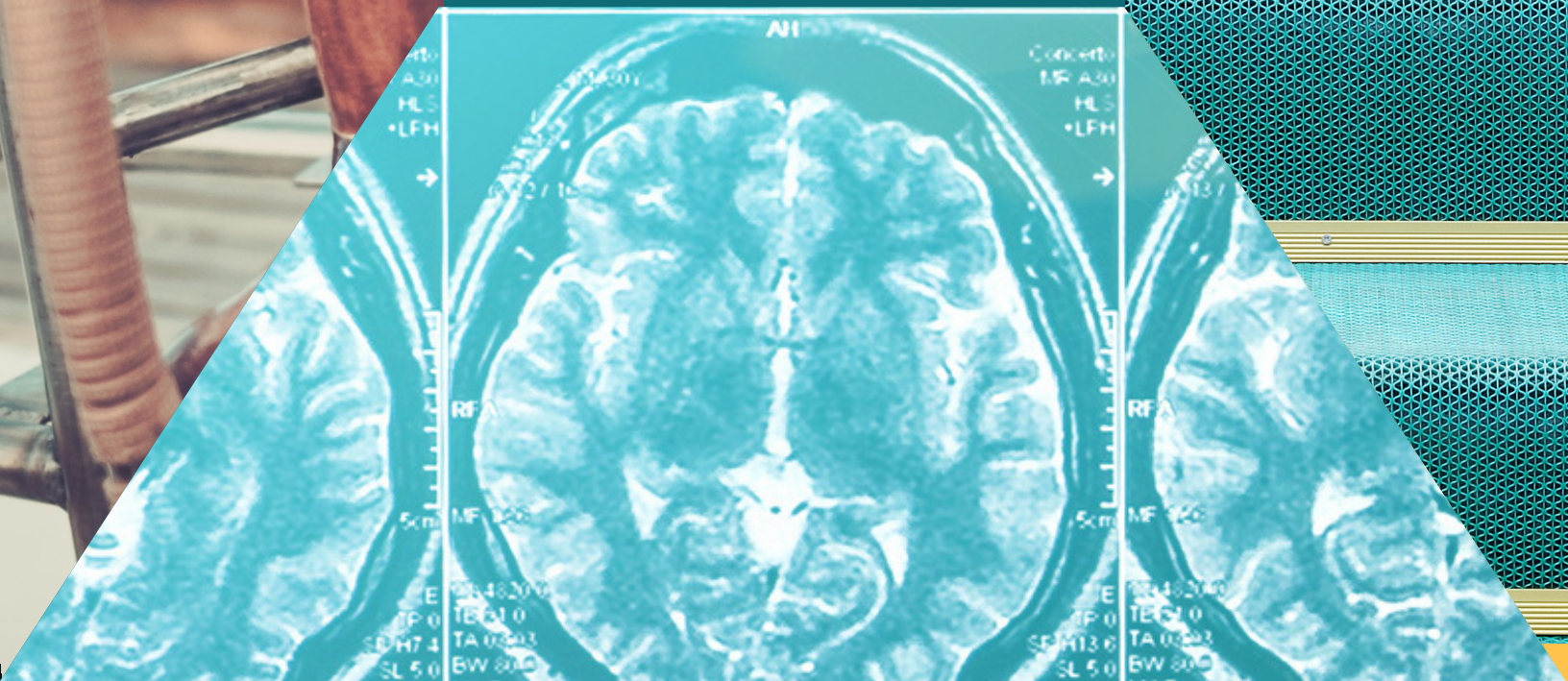




RYAN GOTTFREDSON

What are Prevention and Promotion Mindsets?





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PRO-TIP: If you haven't read the article "*What are Mindsets?*" read that first before reading this article.

This set of mindsets involves how people approach life. Do they approach life from a state of fear? Or, do they approach life from a state of opportunity?





What are Prevention and Promotion Mindsets?



WHAT ARE PREVENTION AND PROMOTION MINDSETS?

Prevention mindsets are mental lenses that orient individuals toward not losing or avoiding losses. If a captain of a ship has a prevention mindset, he is primarily focused on ensuring things run smoothly, no problems or leaks occur, and risk is limited. In turn, he is focused on those things which are urgent, and not necessarily on those things that are most important. As such, what ends up happening is that the ship ends up drifting wherever the winds and currents take it.

Promotion mindsets are mental lenses that orient individuals toward winning and gains. If a captain of a ship has a promotion mindset, she is primarily focused on a clear destination and making progress toward it. Thus, she is primarily focused on what is most important. Additionally, rather than trying to avoid problems and risks, she understands that these are necessary for progress, and thus anticipates and prepares for them. As such, what ends up happening is that this captain's boat is willing to brave rough waters or go against the current in order to reach a specified goal or destination.

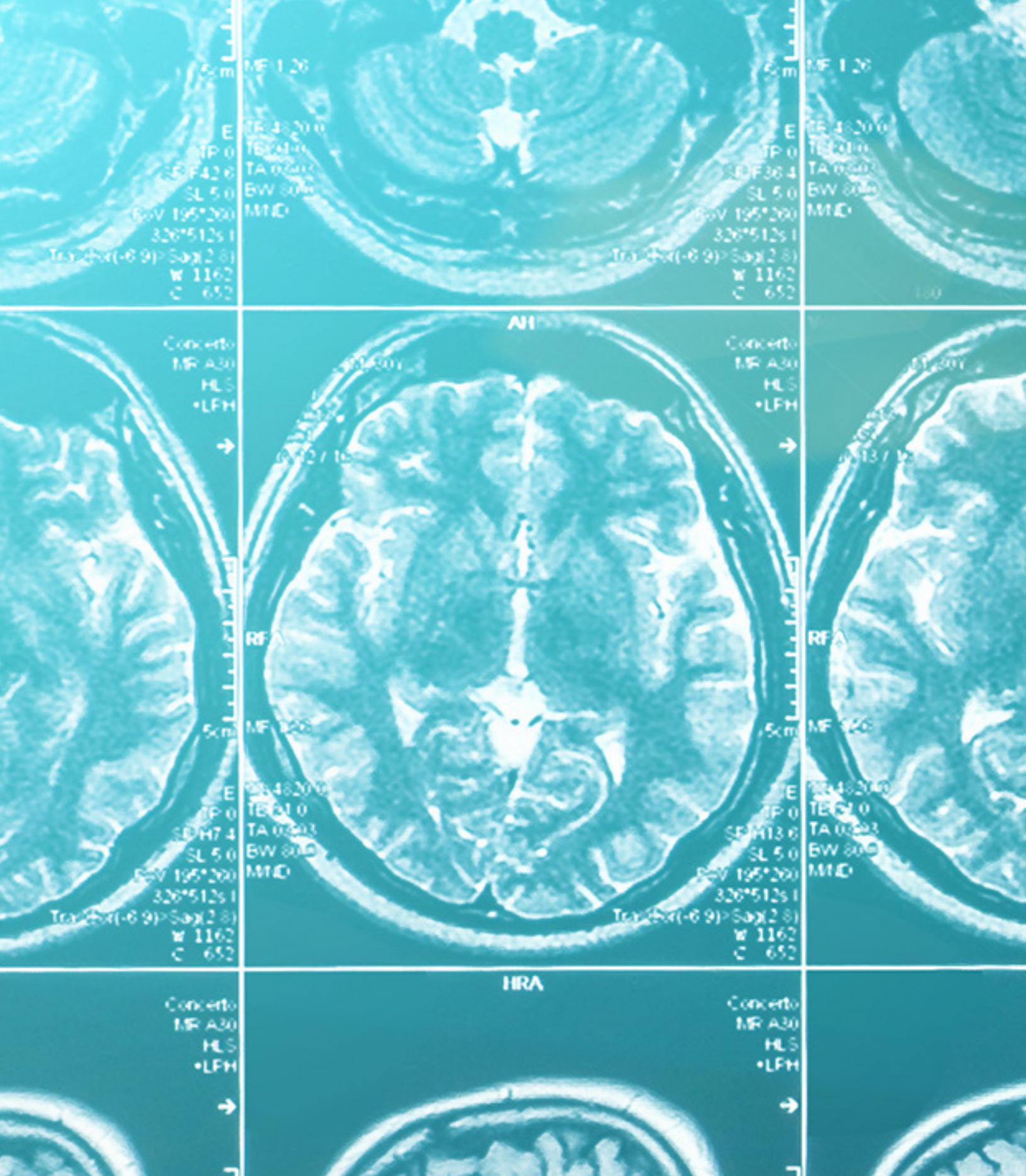


Why are these mindsets so important?

WHY ARE THESE MINDSETS SO IMPORTANT?

Dozens of studies have been conducted on these mindsets, enough to conduct a meta-analysis (e.g., a summary of all research findings). What has been found is that those with a **promotion mindset** consistently have higher engagement, job satisfaction, task performance, innovative performance, and helping behaviors on the job than those with a prevention mindset. In fact, there was only one clear benefit of having a prevention mindset: lower safety incident rates. Thus, all the research on these mindsets suggests that having a promotion mindset is essential for success.





Research Summary of the Effects of Possessing Either Prevention or Promotion Mindsets

RESEARCH SUMMARY OF THE EFFECTS OF POSSESSING EITHER PREVENTION OR PROMOTION MINDSETS

Fortunately, we have 30+ years of academic research on prevention and promotion mindsets that have been able to clearly demonstrate the effect these mindsets have on how we operate. This research has repeatedly demonstrated that those that have a promotion mindset think and process much more effectively than those with a prevention mindset in three primary ways.

FIRST, a **promotion mindset** positively influences how we interpret situational cues.

THOSE WITH A PREVENTION MINDSET	THOSE WITH A PROMOTION MINDSET
Seek to minimize pain	Seek to maximize pleasure
More prone to negative thinking	More prone to positive thinking
Sensitive to cues that indicate the likelihood of negative affect, safety, and security	Sensitive to cues that indicate the likelihood of positive affect, growth, and accomplishment
Focused on fulfilling duties and obligations, maintaining acceptable standards of performance, and limiting mistakes and errors	Focused on accomplishing goals and aspirations, advancing and making progress, and fulfilling one's ideal self

SECOND, a **promotion mindset** activates specific processing dynamics to navigate our situations in a manner aligned with our interpretation of situational cues.

THOSE WITH A PREVENTION MINDSET	THOSE WITH A PROMOTION MINDSET
Motivated to avoid problems and losses, programming them for vigilance, avoidance, stability, exploitation, and maintaining status quo	Motivated to seek winning and gains, programming them for eagerness, speed, achievement, exploration, and change
Negative and/or weak relationships with job satisfaction, affective commitment, and engagement	Strong positive relationships with job satisfaction, affective commitment, and engagement
Moderate positive relationship with continuance commitment (the most negative form of commitment)	Small positive relationship with continuance commitment (the most negative form of commitment)
Small positive relationship with normative commitment	Moderate positive relationship with normative commitment

THIRD, a **promotion mindset** activates specific behavioral dispositions to navigate our situations in a manner aligned with our interpretation of situational cues.

THOSE WITH A PREVENTION MINDSET	THOSE WITH A PROMOTION MINDSET
Generally underperforms relative to those with a promotion focus	Generally outperforms those with a prevention focus
Less likely to set goals and exhibit persistence	Sets more challenging goals and exhibit greater persistence
Small or non-significant relationships with task performance, organizational behavior, and innovative performance	Moderate positive relationships with task performance, organizational behavior, and innovative performance
Moderate positive relationship with counterproductive work behaviors	Moderate negative relationship with counterproductive work behaviors
Strong positive relationship with safety performance	Moderate negative relationship with safety performance

CONCLUSION

Overall, 30+ years of research on **prevention and promotion mindsets** demonstrates that if we have one person/team/organization that is promotion-minded, they will outperform another person/team/organization that is prevention-minded every time.

Your Personal Mindset Report should have revealed the quality of your mindsets along the prevention-promotion continuum relative to over 20,000+ people who have completed the assessment.





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READ NEXT

What are Inward and Outward Mindsets?