



IMPROVING YOUR ATTITUDE

by [Kathy Burford](#)

Have people and situations been getting to you lately? Everyone faces challenges in their lives and how people react to those challenges can vary greatly depending on a person's attitude. If you are finding that you need to do some work on your attitude, now might be good to take a time-out and make a conscious effort to end what is not working and to find something that can.

Attitude as the dictionary defines it is "a feeling or opinion about something or someone, or a way of behaving that follows". Our thoughts and feelings are entirely up to us, and it follows that we create our own attitude. When people approach life with a positive attitude, they are clear about who they are and what they can accomplish. They are secure in the knowledge that they will handle and cope with whatever form of adversity will come their way. Those with a positive attitude approach each day with a sense of anticipation and gratitude. Even when adversity presents itself, they view it as a challenge and often as an opportunity to learn and grow. On the other hand, people who live life with a negative attitude, look for bad things to happen and generally expect the worse. Unfortunately, those with a negative attitude often blame other people or circumstances for their misery.

Attitude also affects our physical and emotional health. We know that when we focus on the positive aspects of life, we feel physically and mentally up to the task, and are able to cope with the demands that life brings. Dr. Donald Ardell, author of *High Level Wellness* has said, "The greatest health problem today is the forfeiture of health to someone or something else." Taking responsibility for your own wellness and using self-help techniques can go a long way in helping improve your attitude. Foremost, keep in mind that your attitude is under your control and you can work to change it. The following can help you begin making those changes.

- If you find you are in a negative cycle, take a time-out to stop and reflect upon what is working and what is not.
- Be clear about what you want. Do you live your life based on your needs and desires, or are you constantly putting others ahead of yourself?
- Set your goals and take them in small steps. Set manageable and measurable goals for yourself for this day, month, and year. Write them down and review them on a regular basis to determine how well you are doing.
- If you fail at first, be patient and persistent. Take time-outs when necessary to determine if your approach needs some re-working. Stick with what works; stop making the same mistakes over again.
- Seek new information and the input of others. Sometimes, we overlook the obvious. At other times, we may not have even considered another point of view. An independent viewpoint can help steer us in the right direction.
- Be inspired and motivated by positive things and people. Make it a point to spend time with positive people. Books and workshop offerings can also provide motivation and inspiration.
- Face your fears today and stop putting it off until tomorrow. You can mentally rehearse a positive outcome just as athletes do before competing. It can be a useful strategy to create in your own mind a positive outcome before dealing with a difficult situation. Each time you face your fears and have a positive outcome, your fears will diminish.
- Stay in the present and trust in your ability to meet your challenges with a positive attitude.
- Cultivate the spiritual side of yourself in whatever form it takes.
- Consider the advantages of discarding the pattern of the blaming game. Instead, develop the habit of looking at other people's actions as just the way they are and less of a statement about you than about where they are. Keep in mind that you can't make another person change but you can change your own thoughts and be free of futile judgments and complaints about how unfair life is.
- Begin each day with a mental plan on what you are going to do today that will be a positive step in helping you become a more positive person.
- See each day as a gift and look around you to see the beauty in all things.
- Do things that are required but also include those things that bring you joy, hope, and renewal.
- Enjoy the successes of others. A leader (which we all are) is one that finds joy and new ideas in the

accomplishment of others.

- View failure as the seed for accomplishment. How often have we had disappointments and failures or had a plan that did not reap the success that we had hoped? These are a part of life and we are not 100% perfect all of the time. We have a choice in learning from our lack of success and viewing what might be the meaning of this occurring in our life right now. Our attitude will determine if we view our failure as a fertilizer for better things to cultivate. Conversely, a negative attitude might show us being hard on others or ourselves. Unfortunately, the latter choice only uses up our precious energy that we could have directed towards our goals.

Attitude and perspective, therefore, determine largely the way we live our lives in either a positive or a negative direction. A positive attitude gets us through the challenges; a negative one makes the challenges seem insurmountable. Perspective can be changed or enlarged upon if we are open to examining our limiting beliefs and have a real desire to change. We know that research in the health field has found that positive attitude plays a role in boosting the immune system to ward off illness. It can also be a powerful healing aid when our physical health deteriorates. It could virtually mean the difference in maintaining our precious health or succumbing to illness and, in some cases, death.

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