Growth Mindset Tool – Strategy Box

*This tool can get you thinking about the strategies you’ve used in other contexts to learn new skills and overcome challenges, reinforcing that you have the ability to improve and identifying approaches that have worked that you can apply to current challenges or to learning new skills.*

**DIRECTIONS:** A Strategy Box has four quadrants. In three of the quadrants, list things that you are good at or have achieved (try to include things that you perhaps struggled with at first). In the fourth, list the thing you’re not good at yet (but want to be) and may be struggling with.

Next, list the most important success factors. How did you address the challenges? What actions did you take? How did you think about the challenges? List as many as you can.

The last step is to see if any of those strategies or factors could be applied to your fourth box. Here’s an example:

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| **Can sing well**   * Learned to read music by learning the clarinet starting in elementary school * Practiced regularly * Bought music books to learn from. * Started singing in college * Took a college voice class and private lessons later * Learned to sing multiple parts in my church choir and in a small group I was part of called Duo Seraphim. * Always loved music * Have set a goal to learn guitar so that I can sing whenever I want and don’t need to rely on being part of a group | **Know how to cook**   * Observed my parents from an early age * Started making pies for Thanksgiving in junior high—didn’t always work out ☹ * Started reading cookbooks and trying recipes after college * Watched my friend Jenn make blackberry pies without a recipe and decided to become that kind of a pie maker! * Learned about using fresh ingredients in season from my friend Steve who loves the cuisine of southern France * Go online to find recipes (and read reviews from users for additional guidance) * Cook often, not always perfectly |
| **Completed my Ph.D. and wrote a strong dissertation**   * Took courses that truly interested me * When I was in a course that was required and not entirely of interest, I used the assignments to focus on topics and issues of interest to me * Decided to focus my dissertation on what I was most concerned about at the time—teaching! * Created a committee who supported me and pushed me to be better. * Stacy supported me financially and provided powerful motivation | **Need to build my financial literacy as I look ahead to retirement**   * Start by focusing on the topics that I’m most interested in (*Ph.D.* *example*) * Find books to learn from *(singing example)* * Look for reputable online resources, perhaps that include input from users like me *(cooking example)* * Ask friends *(cooking example)* * Stacy’s motivation (*Ph.D. example*) * Set a goal to help guide me (*singin*g *example*) * Put in the time (*cooking and singing examples*) * Keep expanding my knowledge (*cooking example*) |

Strategy box for my new learning goal: ­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

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| Something I learned or succeeded at:  Strategies I used: | Something I learned or succeeded at:  Strategies I used: |
| Something I learned or succeeded at:  Strategies I used: | My new learning challenge:  Strategies to borrow from other boxes: |