A growth mindset in farming today



A growth mindset is defined as "The belief that abilities and intelligence can be developed through dedication, learning and effort." It is well researched that those with a growth mindset benefit from improved resilience, confidence and motivation.

The opposite of a growth mindset is a fixed mindset, the belief that abilities, intelligence and talents are static and cannot be significantly developed. A fixed mindset can leave us resistant to change and often there is overwhelm and a sense of disruption when change is forced.

That sounds negative but we are not 100% one or the other, neither is one of the other 100% the answer.

A growth mindset is positive in farming when trying new practices, technologies, or enterprises that improve resilience, efficiency, and long-term sustainability. A fixed mindset is important in fields that require expertise or where stability is crucial for regulatory purposes.

A growth mindset is mostly about growing your mind. Expanding it to achieve your goals in a way that is realistic, manageable and achievable.

The **G.R.O.W coaching model** can be useful if we are in a position where change feels too difficult or when you want to enable change but are not sure where to start.

The model looks at 4 key areas:

G is for **Goal**, what do you want to happen?
R for **reality**, or what is happening now?
O is for **options**, it's also, who could help, how could I learn?
W is for **way forward**, sometimes the "**will**" to act.

The model focuses on learning, not just results. It can be useful to emphasise the journey because our mind loves to learn and mastery is also crucial for motivation. It also encourages curiosity over criticism or judgement. Change is a stressor so the model helps us cope with it by asking "what can I learn?" rather than "What went wrong?" Importantly it also reinforces that improvement come through effort, experimentation, and the will to adapt.

In short, the model can help us to avoid the fear of feeling like we're being told we're wrong or "outdated" or whatever else we convince ourselves when new comes along. It gives us a structure to avoid our ego getting in the way of what might be the right thing to do.

Use the worksheets on the following pages to help develop your growth mindset.

GROW model – popularised by the late Sir John Whitmore in his 2002 book Coaching for Performance.

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1. Goal

Prompt: *What do I want to achieve?*

Think of a specific, measurable and achievable goal you want to work toward. Think long and short term. Consider what success will look like.

My goal:

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2. Reality

Prompt: *What is my current situation?*

Be honest about where things stand right now both physically and mentally. What's working, what challenges exist, and what resources you already have. Think especially about the strengths you do already have as they will be key.

My reality check:

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3. Options

Prompt: *What could I do?*

Brainstorm possible strategies. List as many ideas as possible, even if they seem small or unconventional. Think specific actions and alternatives even if they are scary.

My options:

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4. Way Forward

Prompt: *What will I do?*

Choose the actions you will commit to. Be specific: what will you do, when, and how will you measure progress? Who will keep you accountable?

My way forward: