GROWTH MINDSET

Believing that skills and knowledge can improve as a result of hard work, using different strategies, and actively seeking feedback and help from others.

GROWTH MINDSET IN GAMES

Growth mindset is all about believing that you and others are capable of change and growth. The abilities you're born with aren't written in stone; anyone can get better at almost anything by setting goals, practicing, using good strategies, and seeking help, guidance, and feedback. The opposite of this is a fixed mindset, believing that you can't do much to change who you are. We all have fixed mindsets sometimes. We can be triggered by things like meeting someone who's really good at something we wish we could do, or hearing others label us as just one thing ("nerd," "gamer," "genius," "rebel," "loner"). Games can reinforce growth mindset by letting players level up and gain experience points (showing that big progress is made in small steps over time), proving how valuable mistakes are (errors teach players how to survive), showing players where they're headed if they stick with it using features like skill trees, letting players build huge empires/castles/armies/worlds little by little, and rewarding dogged persistence, like tough platformers that require getting the timing just right.
How would your game help players see and appreciate their growth over time?

ELEMENTS TO ADD

- Allow players the acquisition of XP, items, and skills.
- Make the player evolution very visible and noticeable.
- Add visual flourishes, audio, or other visual indicators of milestones so that hitting each one feels like a special moment.
- Make milestones of progress that the players can look back on and forward to.
- Allow players to track their progress through a quest journal or other mechanism that records their play.
- Make achievements fun to earn by calling them something silly or keeping some of them secret until earned.

ELEMENTS TO LEAVE OUT

- Be aware of time-based mechanics where players who join late have no chance; this will frustrate players.
- Strongly random elements that keep the player from being able to control their character growth may go against growth mindset.
- "You die, you're out" is something that will keep players progressing more out of fear than out of achievement.
- Global leaderboards might keep players focused on comparing themselves to others rather than focused on their own performance.
- Pay to win can be something that makes earned progress meaningless.

GAME GENRES & TYPES

- Platformers
- Most RPG's and MOBA's
- eSports
- Wellness and progress apps
- Masocore
- MOBA's

NOTES

SPECIFIC MECHANICAL REFERENCES

- Players can **aspire to character growth** when they know what forms their ***Pokemon*** will eventually evolve into.
- Being able to see **ability trees** in games like ***World of Warcraft*** and ***Dragon Age***, allows players to plan for which abilities and skills they will choose when they level up.
- When players can see their kingdoms or empires **growing and changing over time**, like in ***Civilization*** or the board games ***Dominion*** and ***Castles of Mad King Ludwig***, it may increase growth mindset.
- "Helper apps" with gamified elements like ***Fitbit***, ***Waze*** and ***Lumosity*** let users **track their progress** on **specific measurable goals** like how much exercise they've gotten or calories burned, how far they've driven, and how many puzzles they've completed correctly.
- In games like ***Candy Crush Saga***, players are able to see on a map what levels they've completed and how many levels there are to go.
- In ***Candy Crush Saga***, ***Cut the Rope*** and ***King of Thieves***, players are **rated on their performance** on a level. This encourages players to **re-play** levels until they have earned the highest rating for that level.
- Platformer games like ***Super Mario Brothers*** require players to **master each level**, so that they feel a sense of accomplishment after having done so.
- "Masocore" games like ***Spelunky*** also require **persistence and mastery** for players to complete levels.