

Great Leaders Think Differently

The Four Mindsets Shaping Modern Leadership

Leadership development has long focused on building skillsets—teaching leaders the "what" and "how" of doing their jobs.

Skillsets tell you what leaders can do. Mindsets determine how effectively they do it.

Our latest research reveals that mindsets—the underlying beliefs, identities, and attitudes that shape how leaders think—are equally foundational to great leadership and more important than ever in light of our increasingly VUCA world.

This guide distills key insights from our comprehensive research report, *Great Leaders Think Differently: The Four Mindsets Shaping the Future of Work*, to help you design leadership development that drives real mindset shifts.

The Four Foundational Mindsets

Our six years of research with hundreds of leaders across industries identified four mindsets that consistently distinguish exceptional leadership.

Growth Mindset		
The belief that skills and behaviors can be cultivated through effort.	46% of surveyed leaders ranked growth as the most critical mindset	Biggest roadblock: 30% cite fear of failure or making mistakes
Inclusive Mindset		
The belief that contribution and performance are unleashed in an inclusive environment.	58% said that actively seeking contributions from a range of people most demonstrates an inclusive mindset	Biggest roadblock: 22% cite fear of saying the wrong thing, prioritizing tasks over people, and organizational norms that discourage dialogue
Agile Mindset		
The belief that success in a complex and volatile world requires flexibility, adaptation, innovation, and resilience.	30% of leaders say team members empowered to act without waiting for permission is the top indicator of agile success.	Biggest roadblock: 26% cite resistance to changing established ways of working
Enterprise Mindset		
The belief that skills and behaviors can be cultivated through effort.	12% of leaders say fostering collaboration across departments is a key action, making it the least prioritized enterprise behavior.	Biggest roadblock: 24% cite focus on individual or team success over shared outcomes

Fear Is a Pervasive Barrier

Across all four mindsets, fear emerges as a common obstacle:

GROWTH		Fear of failure or making mistakes
INCLUSIVE		Fear of saying the wrong thing
AGILE		Fear of taking risks
ENTERPRISE		Fear of not accomplishing personal or team goals



Actions Leaders Can Take Now

Growth Mindset	Inclusive Mindset
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Focus on being curious more than being right Focus on continuous improvement, not perfection Catch yourself when triggered by a fixed mindset and reframe 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Involve others early and often to avoid creating an echo chamber Approach conversations with curiosity Make it safe for team members to speak up and engage in healthy debate
Agile Mindset	Enterprise Mindset
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Be willing to pivot Change decisions as new information emerges Empower team members to act without waiting for permission at every step 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Consider more than local success when making decisions Regularly link individual and team goals to the bigger picture Champion enterprise-wide thinking in everyday conversations

Next Steps: Dive into the Full Report

This guide provides a snapshot of our research findings, but there's much more to explore.

- Detailed success indicators for each mindset
- The specific obstacles leaders face and how to overcome them
- Real leader perspectives from across industries
- Practical behaviors to cultivate each mindset personally and in others
- How AI and emerging technologies intersect with these mindsets
- The role of organizational culture in enabling mindset shifts

Ready to encourage leadership development that drives real change?

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