ATTITUDE
By Charles Swindoll

The longer I live, the more I realize the impact of attitude on life. Attitude, to me, is more important than facts. It is more important than the past, than education, than money, than circumstances, than failures, than success, than what other people think or say or do.

It is more important than appearance, giftedness or skill. It will make or break a company... a church...a home.

The remarkable thing is we have a choice everyday regarding the attitude we will embrace for that day.

We cannot change our past ... we cannot change the fact that people will act in a certain way. We cannot change the inevitable. The only thing we can do is play on the one string we have, and that is our attitude ... I am convinced that life is 10% what happens to me and 90% how I react to it. And so it is with you...

Read the above section. Which statements were in agreement with your thoughts on attitude and why?

______________________________________________________________________
______________________________________________________________________
______________________________________________________________________

Understanding Attitudes

What is an attitude?

✓ Expectations (desired results)
✓ Perception (defining what’s happening)
✓ Thoughts (happy thoughts or negative thoughts)
✓ Feelings
✓ Energy (Bantry example – “flow”)
✓ Action (positive, neutral, or negative?)

Where do they come from?

✓ Formative years
✓ Environment around us

3 Types of People

✓ Spectators (watchers – play it safe – avoid risks)
✓ Critics (sideliners – fault-finders)
✓ Players (try to learn something new – take risks – not afraid of mistakes)
3 Types of Attitudes

- **Players** – see the “good” – don’t fear change – confident - happy
- **Spectators** – rely on others – don’t seek control – let someone else do it
- **Critics** – find fault – avoid change – angry – pessimistic – hateful

Attitudes are communicated with words and nonverbally.

There are “I can” types, “I can’t” types, and “I don’t want to” types.

**Positive attitudes** – lead to better jobs, achievement of goals, etc.
**Negative attitudes** – cause failure, loss of jobs, relationship problems, etc.
**Neutral attitudes** – missed opportunities, failure to develop new skills, etc.

Self-assessment Activity: Pass out “How to Analyze Your Attitude” by D. G. Simmermacher.
Read through introduction and directions together and have students complete the inventory on their own. When finished, discuss results.

### A New Attitude

Work Attitudes - they may be yours, but everyone knows them!

Work Attitudes are those feelings that you have about the job you do, the place you work and the people you work with.

Negative work attitudes will spread throughout the work site if you let them get out of control. However, the same goes for positive work attitude - a positive work attitude can spread to others also.

It is vital to measure your attitude towards work as it will impact your motivation and initiative, your actual output on the worksite and your ability to get promoted and increase your income.

It also spreads to your children - children know when we value the work we do and feel appreciation towards the job.

Today we are going to take a deeper look at how attitude affects not only our lives, but the lives of those around us. Attitudes are positive, negative or neutral views of a person, behavior or event. Attitude, however, is a choice.

Activity:
Give students a blank piece of paper and have them fold it in half. On one side have them list all the negative aspects in their life and on the other side list all the positive aspects in their life. Discuss the amount and content of things on their lists.
- Which list outweighs the other?
Which list was easier to make?
- Why would it be easier to make your negative list?
Discuss how we tend to focus on the negative aspects of our live, though not intentionally, and we dwell on these things as factors that rule our lives.

Have students set these lists aside - we will come back to them later.

(Handout: "A New Attitude" packet - subsections are listed below with activities)

Give students highlighters to highlight sections of this packet that they feel will be useful to them to refer back to since there is an abundance of information in it.

I. The Importance of a Positive Attitude

Have students take turns reading. Interrupt to allow for discussion of important points.

II. Developing and Maintaining a Positive Mental Attitude

Have students take turns reading. Interrupt to allow for discussion of important points.

Activity:
Give students a blank sheet of paper. On one side, have them list everything they are good at. On the other side, have them write self-affirmations to counter some of the negative feelings they have. Discuss what a positive self-affirmation is and give them some examples to get started.

III. Using a Positive Mental Attitude to Get What You Want

Have students take turns reading. Interrupt to allow for discussion of important points.

Activity:
Give students a blank sheet of paper. Have students write down what they believe to be all the past failures and negative happenings in their lives. When they are done, tell them it is important to realize the strengths you have gained from these experiences, even though negative, and that all experiences have made them who they are today - hopefully, stronger. Next, tell them to take a minute to pull all the positives they can think of from this negative list and hold onto them. Finally, tell them that they are going to let go of the negatives and move on with their lives. Have them physically rip up their lists and throw them in the garbage. Now you can't dwell on these things anymore.

IV. Reversing a Negative Attitude

Have students take turns reading. Interrupt to allow for discussion of important points.

Activity:
Have students look back at their negative aspects list. Tell them that we don't always have control over things in our lives. However, with the things that we cannot control we can still choose our attitude toward them. Have them highlight the items on their list that they have control over. These are the things they can make plans to change for the better. The items that are not highlighted (uncontrollable) are ones they need to find the positives in. Make sure to talk about the difference between controllable and uncontrollable and have students give examples.

If time allows have them begin writing plans to change the controllable things and lists of the positives for those that are uncontrollable.

V. Others and Your Attitude

Have students take turns reading. Interrupt to allow for discussion of important points.

-OR-

Have students take home to read on their own if time does not allow. This topic is usually covered within discussion of the other subsections.

Optional Materials

Use these as in class exercises or as materials to take home.

- Handout: "The Winning Attitude" packet
- Handout: "Ten Steps to a Positive Attitude"
- Group Activity:
  - Form groups of 2 or 3 and assign the topic of "Improving Your Work Attitude." Each group can brainstorm and find resources on the internet in order to design their own handout explaining the importance of a positive attitude at work and listing steps to take to improve your work attitude. Have each group give a small oral presentation and share their handouts with the rest of the class.

Action Plan

Action plans are to be completed before they leave class. Instructor should check their action plans to make sure they understand the intended outcome of the activity - to take a small manageable step toward accomplishing something.
Use the *Reversing a Negative Attitude* activity that has students start plans for change and listing positive aspects in place of today's action plan.

-AND/OR-

Question: What step are you going to take to create a more positive attitude? Be specific. When will you start? Give yourself a deadline to complete this action plan.

-AND/OR-

Question: What is your work attitude? Do you like working? Why do you work? How will you create a more positive attitude about work?