



Episode 42 – Grit & Growth Mindset: Good Practice Podcast Crossover Special

Nicola: Hello and welcome to the Good Practice Podcast from Emerald Works.

Phil: And the Emotion at Work podcast as well. Hello everybody. So this week we're doing something a little bit different, we're combining our podcasts into one super show and releasing it on both podcast feeds at the same time. I'm Phil Wilcox.

Nicola: And I'm Nicola Boyle and in this episode we'll be discussing the concepts of grit and growth mindsets. Here with us this week are three of my lovely colleagues from Emerald Works, fellow good practice podcast host Ross Garner. Hello Ross.

Ross: Hey.

Nicola: Regular podcast contributor Owen Ferguson, hello Owen.

Owen: Hello.

Ross: Boo.

Owen: Yeah, so predictable.

Nicola: And last but certainly not least Gemma Towersey. Hi Gemma.

Gemma: Hello, hiya.

Phil: Hey.

Nicola: So let's get started, what is grit, can someone explain that for me please?

Phil: So grit according to Angela Duckworth is a formula of passion plus perseverance. So you take passion or a deep interest or a passion for something, you combine that with perseverance and those two things combine together then make for grit. Angela Duckworth has a grit scale and there is a grit test that you can do, two different varieties of, there's an O1 and an S1 I believe, the S1 is a slightly shorter version. But, yeah, you combine those two things together, passion plus perseverance and then you get grit and people can be more or less gritty, and grit is also something that you can learn. Would be my synopsis.

Owen: Phil, is the grit associated with the subject or topic or thing that you are passionate about as well or is it just in general?

Phil: So the interest comes from the passion bit so it's not the grit, it's the equals bit at the end, it's not the sum of the equation, it's the interest comes from the passion part of it rather than from the



grit at the end. You could be more gritty for one thing and less gritty for another thing depending on what the thing is. Gemma, would that go along with you?

Gemma: Yeah, definitely. Certain areas of life people can be more or less gritty.

Ross: It's not like if you're from an external point of view thinking is a gritty person going to succeed at everything? Probably not because there are some things they just won't care about. Because that passion is missing it's not going to be something that they're going to bother preserving with.

Phil: Yes.

Ross: With some caveat. Do you want to caveat that?

Phil: Not yet, we'll do the caveat later shall we?

Ross: [Laughs].

Nicola: So thank you for that. What is growth mindset?

Phil: I think big Ferg should pick this one up because he's talked about it before.

Owen: Oh, I haven't prepared [laughs]. So growth mindset, how shall I distil it? It's the belief that effort matter more than innate ability.

Ross: Yes, but also that your belief that that effort is going to make a difference to whatever it is that you're doing, that you can learn, change and grow. In a way it sounds incredibly obvious, people who think that they can learn change and grow, and then put the effort in, are more likely to do so than people who think that that effort is not going to have any impact whatsoever. But it's kind of obvious in the same way that grit's obvious, that if you care about something and you keep doing it, you'll get better. And then the difficulty I think comes in the implementation of these two things.

Nicola: So before we get into the problems with them, how gritty do you think you are and what kind of mindset do you think you have? Would you say that you have a growth mindset or more inclined to a fixed mindset?

Phil: I think it depends and this is where I can drop the context bomb quite early in the podcast I can drop context into it. I think it depends, so I often say that I am generally useless when it comes to anything to do with any kind of D.I.Y at home. So putting up a shelf, every shelf I've erected in my time has been wonky, I am yet to put up a straight shelf.

Owen: You're in good company, Phil.

Phil: The shelves behind you look all right.



Owen: Yeah, I know my brother came and fixed them [laughs]. When I moved in one of them fell off in the middle of the night.

Phil: So there are certain attributes where I think I'm useless and I can't be bothered to get better at it. I think that's the other part of it. Could I get better at D.I.Y? Probably. Can I be bothered to get better at D.I.Y? No, I'd rather pay someone to come and do it.

Nicola: You have a growth mindset but not the passion to have the grit to persevere or change?

Phil: Yeah, I guess in a way, yeah.

Owen: You've kind of combined these two things there. I think I've thought of them slightly separately for this question. But I think with both concepts as you start get into it you think, oh, yes, yes, yes, very, very gritty indeed and growth mindset, of course I have. But as you dig into it a bit more I found myself a bit disappointed in my own actions in the past. I would consider myself gritty because I've done well academically, put a lot of effort into work, run marathons and things. Have run marathons, but I've tended to flit from one thing to another, I haven't particularly persevered, I'll do something for like a year or something and then I'll lose interest. And then from the growth mindset point of view there's almost a trick in it, because I've just completed my master's which I've talked about on the podcast a few times.

Phil: Just once or twice.

Ross: Yes, well I've just finished it, update for the loyal listeners. As I thought about it I was like I've got a growth mindset, I worked really hard on that master's. But actually I think I was chasing A's the whole time and actually the chase for the A was a validation because deep down I don't actually have a growth mindset, I don't think that the effort is what I should be taking the credit for. It's the I want validation that I'm a smart person and actually I have a fixed mindset there. It's not quite as simple as just saying, oh yes, I have a growth mindset, I can learn. No, I can't learn but I really want validation so I have a fixed mindset. That was a really rambling answer.

Owen: All these things they are context dependent, there's some areas where I would say I demonstrate grittiness and then other areas where the passion is not there. I think we'll probably come onto this, I struggle with the different meaningfulness or the meaningfulness of the difference between correct and conscientiousness. So there's an element of conscientiousness which is look even if you're not passionate about something, you'll still put in the work because it's important to do it, if it is indeed important to do it. There's passionless but conscientiousness matters an awful lot. In terms of the growth mindset I think I am somewhere in between with regards to that. So like Phil there are some things where I think I'm just starting at a lower level, the D.I.Y for example, I could work as hard as I wanted on the D.I.Y and I'm only going to get to a certain point. I am so far behind whereas there are other people who just take to that kind of thing quite naturally. There are a whole range of things where that is true for me and then there are other things where I feel that I've got more natural aptitude. I still think I need to put the effort in to become any good at them but at the very least I'm starting off at a reasonable point. Yeah, and that impacts how much effort you're willing to put into something as well.



Ross: I wonder if we're all circling the thing that no one's saying yet is do these two things even exist at all?

Phil: Well Angela Duckworth the person who came up with Grit was a student, oh, a student or a colleague? I'm not sure actually, she worked with Carol Dweck.

Owen: I think they were colleagues.

Phil: So Carol Dweck who's the key proponent behind grit mindset, Angela Duckworth worked with her and then took this idea of growth mindset and then expanded on it a little bit to take it into grit. One of the things I forgot actually from my definition that I gave earlier on was about the importance of it, so Duckworth talked about the importance of long term goals. So it's not grit in terms of being passionate about cooking a really good dinner and being really gritty even though you've just burnt the onions, being really gritty and still making the really nice curry anyway. It's about the passion for whatever that long term goal, so for you, Ross, that might have been completing your master's degree and getting the recognition that yes you are indeed smart. That could be different things for other people but it's that long term goal bit. So they're certainly interlinked because the idea being that if you have a growth mindset, you can be better at whatever that is and that will help with your grittiness.

Ross: We have someone here who is focused on long term goals for a very extended period which is Gemma, who has done loads of running and ultra marathons and such things. I'm curious in your response to the grit and the growth mindset question, Gemma?

Gemma: Yeah, I think that's probably the one and only area of life that I do have grit. I think with both concepts you need to have a wraparound, the context that you're working in as well. I don't think I could be as gritty if I didn't have the physiotherapist to help me, the running coach to move me along to keep that interest going. I think it's all contextual and I think certainly with mindset and work mindset, I've definitely noticed a switch over time, but is that switch because my context changed? I think I've always had a fixed mindset at work, I'm no good at this certain thing at work, I'll never be any good. But now I'm in the context at Emerald Works and my team is open to answering questions and they don't judge, so I feel very supported. I can actually now have that growth mindset and I can ask questions. I just think with both you need the right context, the resources around you. I think they're quite difficult to actually implement.

Ross: I think Carol Dweck would be absolutely thrilled with the answer and we can maybe get onto that in a little while. Nicola, do you want to answer that question as well?

Nicola: I just want to say from what Gemma was saying there, the one thing that I thought when I was reading Grit, especially was just that it was coming from a place of privilege and like you say the importance of context, that was the thing that I just kept coming back to when I was reading it.

Phil: Tell me more about that?



Ross: Yeah, I'm intrigued as well.

Nicola: I suppose with Angela Duckworth, so the example of her, I did really enjoy the book I have to say that but she acknowledges this herself that she is a privileged person in terms of the education she's received, being able to go to these world class universities. For some people that position it's just not available to them, so I just kept thinking that when I was reading it and just that she is clearly from a privileged position, she's from a loving family and unfortunately not everyone is in that position.

Gemma: Yeah, even if you have grit and have that growth mindset if you don't have the resources or the support or not in the right environment then you could be as gritty as you like, but you're going to be stopped short, there's going to be a limiting factor somewhere.

Phil: That's one of the big challenges that's levied at Duckworth's work is that especially if you were to read Grit then as an idea, so Grit is full of case studies, whether it be sporting case studies, school case studies, a couple of organisational case studies.

Ross: West Point.

Phil: West Point thank you. What she's doing is interviewing people that are at the top of their game or highly successful or whatever metaphor you want to put around it.

Ross: She also includes herself in that list.

Phil: She does, yes. One of the challenges therefore is, are there other people that are equally gritty but haven't had the physio or the support, that haven't had those opportunities to do it. So J.K. Rowling, I can never remember what the correct pronunciation is, is often proposed as someone who's gritty because the amount of knockbacks that she had on the Harry Potter manuscripts, but yet there are other authors out there who will write lots of work and it will keep getting kicked back, and they never get published. That doesn't mean that they're not gritty, it just means they haven't been published and therefore aren't successful. So is grit linked with success? Yes and maybe no, because it can depend. If the bank of people you're basing your findings on are those that are successful then guess what, yes, gritty people are successful.

Ross: I hadn't considered the privileged side of it until Nicola talked about it but I think it's interesting because there's those persevere on things they're passionate about because they have lots of options, and those that persevere because they have no option to do otherwise. I don't really have anything more to say than that particularly, but it's an interesting perspective I hadn't considered.

Owen: I think the main challenge with these two concepts they both come from really solid academics, the research is of high quality but...

Ross: So for the listeners Phil pulled at a face at the high quality remark [laughs].



Owen: He did pull a face [laughs], so they've got two attributes which make them problematic. One is that they are very attractive ideas when looked at in a certain light. So there is a natural inclination to want to believe them and also they are relatively straightforward to explain compared to other elements of cognitive psychology. Admittedly we have struggled to do any or they're easy to simplify should I say?

Ross: Yeah.

Owen: That's probably more accurate. But they're also suffering from problems in replicating the original results. The original results showed really tantalising prospect of quite dramatic changes from relatively small interventions and that has not borne out in follow up research or indeed when the actual authors themselves have tried to create interventions in the real world and actually make an impact. So what we're left with are these really attractive ideas that showed an awful lot of promise but in practice make very little difference to actual outcomes, when people have created interventions based around them. So the real question is these things are hugely popular but would we better off focusing our attention on slightly more boring but probably more effective interventions and ideas?

Ross: Could I add to that slightly and then I think maybe it would be interesting for Phil to come in, because I think the other thing that these two ideas have in common is the way that they were popularised. So Carol Dweck in 2006 and then Angela Duckworth in 2016, and I think Duckworth learnt a lesson from Dweck here, is that they took the relatively niche thing that they were studying and then turned it into a panacea and particularly with growth mindset. That could be very easily applied by people who haven't actually read the original work at all and expect massive things. And Dweck doesn't talk about the experiments that she did in terms of it had a small effect size or it was a small sample or here's some of the things you should consider. In her book she talks about it as if it's transformative every single time, whereas by the time that Duckworth came to write Grit in 2016, she was far more willing to acknowledge the limits of her research, and give a bit more discussion to the kind of effects that you might expect to see. The other thing that she did is talk about where there was no evidence for the claims that she was making, so she would say things like I would expect such and such to happen in this context, but I haven't actually researched this and it's just what I think. So there's more work needs to be done here and I think that's an important component that Dweck was missing in her book anyway.

Phil: I like giving things names, so I agree that the face validity for Grit and Growth Mindset is really high. On the face of it, it makes real sense, it's easy to get your head around it, it can be easily simplified and it sounds like a good thing. Even the famed David de Souza and I'm naming him as famed now, in a blog that he put out, I think it was towards the end of February, said just because the research doesn't replicate doesn't mean that it's a bad idea. As an idea it makes sense and it sounds like a good thing because you'd want to believe that you can succeed in something rather than think I'm crap at it and I always will be. Because it's a better way to be or to think I'm not gritty but I can be more gritty if I find my passion for this long term goal in whatever way that is. The challenge is the construct validity, so for example if you look at Grit, one of the criticisms that Grit gets is its construct validity is poor. And what I mean by that is the way that Grit scale, so the questions that the Grit scale asks, it gets challenged in the way the questions are formed and it gets challenged in the way of are they actually testing the same thing? And then we link back to Owen's challenge from earlier on, actually



are there better tests out there that test similar things, which is conscientiousness as an example or emotional stability, which is another one of the big five characteristics. One of the big challenges is they make sense and easy to get your head round and they sound good, does the research necessarily support their use, especially in the workplace? And that's one of my biggest challenges, with both constructs, both Grit and Growth Mindset, is what does the evidence and the research tell us about application in the workplace? And that for me is much more sketchy.

Ross: How far do you think the two researchers that were targeting the workplace over schools, because it seems like an idea that's primarily focused on children's education and has then been spun out to the workplace as, and this goes back to the popularisation of it, another audience that might buy the book?

Phil: My personal view is I think Carol Dweck wrote it for education and in particular western cultural educational settings and then industry have taken it and popularised it in other contexts. I think that's a really risky strategy to take. Duckworth initially the focus of her ideas was in education and then in her book as you said as well, as we talked about earlier on, she has taken it to other contexts. I think my read is that for her she seems to be more interested in broadening out the research into other areas, whereas I don't think Carol Dweck had that interest in there, because I don't think she's done any research in a workplace setting at all. Other people have taken her idea and done it but I don't think she's done any.

Ross: It's another problem with Mindset the book and business books in particular is that one of the things that Dweck does is applies her theory to things that have already happened to explain what happened. So she will look at different CEOs and say so and so has a fixed mindset and so and so had a growth mindset and that's how we can pick it. You could guess the CEOs without even having read the book, which ones she's picked. That's true of a lot of business books.

Owen: Yeah, I think those are being used to describe the idea rather than used as a justification but the line does get really quite murky. And as Phil says I think one of the key things for people working in L&D and HR and OD to consider about these concepts before passing them on, is that the paucity of research in a workplace setting. Even Dweck in particular mentions that all of her follow up research including some where they have actually been testing interventions is all in an educational context. But the idea that hard work is important in order to achieve success should be taken at face value. I think that is the obvious idea. I think the less obvious more controversial ideas that we should be looking at and saying is there anything for us to do with these things? Is the idea that your belief about how malleable your personal abilities are, has an impact over and above just impacting on the amount of hard work that you put into something. I really struggle when I'm looking at these things to see anything other than, I think they're really interesting ideas, I think there should be more research in those areas. But in terms of actually being able to do stuff with them, to design interventions, attention should probably be focused elsewhere.

Ross: I think as far as the replication crisis goes, I think to date no one has been able to replicate what Carol Dweck claims, although she and Duckworth did collaborate on a study last year that did have an effect, now slightly problematic because they were the ones that were doing the replication and not someone else. But they attempted to address some of the concerns and I think the way that



they did it does have an impact for L&D and OD. Because I think what was happening with a lot of schools, particularly in the US was you would start the academic year and there would be a PowerPoint presentation, there's fixed and there's growth mindset. If you have a growth mindset you're going to exceed at school, so let's all have a growth mindset now, very good. But then they didn't actually live that in the school, so the teachers would focus on high performing students and ignore the low performing students, as if. So the teachers themselves had a fixed mindset about who could improve and who couldn't, and then also what were the cultural norms within the school? So if you were to go and try really hard at something, did your pals support you in that or did they mock you or bully you for it and make you vulnerable.

What Duckworth and Dweck did last year was they designed an intervention that is in schools across the US, it factored in school achievement level. So a high performing school offers little room to improve, whereas a low performing school as long as it's got the resources to do so might show improvement. Student achievement, so similarly if you focus on low performing students then again they have capacity to improve. If you focus on high performers then that's going to be a much smaller effect anyway. And then they looked at peer norms as well which was, did the social context within the school encourage a belief in growth? So what they found was that the treatment that they were doing did have an effect when the conditions for it to have an effect were present. If you take the research and just apply it anywhere what they're saying is it is going to have difficulty. If you apply a relatively small intervention in a particular context, it can have an impact for a relatively low cost and that impact was, I think they say it's roughly comparable to other things that you could do. Then the question is, this idea that swept the world that if you have growth mindset then you can achieve all sorts, it's going to be transformational, in fact turns out to be quite a small effect comparable to others within the correct circumstance. So the way that it's been marketed is more problematic than the idea itself.

Owen: Yeah, and I think what was interesting about that study was it was a low cost intervention, it was an online module if I remember correctly that was...

Ross: Yeah, I think it took an hour or something for the students to do it.

Owen: Yeah, not very much impact whatsoever and impact that it had on lower performing students, students in difficult social circumstances as well if I remember correctly, was greater but still a relatively low impact. I think point three on a four point grade scale.

Ross: I'll link to it in the show notes.

Owen: But again very much on an educational context and that was a really well designed but also expensive study to complete, we've seen nothing like that in our workplace context.

Ross: Yeah, but the implication for the workplace though, I lost this part of my argument as I bumbled my way through it, was how important the context was. You can't just as L&D say everyone should have a growth mindset now, here's a PowerPoint presentation on how we all have a growth mindset, if the organisation culture doesn't support it.



Nicola: I was just going to ask if you think these two concepts are useful at all for L&D? But I think, Ross, you've just summarised that nicely just about saying...

Ross: No [laughs]. No, I'm joking. I didn't mean to have the final word there on these things. Well done for the lifetime of research by the way but I've now passed judgement [laughs].

Owen: But it fits into those we should be incredibly cautious of new ideas that seem attractive and enticing but haven't yet gone through the rigour that is the scientific process. The replications, the applying to different contexts, the scrutiny of the results that forms parts of the scientific progress. It's definitely keep abreast, maintain awareness but whether you should be designing interventions specifically around them, rather than drawing a broad conclusion that hard work's really useful, that's the real question L&D professionals should be asking themselves.

Nicola: So, Owen, you also suggested that there were better alternatives out there to Grit and Growth Mindset, what are those? What would you suggest checking out?

Owen: In terms of things that are useful to spend your time on?

Nicola: Yeah. So you said at the very beginning of the conversation you said that there is maybe better studies out there. If you're interested in Grit and Growth Mindset what are those? What could you read more about?

Ross: Tough question, cards on the table and where's your pack of secret success recipes?

Owen: Well I think there's two separate things here, what stuff can L&D professionals usefully be spending their time learning about to help inform their practice? And we have interviewed people on this podcast, that summarised good research, Miriam Neilson, we've spoken to Andy Lancaster, who else have we spoken to Ross?

Ross: Phil Wilcox.

Owen: Phil Wilcox for the Emotion at Work. But in terms of what would you be better off spending your time in terms of the interventions that you're designing, well off the top of my head and simply because of where we are just now, but supporting people to work effectively from home. Helping people to connect digitally. Those are practical things where you can provide support and help in the workplace. I think I would encourage L&D professionals to think about how they might help people in their actual jobs rather than thinking about more esoteric subjects like Grit and Growth Mindset. I reckon Phil's probably got some ideas around what you might usually spend your attention on in terms of leadership and management development for example?

Phil: I'll come back to that in a second because I also kind of disagree with you a little bit. I want to encourage L&D practitioners to I guess do a bit of what we're trying to do here, which is go and investigate something more, be more discerning in what you do, don't just listen to this podcast and think oh Nicola and Gemma, and Ross, and Owen, and Phil said it's not really all that useful so therefore I'm never going to talk about it again. Go read it, go find out and go do your own research



and find out what's happening in your setting in your context. I think what we have talked about is, and most recently when Ross was talking about the study that Duckworth and Dweck did recently, what they noticed that it wasn't just about growth mindset, it was about other things that sit into that environment as well. If you're putting together some learning and development programme of some sort, should it include something to do with growth and fixed mindset? Maybe, because there might be something useful to explore in that but that can't be it, that's not the panacea, there's other aspects that sit in there. And that's where you look at someone like Matthew Syed, so he's written a couple of books and the one in particular that I'm going to talk about now is Black Box Thinking, I suppose in Bounce as well, he takes the idea of a growth mindset and applies purposeful or reflective practice to it, to say don't just practice something by doing it, but do it in a deliberate and purposeful way with focus reflective practice that sits around it, all of those things, they end up being more successful at whatever that thing is they want to get better at. Okay, well that's something useful in that and we know from good learning theory that, that reflective a practice element, that critical effective practice where you think about what you did well and what you could do differently and how you can improve and get better? There's some really strong replicable studies that sit behind that.

Okay, so now we're saying, is growth mindset a good idea? Yeah, it sounds simple and it's easy to get your head around and it sounds like a good thing. Would it work on its own? No, there's other things that need to sit around it. So what are those things? And then work on pulling those things together. I get people to think about grit and growth mindset constructs in the work that I do because I want them to pick them apart, I want them to challenge them, to go yes it makes sense but actually it's not as simple as that to quote Owen Ferguson. There's lots of other aspects that we need to bring into it as well, so, yes, reflective practice for me that's a big, big part of what it is that we're trying to do. Yes, it's about hard work as Owen said earlier on and it's about something that you're interested in. If you're not interested in something you're not going to want to learn or develop it. If you can find stuff that people are interested in and if they can be passionate about it, that can be a really good thing. The harder work plus being passionate about it doesn't equal you necessarily being gritty, there's other stuff that sits around it.

Owen: I would agree entirely with Phil, that I think it's important that people go off with a sceptical eye and look at some of the ideas and the concepts that are bubbling around, because some of them more likely than not will turn into something useful eventually. Keep your finger on the pulse of what's happening on the research side, but don't be too quick to adopt something that's really quite new. You do want to find out how well replicated is it? Have they don't any studies in a workplace context? What are the practical applications of this? How do you turn an idea into an actual intervention that might have some kind of impact? Because that can sometimes be the tricky aspect and again it's one of the things that people are struggling with around the growth mindset stuff in particular is, how do we turn this into an intervention? How do you adjust someone's view of their own innate ability versus the amount of hard work that's required?

Nicola: We'll now move onto a regular feature, what I learned this week? Where we each share something we've picked up on over the last seven days. Owen, would you like to go first?



Owen: Sure, I'm sure lots of other listeners have been doing an awful lot of video conferencing recently and one of the tools of choice is Zoom. And goodness me I learned an awful lot this week about video conferencing security.

Phil: [Laughs].

Owen: Because first of all it was mildly humorous the Zoom bombing and then very quickly after a period of intense scrutiny various other security concerns were raised about Zoom and the recording of calls, and where those got stored? Some really quite terrifying reports of recordings being freely available, found downloaded. There was a report I think it was The Washington Post, I need to find the...

Ross: We'll pop it in the show notes whatever it was.

Owen: We'll pop it in the show notes, of counselling sessions, videos of one to one counselling sessions being found and freely available, lots of personal and identifiable information. So there are some simple things that you can do to make you more secure when you are using Zoom, I will probably post a link to something that can give you an overview of actions that you can take to make sure that your Zoom meetings in particular are more secure. But given that we're all doing an awful lot more of it I think be careful out there folks, it's very easy to get lax about security and sometimes the tools that are easiest to use are the ones that will have the biggest security concerns.

Nicola: Thank you for that, Owen. And, Ross, how about you, what have you learned?

Ross: This is going to be more of a reflection then, something I have learned I think, something interesting that happened over the weekend. I was following the public ripping apart and flagellation of Doctor Catherine Calderwood who was the chief medical officer of Scotland until last night or whenever this comes out, two days ago. So she just resigned, having told everyone to stay at home to prevent the spread of coronavirus, she twice visited her second home and spent the night there. This sparked charges of hypocrisy and calls for her resignation or sacking or worse. I don't really want to talk about what she did or why she did it or the rights and wrongs of that, but I would like to recommend Jon Ronson's book *So You've Been Publicly Shamed*, which I finished reading about a month ago. It is an excellent read and it's all about the impact on your life of having the entire mass of Twitter turn on you overnight for something that you did probably without thinking. And it should be mandatory reading for anyone with a Twitter account.

Nicola: I do love that book as well.

Gemma: Some terrible stories.

Phil: I've not read that one actually, I need to add that to my, on your recommendation then Ross, I need to add that to my bookshelf.



Ross: Don't send a racist Tweet as a joke and then get on a plane for 12 hours, that was the main takeaway. You might find yourself a global superstar by the time you arrive at your destination, fired and with a photographer waiting to take your picture.

Gemma: Some of the stories make me go cold, like in a cold sweat [laughs].

Ross: That's exactly it, you do not think about the way that that person feels about, that's surely the worst day of Catherine Calderwood's life and we could be a bit more kind to each other when we make mistakes.

Gemma: Definitely.

Nicola: Phil, how about you?

Phil: I've got two what I learned this weeks then. So one, I'm going to build on, I was going to say stolen by Owen but I'm going to say I'm going to build on Owen's one. I've learnt loads about Zoom in the last two weeks. So partly the security stuff which Owen's already talked about, but I've also learned about all of the really quite funky functionalities that Zoom has and it does it well. So in part a link to Owen's security one, the waiting room feature enable the waiting room feature on Zoom, that's something I've learnt in the last two weeks and has been an absolute godsend. Because a) it helps me with security so I can make sure that only people I want to get in, get in. But it also means when I'm running a little bit late and I'm not as prepared as I would like to be, I can keep the meeting closed and I can busy myself away getting stuff done behind the scenes, so that when I open the meeting at 11 o'clock when Ross arrives then it's all good and we're there and ready to go. From a user perspective everything looks seamless. I could also put a nifty background on or I can blur my background, I can do things like that to hide the shameful amount of rubbish that is on my dining room table that's directly behind my webcam. And there are other functionalities within Zoom that you can use, break-out rooms I think work beautifully well. So, yeah, at the risk of doing a blatant Zoom promo it's been a wonderful learning opportunity to get familiar with Zoom over the last couple of weeks. And the second one and I'll send a link to the study over to Ross was one of the...

Ross: For the show notes not just so I can read it? [Laughs].

Phil: For our show notes.

Ross: Our show notes.

Phil: [Laughs] Is a study that was done in the UK looking at a growth mindset and looking at a growth mindset in schools in particular. The report is called Changing Mindsets and it was put together by a body who are tasked with improving educational attainment for underprivileged groups of people. And they completed a study that included, depending on which paper you read, the actual paper itself quotes 5,000 students and one of the writeups online says 4,000 and something. But they recruited...

Ross: Robust dissemination [laughs].



Phil: Yeah, exactly. They recruited a number of schools and provided some training for a number of teachers in growth mindset, a one day training course, then provided with additional follow-up resources that were made available to support lesson planning and so on. Of those schools they did have a big dropout in terms of reporting, so one of the methods that they use was for the teachers or the schools to send back summaries of how they'd used growth mindset approaches in their lesson planning over the course of the week. And they started off with 49 schools responding and they ended with nine by the time the study came to an end. So you've got a real drop off which doesn't necessarily mean that those 40 schools that have stopped returning weren't doing growth mindset, or they weren't doing growth mindset lessons, it might just mean that they weren't returning the data. What they found was uniformly it made no difference to key stage two SAT results. The schools that did growth mindset teaching in them it made no difference at all versus a randomised control group in terms of performance against a standardised test. Now the authors of the study do accept that growth mindset is quite popular and has been used often within educational settings. So it could be that those schools that were in the randomised controlled trial were using growth mindset approaches even though they were part of a random controlled trialled group.

They were also testing four subsets then which were test anxiety, self regulation, self efficacy and intrinsic value and only against one of those sub areas would they find a very small correlation between growth mindset and an improvement in those things. So in a very thoroughly put together research study that was using a standardised test as a way of assessing impact, it still struggled with saying that growth mindset has anything to do with it whatsoever. It was an absolutely fascinating report and I'll put a link to it in our show notes. But, yeah, it was really good.

Owen: I think you subverted what I learned this week to shoehorn in something you forgot to mention during the body of the show.

Phil: No, how rude. Of all of the stuff that I've read and I've read lots because I've got all of my tabs open and everything ready for today, that was the one that caught my attention the most.

Nicola: Thank you, Phil. And, Gemma, what have you learned?

Gemma: I have been reading a book written by Stephen Pinker called The Sense of Style and it's focused on how to make your writing more stylish and I guess bring a bit of energy to perhaps something that's non-fiction, like reports that you're writing. Yeah, I've been using it as a way to improve the writing I do in my e-learning courses. So mine's a really simple what I learnt this week and it's a one particular word and maybe everyone else knows it but I didn't and it's kibitz. Has anyone else heard of this word?

Ross: No.

Owen: No.

Nicola: No.



Gemma: There's two definitions but in the sense he was using it, it means to speak informally or to chat kibbitzing. Loved it [laughs]. I thought it was a great word, other than everything that he says in the book that was one that I took away.

Phil: So does that mean we've kibbitzing through this podcast?

Gemma: Kibbitzing, yes [laughs].

Nicola: I like that very much, thank you, Gemma.

Phil: And, Nicola, what's yours?

Nicola: Mine's more of a reminder really or something that I did learn is that here in the UK leaving your home in the socially distancing period, leaving your home to give blood is something that's classed as essential. So it's just a reminder if you can, that you can still go and donate blood and it's just something that if we can do we should still try to do. So I'll pop a link in the show notes as well just about giving blood and where you can local to you as well.

Phil: What a wonderfully prosocial thing to end the combined Emotion at Work and...

Nicola: Good Practice Podcast [laughs]. That's all from us this week, if you'd like to get in touch with us about anything we've said on the show you can Tweet me at @nicola_boylew. You can Tweet Ross...

Ross: At rossgarnerew. Did I say that really weirdly?

Owen: Yeah.

Nicola: Thank you, you can Tweet Owen...

Owen: @owenferguson.

Nicola: And Gemma?

Gemma: @gemmatoersey.

Nicola: And Phil?

Phil: @philwilcox.

Nicola: And you can find out more about @Emerald Works.com and Tweet us at emerald_works.

Phil: If you're also interested in the role that emotion has in the workplace, you can join the Emotion at Work hub which is community.emotionatwork.co.uk. But you can find a curated list of podcasts, research papers, blogs, articles and videos all around the importance of emotion in the workplace. It's free to join and there's lots of cool stuff that happens inside.



Nicola: And if you've enjoyed the show please do leave us a review and make sure you subscribe wherever you get your podcasts. Thanks for listening, bye for now.