

9

Attitude: The Zing Thing

Pradip Sinha

Attitude is one of the vital ingredients an individual should possess to reach today's skyrocketing altitudes of success. Having negative attitude could be fatal and leads to nowhere. Attitude alone determines success in one's career.

"The greatest discovery of our generation is that human beings can alter their lives by altering their attitudes. As you think, so shall you be."

– William James.

What is Attitude?

It goes without saying that management education plays an important role in determining one's career in today's corporate world, as the acquisition of this knowledge pumps a new ray of confidence and poise in individuals and makes them ready to meet the upcoming challenges and opportunities in both personal and professional life.

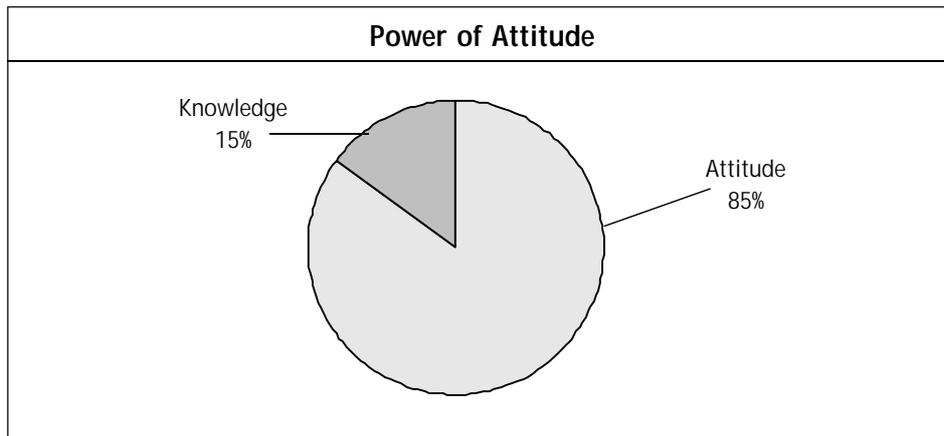
But, it has been often observed that the most critical and important aspect that makes or mars one's career, beyond the boundaries of management concepts and skills taught at different B-Schools, is 'Attitude'. The attitude of a person

decides his/her success. Irrespective of how much knowledge one gathers in his/her life, it would be extremely hard to climb up the ladder if he/she does not have the right attitude towards life and matters associated with them. A right attitude is a mixture of the 'WIN' principle where 'W' stands for hard work, 'I' stands for innovation and 'N' stands for never giving up at any stage. An attitude of a person can also be defined as the established set of ways he/she reacts to a particular person/situation based on his/her beliefs, values and own perceptions and assumptions he/she holds of that person or situation. An attitude of a person can easily be apparent and understandable through his/her behavior. It is further said that one's attitude determines one's behavior. Attitude comes from judgment. Most attitudes in individuals are a result of social learning from the environment.

The body language of a person is nothing but the outcome of his/her mental attitude. Depending on one's attitude, one reacts in a way, either verbal or non-verbal, that is understood by others. Studies and researches in this field have revealed that mind does not dictate the manner of reacting to a situation. However, they reveal that to every situation one has the option to react in a way one wants. If a person feels happy about something, it is because he/she has chosen to be happy about it and not because it was dictated by the mind. It has been seen that an individual reacts both in a happy as well as an unhappy manner to the same situation over a period of time. This clearly clarifies that attitude does not come directly from the mind nor it exists from birth. It can be developed over time. So, since we have the power in us to decide, it's advisable to react in a positive manner most of the times. Just as yawning, crying and laughing are infectious, attitude too is very infectious. The first thing people pick in a face-to-face communication/interview is the other person's attitude. Long before uttering a word, one's attitude can infect the other who sees you with the same behavior.

It's not what happens to you that counts rather it is how you react to what happens to you when you confront an unexpected problem of any kind which counts in the long run. Also, researchers from the leading American universities prove that people who have a positive attitude show significantly less signs of aging, they are less likely to become frail and are stronger and healthier than those that have negative attitude. Researches in this field also found that a person

having a positive attitude towards life improves his/her personal health because it is more likely that they would succeed in life. Leading researcher in the field of attitude, Dr. Glen Ostir, said, "I believe that there is a connection between mind and body, and that our thoughts and attitudes/emotions affect physical functioning, and overall health, whether through direct mechanisms such as immune function or indirect mechanisms such as social support networks."



Barrie Hawkins, author of *How to Generate Great Ideas*, believes that "the difference between more and less creative people is their attitude towards the problems they face and how they view them." It was positive attitude that gave Alexander the motivation of conquering the whole world. It was this attitude of the great Mahatma Gandhi and his belief in non-violence that has brought freedom for India from the British rule of over 200 years. It was this attitude of Azim Premji and Narayana Murthy that helped them establish global brands like Wipro and Infosys respectively from nowhere. There are many such instances, which show that a person is able to make it big only because they have the right attitude to do that particular thing. Attitude is everything. Ajay Chowdhry, Chairman and CEO, HCL Info Systems, believes that people with great attitude turn out to be great managers. He further said, "Your attitude can make or mar your career. The top of the pyramid is very narrow; there's only room for the very best in the business and so having the right attitude gives you an edge over others to reach there and stay there longer."

Attitude at Workplace

Having a right attitude at workplace is of utmost importance in today's cut-throat competitive world where everyone is pushing the other to secure a better position. It has been seen time and again that people do get carried away in offices. Being politically correct at one's workplace does not mean always doing the right thing at the right place. It specifically means respecting your colleagues and seniors, learning from them, and importantly containing your temper when there is a difference of opinion with your senior. The following rules help in carrying the right attitude to workplace.

Never be Rigid with Your Views

It's very common that we all have some or the other preconceived notions and thoughts that guide our thinking pattern, i.e., the way we think of some particular person or situations. Being stereotype won't push you in your career, it's important to keep your mind open and flexible to everything and everyone. Preconceiving is a strict no-no at workplace.

Get Out of Your Comfort Zone

People quite often are drawn towards those who seem to be like them in whatever way. This is not a positive aspect in today's globalized workplace. You have to budge an inch from your comfort zone, i.e., you should try to make efforts to be or even to get to know others with different ethnicity, religion or even from different nationality in the organization.

Never be Harsh with Your Humor

This is the most common mistake committed by an employee at the workplace. One should be extremely cautious of the kind of humor he/she shares with colleagues. Many a time, it has been seen that harsh jokes often lead to a souring relationship. It generally happens with the young who join an organization straight from college; it's often a huge difference for them in terms of professional environment. One should never ever crack jokes at the expense of women and individuals with disabilities or intending any particular person. There should not be any room for such humour at workplace.

Four Steps in Achieving a Super Attitude by Brian Tracy

Brian Tracy is one of America's leading authorities on the development of human potential and personal effectiveness. He is a dynamic speaker with a wonderful ability to inform and inspire audiences toward peak performance and higher levels of achievement. He addresses more than 250,000 men and women each year, including the executives and staff of IBM, Deloitte Touche, McDonnell Douglas and The Million Dollar Round Table, on the subjects of personal and professional development. His exciting talks and seminars on leadership, sales, management and personal effectiveness bring about immediate changes and long-term results.

Here are four things you can do to assure that your attitude is the very best it can be, under all circumstances:

Focus on the Future: Whatever challenges you face, focus on the future rather than on the past. Instead of worrying about who did what and who is to blame, focus on where you want to be and what you want to do. Get a clear mental image of your ideal successful future, and then take whatever action you can to begin moving in that direction. Get your mind, your thoughts, and your mental images on the future.

Focus on the Solution: Whenever you're faced with a difficulty, focus on the solution rather than the problem. Think and talk about the ideal solution to the obstacle or setback, rather than wasting time rehashing and reflecting on the problem. Solutions are inherently positive, whereas problems are inherently negative. The instant that you begin thinking in terms of solutions, you become a positive and constructive human being.

Look for the Good: Assume that something good is hidden within each difficulty or challenge. Dr. Norman Vincent Peale, a major proponent of positive thinking, once said, "Whenever God wants to give us a gift, he wraps it up in a problem." The bigger the gift you have coming, the bigger the problem you will receive. But the wonderful thing is that if you look for the gift, you will always find it.

Look for the Valuable Lesson: Assume that whatever situation you are facing at the moment is exactly the right situation that need to ultimately be successful. This situation has been sent to you to help you learn something, to help you become better, to help you expand and grow.

Source: www.briantracy.com

Always be Curious

Entering a workplace always gives tremendous amount of opportunity to learn new things, new culture and get acquainted to new people. One must inculcate the habit of building relationships with others who are different from them. Always ask questions with an intention to learn more. If the approach towards learning is honest and sincere, then others around you will extend their helping hands and will respect and appreciate your personal views.

Respect Opinions

Be extremely careful about how to interpret things like news and current events. If you feel the need to voice your opinions on the ongoing politics and any such events at work, make sure you do so in a way that demonstrates to others that you are open to hearing others' opinions too as a thorough professional.

Always Remember the Golden Rule

As an old saying goes that “do unto others as you would like others do unto you”, you should always behave with others in a manner in which you would like them to behave with you. If one behaves and treats others with due respect, care, love and dignity, the overall professional experience will be much more positive and results more fruitful.

One can also attain a positive mental framework by becoming more solution-oriented, by seeking for the valuable lesson from every setback, by taking some time out in order to write out every detail of the problem and then taking the most logical step to solve it.

Conclusion

Attitude is all about how an individual thinks about himself and the situations around him. It's how they feel about the past, the present and the future. A recent Harvard University research found that when a person gets a job, 85% of the time it's because of their attitude, and only 15% because of smartness and how many facts and figures they know. The attitude of the person to learn more is of utmost importance.

Attitude is the power by which an individual can achieve and reach the pinnacle of success. As a tall building relies on its strong foundation, so does the attitude serve as the foundation of success in one's career and life.

Jeff Keller, President, Attitude Is Everything Inc., said, “Success, it's a matter of having a positive attitude and applying motivational principles on a daily basis.”

(Pradip Sinha was Associate Consultant, Icfai Centre for Management Research, Hyderabad and can be reached at pradips123@rediffmail.com).