

## Growth & Goals Module – Introduction – Transcript

Hi there, my name is Alison Flynn, I'm here to welcome you to the growth and goals module and tell you a little bit about it.

We made this module to help equip empower you with greater control of your learning. We know that everybody learns an awful lot at university but the recent pandemic has shown us just how much we need to be able to adapt and be resilient and learn in all kinds of different situations.

In fact, the World Economic Forum has recently shared the top 10 skills that will be needed by 2025: active learning and learning strategies, resilience, reasoning, problem-solving skills. And certainly, you'll learn many of these skills in university. The thing is you'll need to continue to learn and pivot and adapt and be resilient, through the rest of your life and career. And so while we can't teach all of those things that you'll need-- we can't even foresee all of those things right in this moment--what we can do is help you to learn a superpower, a superpower that will let you learn what you need to learn when you need to learn it.

And that superpower is metacognition. It's knowing what you know and then strategizing accordingly for your learning, and according to your goals and values.

Let's talk a little bit more about learning, and then dive into the rest of the module. Learning begins with our senses, and we are constantly being bombarded with information: sights, smells, sounds. And some of those inputs are registered either consciously or subconsciously and transferred to our working memory. Others are lost. We can also transfer information from our long-term memory into our working memory and start to think about those different pieces. We can rearrange that information, reconnect it, store it in long term memory, or some of it can be lost. To take a little bit more into that working memory piece.

Our working memory is limited to seven plus or minus a couple of pieces of information that we can remember at a given time. So for example if I asked you to remember this string of numbers, you'd likely be able to do it. You might break up the information into pieces to make it easier to remember, or reorganize it for the same purpose. But it's going to become harder and harder to remember information like that if the symbols become increasingly unfamiliar, or if you're learning them in a new context.

There's another way to think about this in terms of our reasoning. This is a book Thinking Fast and Slow that describes the reasoning processes that we can use. Essentially, there are two types. Type one is fast and easy. The answer quickly jumps to your mind, like five plus five. Type two is the slow, effortful, analytical kind of reasoning, like when you're playing a great game of chess. Neither type is inherently better or worse than the other; it completely depends on the context. If we spent all of our time in Type two thinking, I mean we would never get out the door, thinking about where exactly we should place our feet, how long to balance on each foot as we walked toward the door, exactly the angle placement of our hand on the doorknob. I mean it would really take us forever. Similarly, with Type one thinking, if we're always thinking

fast and easy we just jump right to the answer, we can miss thinking about different aspects, weighing different options, thinking about different possible outcomes. And so there is certainly a time and a place for each of these, and we can be purposeful, to an extent, in our selection of the types of reasoning that we decide to use.

And then the last thing to consider in all of this is that we're not robots. We're not simply transferring, storing, gaining, losing information. We're people. We have emotions and cultures and environments and teachers and friends and family and all of these effects are learning as well.

So let's bring this all back to that idea of metacognition. Metacognition helps us to be in control of that learning. It helps us be able to identify what we know, what we don't know, what we want to know, and then strategize accordingly. Take control of that learning process.

This is where the Growth and Goals Module comes in. We use that idea of metacognition to help you grow as a learner. Using your values, your knowledge, where you want to go in your career, you can set specific and measurable goals. To do that we use a self-regulated learning cycle where you reflect on your values, your priorities, your previous successes and failures, plan, set goals, make a schedule, act on those things, and then continually iterate. In the module you'll learn concepts of mindfulness, and how to bring calm in organization to your thinking. And you'll also learn about mindsets. That's idea that if we're fixed, we believe that our abilities innate and can't change, then we're stuck in our current knowledge and abilities. But if we can instead decide in different areas of our lives that we want to improve certain of our skills or knowledge or abilities, then we will have the ability to do so, and we'll seek help, we'll make strategies, we'll plan, we'll work at it. We'll fail sometimes. But we can grow.

Thank you for deciding to listen and to dive into this module. We know it's work, we know it takes time, but the results we have to date, are incredibly encouraging. Over 5000 students have used it so far. Metacognition skills increase within a single semester. The vast majority of students are still using the module's skills in their next course in their next semester, even if the next course doesn't incorporate the module itself. Students are saying, great things about it. And so we hope you also have a great experience with it.