

dear residents

The Flux Mindset

September 3, 2023

Dear Residents,

It's **September** – the month that marks **Labor Day** (a recognition of the Labor Movement in the US). It also signals the end of summer (even though you wouldn't know it looking at the mercury). More importantly, it marks the beginning of a level of self-confidence that will carry you through the rest of the academic year. September was my third rotation in residency, and finally, I wasn't clearing every small decision with my resident. Yes, I could replete serum potassium without asking for permission.

You are talented, no doubt. Your journey is a testament to that. Talent without challenge will wither. **Talent + a growth mindset = empowerment to flourish.** The [growth mindset](#) is borne of the idea that one can develop new interests or rise to new challenges. It is the antidote to the fixed mindset which restricts you to your sphere of talent/familiarity. This is the difference between “finding your passion” and “developing your passion.” Your passion is not something that grandma buried in the backyard waiting for you to find it. Passion develops – guided by encouragement from those who mentor you to pursue new interests, and who convey the message that it is perfectly normal to encounter difficulty with anything new. The growth mindset mantra is that you *can* get smarter, and that effort makes you stronger.

Building on the growth mindset, [April Rinne's](#) idea of the **flux mindset** is premised on the need to change our relationship with uncertainty and to let go of some old life scripts like “run faster” and view change as an opportunity rather than as a threat. Rinne would like you to “*think of a flux mindset as a state of mind that grounds and holds you when everything else changes.*” You are grounded by your core values, whatever these may be. This is not dissimilar to [Herminia Ibarra's](#) approach to authenticity. Being always “true to self” without regard to others or the situation is harmful to self and others - you are caught with the script that was written for you – your authentic self ought to be more like a reed than a stick (without compromising your core values).



April Rinne’s book, [Flux](#), is a quick and interesting read and germane to a world that is changing at a dizzying pace. Here are some of the ideas expressed in the book:

HOW DO YOU SEE	OLD MINDSET	FLUX MINDSET
<i>Your life story</i>	Written by others, for you to follow	Written by you, for you to become
<i>Life</i>	A ladder to climb	A flowing river
<i>Career</i>	A path to pursue	A portfolio to curate
<i>Expectations</i>	Determined externally, by others	Determined internally, by you
<i>Goals</i>	Set in concrete, yet hard to attain	Emergent and often blurry, yet rich with opportunity
<i>Measurements of success</i>	Rungs of the ladder	Next steps and new insights
<i>Leadership</i>	Manage and control other people, “me”	Unleash potential in others and yourself, “us”
<i>Power</i>	Top-down, guarded	Bottom-up, dispersed
<i>Peers</i>	Competitors	Allies and collaborators
<i>Vision</i>	Certainty	Clarity
<i>Change</i>	Threat	Opportunity
<i>Emotions associated with change</i>	Fear, anxiety, paralysis	Hope, wonder, curiosity

She also gives us some concepts for new scripts to follow:

OLD SCRIPTS	NEW SCRIPTS	BENEFITS
Run Faster	Run Slower	You crave a calmer pace and silence becomes a friend
Focus On What's Visible	See What's Invisible	You are no longer blind to what you genuinely care about
Stay In Your Lane	Get Lost	You feel delight when things <i>don't</i> go according to plan
Trust Nobody	Start with Trust	You earn trust, you engender trust
More = Better	Know Your "Enough"	You begin living in abundance
Get a Job	Create Your Portfolio Career	You stop seeing work as having/getting a job
Technology Knows Best	Be All the More Human (and Serve Other Humans)	You recalibrate your relationship with people and with technology
Predict and Control the Future	Let Go of the Future	The future looks brighter

I will leave you with some additional viewpoints to consider:

- Our values come from many places, and these are beyond self-interest and "winning."
- Your relationship with change begins within you – take care of yourself first.
- While we need plenty of help from others, no one can ever be "fully you" except you.
- Writing a new script is hard work but it pays off.

I have deviated from some scripts that were written for me – *serve your country* (I immigrated), *surgery is the preeminent career* (I became an internist), *a career in education is less prestigious than one in patient care and research* (I discerned what I care about the most). Who knows what will challenge us next. Living with trust and in an abundance of opportunity, with the right mindset, each one of you can write your own script and surf the future.



Stella – has a flux mindset – she lives in abundance

Dino Kazi