

Fixed to Growth – case study

This case study provides you the coach with an understanding of the transfer from a 'fixed' to 'growth' mind-set:

What do we do about the gymnast called Ben? Ben has been an outstanding gymnast in his age group since 9 years old. He is physically very strong and flexible and demonstrates good technical delivery on all apparatus. He is a quietly confident boy, introverted, knows he is the best gymnast in the club and believes he is natural talented and gifted. Why? Because he has been told this countless times by several people.

Ben's mother was a very good gymnast and believes Gymnastics is in his genes. During Gymnastics sessions his coach regularly says he is too good to coach and he is used as an example of excellence in front of the others. He and those gymnasts around him believe he is perfect. However Ben is now 15 and this competition year has struggled with completing a routine on the high bar. He is struggling to perform it competently and is behind a few of the other boys in the club.

During the following period whenever given the choice he works on his strengths and when on high bar he avoids doing the certain skill. If other people are watching he fakes injury and comes off the bar. When forced into a corner and made to work on it he gets upset and defensive when the slightest thing goes wrong. Worst of all this 'gifted and able' gymnast is not improving in other areas and being overtaken by others. People are questioning his attitude and labelling him as being soft. His confidence is dipping, he's not enjoying Gymnastics and many believe he will quit. Ben has what we call a 'fixed' mind-set.

Do you recognise Ben?

If so how would deal with this situation?

How may you have dealt with this situation a few years earlier?

Case Study – coach strategy

1. The coach talks to Ben about how the process of development and learning. Ben feels it's important to always impress the coach by not making mistakes
2. The coach explains that they are more interested in seeing how they learn and challenge themselves in training than the outcome.
3. The coach discusses with Ben how making mistakes is part of the learning process and that he has to reflect on his training sessions and set goals for his new ones.
4. The coach introduces him to stories and backgrounds of some of the top gymnasts in the world and how they have progressed to the top.
5. Both Ben and the coach agree to have a session rating scale for challenge and effort where feedback is provided on these 2 areas.
6. They also agree a more focused approach to training that spends more time on areas where he is less confident