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Have you ever heard someone say, “Attitude is everything”? I have. I’ve also seen it posted on signs in workplaces and school gyms. Even motivational speakers will claim that all you need is a good attitude to be successful. Unfortunately, it’s simply not true.

The promise that attitude is everything is hollow. In fact, if you believe that attitude is everything, it may actually hurt you more than help you. If attitude were everything, the only thing separating me from a professional singer would be the belief that I can do it. But trust me, there is another factor that stands in my way: talent. If I tried out for American Idol with my awesome attitude, the judges would love my enthusiasm but will still send me home. No attitude is strong enough to compensate for lack of skill.

So does attitude make any difference? Absolutely. Attitude can be a difference maker. It can get you off your behind or it will keep you on your behind. It can get you through the door or it will keep you outside looking in. Attitude can be the difference between you and someone else with similar skills or abilities--hopefully it’s a positive difference. Businessman, philanthropist, and author W. Clement Stone said, “There is little difference in people, but the little difference makes a big difference. The little difference is attitude. The big difference is whether it is positive or negative.”

What is an attitude anyway? When you hear the word, what do you think about? Experts will tell you attitude is an inward feeling expressed by outward behavior--that people always project on the outside what they feel on the inside. Some people try to mask their attitude, and they can fool others for a while. But that cover-up doesn’t last long. Attitude always wiggles its way out.

I read a story about a 4-year-old little

boy who was finally put into time-out after battling his mother.

“Sit in that chair until the timer goes off,” the mother said in frustration. The boy sat down, fearing greater punishment, but said, “Okay, Mommy. I’m sitting on the outside, but I’m standing up on the inside.”

Your attitude colors every aspect of your life. It is like the mind’s paintbrush. It can paint everything in bright vibrant colors--creating a masterpiece. Or it can make everything dark and dreary.

Leadership expert John Maxwell wrote this about attitude:

*It is the vanguard of your true self.
Its root is inward but its fruit is outward.*

*It is your best friend or worst enemy.
It is more honest and consistent about you than your words.*

It is your outward look based on your past experiences.

It is what draws people to you or repels them.

It is never content until it is expressed.

It is the librarian of your past.

It is the speaker of your present.

It is the prophet of your future.

There is not a single part of your current life that is not affected by your attitude. And your future will definitely be influenced by the attitude you carry with you from today forward.

Where did you get your current attitude? You get it from your personality type, the environment you were exposed to growing up, the expression of others toward you, the self-image you have of yourself, the exposure you’ve had toward growth opportunities, your association with peers, and your beliefs.

This doesn’t mean you’re stuck with your current attitude for life. Of all the factors listed above, “your beliefs” is the factor that can bail you out. This is so because your beliefs can be changed or altered by your current thoughts. This means your thoughts can turn a bad attitude into a good attitude. Basically,

better thoughts equate to a better attitude.

Author and successful businessman Bob Conklin wrote the following piece from the first-person perspective of a thought:

*I can make you rise or fall.
I can work for you or against you.
I can make you a success or a failure.
I control the way you feel and act.
I can make you laugh...work...love.
I can make your heart sing with joy...
excitement...elation.*

*Or I can make you wretched...
dejected...morbid.*

*I can make you sick...listless.
I can be a shackle...heavy...attached
...burdensome.*

*Or I can be as the prism’s hue...
dancing...bright...fleeing--unless captured
by pen or purpose.*

*I can be nurtured and grown to be
great and beautiful...seen by the eyes of
others through action in you.*

*I can never be removed...only replaced.
I am a THOUGHT.*

Why not know me better?

Certainly, thoughts can make a huge impact on you. Every thought you have shapes your life. What you think about your neighbor is your attitude toward him or her. The way you think about your job is your attitude toward work. Your thoughts concerning your spouse, the people on the highway during rush hour, or a certain politician create your attitude toward each of those subjects. Certain thoughts create certain feelings that result in a certain attitude.

Suffice it to say, the sum of all your thoughts comprises your attitude. If you change your thoughts, you can change your attitude. And if you change your attitude, you can change your life. Attitude, therefore, is the difference maker. Just make sure the difference it makes is helping you rather than hurting you.

~ The End ~