

Mindsets to Help Live Your Calling



Mindsets are our beliefs about how the world works. They shape our expectations of ourselves and of other people. They tell us what is possible and what is not. Our mindsets will either hold us back or propel us forward. Following are the mindsets we have found to be critical to living our calling.

Mindset 1: Empowerment Mentality

Step 1: Make Time

Old thinking: I have to.../I can't...

New thinking: I choose to... ...

When we don't take responsibility for the choices we make, we forfeit the power to choose something different for ourselves. Therefore, there is a lot of power in recognizing our part in what we might otherwise consider to be our “circumstances.” We need to recognize our own power to make changes in our lives before we will have the power to effect changes in the lives of other people.

Mindset 2: Abundant Options

Step 1: Make Time

Old thinking: I have two options, A or B.

New thinking: I have many options.

We are fooling ourselves when we believe there are only two choices or, worse, when we believe there are no choices at all. A/B thinking is just a different version of victim mentality. We will have more power over our own lives when we search for a variety of options before we make our decision. The truth is there is an abundance of options available. Brainstorming solutions will reveal new options, usually with at least one of them being better than the first two we started with.

Mindset 3: Continuous Learning

Step 2: Connect to Positive Inputs

Old Thinking: I'm done with school, so I'm done learning.

New Thinking: I'm a lifelong learner.

Living our calling will require us to learn many new things like new ways of thinking, new ways of expressing ourselves and new ways of doing things to name just a few. It takes some humility to admit that we don't know it all, but no one person really can know everything. Having a continuous learning mindset will allow us to always improve our effectiveness in our calling. Putting in time, effort and money will ultimately benefit many, many people.

Mindset 4: Outward Focus

Step 2: Connect to Positive Inputs

Old thinking: I need to be happy before I help others.

New thinking: I will find ultimate satisfaction when I am other-focused.

We experience just a shallow, fleeting happiness when we focus on ourselves, for example having cool experiences, buying neat stuff and making our home pretty. When we do things that benefit other people, though, we experience a deeper, longer-lasting satisfaction. Maybe the satisfaction lasts longer because the results are longer-lasting or maybe just because other people are better off because of us. The best way to learn this truth is to experience it. The key is to not wait until we're "feeling satisfied" with our own life because that satisfaction isn't going to come until we have that outward focus.

Mindset 5: Openness

Step 3: Maximize Your Energy-

Old Thinking: I can't trust new ideas or new opportunities.

New Thinking: I am discerning and let good things into my life.

We must be willing to consider new ideas in order to grow. At first, being open to new ways of thinking can be a little scary. This openness does not have to threaten our closely-held personal beliefs, though, because we have the power to accept, reject or modify new ideas to make them work for us. Being open to new perspectives, ideas and ways of doing things helps us greatly in being effective at living our calling.

Mindset 6: Win-Win or No Deal

Step 3: Maximize Your Energy

Old Thinking: I want a solution that's good for me.

New Thinking: A solution is only acceptable if it's good for both of us.

We know there are many potential solutions to any given problem. When negotiating, therefore, we might as well assume there is a solution that will benefit both us and the other people involved. Opting for win-win solutions helps foster trust because people like knowing that we have their best interests at heart.

Mindset 7: Financial Freedom

Step 4: Create Security at Home

Old Thinking: I need to use credit to achieve my goals.

New Thinking: Being debt free gives me freedom and more opportunities.

Personal money management will effect our calling. When we have money set aside for emergencies and no debt, we are in a relatively secure position financially compared to a person who has debt and no cash. Having this kind of security keeps us from getting stuck in a bad situation , like needing to stay in a job we don't like because we need the money. It also opens up many more options for how we choose to live our calling than we would have otherwise.

Mindset 8: Risk Management

Step 4: Create Security at Home

Old Thinking: I value safety over risk.

New Thinking: I take appropriate risks in life.

Many of us have played it safe in life so far. Now if we are to do worthwhile things in the lives of other people, we must be willing to take some risks. Some risks will be personal, like trying new things, looking silly to other people and maybe even failing at some thing. Other risks may involve our career, our relationships or our finances. We will be more able to tolerate these risks when we know our needs will be met and we feel reasonably secure physically, emotionally and financially.

Mindset 9: Unbalanced

Step 5: Create Your Personal Purpose Statement

Old thinking: I need to improve my areas of weakness.

New thinking: I maximize my strengths.

We will achieve the best results in our calling when we focus on and utilize our strengths. Shoring up our weaknesses will yield very limited results, so we should bring them up to a minimum acceptable level when they are holding us back. Then we can focus on using our strengths for the benefit of other people. Working in our areas of strength yields extraordinary results not to mention lots of personal satisfaction, and joy.

Mindset 10: Calling Mentality

Step 5: Create Your Personal Purpose Statement

Old thinking: I just need to serve.

New thinking: I use my strengths and passions to serve effectively.

Many of us have helped out various charities, but our efforts have been very unfocused and, therefore, the results we have gotten have been very limited. A calling, determined by our unique combination of strengths and passions, is much more focused than doing some volunteer work here and there. This focus is one of the main reasons living our calling is far more effective at bringing about long-lasting change in the lives of other people.

Mindset 11: Agile Planning

Step 6: Learn by Doing

Old thinking: I make the whole plan and then follow it

New thinking: The plan isn't fully knowable until I take steps forward

Even though it's uncomfortable not fully knowing what to expect we must be willing to set out on this journey without knowing all the details in advance. We will begin a cycle of doing, learning and re-planning. This agility allows us to take the steps we know to do now and then from there to plan the next steps based on what we've learned along the way.

Mindset 12: Embrace Failure

Step 6: Learn by Doing

Old thinking: Failure is bad. Avoid it at all costs.

New thinking: Failure is valuable because we learn from our mistakes.

It is normal to not get it right the first time we try something new. Many of us will avoid trying something new if there's a good chance we'll fail at it. When we are willing to venture out into the realm of new experiences, we will learn at a much faster pace than when we are playing it safe. In fact, failure gives valuable experience that helps us grow, experience we could never learn from a book. We will need to learn new concepts, try new things and acquire new skills to live our calling. Therefore, we should not only expect to experience some failure during our journey, we might as well embrace it.

Mindset 13: Results Oriented

Step 7: Live Your Calling and Refine

Old thinking: I plan for activities, and hope I see some results.

New thinking: I plan for results, and tweak the activities until I get the results I want.

In order to be as effective as possible in our calling, we must be very clear on the results we are trying to achieve. It's easy to get caught up in doing "stuff" because those things seem like good ideas, but the activities we do for our calling should be determined by the specific results we are working toward.

After any activity, we should evaluate its results and modify any future activities until we get the results we want.

Mindset 14: Systems Thinking

Step 7: Live Your Calling and Refine

Old thinking: I own and control my area.

New thinking: I am part of a bigger system, and my effectiveness depends on the system.

We are all part of larger systems, whether in business, education, family, organizations, community, or a myriad of other kinds of systems. Each part of a system affects different parts of the same system. We will have greater results in any change effort when we understand the interrelationships between the different parts of a system and how they affect each other.