

# Mindset Cards

## INSTRUCTIONS

behaviors — what we do in the world  
 values — what we believe in our hearts  
**mindsets — what we think in our heads**



Mindset Cards are a tool for building, transforming, and assessing culture in groups. They make it safer and easier to have concrete, productive, courageous conversations about things that are important to discuss but that can often feel vague and ungrounded.

You can use them with groups of any size — from two people to hundreds, even thousands — and types — from small teams to large organizations, even your family and friends. They're ideal for:

- Defining and assessing organizational culture
- Defining and assessing team working agreements
- Working through difficult group dynamics

You can also use them individually for your own personal development.

Mindset Cards were created by Faster Than 20 and Duende. The data for these cards were harvested from real culture change work we and our close colleagues did with many organizations over several years, then refined and tested with many more organizations of all sizes and types.

For more information, videos, and ideas for how to use these cards and other collaboration tools, visit <http://fasterthan20.com/>



## What are mindsets and why should we talk about them?

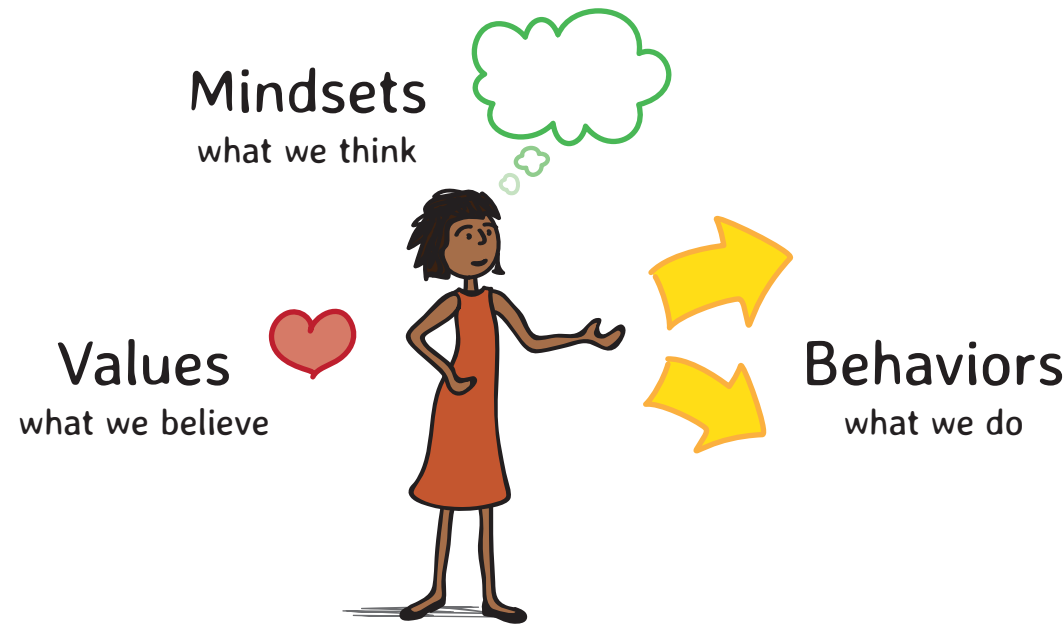
Mindsets and values help dictate behavior, but they are invisible. If we can make these more explicit and specific, we can describe our desired culture and hold ourselves accountable. We can also build greater empathy, shared understanding, and trust.

We often behave the way we do because of what we think (mindsets) and believe (values). However, these are invisible, so unless we share these explicitly with each other, we have to guess to understand why people behave the way they behave.

In order to do that, we have to invent language to describe our mindsets and values, and we have to tell stories to understand their meaning.

**Mindset Cards help us create a language to talk about mindsets and values.**

They can be used to align around a desired culture and assess how well we're doing.



### ANATOMY OF A MINDSET CARD

We've harvested 65 mindsets from our work with real groups on team culture. We've also included five blank cards for you to come up with your own.

The colors indicate how often these mindsets are mentioned as more (Green) or less (Orange) productive. Yellow cards come up in both scenarios about 50 percent of the time. These are suggestions. Mindsets in green can absolutely be unproductive mindsets, and mindsets in orange can be productive.

Values that are reflected in these mindsets. You can use these either to help you prune the deck to focus on your group's values or to help you identify your group's values. See the Values exercise on the other side of this sheet.

Unique ID numbers for each mindset card. Useful for harvesting and tracking mindset data.

## How to use these Mindset Cards

### THE BASICS

All of the methods described here are variations of the following:

1. Pick a group or project you're working with. Context matters.
2. Rapidly go through the deck, and pull out cards that resonate for whatever reason.
3. Choose one of the cards that you pulled that represents a productive mindset — a mindset that you'd like to see the group exhibit more of.
4. Show this card to someone else in the group. Explain why you chose it. Tell specific stories if you can.
5. Take turns and/or repeat as often as you'd like.

### MINDSET SPECTRUMS

The language on each mindset card helps us get more precise about the kind of culture we want and don't want. However, there is still a lot of gray area. You can get even more precise by creating mindset spectrums, which allows you to talk more concretely about not just what is desired, but how much.

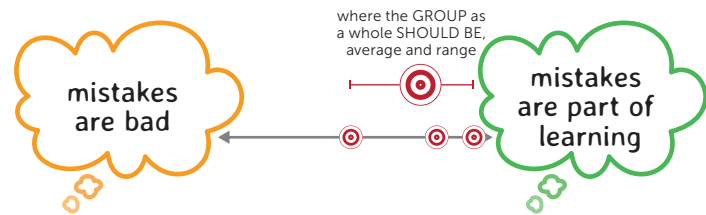
This works best with one or two people. (You can do it with more than two, but it's better to use the **Divide and Converge** approach described on the other side of this sheet.)

1. Follow steps 1-4 of **The Basics** described above. Instead of choosing one card representing a productive mindset you'd like to see the group exhibit, choose three.
2. For each productive mindset, go through the deck and pull out the counter less productive mindset. If you can't find the card you want, fill in one of the blank cards. Create a spectrum by putting the less productive mindset on the left and the more productive mindset on the right:



(over)

3. Take a moment to think about **where along this spectrum you'd like the GROUP to be.** When everyone has an answer, have everyone mark their spot. You can mark a piece of paper, use a physical marker, or physically form a giant spectrum and move your bodies to represent your position. For example:



Discuss. Start with the outliers. Why did people pick their spots? This is not about persuading others, but about understanding each other's thinking. However, if people feel compelled to move their marks as they hear others speak, they can. The average of where people put their marks acts as the collective aspiration.

4. Now take a moment to think about **where along this spectrum YOU are right now.** When everyone has an answer, have everyone mark their spot. For example:



Discuss. Start with the outliers. Why did people put their marker there? The average of people's marks acts as the assessment for where the group is right now.

One variation of this exercise is to examine the tension between two productive mindsets that might potentially come into conflict. The exercise works the same way, except the aspiration will likely be more in the middle of the spectrum than toward the right.

If your assessment is at or beyond your aspiration, then you're already doing well! It's useful to be able to articulate what you're already doing well, not just what you have to work on, because it represents a culture that already exists, which is helpful both as a reminder and also for new people who join the group.

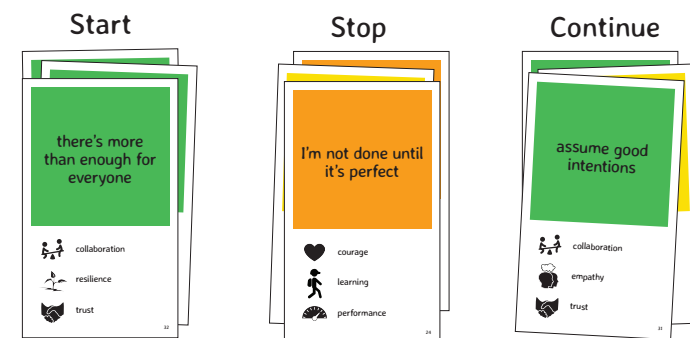
If your assessment is below your aspiration, brainstorm with your group experiments for closing that gap. Keep in mind that mindset shift is hard, that it takes time, and that you'll fail a lot more than you'll succeed. You can repeat the assessment process to track your progress.

Note that self-assessments are not scientific. Treat these as an opportunity to talk with each other about important, sometimes difficult topics and to get aligned about where you are and where you want to go.

## START, STOP, CONTINUE

This is an alternative to **Mindset Spectrums**. This works best with one or two people. You can do it with more than two, but it's better to use the **Divide and Converge** approach described below.

- Follow steps 1-4 of **The Basics** described above. Instead of choosing one card representing a productive mindset you'd like to see the group exhibit, create three piles of cards: Mindsets you'd like to **Start** having, mindsets you'd like to **Stop** having, and mindsets you'd like to **Continue** having.
- Prune each pile so that there are only 3 cards in each.



- Show your piles to someone else in the group. Explain why you chose these cards. Tell specific stories if you can.

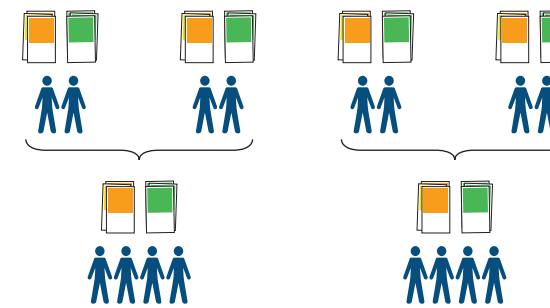
If you're playing individually, you can cycle through your cards each day as a reminder of your intentions.

## DIVIDE AND CONVERGE

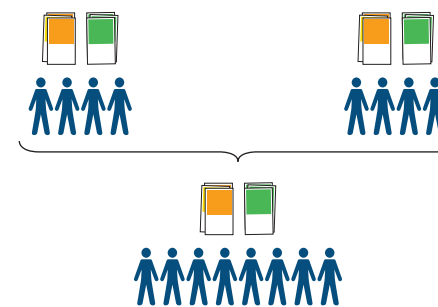
With both **Start, Stop, and Continue** and **Mindset Spectrums**, you're ultimately trying to get to a handful of cards per pile or spectrums — 3-5 at most. For one or two people, this is a fairly straightforward prioritization process. For more than two, it can get complicated quickly.

Rather than try to prioritize as a whole group, we'd encourage you to do it as small groups, then come together.

- Divide up the group into pairs, and have each pair play **Start, Stop, and Continue** or **Mindset Spectrums**.
- Pair up the pairs, have people discuss the cards they chose, and — as a larger group — try to agree on three cards per pile or three spectrums.



- Continue re-combining groups and repeat until the whole group is together once again.



This process can scale to literally thousands of people. To help you track the cards being chosen, you can use the index number on the bottom-right of each card.

## THE OTHERS

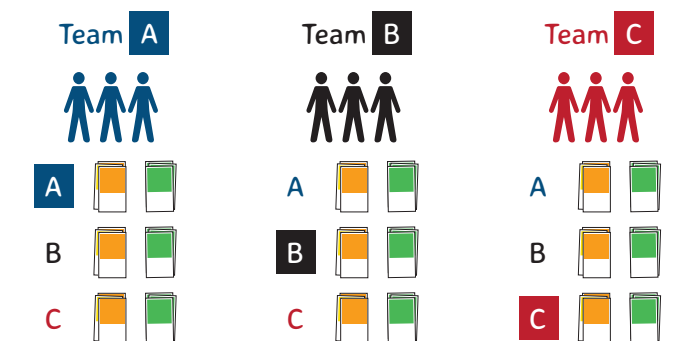
It's human to form tribes or factions. There are lots of good things that can come out of this, but it can also result in divisiveness and silos.

You can use this technique with either **Start, Stop, and Continue** or **Mindset Spectrums** to build greater unity and empathy. You could use this for:

- A leadership team and the people who report to them
- Different teams within larger organization working together
- Different groups within a multi-stakeholder collaboration

It's especially useful when there are complicated power dynamics.

- Divide into groups.
- Have each group play either **Start, Stop, and Continue** or **Mindset Spectrums** both for themselves and for the other groups. (Use **Divide and Converge** if the groups are large.) In other words, if you're doing this with three different teams working together, each group would have three sets of piles or spectrums: One for themselves, and one for each of the other two groups.
- Share the piles or spectrums with each other. Why did you choose these? What are the similarities and differences between the cards you chose for yourself versus the cards others chose for you?



Based on these discussions, have each group decide on the piles or spectrums they will be committing to.

## VALUES

If your group has already agreed on a set of core values, you can use these values to prune your deck and simplify any of the mindset exercises described above. Go through the deck, and take out every card that lists one of your values (or something similar).

Alternatively, if your group has not already agreed on a core set of values, you can do one of the mindset exercises above (either **Start, Stop, and Continue** or **Mindset Spectrums**), examine the cards you've chosen, and use the values listed there as a candidate list of values for your group.

## YOUR IDEAS!

There is no wrong way to use these cards! Practice and play. Please share how you're using them at [diy-strategy-culture@fasterthan20.com](mailto:diy-strategy-culture@fasterthan20.com)!