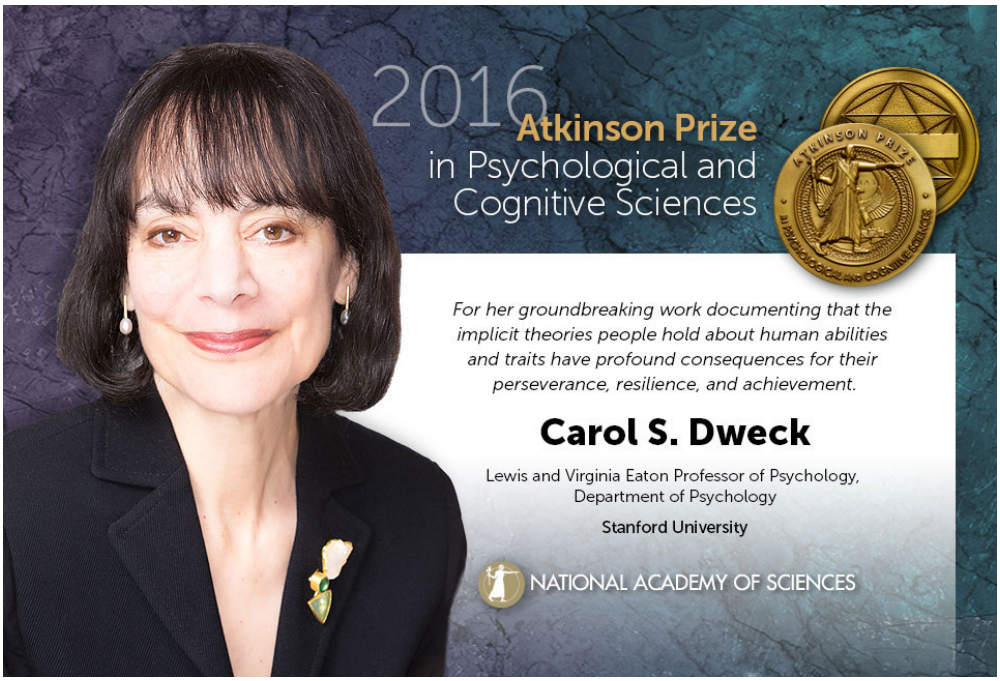

In her work on how people think about the self, their accomplishments, and potential, Dweck has synthesized research from five areas of psychology—cognition, motivation, human development, personality, and social psychology. Earlier in her career, she demonstrated that, starting as children, people hold implicit beliefs—a mindset—about intelligence. Some students have what Dweck called a "fixed mindset," believing that intelligence is a fixed trait, like eye color. Others have a "growth mindset" and think that intelligence is a skill that can be improved over time. Dweck showed that these mindsets can shape behavior and affect learning. When confronted with a problem, for instance, those in a fixed mindset often stop trying to solve it while those in a growth mindset view it as a challenge. Over time, such attitudes can have profound impacts on a person's life.

Dweck also showed that the praise given to a child can affect which mindset they hold, and well-intentioned comments, such as "you're good at that" can actually backfire and promote a more fixed mindset. Young girls, she found, are more likely to be given that type of praise, while boys are more often praised for effort and strategies, something that builds confidence for trying new challenges. Those differences in feedback may explain in part why many girls avoid math. But Dweck has also found that parents and teachers can be educated about how they give praise, and her work is now available as a web-based platform for teachers. She has also developed programs for students that teach them that the brain is like a muscle that can strengthened through learning, which affects both mindset and academic success.

Dweck has gone on to expand her concept of mindsets, showing that fixed and growth mindsets exist in domains outside of intelligence, including morality and willpower. Such work is leading to insights on notions of prejudice and stereotyping, and even on conflict resolution and negotiation.