

## Fixed mindset versus growth mindset

Becoming a high-performance team requires individuals to develop themselves. This becomes even more important at senior levels.

When you grow as an individual, you display openness, are seen as guided by virtues and appear to be focused on a positive mindset. In teams, it is shown by a belief in others and giving them a chance because you care about their success. As a result, people who feel supported within teams are motivated to do their very best work, which will contribute to high performance.

Developing personally also means raising your standards by operating with honesty and humility. That requires an inner change in individuals, which takes a bit of effort. This is a personal journey as much as a team one. It's about shedding poor behaviours and habits that inhibit personal growth. It's less about what you do, but all about maturing your character so that you become who you truly are and are meant to be.

Put simply, personal development is about going from a fixed mindset to a growth mindset – or moving from your vices to virtues.

To best explain how you can help a team to achieve this, it's useful for you to describe the following concepts and principles:

- Inner drives, vices and the 'shadow self'
- Leading with your virtues growth values that help people to awaken their authentic self

### Inner drives

Richard Barrett, leadership and wellbeing author, eloquently suggests that powerful drives dominate the first part of our lives and early careers:

- **The survival drive** helps us to protect and defend ourselves.
- **The social drive** shapes our feelings and attitudes towards others and our relationships with them.
- **The self-esteem and ego drive** allows us strive to get what we want and desire.

Importantly, these drives form the basis of personality style, how we tick and our attitudes to life. Through them, we begin to shape our early careers, too. But if we don't grow beyond them (as we are meant to), they eventually lead to a fixed mindset.

### Unmasking your 'shadow side'

According to the author Sandra Maitri, these drives are unfortunately also responsible for our limitations, habits, programmes, vices and shortfalls – what she calls the 'shadow side'. They are the 'baser' instincts of our shared humanity, and we all have them.



Our baser instinctive drives are at the middle of the graphic above. Working outward, these develop into our vices. Eventually they emerge as our shadow side.

**The trick is for your personal development to grow beyond your shadow side and transform your character so that you become what you were always meant to become.**

Left unchecked, our shadow side leads to low performance – e.g. manipulation, over-control, fear, dysfunction and ego. So, from a high-performance viewpoint, these are toxic traits and need ironing out.

However, it's not all bad news.

Counter-intuitively, your shadow side is also one of the building blocks for authentic leadership as you mature. By having the courage to tame your shadow side, you can learn valuable character-building lessons and consciously choose to make attitude adjustments along the way.

Leadership author Steven Synder believes that, together, these struggles comprise the backstory that drives you.

### Awakening your authentic self

We all have an authentic self that calmly waits for the right moment and conditions to begin to nudge us subtly away from our shadow side and towards a growth mindset. Richard Barrett calls this the activation of the authentic self.

This gentle push is your authentic self, awakening. This is the 'transformation of self' phase. It's a natural part of maturing, but you must take note of it. Along with your backstory, developing a growth mindset unlocks leadership potential.



Have a look at the diagram above. In individuals, the awakening of the authentic self starts from the centre circle.

Personal growth is about moving outwards towards developing your virtues. This takes conscious effort.

The outer circle represents what Richard Barrett describes as the growth values of:

- **inner cohesion** – finding meaning and togetherness
- **making a difference** in who we are and how we do what we do
- **wider service** – making the world better.

I believe that these growth values specifically apply to high-performing teams.

For more information on an accompanying exercise please refer to, *Developing High Performance Teams*, by Andrew Jenkins, SRA (July) 2017.