



## The Only True Disability in Life is a Bad Attitude

By Alan Zimmerman

Take a look at any of the Olympic Games that have ever been held. You may notice one outstanding characteristic of the winners. Very few of them were “*natural-born*” athletes. But almost all of them had a totally awesome attitude.

In fact, many of the winners would have seemed the least likely to win, considering all the obstacles they had to overcome. Some of the winners were handicapped, injured, or disabled at one or more points in their lives, but that didn’t stop them. They had an attitude that more than made up for any lack of aptitude.

And the really good news is that you can have a similar, powerful, positive attitude. You really can. You can have an attitude that will take you across the finish line in every part of your personal and professional lives.

Of course, if you’re cynical, you might say, “*Yeah, attitude works in sports, but it doesn’t really matter in the business world.*” Oh really?

**1. Executives with the right attitude are much more effective.** Telemetrics International studied 16,000 executives who had risen to the top of their various corporations, but they were divided into “*high achievers*” and “*low achievers.*” In other words, some were effective, and some were not. What was the difference? The high-achieving executives had a positive attitude toward their employees. They believed in their employees. They trusted the ability of their subordinates. They sought out their advice. And they cared about their employees as well as their profits. By contrast, the low-achieving executives had a negative attitude towards their employees. They avoided communication with them, seldom seeking their input or truly listening to them, relying on impersonal policy manuals and formal procedures instead. And they were more concerned about their own security than anything else. (*Sounds a bit like Congress, doesn’t it?*)

So it’s obvious that the right attitude makes a huge difference.

That being the case, WHAT does a good healthy positive attitude look like? For starters, let me suggest that...

**2. A person with the right attitude moves from failure to failure with undiminished enthusiasm.**

Instead of getting overly upset by the failure, instead of putting himself down, he focuses on how he can do better the next time. And as a result, he is eventually and inevitably a winner.

**3. A person with the right attitude welcomes problems.** I know, it sounds strange, but I often ask my audiences how many of them like problems. Very few people raise their hands. Then I tell them you'd better like problems unless you like unemployment — because customers hire you to solve problems. Suddenly, a few light bulbs go on, and people get it.

Of course, the most important question of all, when it comes to attitude, is HOW do you get and keep a strong, healthy, positive attitude? Time and space doesn't allow me to expound of all those HOW'S or all those techniques right now, but you can start with this.

**4. To improve your attitude, change the channel.** Your attitude is like a filter. When you observe life through a particular attitude, you can only receive certain information. The rest is unavailable. It's like having your TV tuned to NBC. You're not going to see any shows on CBS, no matter how hard you try. You can go to therapy, join a support group, or take assertiveness training. You can even buy a hi-tech, multi-channel satellite dish, but no matter what you do, if you don't change the channel, you'll still be watching NBC.

The same is true of your attitudes. Your attitudes won't let anything in except those things that fit with the attitudes you already have. For example, if you believe "*life is hard,*" you won't have much fun in life. If good times come, you may tell yourself, "*This won't last.*" On the other hand, if you believe "*life is good and getting better,*" you'll probably have a lot less stress. Even when difficulties come, you may be thinking, "*This won't last...and it's always darkest just before the dawn.*"

The lesson is simple. If you don't like how things are going, if you don't like how you're feeling, change your attitude channel. That's what Leonardo da Vinci had to do when he was painting "*The Last Supper.*" Da Vinci had painted the face of Judas to look like a personal enemy of his. As he thought about how much he disliked the man, it was easy to paint the face of Judas to look like his enemy.

However, when it came time to paint the face of Jesus, da Vinci had great difficulty. His eyes would wander to the face of his enemy, and thoughts of his enemy made it impossible for him to concentrate on the goodness of Jesus. In fact, da Vinci succeeded in painting the face of Jesus only after he painted out the face of Judas and reconciled with his enemy.

In essence, da Vinci couldn't change until he changed his attitude. Until he changed his attitude of "*get even with your enemies,*" to "*love your enemies,*" he found himself stuck. So if you don't like how things are going, if you don't like the results you're getting on and off the job, change your attitude channel.

**Final thought:** When you change your surroundings, you change the present, but when you change your attitudes, you change your future.

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