

## Mindset

By Dr. Margaret Rea

Many of you are embarking on a new academic year, or are beginning a new academic journey. There is hopefully excitement as you dive into the new opportunities for growth and learning.

However, with the new demands, it is not unusual to experience some self-doubt. It is expected that, at times, you can find yourself wondering if you can accomplish what is being asked of you.

However, what we want to avoid is you spiraling into an episode of Impostor Syndrome which can occur among high achievers like yourselves. It is a form of intellectual self-doubt whereby the individual is unable to internalize and accept success and there can be a fear that others will eventually unmask you as a fraud.

Impostor syndrome also impacts learning as students can become less likely to speak up for fear they will be wrong. The impostor phenomenon and perfectionism often go hand in hand. In case you feel alone with this experience, you are in good company. Maya Angelou the renowned American poet and civil rights activist addressed her impostor experiences when she said, "I have written eleven books and each time I think, 'Uh Oh, they're going to find out now. I've run a game on everybody, and they're going to find me out'"

Impostor feelings can be accompanied by stress, anxiety and depression. By definition, most people with impostor feelings suffer in silence as individuals don't talk about it as they are afraid they're going to be found out. It is key to challenge your impostor thoughts in order to maintain your well-being and so you can continue to learn and grow. Psychologist Carol Dweck from Stanford University proposed that adopting a growth mindset versus a fixed mindset can help challenge impostor syndrome. With a fixed mindset you attribute success to an innate ability-you have it or you don't. When a mistake happens or failure strikes, you can easily give up and make the

assumption that you just don't have the talent to be successful. In contrast, if you adopt a growth mindset, you attribute success not to inherent talent that you do or do not possess, but hard work. **You are not there yet.** When a mistake happens, and it will for all of us, you can instead tell yourself, "Messed up this time..didn't study as well as I could have..maybe I need to get guidance how to study...failed this time..I will not necessarily fail next time." Growth mindset allows for improved performance over time, flexibility and hopefulness. Carol Dweck suggests the following approach:

**Step 1.** Learn to hear your fixed mindset "voice."

**Step 2.** Recognize that you have a choice. You can interpret mistakes or failures in a fixed mindset as signs that your fixed talents or abilities are lacking. Or you can interpret them in a growth mindset as signs that you need to ramp up your strategies and effort, stretch yourself, and expand your abilities.

**Step 3.** Talk Back with a Growth Mindset Voice THE FIXED-MINDSET says "Are you sure you can do it? Maybe you don't have the talent." THE GROWTH-MINDSET answers, "I'm not sure I can do it now, but I think I can learn to with time and effort"

**Step 4.** Take the growth mindset action and take on the challenge wholeheartedly-learn from your setbacks and try again and hear the criticism and act on it.

<https://mindsetonline.com/whatisit/about/>

[TED Talks: How students of color confront Impostor syndrome](#)

[TED Talks: The power of believing that you can improve](#)

### Wellness Events

#### Work Life and Wellness Events

<http://www.ucdmc.ucdavis.edu/hr/wellness/index.html>

Check out their [Summer Newsletter](#)

#### UC Living Fit Forever

[http://intranet.ucdmc.ucdavis.edu/clinops/resources/living\\_fit\\_forever.shtml](http://intranet.ucdmc.ucdavis.edu/clinops/resources/living_fit_forever.shtml)

#### UC Davis Health Farmers Market is Back!

Ed Bldg Outdoor Quad  
Wednesdays 3 - 7:30pm

#### New Wellness Resource

Check out this exciting new Wellness Resource  
<https://healthy.ucdavis.edu/>



## Wellness Tip: A 10-Minute Meditation to Work with Difficult Emotions

One of my favorite places to go to when I want to learn about new techniques for promoting well-being, is the magazine Mindful. I came across this meditation presented by Carley Hauck which seemed like a good fit to our discussion about Impostor Syndrome. This meditation can help when you need to navigate uncomfortable emotions like disappointment, sadness or fear that can arise as we are faced with new challenges.

<https://www.mindful.org/a-10-minute-meditation-to-work-with-difficult-emotions/>

The steps to the meditation are below along with an audio that you can use to talk you through the steps.

<https://soundcloud.com/mindfulmagazine/a-10-minute-meditation-to-work-with-difficult-emotions>

**Come into a comfortable sitting position.** Imagine something difficult that you are going through. It doesn't have to be the most difficult, but something moderately difficult. We want to practice with moderation before we move into the most difficult.

Now, recognize your desire to push away the difficulty, to reach toward something that would soothe the difficulty in the moment (reaching out to someone, chocolate, distracting with technology, etc.), or denying that this difficulty is actually happening.

**Now turn toward it.** Breathe deeply in through your nose and out through your mouth a few times. Now invite into your awareness a large figure of compassion and strength who envelops you in a blanket of love, acceptance, and security. It can be a big cloud of compassion, a large grandmotherly figure, anything that feels loving and kind. Now, imagine this figure is holding you.

**Turn fully towards your difficulty.** Face it, head on. There is no need to be scared. Feel this wise being enveloping you and speaking kindly to you: "It will be okay, you are okay, you are lovable, you are enough, you are not alone, and we will get through this together." Let yourself offer and receive loving and kind statements as many times as you need until your mind and body can soothe and slow down.

**Each time, you notice yourself reaching for the old familiar way of turning away from discomfort, try gently turning toward it.** The more you train the mind to acknowledge and name whatever difficulty is here, it won't feel so challenging. In addition, your limbic system and specifically your amygdala will send a signal to your sympathetic nervous system that you can physiologically relax.

All students, staff and faculty are encouraged to contribute wellness stories, tips or recipes to the newsletter.

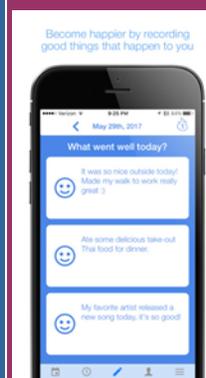
### Monthly Recipe from the UC Davis Community

Dr. Oliveira from the UC Davis Department of Integrative Medicine recently discussed one of my favorite summer treats, Corn on the Cob. June 11th was National Corn on the Cob Day. Who knew???! I usually take the boring route and pop the cob into some boiling water, but I am now ready to liven things up and try making Dr. Oliveira's Mexican -Style Corn on the Cob. "The weather is warm, and now is the perfect time for a plant-based barbecue! Veggies are right at home on the grill, and one of the most welcome guests at outdoor parties is corn on the cob. Our [Mexican-Style Corn on the Cob](#) enhances this classic side with a spicy avocado paste that is simple to make and kicks the flavor up into the 'WOW' zone! This recipe will delight your friends and family, and you will be coming back to it all summer long."



### Wellness App: Three Good Things - A Happiness Journal

This App can help you remember your accomplishments and other "good," things that happen and, in turn, be another tool to help you challenge your impostor feelings.



"It's been shown that if you write down three good things that happen to you everyday, your happiness and positivity increase. Three Good Things, a happiness journal, enables you to do exactly that....Rather than remembering all of the good things in their lives, people often focus on the things which they don't like. With Three Good Things, you can rewire your brain to focus on the positive by writing down good things that happen to you everyday.

<https://itunes.apple.com/us/app/three-good-things-a-happiness-journal/id1242079576?mt=8>