Acceptance of Others

Related to the idea that role models show a commitment to their communities, students also admired people for their selflessness and acceptance of others who were different from them. One student spoke of her father, saying “He never saw social barriers. He saw people’s needs and acted on them, no matter what their background or circumstances. He was never afraid to get his hands dirty. His lifestyle was a type of service. My father taught me to serve.”

5. Ability to Overcome Obstacles

As Booker T. Washington once said, “Success is to be measured not so much by the position that one has reached in life as by the obstacles which one has overcome.” Young people echoed this sentiment, showing how they developed the skills and abilities of initiative when they learned to overcome obstacles. Not surprisingly, they admire people who show them that success is possible.

Roots of Action



Teens' Mindsets Determine their Choice of Role Models

Growth Mindset

Young people are more likely to be inspired by positive role models when they have *growth mindsets* – when they see themselves as active learners and achievers who accomplish goals through hard work and perseverance. With this type of mindset, youth strive to achieve their best selves. And they look toward adults to show them the way.

Prevention Mindset

A *growth mindset* can be contrasted to a *prevention mindset*. When youth approach life with a desire to prevent or avoid disasters and negative outcomes, they are more likely to gravitate toward role models who will help them learn avoidance strategies. These strategies might include cheating on tests or using drugs and alcohol to escape life challenges.

Simply put, when young people have a *growth mindset*, they are more likely to choose role models that provide the kinds of strategies that support their way of thinking. When they have a *prevention mindset*, they are more likely to choose role models who provide them with preventative strategies.

Mindset and Qualities of a Role Model

Positive role models boost young people's motivation by modeling a guide to achieving success. Using the 5 Qualities of Role Models, as mentors, we should have and share: 1) an ability to inspire others, 2) a clear set of values, 3) a commitment to community, 4) an acceptance of others, and 5) an ability to overcome obstacles. These illustrate for youth a way of achieving successful goals and a sense of self-worth. Youth who have a *growth mindset* are likely to gravitate toward these types of positive role models.

Negative role models also boost young people's motivation, but in different ways than positive ones. They do so by guiding youth toward strategies for avoiding failure. They often have a deep personal fear of failure and have found various coping mechanisms and strategies to avoid misfortune at all costs. Young people who have developed a *prevention mindset* are likely to find these types of role models very helpful because they share similar fears.

Marilyn Price-Mitchell, PhD *A Growth Mindset Fuels Creativity in Youth; A Growth Mindset Fuels Creativity in Youth* (rootsofaction.com). Retrieved from: <https://www.rootsofaction.com/role-model/>

8 Abilities for Youth, Adult, and Societal Thriving

Below is an introduction to each ability measured by the
Compass Survey of Core Human Attributes

1. Empathy is viewed through the compass framework as the ability to recognize and respond to the needs and suffering of others. A complex human attribute, scientists agree there are affective and cognitive aspects to empathy (Davis, 1983; Deutsch & Madle, 1975) and that empathy is related to prosocial behavior and altruism (Batson, 2010; de Waal, 2008; Eisenberg et al., 2007; Hoffman, 2008). It has been shown that empathy is foundational to a person's ability to care for others (Slote, 2001, 2004).

2. Curiosity is viewed through the compass framework as the ability to seek and acquire new knowledge, skills, and ways of understanding the world. It is at the heart of what motivates kids to learn, provides a key pathway to student success, and keeps young people learning throughout their lives. Curiosity facilitates engagement, critical thinking, and reasoning. Multidisciplinary researchers have studied curiosity as a mental state (Inan, 2012), an emotion (Brady, 2009; Silvia, 2008b) and an intellectual or moral virtue (Baehr, 2011; Baumgarten, 2001; Peterson & Seligman, 2004).

3. Sociability is viewed through the compass framework as the joyful, cooperative ability to engage with others. It is derived from a collection of social-emotional skills that help students understand and express feelings and behaviors in ways that facilitate positive relationships, including active listening, self-regulation, and effective communication (Dusenbury et al., 2015; Mahoney et al., 2020).

4. Resilience is viewed through the compass framework as the ability to meet and overcome challenges in ways that maintain or promote wellbeing. Historically, the study of resilience has been the purview of human development researchers who have worked on identifying protective factors that promote resilience in children, particularly in at-risk populations (Luthar, 2015). Some theorists link resilience to aspects of personality like hardiness and *ego resilience*, a trait that reflects general sturdiness of character (Eisenberg et al., 2004). Resilience in adulthood has been studied far less than in childhood but a growing body of research links resilience to attributes like grit, persistence, initiative, determination and positive adaptation throughout the life span (Ong et al., 2009).

5. Self-awareness is viewed through the compass framework as the ability to examine and understand who we are relative to the world around us. It is developed through skills like self-reflection, meaning making, and the process of honing core values and beliefs. It is an essential aspect of human development (Ardelt & Grunwald, 2018).

6. Integrity is viewed through the compass framework as the ability to act in ways consistent with the values, beliefs, and moral principles we claim to hold. Rooted in centuries of moral philosophy and ethics, integrity is derived from the Latin word *integritas*, meaning wholeness. Carl Rogers (1961) first described *psychological integrity* as a time when a person’s feelings “are available to him, available to his awareness, and he is able to live these feelings, be them, and is able to communicate them if appropriate” (p. 61). Integrity has been classified as a character strength and virtue and linked to moral courage, honesty, responsibility, authenticity, trustworthiness, and positive human development (Peterson & Seligman, 2004).

7. Resourcefulness is viewed through the compass framework as the ability to find and use available resources to achieve goals, problem-solve, and shape the future. The literature on resourcefulness focuses on a common theme—the processes by which humans achieve goals. Rosenbaum’s theory of *learned resourcefulness* suggests that a repertoire of mastery behaviors that include planning, problem-solving, and evaluation help individuals attain higher levels of achievement (Rosenbaum, 1990, 2000). Psychologist Carol Dweck suggests that an individual’s beliefs about intelligence guide their goal-setting and corresponding performance. She described this belief as a *growth mindset* (Dweck, 1999, 2006).

8. Creativity is viewed through the compass framework as an everyday human capacity to produce new ideas, discoveries, and processes. It has been studied from multidisciplinary perspectives, including cognitive psychology (Ward et al., 1999); motivation (Collins & Amabile, 1999); personality (Feist, 2010; King et al., 1996), and systems theory (Csikszentmihalyi, 1999). The focus of *everyday creativity* is on the diverse ways people engage in activities that use their creative minds to improve themselves and society (Conner et al., 2018; Cotter et al., 2018).

Price-Mitchell, M. (2021). Human Development is Fundamental to Thriving. Roots of Action. Retrieved from: <https://www.rootsofaction.com/human-development/>



Five Ways to Foster a Growth Mindset in Adolescence

Growth Mindset #1: “I see connections.”

Today’s challenges are complex, interwoven, and multifaceted. Consequently, young people must be able to see the implications of ideas and decisions on an entire system of stakeholders. Instead of viewing change in mechanistic terms like those in prior centuries, they must know how to recognize, analyze, and respond to a web of relationships that are impacted by small- and large-scale change. This requires a shift from linear to non-linear thinking.

Growth Mindset #2: “I am open to new ideas.”

Innovation thrives with collaboration and flexibility. Einstein’s words, “We can’t solve the world’s problems by using the same type of thinking we used when we created them,” couldn’t ring more true today. The majority of the successful young innovators studied were not rigidly ingrained in one ideology. They understood the importance of being open to new ideas and working collaboratively for the common good.

Growth Mindset #3: “I bow to my mistakes.”

Innovation only occurs when we have the courage to make mistakes and learn from them. Instead of shaming students who don’t perform to expectations, we must teach them that mistakes are part of their growth as human beings. If you haven’t heard of the *Failure Bow*, read about it in the Harvard Business Review. Developed by Matt Smith, an improvisation teacher, it works by teaching people to raise their hands in the air, announce “I failed,” grin like a compliant dog, and then move on. More and more organizations are teaching employees to use the *Failure Bow* as a means to increase innovation! Teens who become innovators have learned from mistakes and failures during their adolescence.

Growth Mindset #4: “I embrace diversity.”

The world is made up of different cultures that collaborate and collide at lightning speeds. Key to the development of better products, services, and policies is a young person’s ability to understand people who are different from themselves. Opportunities abound through community service not only for young people to understand the social issues of our times, but also to impact those issues as change-makers. By teaching kids to be good citizens, we impart an important mindset that contributes to innovation in all parts of society.

Growth Mindset #5: “I live in a human-virtual world.”

The information and knowledge society that has evolved since the birth of the Internet, and that now includes social media, is a major driver of innovation. The next generation of leaders will know how to use the power of the Internet and its tools to connect with people and ideas across

the globe. But the fact remains that face-to-face relationships young people nurture with friends, family, and people in their own communities will remain at the heart of what feeds their initiative and well-being. Today's youth must learn to live in human and virtual spaces simultaneously, harnessing the benefits of both.

When we foster these growth mindsets in young people, we help them become the innovators of the future.



PLEASE COMPLETE THE TRUE COLORS PERSONALITY TEST ON THE FOLLOWING PAGES.

PLEASE CONSIDER TAKING AN IMPLICIT ASSOCIATIVE TEST(S) FROM A LIST OF POSSIBLE TOPICS FOUND ON THE HARVARD IMPLICIT PROJECT WEBSITE:

<https://implicit.harvard.edu/implicit/takeatest.html>

Weight IAT

Weight ('**Fat - Thin**' IAT). This IAT requires the ability to distinguish faces of people who are obese and people who are thin. It often reveals an automatic preference for thin people relative to fat people.

Weapons IAT

Weapons ('**Weapons - Harmless Objects**' IAT). This IAT requires the ability to recognize White and Black faces, and images of weapons or harmless objects.

Gender-Science IAT

Gender - Science. This IAT often reveals a relative link between liberal arts and females and between science and males.

Disability IAT

Disability ('**Disabled - Abled**' IAT). This IAT requires the ability to recognize symbols representing abled and disabled individuals.

Age IAT

Age ('**Young - Old**' IAT). This IAT requires the ability to distinguish old from young faces. This test often indicates that Americans have automatic preference for young over old.

Presidents IAT

Presidents ('**Presidential Popularity**' IAT). This IAT requires the ability to recognize photos of Joseph Biden and one or more previous presidents.

Race IAT

Race ('**Black - White**' IAT). This IAT requires the ability to distinguish faces of European and African origin. It indicates that most Americans have an automatic preference for white over black.

Transgender IAT

Transgender ('**Transgender People - Cisgender People**' IAT). This IAT requires the ability to distinguish photos of transgender celebrity faces from photos of cisgender celebrity faces.

Skin-tone IAT

Skin-tone ('**Light Skin - Dark Skin**' IAT). This IAT requires the ability to recognize light and dark-skinned faces. It often reveals an automatic preference for light-skin relative to dark-skin.

Religion IAT

Religion ('Religions' IAT). This IAT requires some familiarity with religious terms from various world religions.

Gender-Career IAT

Gender - Career. This IAT often reveals a relative link between family and females and between career and males.

Sexuality IAT

Sexuality ('Gay - Straight' IAT). This IAT requires the ability to distinguish words and symbols representing gay and straight people. It often reveals an automatic preference for straight relative to gay people.

Asian IAT

Asian American ('Asian - European American' IAT). This IAT requires the ability to recognize White and Asian-American faces, and images of places that are either American or Foreign in origin.

Arab-Muslim IAT

Arab-Muslim ('Arab Muslim - Other People' IAT). This IAT requires the ability to distinguish names that are likely to belong to Arab-Muslims versus people of other nationalities or religions.

Rationale for Testing

People don't always say what's on their minds. One reason is that they are unwilling. For example, someone might report smoking a pack of cigarettes per day because they are embarrassed to admit that they smoke two. Another reason is that they are unable. A smoker might truly believe that she smokes a pack a day, or might not keep track at all. The difference between being unwilling and unable is the difference between purposely hiding something from someone and unknowingly hiding something from yourself.

The Implicit Association Test (IAT) measures attitudes and beliefs that people may be unwilling or unable to report. The IAT may be especially interesting if it shows that you have an implicit attitude that you did not know about. For example, you may believe that women and men should be equally associated with science, but your automatic associations could show that you (like many others) associate men with science more than you associate women with science.

This self-awareness is extremely important when providing services to the public where you are responsible for shaping their self-perception and world view, judging their behavior in an evaluative and official capacity and/or making split second decisions especially where permanent, irreparable damage is possible.