

Attitude is Everything

Keith Harrell

The Big Idea

Good vs. evil. Yin vs. yang. Positive vs. negative. Opposites thrive everywhere. Even in your own little self, a continuous battle exists. Whichever way you choose to deal with these battles, that choice always defines the attitude that you project. Looking at these objectively, a positive attitude is still undeniably the most valuable asset you can ever choose to treasure. It is the most basic ingredient to every success story in this planet.

This book by Keith Harrell will show you the way towards a life ruled by positive attitude. This book will not only serve as a motivational device but a learning tool as well, that will expose you to fundamental principles leading to self-development and personal growth.

Chapter One: Attitude is Everything

Step 1: Understand the power of attitude

Life will always be full of surprises. It will never cease to hurl disappointments and frustrations on your way. Nevertheless, these negative occurrences will always be coupled with matching, if not greater, intensities of happiness leading to ultimate joy. The difference lies though on the handling methods you apply various situations that come your way. It will all lie on how you translate bad situations into good learning experiences.

Keith Harrell shares his frustration on not being drafted to the NBA and how this experience shaped the rest of his lifetime. Sometimes, disappointments and frustrations are miracles in the form of disguises. If you would look deeper into your story, these negative events might just be a form of a wake up call for you. More often than not, they are simple incidence to make you realize that life has better offers for you.

To understand the power of attitude, you have to realize these though: your attitude affects everything you do, your attitude affects the people around you and your attitude reflects YOU. As a first step, ponder on these questions: (1) how well do you know yourself; (2) What are your attitudes at work; and (3) what are your attitudes at home? By personally digging into yourself, you start connecting with your inner self. You are now starting your attitude tune up.

Remember that your attitudes always translate into actions. As a human being, you are not deemed perfect and is not therefore expected to adapt a positive attitude all of the time. However, it is important that you always work your way towards a positive attitude. You can start your journey towards positivity by practicing the following steps:

- Learning to handle stress by balancing work and leisure time
- Identifying your persistent negative and pessimistic thoughts and learning to combat them with logical and rational thoughts.
- Sharing what you feel to a supportive person, one good example of which is emptying out your worries to a close friend.
- Working your way towards a problem solution instead of choosing to be argumentative always.

Chapter Two: Attitude is a Choice

Step 2: Choose to Take Charge of Your Life

Choices are essential in your life. They can be made consciously or unconsciously. Whichever way, they always define behavior. Behaviors are your responses to every situation that you encounter. They often translate into habits. It is imperative then that you make a conscious effort of not letting your choices rule over you. Always take sometime to reflect on how your choices made differences in your life. When you see some bad choices along the way, never think that your realization came too late. Choosing to rectify mistakes made in the past is never too late a deed.

Controlled By Attitude vs. Attitude under Control

Individuals controlled by attitude tend to be pessimistic and are often afraid to take chances. They tend to dwell on the idea of permanent suffering. They don't believe in second chances. They simply allow themselves to get stuck in their own little miserable world.

People whose attitudes are under control are their total opposites. Controlled people are pure optimists and views hardships as accidental challenges. They act to solve a problem. Sulking is never an option to them. Which one are you?

Happiness Is Yours to Create; They Are Often Determined By Your Choices

As a cliché goes, happiness is a state of mind. Ask yourself this question, what are the things that will make you happy? Sometimes you ask too much from life. Learn to appreciate small doses of joy. It is better that you start from the small ones and move up to working on your lifetime happiness rather than jump a few ladders ahead and fall back a few more steps behind after.

Strengthening your choosing ability

- It's the internal message that counts . Whatever negative comments you hear, believe that they can always be neutralized by more pleasant thoughts from other people who appreciate your potentials as a person.
- A positive attitude is the first and last line of defense . Your inner dialogue is one powerful tool. Learn to replace negative internal thoughts with hope and optimism.
- Selecting an optimistic attitude . You always have a choice on how you would want your inner dialogue to run. You can opt to dwell on self-defeat and self-pity or you can decide for self-encouragement and self-motivation.
- Programming your attitude . The mind sometimes works just like computers. Positive outlook can sometimes stem from good programming or favorable mind conditioning. Your behaviors and responses are 90% influenced by your thoughts. So try to think of happy thoughts always.
- Watch what you say - to yourself . Be your own personal critic. But always be kind to yourself. Take constructive rather than destructive criticisms to heart.

Chapter Three: Bag Your Bad Attitude

Step 3: Identifying Through Self-Awareness the Attitudes That Hold You Back or Propel You Forward

Bad Attitudes Are Heavy Baggage

Do some constant self-check. See how your environment responds to your behavior. If you see some changes, ask yourself, are you behaving differently these days? Keep an open mind always. Sometimes, the signal to change an attitude will come from external parties rather than from you.

Three Types of Bad Attitude Baggage

- **If-Only Baggage.** This stems from questions that were left unanswered in the past. But learn the value of letting go. The past will never be someplace you can come visit again. They can never be relived. Work on moving forward and not making the same mistakes again.
- **What-Now Baggage.** This happens when challenges at the present are dealt with fear instead of seeking for opportunities and solutions to the situation at hand. Remember that no problem is resolved when the load that you carry as the problem solver is too much for you to handle. Lighten up. Brighten up. Things will get better soon.
- **What-If Baggage.** These are brought about by unnecessary anxiety on what might happen in the present. Oftentimes, they paralyze you and disable you from making logical and rational decisions. Focus on opportunities and solutions rather than anticipating negative consequences and stressing yourself out.

The Root Causes of Bad Attitude and Their Symptoms

- **Low self esteem .** Constantly putting other people down, shifting blame to others for your own mistakes.
- **Stress.** Burn out; short attention span; lack of focus; insomnia; thoughts of suicide, ending relationships or quitting a job; headaches; stomach problems; and/or back pains.
- **Fear .** Renders a physically and mentally equipped person immobile.
- **Resentment and anger .** Urge to attack another person, anger by mere thoughts of a person
- **Inability to handle change.** Belief that change is always equivalent to failure.

The Basics of Attitude Awareness

The key to maintaining a good attitude is by doing some constant personal attitude assessment. By personally identifying your bad and harmful attitudes, the initiative to toss out specific personal negative traits and do some attitude tune up now comes from you. It makes the choice to change more appreciated.

Chapter Four: Change Your Bad Attitude For Good

Step 4: Reframe your bad attitude

Attitude Control 101

Be responsible for your own behavior. Realize that the people around you will not adjust your attitude for you. Don't get swept away by negative emotions like despair, grief, hatred, resentment, fear, anxiety and the like. Learn to block them from your thoughts.

The Three-P's That Cause Bad Attitudes

- **Permanent.** Give more value to the good times and the good memories, rather than spending too much time nursing tragic memories. There's time to grieve but don't spend your lifetime doing only that. Know when to start moving on.
- **Pervasive.** Your current tragedy might feel so intense you might think that it's going to ruin your entire life. But experience wise, think that there is in fact some truth in the saying that: behind the clouds is a silver lining. Sometimes, the silver becomes even gold. Tragedies are sometimes windows to positive, major life changes.

- **Personal.** Sometimes, you become resigned to the idea that the difficulty you currently face is exclusive to you and that God personally chose to punish you. Such thoughts should be flushed out of your mind before the brain even starts processing the thought. A cheerful disposition towards every challenge that life throws at you can sometimes lift the burden off your shoulders. Challenges often bring you good learning experiences.

The Power of Words: Gratitude and Forgiveness - The Antidotes To Negative Attitude

Forgiveness enables you to accept other people's flaws and to realize that you sometimes do demand too much from other people. Learning to forgive also replaces pain and anger with respect towards others and yourself, most especially. It promotes some sense of calmness in the spirit to be able to let all that baggage go.

Learning to be grateful promotes life appreciation. When you feel like the world has conspired against you, start counting your blessings. Sometimes, you just tend to overlook the fact that you have so much to be thankful of.

Chapter Five: Turn Attitude Into Action

Step 5: Find your purpose and passion.

Living for a Purpose

The process of getting in touch with your true purpose in life and finding your passion always brings you these three queries: (1) why were you born; (2) who are you really; and (3) what do you want to do with your life. Answering these questions will provide you with blueprints of your goals and the path towards the achievement of these goals.

Creating you own personal vision

Writing down your own personal vision is the first step towards the realization of your lifetime goals. It is important to note though that these goals should always be realistic. Your personal vision can be divided into three major parts:

- Your Work-life game plan/ Long-term goal
- Your Private-life game plan
- Your complete game plan

These are the steps towards drafting your personal vision:

- List down your separate primary goals for each part - for your career and for your private life.
- Next, create mini-goals or steps that you will help lead you towards the achievement of the primary aim. For example, write down specific trainings or experiences that you would like to take prepare you for the next level of your journey towards your lifetime goal.
- Set deadlines for each primary goal and mini-goal so that you always have a timeline in mind. This will help you set your pace.
- Lastly, write affirmations on each objective/mini-goal that you identify. The affirmation should contain the reasons why this goal is important and how it would help you inch you closer to your primary goal.

Chapter Six: Warning - Attitude Hazards Ahead

Step 6: Be proactive.

You should assume a never give up, never quit attitude. Always try to give yourself enough time to prepare for each activity you enlist into. Preparation is one thing that fuels attitude into action.

Having Enough Prep Time

Preparation is important because it one major source of confidence for you. It conditions your mind to think that no obstacle can ever hinder you from achieving your goals. People might try to put you down and discourage you from continuing on with your plans but having cultivated a positive attitude, you will simply take criticisms like these as a form of challenge and continue to move on with your strategy.

Maintaining Control In Spite Of Attitude Hazards

Even when you totally instilled a positive attitude, life will always have minor inconveniences that would sometimes prove to attitude hazards. But if you remain level headed and optimistic, accepting these minor bumps along the way as part of journey to success, you are certainly assured of nothing but success.

When you learn to overcome these minor annoyances and interruptions, you are pretty much sure that you can hurdle the major ones later on. Just remain grounded and focused on your goals.

Preactive vs. Inactive

Cultivating a positive attitude also requires you to be preactive. By being preactive, you learn to anticipate situations even before they arise. Because even the most prepared individual will not be excused from suffering life's disasters. But if you are preactive, its impact on you can be cushioned.

Catastrophe is inevitable. Natural disasters will occur and these are situations you can never be sufficiently prepared for. When they occur, you could get thrown off-course. But learn to reestablish your goals and your routine. This will help you adapt and eventually recover.

Facing the Hazards of Fear; Keeping your faith

Fear is one deadly phenomenon. When it attacks, it always renders you immobile, indecisive and lost. However, there are ways in which you can take control of you fear. These are the following:

1. Seek help for your fear
2. Strengthen your faith through prayers
3. Communicate your fear to people you trust
4. Be in touch with your inner dialogue

Victory lies on the other side of each challenge

Stop worrying too much because whatever difficulty you are experiencing right now is only temporary. Assure yourself that victory is always on the other side of the fence. Find your way towards it. Channel your energies on things you can control and stay optimistic that you will eventually get favorable results. Don't let yourself become a victim of additional attitude hazards like self-doubt, frustration, fear of failure, anxiety, anger, and blame. Just stay focused and keep your cool.

Response vs. Reaction

A response is a positive and constructive mental adjustment. It is your offense and defense against negative thoughts. A reaction, on the other hand, only involves emotions and does not usually do anything to alleviate the difficulty that you are currently experiencing. Work on being a responsive individual rather than a reactive one.

Chapter Seven: Your Attitude Tool Kit

Step 7: Discover how to motivate yourself

Reach into the attitude tool kit

If you delve deeper into your inner positive defenses you might just be surprised to discover that you have built in tools to help you neutralize negative attitudes. They just need some conditioning and they are good to go. These attitude tools are affirmations, self-motivation, visualization, attitude talk, powerful greetings, enthusiasm, spiritual empowerment, humor and exercise. These can help you stay focused, build confidence and eliminate counter productive thoughts.

Attitude Tool 1: Self-coaching through affirmations

- Affirmations are statements of confidence and faith in your abilities. This involves the processes of repetition, feeling and imagining. Its five major attributes are: (1) it should be uniquely yours; (2) it should be uplifting; (3) it should deal with the current situation; (4) it should paint a picture in your mind; and (5) it should touch your heart. These statements should start with I AM not with I TRY, I WISH, or I HOPE.

Attitude Tool 2: Self-motivation through discovering your motives

- The basic human motives for action are love, self-preservation, anger, financial gain, and fear. The strongest among these are love, fear and financial gain. It is imperative that you discover what motivates you in order to have the passion you need to achieve your success.
- It is also important that you realize that motivation is not permanent. Therefore, you have to take some effort in doing something daily to maintain your energy, focus and enthusiasm. In order for you to be able to cultivate self-motivation, you should at least have these five qualities: enthusiasm, a positive outlook, a positive physiology, positive memories and belief in yourself and in your potentials.

Attitude Tool 3: The Power of Visualization

- Visualization is a powerful method of self-therapy. It produces a calming effect and helps you remain focused by detaching too much emotion. It works well with affirmations to improve your attitude and self-motivation. It sets your mind towards positive results and goal achievement.

Attitude Tool 4: Attitude Talk for Positive Internal Dialogue

- Attitude talk is a form of mind conditioning. This method will help you face new directions through overriding your past negative thoughts and erasing or replacing them with conscious positive inner dialogues.
- Your mind works just like a computer. Sometimes major influences like the television, newspapers, and snide comments from other people program your mind to expect nothing but negative events. You should learn to filter out negative thoughts brought about by negative ideas from these factors.

Attitude Tool 5: The Power in A Positive Greeting

- When you're feeling down, don't say what you feel. You should instead tell people around you what you want to feel. Use words that will lift up not only your spirit but those around you as well. Bear in mind that great power lies in these things: the words you use, the things you do, and the things you say.
- People who view life as a beautiful gift are the ones whose company is sought after. Because such a feeling is contagious and who would not one to be inflicted by such an attitude.

Attitude Tool 6: Enthusiasm, a Vital Tool for Staying Motivated

- Enthusiasm maintains positive disposition and helps keep you motivated. It is the most empowering and attractive characteristics one can ever display. It is the actual translation of the spirit within you. It illustrates your faith towards the eventual realization of your goals. It sums up this equation: commitment + determination + spirit.

Attitude Tool 7: Connecting To Your Spiritual Empowerment

- Faith is one great source of powerful and positive motivation. Spirituality is one major part of the human being. Just as the physical body needs to be fed and nourished with food, the spirit requires the same amount of feeding as well. One major source of food for the spirit is the Bible.

Attitude Tool 8: Lighten Up Your Life with Humor

- Humor flushes out stress. It helps your body generate more positive energy to fuel you in your daily goings-on. This is idea supported as well by science. Studies show that laughter helps your body produce endorphin which is one major factor in the physical healing process of the human body.

Attitude Tool 9: Exercising Will Help Keep You Motivated

- Just like laughter, exercising also facilitates the production of endorphins. Exercise does not always have to be done in the gym. There are simple exercises ranging from taking mental vacations to stretching exercises that could help you relax while even at work.

Chapter Eight: Build Your A-Team (Attitude Team)

Step 8: Build supportive relationships.

We are formed by many hands and hearts

No one exists for long as an island. Everybody needs people to stay alive. Feedbacks from others help you maintain a straight perspective, tune up your wisdom channel, and help you cultivate honesty and build support.

Let go of your ego and adopt a humble disposition. Identify the major characters that comprise your A-team (or your attitude team). Recognize that these people influenced you to become what you are now. All of them have played an important role in your life. Learn to appreciate the value of their support.

Building relationships with the right attitude

You only reap what you sow. If you have always been giving as a friend, expect to always have people around to support and help you especially during moments of dire need. Most friendships endure because of the symbiotic nature of the relationship. The mutual benefit doesn't have to be of equal value always for each of the parties involved. In real and lasting friendships, there is never a definite measurement to the help that you can extend to a friend. What matters is your readiness to extend a helping hand whenever it is needed.

Building your own A-Team

Build a team with whom you have shared values and visions because it is the best foundation for lasting relationships. Make a list of the people who had been qualified to be in your A-team. This will serve as a constant reminder that you are never alone in this world. It will help you appreciate these people and at the same time, bring you humility. Try to keep open communications with any member of your A-team.

Evaluating your attitudes about relationships

Generally, the following are the observed attitudes from people who have maintained long and lasting relationships.

- Unconditional acceptance and respect for others . You should not demand anything from friendship. When you give something, don't expect anything in return. Rewards will come unexpectedly but you should never anticipate them.
- Trustworthiness earns trust . You win trust by showing other people how dependable you are. You become trustworthy when you show up when you said you would. You earn honor by letting people feel how honorable you are.
- Be nice without expecting anything back . Simple acts of genuine kindness go a long, long way. Offer such and you will be rewarded with friendship.
- Practice loyalty, even when it loses popularity . Being a friend calls for you to be there during times of need. It calls for your constant support and feedback. These feedbacks don't have to be always pleasant. Sometimes, as a true friend, you have to say things that are unwanted but are crucially needs to be communicated.
- Offer a listening ear and an understanding heart and mind . When you listen as a friend, do it objectively. Avoid being judgmental. Your worth is not measured by the judgments you make. Although difficult, this is the only way you can offer good insight and advice.

Remove toxic negativity from your A-team

There are four major types of toxic people, they are:

- Judges and critics. These refer to people who like to spend considerable time judging and criticizing the actions of others. They are best when offering demoralizing comments and making moral/value judgments.
- Professional victims. These people like to play the blame game. They like to hype things up and blame others when the project ends up in failure. They never take responsibility for their actions.
- Soap opera stars. These are attention-seeking people. They like to be the focus of attention always. They like to stay dramatic always, thinking that this is the best way to catch everybody's attention. They never listen to advice though. They just like to pray the grieving party always.
- Bitter to the core. They are the epitome of "misery loves company". These represent people who become unhappy when they see their friends succeed. They usually have nothing to offer but sarcastic, hurtful and harmful remarks.

If you some people in your A-list nurture any of the attributes above, better start limiting your exposure to these people already. They will bring you nothing but tragedy.

Creating a Non Toxic Zone

The best defense against toxic people attacks: finding your center and your focus. By staying positive and choosing to maintain that productive attitude, you are slowly creating your own non-toxic zone. Once you are able to do so, toxic people will find it hard to knock you off course.

Chapter Nine: Develop A Whatever-It-Takes Attitude

Step 9: See Changes as an Opportunity.

Changes are inevitable. The only question here is: how do you respond to the various changes that come your way? The book cited four different ways on which people deal with change:

- Shift into neutral.
- Adopt a negative attitude.
- Adopt a counterproductive attitude.
- Adopt a positive attitude.

Among the four, which do you think would work best in bringing out your potentials to it fullest?

Understanding the Process of Change

Overcoming the fear of change requires you to undergo a certain process. Here are the stages:

Stage One: Have I got what it takes?

Your fear to take risk is at its strongest at this stage. However, you should realize that staying in your comfort zone won't get you anywhere. Your only choice is to let go of the fear and work hard to attain the best output you can get.

Stage Two: How much is this going to hurt?

You might feel some sense of disorientation and insecurity when you are in this stage. You might feel lost. But hang on. You got this far. Try to create positive affirmations to help you get through. Stay with dynamic and positive people.

Stage Three: Action Produces Results

Your confidence will start growing at this stage. Try not to go overboard. Relish the good feeling brought about by self-assurance but don't be overwhelmed. Work on maintaining your sense of balance. Keep your faith and spirituality high.

Stage Four: Whatever-It- takes

And you are here! You reached your goal finally. Don't stay too comfortable though. Try to avoid nesting into another comfort zone. Work instead on stretching your capabilities by setting up new but realistic goals.

Ten Strategies for Creating Positive Attitudes about Change

1. Tap Into the power of your subconscious
2. Pause to reflect
3. Keep your long term goals in mind
4. Avoid learned helplessness
5. Maintain a balance

6. Acknowledge change
7. Convert threats into opportunities
8. Turn the change into a challenge
9. Turn on the positive energy
10. Seek support from members of your a-team

Chapter Ten: Make A Mark That Cannot Be Erased

Step 10: Leave a Lasting Legacy

After learning to appreciate the real you and achieving your goal of keeping a positive attitude, you should now realize that all that goodness should not stay bottled up. Start sowing your seeds of love and positivity. Learn to give and share your blessings because at the end of the day, your definition of fulfillment will be the same as everybody else's. That is, making a difference - good, positive difference - on somebody else's life. Eventually, you will see that the reward you get from this effort will never be equaled by any material reward there is in this world.

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