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Your Attitude - Your Self-Esteem

“It's all about Self-Improvement”

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Introduction

Your Attitude is something that is uniquely yours. The dictionary defines mental attitude as:

n 1: a complex mental orientation involving beliefs and feelings and values and dispositions to act in certain ways; "he had the attitude that work was fun."

Your Self-Esteem is something that you have been developing all of your life and it can affect everything you do.

The dictionary defines it as:

n. Pride in oneself; self-respect.

One thing that both attitude and self-esteem have in common is that that they both can be changed. Yes, you can improve your attitude and your self-esteem and that is what this book is going to show you how to do.

Please keep an open mind as you read this book, because before this book can help you, you must focus and apply the tools and ideas that you are about to be given. Many times in your life, you may have heard that "Money is Power." It's true. Money does allow for power. However, real power is knowledge and then applying that very knowledge to improve your quality of life. This quality can go from a relationship with your parents, grandparents, friends, spouse, lover, to the creep that lives next door, even to improving your income.

When your attitude and self-esteem are in a positive frame of mind, you can turn mountains into little bumps. You can make more money, become healthier, have more friends, and even make more time for yourself, and it is all done through knowing and taking simple steps that soon become giant leaps forward.

Chapter 1 Attitude and Conditioning

I would like to simply clarify what attitude really is:

Attitude is:

What you think

What you do

How you feel

All situations require that **you think** about what is happening. You have to decide **what to do**, then work on your emotions on **how you feel** about what you think and do. That is the simplicity of attitude.

You can be struggling with a problem with your teenager. Your teen's new friends are not the kind of friends you want him to have. **You think** the problem is a tough one, you know you **have to do** something about it. You might want to do whatever your decision is in a positive way. However, your emotions on **how you feel** may want to dictate to him and yell and scream to get those low life friends away from the house.

Your attitude will be the essence of how you find the solution to the problem.

A negative attitude will be one of, "Why does that kid always upset me, seems a day can't go by without problems, why did I ever have kids anyway? All I have been doing is trying to do the best I can, feeding, clothing, sheltering and working overtime so he can have his name brand shoes, and now he brings punks home that will influence him and turn him into a druggie and cigarette smoker."

With a positive attitude, your solution will come with positive emotions.

"I love my teenager and find the challenges of raising one quite stimulating. Let's see if I can settle this problem without creating mountains out of molehills."

I have raised my teen with great values, and I know that he has a strong background of knowing the difference between right and wrong so I will trust him to make his own choices. I will sit down tonight and get his viewpoint on his new friends and go from there.

You can almost picture in the above example, which attitude is going to get the best results and come up with the better solution.

Let's Start with Conditioning

As a child, you were raised. Whether you had good parents, horrible parents, indifferent parents, or were raised by someone that was not a relative, you survived. You learned how to eat, talk, walk and read, and all the while you were forming perceptions of what the world was all about. In essence you lived in a box. The only way outside of the box was to learn more, see more, and do more. Each thing you saw, or did, created the "you" that you are now.

If your caregivers:

- were kind, you learned kindness
- gave into your every whim. Then you learned to get your way
- were mean, you learned to be mean, or decided not to be mean
- argued a lot. Your environment was one where arguing was normal.
- were critical, you learned to judge.

If the male figure in your life was dominating and the female caregiver in your life walked on eggshells to not upset the applecart, you learned to be careful and possibly to whisper so as to not make anyone angry.

If you were yelled at as a child, the chances are you use yelling as a tool. This also can backfire on you. Did you know that if you grew up with lots of yelling, that if you find yourself in an environment where there is no yelling, you may very well do things in your new situation to create yelling and all subconsciously?

If your dad gave you the silent treatment, the chances are you use that punishment against those you love, or, you totally flip-flopped and did not do what you thought was wrong and made a vow to yourself - you would not be like that when you grew up.

As a child you learned to be scared of authority, or to defy authority. You learned to respect the law, or hate the law, or just abide by the law. You may have learned to put your seatbelt on at an early age, and it may be a habit. Your parents both may have smoked, so smoking is acceptable to you or every time you smell cigarette smoke it brings back bad memories when you were stuck in an environment that you had little control.

Your parents may have been very religious and you learned to be just like them or won't go into a church, because it was pushed so hard down your throat you can't even look at what it really is. Your parents may have been atheists and would not let you go to church.

You learned fear of water, or respect of water. If your mother screamed every time she saw a spider, you may have ended up with a fear of small harmless creatures, or by watching her, you may have learned how to act hysterical over small things to get attention.

As we grew up, each of us learned what was "normal." What was normal to us was what we were subjected to each day. Our perceptions of what life is and how "adults" behave became part of our center core where we could make decisions with the "facts" that we had on hand.

It's all in perceptions and how you learned through living at home, from your schooling to social events to going to church and television. Children take in the world as a sponge absorbs water - fast. They watch, listen, and try things and then end up doing what they have learned. This is conditioning.

Sometimes, we need to wring out that sponge so we can put fresh water in.

Many parents messed up, after all, they only had skills that they learned as they were growing up. Babies come out naked without any instructions. Some parents managed better than others, and some children never enjoyed decent parenting.

Many children get lots of spontaneous hugs, and others get parents who hardly ever hug. Some children are not allowed to show anger, or some were raised with the myth: Big Boys Don't Cry.

I like to liken children to weeds and flowers. A child that is nurtured such as a precious orchid where its environment was carefully cultivated, may die at the first sign of bad weather, while the scrappy weed defies the wind, rain, snow and flourishes.

We are going to cultivate you as an adult, make you strong like that weed, and unscarred like that orchid, because no matter where you were or how you started, **that was then; this is now!**

Chapter 2 Self-Esteem goes with a Positive Attitude

When Eleanor Roosevelt stated, "No one can make you feel inferior without your consent," she hit the very essence of self-esteem.

Self-Esteem is your image of yourself.

If you let others put you down, or believe others when they say things about you, then let it manifest into a negative feeling about yourself, you are allowing yourself to be governed by other people and what they believe to be true about you, or that you have allowed yourself to prove that you are what they think.

The power within you is astounding. You just need to tap into changing your attitude when you catch yourself being negative.

You can't control the thoughts that pop into your head, but you sure in the heck can control what you do about those thoughts.

"Friends are those rare people who ask how we are and then wait to hear the answer." Ed Cunningham

What kind of friend are you?

A friend is someone with whom you are comfortable, who you enjoy spending time with and who is loyal to you and whom you can be loyal to.

You trust them with your confidences, you can tell them your deepest darkest secrets and share your dreams and goals. You feel safe that your friend will not judge you.

When you choose a friend it is like looking into the mirror. Who you hang out with does reflect on who you are.

Choose some qualities that you would like to see in your best friend.

Loyal
Trust
Comfortable
Sharing
Caring
Similar interests
Encouraging
Good Listener
Supportive
Energetic
Giving
Nurturing
Ambitious
Keeps promises
Remembers your special days
Gives you presents
Compliments you
Tells you the truth when you need to hear it
Accepts you as you are
Does not Judge You
Educated
Fun to be with
Understanding
Compassionate
Smart
Sense of Humor
Steady
On time
Relaxed about Life
Fighting for a Cause
Quick Temper
Slow Temper
Negative

Positive
Lazy
Procrastinator
Thief
Witty
Not so smart
Easy Going
Same Belief System
Same Work Ethics
Morals
Faithful
Angry
Helpful
Tenacious
Dominating
Controlling
Friendly
Industrious

Think of your best friend and list some qualities.

Do you forgive your friend for things on the above list even though you don't like that characteristic in your friend? Do you accept your friend the way he/she is or do you keep trying to mold him/her to what you want in a friend?

Now, choose some qualities that you have as a best friend from the list above.

The art of friendship is a simple thing.

“You do unto your friend as you wish them to do unto you.”

It's the Golden Rule. It is taught in all belief systems one way or another, and it is a good rule.

If you don't want to be judged, you don't judge.

If you don't want anger and upset in your life, you don't allow unhealthy ways of showing anger in your environment.

If you want companionship and to do things that you like to do, you want a friend who respects that as well.

If you break promises to your friend, then your friend won't trust you when you make a promise.

You don't like it when promises are broken to you, do you?

You stay loyal to your friend and best of all you keep that trust and communication open between the two of you.

If your friend is in need of you, your phone lines are open to him/her no matter what time it is. That is what a friend is for. Of course you would expect that your friend would be there for you as well.

If your friend had an annoying habit of a nervous laugh, you would forgive them, wouldn't you? If he/she smoked and you didn't, you would still be a friend.

If your friend did something that you did not feel is right, you would forgive them, would you not? If you cannot forgive them then there is truly no real friendship.

So, why not forgive yourself for your own screw-ups?

Why is it that most people are harder on themselves than anyone else? If my best friend is thirty pounds overweight, the only thing I think about is her health. I do not condemn her for eating that extra cookie, or not walking some of that weight off. My friend is my friend and I love my friends as they are.

When you berate yourself and put yourself down, you are setting yourself up for failure.

Yes, make realistic goals to improve what you want to improve, and give yourself pep talks, but for goodness sakes, don't punish yourself.

Let's think about this next statement:

Before you can be someone else's best friend, you need to make yourself your own best friend.

Let's talk about you and your attitude toward yourself and the things you can do to become a better friend to yourself.

Why is it that you make promises to “you,” then break them?

I am going to go on a diet.

I am going to start an exercise program

I am going to quit smoking, biting my nails.

I am going to quit saying never, and always, and start being nicer.

I am going to lift weights

I am going to spend more quality time with my family

Then a bit down the road, you have broken all the above promises to yourself.

Would you break a promise to your best friend?

Let's think about that one. If you are your own best friend, do you lie to yourself, do you make false promises, do you do things that you know your friend does not like you to do?

Would you lie to your friend and mislead them?

Of course, you wouldn't.

Would you accept some of the things about your friend that you don't like?

Of course you would. So, as your own best friend, you can accept things about yourself, too. One thing we all know is that no one is ever perfect. We were not made to be perfect. We make mistakes, and we learn from them.

A long time ago I heard this one:

"The only mistake I ever made was when I thought I made one."

It's obviously a joke, as everyone makes mistakes.

We can work at self-improvement, and we can change some things, however, it takes time to change everything.

We can take care of 90 percent of what we do, and let the other ten percent take care of itself.

Your best friend is you....

No matter where you go in life, you do have to take your best friend with you. Be good to your best friend!

With small steps you can end up with giant leaps toward becoming a new, happier you.

From Conditioning to Comfort Zones

A comfort zone is the area in your life that you have habitually been doing for so long it is part of your life, like your grandpa's favorite chair. It is in knowing how staying inside your comfort zone can keep you from your dreams, goals, and how it can stop you from doing anything that is not comfortable to you.

Sometimes your comfort zone is not a healthy place to be. When you are constantly in your comfort zone and never step out of it, you don't get much further in life than you already are.

An example: You might not like the thought of dancing, in fact, the very idea of dancing and getting out in front of people wiggling to music might terrorize you. Therefore, why dance?

What could happen if you made a fool of yourself in front of others? Would you be mortified? Would you have an anxiety attack, or, can you shrug it off and go on with your life?

You might envy how some people can get up in front of people and give a wonderful speech, however, the idea of doing it yourself is something you don't want to consider. You might see a fancy car that you would die for, however,

would you die for it, or do you just dream about that fancy car, and deep down know that unless you won a lottery, or some rich person left you money on their death bed, you would never have a car like that?

What if I told you, you could have that dream car? Would you laugh to yourself, and say, "She doesn't know me. She doesn't know what a rut I am in, how many bills I have, what a lousy job I have. She is talking about lucky people, not me!"

Knowing your comfort zone, and why it is your comfort zone is your first step in learning about how to change some of the perceptions that you have about yourself.

Those perceptions begin with the label that was put on you. People get labels put on them. It usually starts when they are small. For a few, the label was a positive one. However, for most, they were negative labels.

Are You Living Up to the Labels that Others Have Put on You?

This may have happened to you. It may have happened to someone you love, or, you may be doing this to your own kids and not even realizing it.

Labels: When you put a label on someone such as you are ugly, stupid, messy, lazy, no good, late, fat, skinny, uncoordinated, clumsy, dumb, irresponsible, under achiever, or things such as procrastinator, and one of the worse ones, "worthless," it will set a person up to become what they are labeled, or resist it so much that they become miserable and end up with low self-esteem.

We tend to accept, or believe what has been said about us, and, by believing what has been said we end up being what we are labeled. It's a vicious cycle.

Maybe as a child you were clumsy, but that does not mean you have to be clumsy.

I remember my middle son when he was tiny. He spilled things more than the average child. He could also find a mud puddle even if it had not rained within three weeks. Instead of calling him "pigpen" or "mud pie" we called him Mr. Clean. We figured if we made a positive label that it would rub off on him in

a "clean" way. It worked. He grew up to be very tidy and organized.

By labeling him something positive, we got positive results.

It is now time to create new improved labels for you.

Get a pen and paper, or get your computer notepad and start writing. First, write all the negative things that have been said about you. Scratch out the ones that are not true.

Don't hesitate. Our minds react quickly to come up with the right answers. It is our own self-doubt that throws that answer aside and starts looking deeper into the question until we come up with the wrong answer. It is not that I am saying that the first answer is always right. Sometimes we do have to look deeper and we will, however, for now, write down the things that you were labeled and immediately scratch out what is not true.

Now write down labels you have put on yourself. Now think about this, who are you? Do you say, "I am a mother?" I am just a housewife. I am a carpenter. I am lazy. I am a working dad. We all tend to label what we are.

Next, write down all the positive labels that you can put on yourself that are true.

I will bet your positive list is way bigger than your negative list!

This brings me to talking about learning what we can accept and what we cannot accept and in knowing the difference. You have probably heard of the Prayer of Serenity. Let's see what it really is:

The Prayer of Serenity

"God grant me the serenity to accept the things I cannot change, courage to change the things I can, and wisdom to know the difference."

Serenity

A simple explanation is this: You could be in a traffic jam. You're stuck. You can't change the traffic jam, however you can be bitter and upset because you are stuck, or you can put in a CD and listen to your favorite comedian and relax and accept what you cannot change.

Life has choices: You can choose to have a realistic expectation or an unrealistic expectation. Unrealistic expectations are when we get upset and gripe over something that we knew would more than likely happen.

If you have taken that traffic route before and have ended up in a traffic jam, you can definitely expect it to happen again - that is a realistic expectation, however, you are late and you must get from point A to point B. You toss it over in your head. It takes ten extra minutes to go the longer route. In your experience there has never been a traffic jam by taking the longer route, however, you really want to get where you are going in record time so you take a chance and take the shorter route.

Then of course you find that you landed in a traffic jam.

Let's think about it: Your expectation was unrealistic, so there is just no sense in griping about or even yelling at yourself for making that unrealistic decision. You took a gamble and lost. Learn from it, and the next time, take the longer route and accept it. You can now put that CD back in, or count all the red cars on the road and all the black trucks on the road, or count the drivers that you see that are not picking their noses. Accept the situation, because you cannot change it.

So you see, you do have choices.

Acceptance has nothing to do with whether or not you like the situation, or how it makes you feel, or if you agree with what is going on. Acceptance is understanding that you cannot change it, therefore, the best thing to do is accept it, so that you can go on with your life or make concessions as in the above example because you have learned from past experiences what the chance of something happening is. That is the reality of the above situation.

Courage

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