



**THE**  
**LEADERSHIP**  
**CRUCIBLE**

**Where Great Leaders Are Forged**

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## **The Triple Crown of Achievement Attitude, A Growth Mindset, and Work Ethic**

The term Triple Crown has different meanings depending upon its context. In horse racing it is the winning of three races for three-year-old thoroughbreds; in wrestling it is the distinction of a person winning a world, a singles, and a tag team championship; in baseball it is a batter who completes the season and is leading a league in batting average, home runs and runs batted in (RBI).

The triple crown marks a significant achievement in sports, but what measures a person's significant achievement in their profession and in their life? I have worked with a number of people who have been successful in their field, but if you read their background and resume, you would ask: "How did they get here?" I have also had the opportunity to hire hundreds of people, and some had all the credentials, education, and experience to be successful but failed miserably. Why?

I observed that people who are successful in their personal and professional lives have three character traits in common. I call it their Triple Crown: a positive attitude, a growth mindset, and a strong work ethic. One of my first mentors when I began my career shared a Zig Ziglar quote that has been with me ever since; "Your attitude not your aptitude will determine your altitude." The quote highlights the crucial role that attitude plays in our lives. Our attitude influences how we perceive the world around us, how we interact with others, and how we approach challenges and opportunities. It sounds simplistic, but choosing to have a positive attitude will give you a better chance of reaching greater heights.



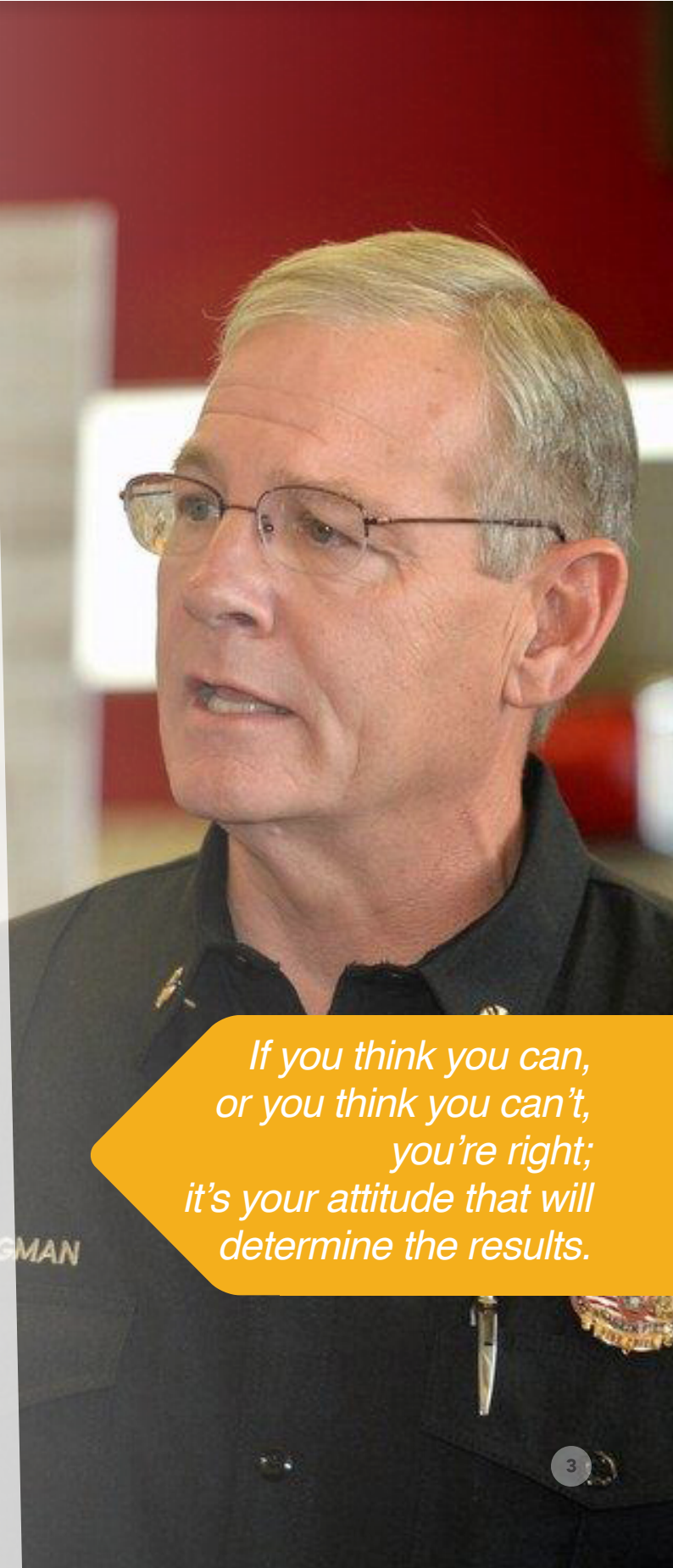
Meanwhile, complaining, negativity, and being overly critical will keep you firmly grounded where you are. From your attitude arises your actions, which in turn generates results. Equally, your attitude is the foundation for your failures. With a negative attitude you've failed before you've even begun. That old saying, if you think you can, or you think you can't you're right; it is your attitude that will determine the results.

Your attitude is also the foundation in the development of a growth mindset. When you believe that your capacity to improve, two important things happen. You stop limiting what new things you can learn, and failure stops being something to be frightened of and becomes a learning opportunity. With a positive attitude and growth mindset you can approach challenges with optimism and confidence, which makes you better able to adapt, overcome, learn, and grow over the course of your career and your life.

One of the most valuable lessons that I've learned is, that attitude can be one of a person's greatest assets. Ultimately, your attitude is your choice. Neither negative people nor negative circumstances can control your attitude. It's ultimately up to you to choose the attitude that you have, and you make that choice every day.


### **A Fixed or Growth Mindset**

It was Dr. Carol Dweck who first discussed the concept of fixed versus growth mindset in her book "Mindset: The New Psychology of Success" which was published in 2006. Dr. Carol Dweck is a Stanford psychologist who studies human motivation focused on children, but this concept applies to adults as well.



*If you think you can,  
or you think you can't,  
you're right;  
it's your attitude that will  
determine the results.*





*“A fixed mindset is like looking through a key hole to your own future.”*

According to her theory, people with fixed mindsets believe that their abilities are innate and cannot be changed, while people with growth mindsets believe that their abilities can be developed through hard work and dedication. As she noted, “The hand you are dealt is just the starting point for development.”

So, I pose two questions for you: Do you believe that you were born and raised with a fixed set of basic qualities, like intelligence and talent and you are limited by those abilities that you have had from birth? Or do you believe that your most basic abilities can be developed through dedication and hard work. If you said “yes” to the first question, you have what is referred to as a “fixed mindset.” If you said “yes” to the second question, you probably have a growth mindset.

A fixed mindset is like looking through a key hole to your own future, you only see a very small perspective of the landscape of what could be for you. A growth mindset is like opening that door and seeing the expanse of opportunity that is available for you to pursue. But without the right mindset, you will never see it, nor pursue it.

In the world we live in today, with the speed at which change is occurring in all aspects of our lives, it can be incredibly challenging. A positive attitude and a growth mindset are essential to your career and personal development. A growth mindset opens you up to more opportunities and possibilities for you to pursue. You are more proactive and curious, because you seek new challenges and experiences that can enhance your skills and knowledge.

*Below are the differences between the two viewpoints.*

## **A Growth Mindset**

*People with growth mindsets  
are more likely to:*

Believe intelligence and abilities  
can be improved

Believe in lifelong learning

Puts in the effort to learn  
new things

Believe in working toward  
developing new skills

Look at failures as temporary  
setbacks and as opportunities  
to learn and grow

View feedback as an  
important source of information  
that can help them improve

Are inspired by others' success

Confront and embrace  
challenges as a  
learning opportunities

## **A Fixed Mindset**

*People with fixed mindsets  
are more likely to:*

Believe intelligence and abilities  
are fixed

Avoid learning because  
it seems pointless

Effort means you're not already  
good enough, tend to  
give up easily

Hide their flaws to avoid  
judgement from others

View failings as personal failings,  
not just setbacks

Become defensive  
when critiqued

Feel threatened by others success

Avoid challenges to avoid failure





So, as you review the chart, where did you find yourself? Are you more in alignment with the growth or fixed mindset? Did some statements in each area resonate with you? That is common for most people. For those mindset elements that are on the fixed side for you, they provide insight into the areas that you can begin to work on to move them to the other column.

**Fixed**

**Mixed**

**Growth**

Both mindsets are the product of our own perceptions, experiences, and education. The way we think about ourselves and our abilities can have a significant impact on our performance at work, and in everyday life.

With a fixed mindset you are more likely to avoid challenges, give up easily, and avoid challenging learning situations as they may directly impact your ego. With a growth mindset you don't see things as static. You are continually working to improve your talents and skill sets, you thrive on challenge. You don't see failure as a way to describe yourself but as a springboard for learning, growth, and developing your abilities. Your intelligence and talents are always open to growth.

### **Developing a Growth Mindset**

For most people developing a growth mindset requires a conscious shift in their perceptions of challenges, failure, feedback, seeing opportunities in every situation and believing in one's capacity to continually develop and improve. It is not a singular event, but a lifelong journey that requires continuous effort, with a payoff of leading to higher levels of achievement and satisfaction in your personal and professional life.

*Below are strategies to help get you started:*

- Determine where you find yourself. You can't know where to go if you don't know where you are.
- Are you motivated to make the change and can you see the benefits it could have on your life. Developing a growth mindset can be difficult, so purpose will be a driving force during those difficult periods.
- See challenges as opportunities to learn and grow. Embrace as many as you can.
- Look at failures as learning opportunities, not as the end of something. Those experiences are often our best opportunities to learn if we reframe them with a growth mindset.
- Develop a passion for continuous learning.
- Seek constructive feedback. Outside feedback can be a great learning tool if you have a willingness to accept it.
- Align and surround yourself with people who inspire and pursue personal growth and development.
- Embrace the concept of "yet". The concept of 'yet' is one that Dr. Dweck has discussed. (Realizing there will be skills or subjects you're not good at yet. When you catch yourself thinking "I'm not very good at this," add the word "yet"; "I'm not very good at this yet." Challenge yourself to try something you aren't good at. If you can progress even a little your confidence will grow, which will serve as a foundation to go further. This is kind of breakthrough creates outstanding achievement in leaders.)
- Be persistent. When obstacles get in your way, power through. Don't give up. Seek support and take time to reflect on where you are and where you want to be, and maybe, what you need to do differently to breakthrough.
- Success and achievement always starts with your mindset and end with the actions one takes to get to where they want to be.





### **A Strong Work Ethic**

The last of the Triple Crown of achievement is work ethic, and it is a factor that is so often overlooked by many. People that have a strong work ethic place a high value on having it and it is the one character trait that so often separates them from their colleagues. While attitude and growth mindset are valuable, they won't go anywhere without a strong work ethic. We have all worked with people that had a great attitude, were fun to work around, but you could not count on them to ever get much done or be on time.

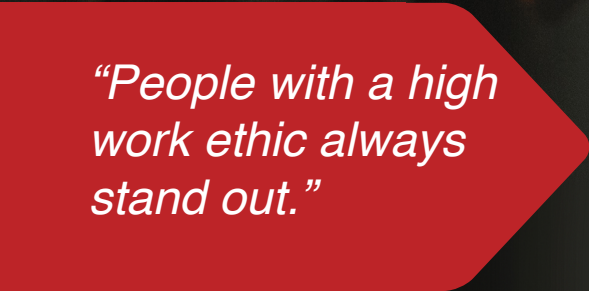
Do you think that if you want to develop a growth mindset and put that into action in your life, that will happen without a strong work ethic. It won't. People with a high work ethic always stand out, and those are the people that you want to work with, and you want to have on your team, because you know you can count on them. That is critical. Developing a good work ethic is directly proportional to building a successful career and opens the door to more opportunities. A strong work ethic is typically displayed in your behaviors, actions and in the way that you conduct yourself. It influences your daily decision-making and allows you to create strong values that eventually define you as an individual.

If you want to achieve your career goals, be a good team member, or take on a leadership role, demonstrating a good work ethic is important. There are several qualities that contribute to having a strong work ethic.

*Below are just a few key skills and values that can help:*

**Accountability:** Having accountability means you are able to manage your own work well without much oversight.

**Reliability:** Being on time with the commitments you have made whether that is reporting to work, completing an assignment, meeting a deadline, or acting appropriately in professional settings.

A red arrow-shaped callout box pointing to the right, containing a quote in white text.

*“People with a high work ethic always stand out.”*



**Discipline:** Having the ability to focus and manage your time and the commitment to complete the tasks assigned to you, on time and with the level of quality that is needed.

**Responsibility:** Taking ownership of one's actions and decisions and being accountable for the outcomes. Individuals with a strong work ethic are known to be responsible. Being consistent and reliable shows professionalism and respect for your work.

**Determination:** Showing a strong work ethic by being determined to meet or exceed the goals and objectives one has been given. Even if not familiar with the task, determined individuals will look for resources to help them successfully achieve the objectives they have been given.

**Integrity:** Integrity is a strong indicator of a good work ethic. It guides individuals to make choices that are morally sound, and that are ethically balanced.

**Professionalism:** Professionalism is a component of the concept of work ethic, which describes how a person comes to work and conducts themselves on the job. A strong work ethic suggests that the person places a high value on doing a good job, as well as respecting others and functioning with integrity.

No matter what profession or what level you are currently working, a good work ethic is an attribute that employers value in every profession. Developing a track record of a good work ethic makes one more employable and will create more opportunities in your present position. In a recent survey by Zipdo on work ethic statistics they found that:

83% of employees consider work ethic to be an extremely important trait in coworkers.

92% of HR professionals believe that prospects with strong work ethics have better chances of getting hired.

A strong work ethic was ranked as the most important aspect of professional success for women, at a rate of 97.9%.

These statistics provide insight into the significance that work ethic is having today in the job market and in the recruitment of employees. Want to place yourself in a competitive advantage, develop a good track record of a strong work ethic.





## Readers Are Leaders

I believe that to be a good leader, one must be on a continuous quest to gain more knowledge. The leadership benefits of reading are wide-ranging. Evidence suggests reading can improve intelligence and lead to innovation and insight. To that end, we provide a few suggested titles below for you to consider:

**Mindset - Updated Edition: Changing The Way You think  
To Fulfil Your Potential**

Dr. Carol Dweck

**Attitude Is Your Superpower: How to Create Incredible  
Life-Changing Success**

Eduardo Clemente







**Grit: The Power of Passion and Perseverance**

Angela Duckworth



## Chief B's Key Leadership Takeaways

Having the honor of speaking to great leaders in their profession in The Leadership Crucible Podcast, we note the key leadership takeaways we discussed. We share these personal and leadership takeaway, these insights, with you in hopes it will help you reflect on them personally or from a professional perspective. These may also provide potential talking points you can discuss with your team or colleagues, often creating great dialogue insights.

-  Effort is important. But more crucial is a person's attitude toward learning new things and their perspective on failure as a part of life's learning process.
-  Your attitude will dictate your altitude; your growth mindset will determine your destination.
-  While one cannot control their natural attributes, they can control their work ethic, it's a choice.
-  Your work ethic is your portrait at work, only you can paint it.
-  Developing a growth mindset is not a singular event, but a lifelong journey.
-  It is not where you begin, but where you end up that matters, and you are the navigator.