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## A Reset Mindset

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## A Reset Mindset

### Abstract

Online access: [Cityscape](#)

### Keywords

growth mindset, employees, work, strengths

### Disciplines

Public Affairs, Public Policy and Public Administration

# A Reset Mindset

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Employees and organizations are encouraged to continue learning and developing with a growth mindset. An additional helpful frame is “the reset.” The reset encourages looking back and recognizing drift away from high performance in certain areas. Recommitting and resetting to mission-critical tasks and behaviors can be just as important as proposing something new.

Many organizational and strategic planning tools focus on establishing goals and performance markers for the coming years; the best ones encourage use of data-informed decision-making in the goal-setting process. Additionally, many managers also require employees to establish their own set of goals as well in considering their own professional growth and development. These activities are important not only for the direction setting that it encourages, but also for a chance to examine how employees, departments and administration view their work and its significance.

In their 2019 peer-reviewed article on the challenges of mission drift, Grimes, et al. describe mission as a

socio-cognitive bridge between identity and actions. This bridge provides a conceptual frame for the organization or department that directly links purpose (the why) to the actions (the how). Mission as a socio-cognitive bridge provides imagery and narrative to the meaning and purpose of the work. Goals and day-to-day work

should be firmly grounded in the mission or primary function of the organization. Pursuing the next best thing or the new, innovative thing is only important if it helps to fulfill the primary tasks or mission of the organization. It is entirely possible to be quite good at things that are misaligned with mission—at every organizational level, people can succumb to the allure of funding opportunities and quick wins.

Progress and adaptability should not lead to mission drift, but it often does. Drift is a natural consequence

of being part of a dynamic organization; normalizing it as a naturally occurring phenomenon can take away feelings of failure or shame for employees. To be able to be honest about misalignment of tasks or missing performance goals requires an atmosphere in which it is safe and acceptable to reflect honestly about where a team has gotten off

Questions to ask might be “where do we need to reset? Where are areas of high performance that have become less of a priority for us? We used to be good at...” It may be likely that these questions will draw out perspectives from team members who are more prone to look back at what has been.

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course. In her 2016 article in the *Harvard Business Review*, Dr. Carol Dweck, in her work on growth mindset, highlights the need for organizations and teams to encourage atmospheres that reward employees for lessons learned and not just goals achieved. Teams that are able to focus in this way are able to address areas for improvement as part of a continual arc of growth and development.

A common tool like the SWOT analysis can be useful in that it asks the team to reflect on strengths of the organization. However, it does not necessarily require an intentional reflection of past activities and performance needed for a robust reset frame. Changes in leadership, policy change, or major disruptions like COVID, can provide natural opportunities to ask questions about drift, and to identify key areas for resetting and recommitment. The concept can also be added to regular reflection and evaluation points. Questions to ask might be “where do we need to reset? Where are areas of high performance that have become less of a priority for us? We used to be good at...” It may be likely that these questions will draw out perspectives from team members who are more prone to look back at what has been. In very forward-thinking team cultures, these voices can be dismissed because they have an orientation of pointing first to the past. However, in doing this they often have important contributions that may point to reset opportunities. Participating in these conversations collectively are essential to establishing the shared story of identity and mission for a team that acknowledges both historical context and future-orientation.

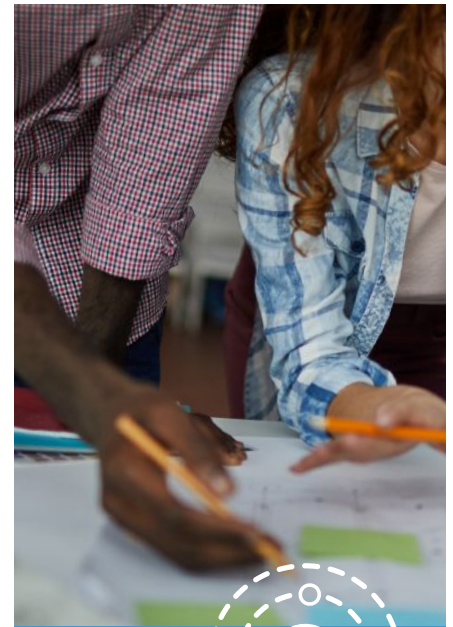
Incorporating concepts of reset, or recommitment, into conversations about progress and goal-setting encourages a strengths-based narrative centered on tasks and behaviors that are mission-critical. These centering questions can be included as a balance to forward-thinking questions in program or department workshops, strategic planning and performance evaluation conversations. <<

**References:**

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