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4 Steps to Building a Growth Mindset in 2024

~ Amy Cushing, ghostwriter

Our bodies go through some big changes during menopause. As we move toward the last stages of perimenopause, our estrogen levels drop at a more rapid pace and create the symptoms most associated with menopause: hot flashes, headaches, brain fog, sleeplessness, mood swings, depression, lowered libido, and changes in our body composition—most notably our weight.

We may notice the extra pounds creeping on and taking up residence. Even worse, it becomes more and more difficult to evict them. We try this new diet or that latest fitness craze in hopes of returning to our former, familiar body, only to end up exasperated at the lack of progress.

These shifts affect not only our physical body, but our emotional and mental states as well. The added pounds, the fluctuations in intimacy and connection, and not feeling our best can bring feelings of confusion and unworthiness.

I'm here to say you are worthy.

Menopause can be difficult, but it is also a springboard to a new phase of life that is rich and full of opportunity. You can get through this challenging time. I like to think of it as a mood remodel—reorganizing our thought patterns to toss out the negativity and focus on the positive.

There's a concept in the educational and business worlds known as *growth mindset*. It is the belief that through dedication, persistence, and resilience, we can improve our capabilities and also our way of life. With a growth mindset, we embrace our challenges and find ways to adapt. It is being patient when things work and especially when they don't work. It is a change of attitude, knowing you can make a difference in your day-to-day experience.

Instead of trying to fight against the natural shifts in your body, embrace them. Change is inevitable, but how you manage change is not. You have more control than you think. And just as menopause arrives at a slow pace, so can your adaptiveness. Try making adjustments bit by bit. Sticking with small habits like the following each day will create big changes in the long run.

1. **Create a sleep routine.** This is my number one go-to for making positive changes in both your mind and body. It is one of the most important habits you can add to your day. So much happens during sleep: muscle and cell repair, improved brain plasticity (fancy term for being flexible), lowered heart rate and blood pressure, and hormone release. This is why people who don't get enough sleep often report issues with hunger and weight gain. When your sleep suffers, so do your hormonal hunger cues.

Lack of sleep also affects memory cognition and the ability to think on your feet. Our brains rewire during deep sleep, enabling us to make sense of the information we've processed throughout the day. This is the key to finding that steadiness that keeps us going each day. I recommend trying to get at least 8 hours of sleep. I know some days may not end this way, but the more that do, the better for your body and brain health.

2. **Do less.** I know I just mentioned growth mindset and the need to build persistence, but it is also about observing our efforts. Maybe you've been too aggressive with your ambitions and need to slow down? Maybe you are overextending yourself instead of prioritizing what is most important (this can be hard for me too)?

Often, we equate doing with success, but really, finding balance is where it's at. Doing just creates busyness. Balancing work, family, and self-care creates more happiness. Instead of continually waiting for the moment when "everything will slow down," create that for yourself now. Your mind and your body will thank you.

3. **Remind yourself of the good stuff.** Enough can't be said about the power of gratitude. It can be tough to run through all of the things to be grateful for after a particularly difficult day (we've all been there), but there is strength in recognizing the good too. Gratitude helps transform the perception of ourselves. Holding on to a negative script can affect more than just your mood, it can increase anxiety and depression, foster low self-esteem, and even adversely affect blood pressure and your immune system.

Positive self-talk can help rewire your brain circuitry (yes, it can actually create new pathways...amazing right?). Consistent positivity can overtake those pesky negative thoughts and help build more emotional resiliency. Negative talk can be powerful. Instead of getting wrapped up in the negative thinking, simply notice it, acknowledge it, and let it pass. The great thing about thoughts is that they are fleeting—they constantly come and go, and we have a choice as to which ones we bring to the forefront.

4. **Be your own cheerleader.** Who better to be your own best advocate than you? It's wonderful to be surrounded by positive and encouraging people as they can bring out the best in us, but the person who is going to have the most influence on you is, well, you.

Give yourself pats on the back for completing that morning walk or a high-five for sticking to your sleep schedule. The more you give yourself positive recognition for doing the hard things, the more you will continue to do them. It's also having that self-compassion to give yourself a break after a trying day. Again, it's how we perceive and react to the difficulties that will determine not just our paths forward, but also how we think of ourselves. Stand in your corner and cheer yourself on!

You can create a more positive mindset for yourself. Join XXXXXXXX program, where you will find a supportive community and learn wellness techniques that will bring more positivity into your life.

*Ghostwriting for women's wellness expert
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