

Personal Best

Changing our mindset about success!



Achieving your personal best

“Give it your best shot!” “Go for it!” “Keep trying!” “Never give up!” Teachers, coaches, family members and friends often use these encouragements to help kids achieve their personal best! What is your personal best, you might ask? It is performing at your highest level. Personal best means setting a goal, making a plan, doing your best, and no matter the outcome, being satisfied with the level of effort you put into achieving your goal. Yes, that’s right, . . . personal best isn’t outcome-focused (e.g., getting an A on the exam, running your fastest time), it’s process-focused (e.g., your preparation for the exam, committing to following the training program for your race)! In every aspect of our lives, we have an opportunity to achieve our personal best by committing to *“give it our best shot”* as we work towards accomplishing our personal goals, both in health and in life.

Changing our mindset

Focusing on the process rather than the outcome may require a change in your mindset! What is a mindset, you ask? A mindset is your outlook on life, your world view. It’s also an expression of your beliefs. To change your mindset means to embrace a new belief. In many instances, we tend to only have a *“winning”* mindset. A *“winning”* mindset defines success only in terms of winning first place! To many, it means being better than everyone else and exceeding the achievements of other people. Personal best, however, is achieved through a *“growth”* mindset of rising above challenges and learning how to get better at something if you try. Having a *“growth”* mindset means pivoting away from *“how did I perform”* to *“what did I learn”*. A *“winning”* mindset means being the best. A *“growth”* mindset means being *your* best. It means being better tomorrow than you were yesterday. A *“growth”* mindset means matching your practice with your potential.



A growth mindset changes everything because it changes your attitude and how you look at things. When you change your attitude, you change your behavior. When you change your behavior, you change your actions, which by itself is a success. By shifting the focus away from *performance* towards *process*, you can help your children and family achieve their personal best.

The Power of Yet: why mindset matters!

A growth mindset means that even when we face challenges and struggle, with work we can improve. There is a tiny word that packs a lot of power to achieve a growth mindset. That word is **yet**. We can use the power of the word yet when we self-talk about our goals. Many times, we focus on what we think we can't do. Think about how adding the word **Yet** to these statements can change how we feel.

- I am not able to run a 5k... **yet**.
- I don't understand this math problem...**yet**.
- I am not able to eat my daily servings of fruits and vegetables...**yet**.
- I cannot fit in 60 minutes of physical activity a day...**yet**.
- I can't get my kids to clean their room...**yet**.



Can you feel the difference? Adding and believing the word yet tells us that we can do those things when we put in the effort. Think about something you want to do, but you are struggling to set a goal because you feel you can't achieve it. Now add the word "yet". You are on your way to a growth mindset and meeting your goal.

The path to success is not linear!

While having a growth mindset is an important ingredient for achieving your personal best, it is important to acknowledge that success is not an ongoing, straight-line upward progression (graph on the left). And, believing that the path to success is linear can leave you feeling

discouraged and frustrated by some of the challenges that you are hit with along the journey. Instead, success often comes to us in big leaps, a few dips, and several plateaus (graph on the right). There can be seasons of struggle where you feel like you are doing everything right, but you don't see any results. The trick is to not give up! Because on the other side of that dip there is a giant leap in progress waiting for you. Sure, sometimes we need to ease off, slow down, give ourselves a little rest, but just as Dory from Finding Nemo reminds us: we need to "just keep swimming!" If we keep moving forward our persistence will pay off! The next three sections of this module will give you and your family examples of how you can achieve your personal best by moving together, thinking together, and being together!



Figure developed by Eric Graham: ericgraham.org



Move Together: Achieving our personal best through activity



Imagine your family has completed the InPACT at Home Health Choices module, you've started exercising and have already successfully run a couple of 1-mile races. As a family you now set a goal of participating and completing the Girls on the Run 5k! No one in your family has run a 5k race . . . yet. Remembering that nothing is achieved in a day, rather it's achieved with consistency over time, you download the

[Girls on the Run 10-week training plan](#) or join a [Let Me Run](#) team. Rather than set a race time goal (i.e., finishing the race in under two hours) you instead figure out your own process to follow that will help you *finish* the race. For example, you ask the following questions when making your plan:

- What time of day will help us be consistent in our training?
- Are we going to train by ourselves or train as a family?
- What steps should we take to prevent injuries?
- Where in our house/apartment will we post our training schedule?
- How will we keep each other accountable to complete our training plan?
- How will we reward ourselves for the progress we are making?
- Are there any changes I should make to the 10-week training plan?



After answering these questions, you write down your training schedule, post it on your refrigerator and start your training!

It is now race day and over the past 12 weeks you have completed 94% of the runs on your training schedule! Congratulations! Because you put in the hard work of training, the race is no longer a race but is in fact your VICTORY LAP! You and your family can run with confidence knowing that two things will be true:



1. You can **trust your training** and be satisfied with the level of effort you put into achieving your goal of finishing the race.
2. No matter how long it takes you to finish the race it will be your Personal Best, because it is your first time running the race!

In this running example, the important thing to remember is: Personal best means setting a goal,

making a plan, doing your best, and no matter the outcome, being satisfied with the level of effort you put into achieving your goal.

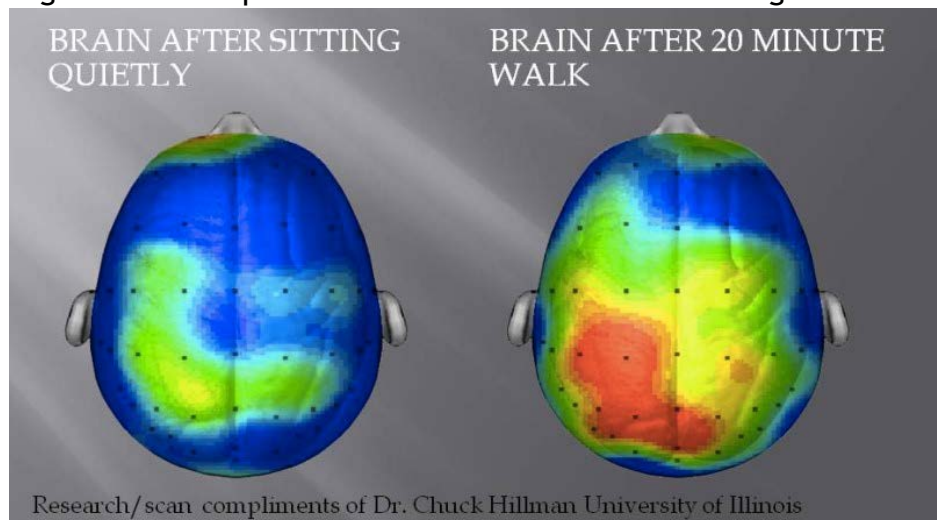
Think Together: Achieving our personal best through memorization

Imagine you got a part in your school play! You are excited, but not sure how you will be able to memorize all those lines. Just as runners work through a training schedule to be ready on race day, you can also create and follow a “training” schedule to be ready for Opening Night!



There are a few tips and tricks to keep in mind when memorizing ANYTHING (think vocabulary words, spelling lists, speeches, etc.):

1. Writing your lines out long hand helps you remember them.
2. Working on your lines before bed helps them “stick.” We process our learning while we sleep, and things are converted from short term to long term recall during sleep!
3. Repetition is key! Work on your lines over and over and over.
4. Exercise or move around while you work on lines. Research has shown that the increased blood flow to the brain from movement as well as the connections your brain makes while moving makes for a powerful combination for memorizing!
5. Keep memorization sessions short. 20-30 minutes per day is plenty. ALWAYS take a 5-minute break every 10 to 20 minutes. Get up and walk around.
6. Once you have a scene memorized, give your script to a partner and have them read the other character’s lines as you run through it.



7. After the first four days, speak your lines out loud as you practice! Speaking them AND hearing them helps to make them stick.

Here is a sample schedule you could follow to work toward your personal best in memorizing:

- **Day 1:** Read the entire script (as long as it takes).
- **Day 2:** Highlight all your lines and read through as many as you can in 20 minutes. If you finish before your 20 minutes, go back to the beginning, and read them again until your time is up.
- **Day 3:** Start at the beginning of your script, and hand write as many lines as you can in 20 minutes. This will be section 1. Read through them again before bed.
- **Day 4:** Walk around your home (or outside if you prefer) as you read through section 1. Read through it over and over until your 20 minutes are up. Read section 1 quietly before bed.
- **Day 5:** At the end of section 1, hand write the next lines (as many as you can) in 20 minutes. This will be section 2. Read through section 2 before bed.
- **Day 6:** Walk around your home, or outside if you prefer, as you read through section 2. Repeat until your 20 minutes are up. Read section 2 quickly and quietly before bed.
- **Day 7:** Walk around, wherever you'd like, and read through section 1 AND section 2. Say the lines out loud. Repeat for 20 minutes. Read section 1 and 2 before bed.
- **Day 8:** If you still have more pages to work through, repeat Day 3-7 until all of the script has been worked through.
- **Day 9-Opening Night:** Read OUT LOUD through all sections as you move/walk around. Read through all sections quickly and quietly before bed.

In this memorization example, again, the important thing to remember is: Personal best means setting a goal,








making a plan, doing your best, and no matter the outcome, being satisfied with the level of effort you put into achieving your goal.

Now let's apply this same process to setting reading goals! As you think together to make a family plan for reading, remember your goals should be SMART goals. SMART stands for Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, and Time-Bound. Below is a list of questions that you should answer when making goals.

Examples of SMART Goals for reading:

- Simple goal-I will read every day.
- Better goal- I will read at least 10 pages per day.
- Best goal- During the summer months, I will read at least 10 pages per day before going to bed.

S	SPECIFIC	Does the goal make sense? Is it clear?	
M	MEASURABLE	Is the goal measurable? Can I track my progress?	
A	ATTAINABLE	Is the goal challenging but not impossible?	
R	RELEVANT	Is the goal worth my effort? Will it benefit me and meet my needs?	
T	TIMELY	Is there a timeframe for achieving the goal?	

Be Together: Helping each other achieve their personal best!

Achieving our personal best is difficult when attempting to do it on your own. Everyone needs support and everyone needs a team to accomplish their personal best! As we learned in the Health Choices module, people feel motivated to accomplish their goals when they have a sense of belonging and attachment to other people. So, take a moment and think about how you can help your child achieve their personal best. Below are some suggestions to get you started!

1. **Carving out time to be together-** The combination of our fast-paced society and hectic work and school schedules, has made it more and more difficult for families to spend quality time together. This means we will have to put in more effort and be intentional about setting aside time for Family Discussions and family fun! What is a SMART goal that you can set for being together?



2. **Being present and mindful in those moments together-** Putting more effort in today's world will require a personal connection with your family members and a disconnection with your electronic devices. Being present for your kids and mindful in those moments will give them the message that they are important to you.

3. **Helping each other set SMART goals-** Setting goals can be hard for anyone, especially if you haven't had a lot of practice making them. Ask your children if they need help setting SMART goals for homework assignments, athletic and extracurricular activities. Remember not to impose your own goals on your kids but instead ask SMART questions to help them set goals and processes to achieve their goals. Another strategy is to model developing SMART goals for your own life as an example for your kids. Allow them to see your process as you set and achieve goals for work, leisure, and relationships.
4. **Supporting each other's process and goals-** Think about how you can be a supportive accountability partner for your child as they make progress on their goals. Say for instance, they are experiencing a dip or plateau in their journey towards success. How can you come alongside them and offer encouragement to "Just keep swimming"?
5. **Celebrating efforts rather than outcomes-** For anyone who has participated in a community race like a 5k or 10k, you learn very quickly that at the end of the race, everyone gets a medal! While first place winners are acknowledged, the emphasis is placed on finishing the race. Everyone is celebrated for setting a goal of running the race, making a plan to train for the race, and doing their best to finish the race. Hence the medal represents a celebration of the level of effort everyone put into the entire process. Take time to think about how you can celebrate your child's process towards achieving their personal best, not just in athletics and schoolwork but in life.



AUTHOR BIOGRAPHIES

The development of this module was a team effort! **Alanna Price** (Detroit Public Schools) conceptualized the theme for this module: *Best Effort*. **Dr. Rebecca Hasson** (University of Michigan) drafted different versions of the module. **LisaJo Gagliardi** (LJ Gagliardi, LLC) provided content for *Changing your Mindset* and *The Power of Yet* sections. **Heather Lewis** (Williamston Community Schools) provided content for the *Think Together: Achieving your Personal Best through Memorization* section. **Evilia Jankowski** (Michigan Department of Education), **Scott Martin** (Michigan Department of Education), **Nick Jaskiw** (Newaygo County Regional Educational Service Agency), and **Nancy Jaskiw** (Reeths-Puffer Schools) provided constructive feedback on different versions of the module.