

# *7 Ways to Change Your Attitude When You Can't Change Anything Else*

by Marc Chernoff



Attitude is a little thing that makes a big difference.

Sometimes changing your circumstances isn't possible – or simply not possible soon enough. You can't get to a new job in an instant. You can't make someone else change against his or her will. And you certainly can't erase the past. So what options do you have left? Change your perception, belief or opinion about your circumstances. Doing so will help you change your attitude and ultimately allow you to grow beyond the struggles you can't control.

The Greek philosopher Epictetus said it perfectly more than 2,000 years ago: "People are disturbed, not by things (that happen to them), but by the principles and opinions which they form concerning (those) things. When we are hindered, or disturbed, or grieved, let us never attribute it to others, but to ourselves; that is, to our own principles and opinions."

Modern behavioral science agrees too. American psychologist Albert Ellis, famous for developing rational emotive behavior therapy (REBT), has proven that how people react to events is determined predominantly by their view of the events, not the events themselves.

Have no clue how to change your perception of things – and improve your attitude? Here are seven easy ways to start:

## **Still your mind**

In order to gain conscious control of what goes on in your mind, you need to develop a keen awareness for this process. What helps is to hold still for a moment, take a deep breath and

free your mind of all the chatter that's going on inside and all around. This makes room for a change of state, for something new to enter. So give yourself a break. Don't say you can't. Yes, you have battles out in the world to fight, insecurities to overcome, loved ones to contend with and goals to achieve, but a break from it all is necessary. It's perfectly healthy to pause and let the world spin without you for a while. If you don't, you will burn yourself out. You must refill your bucket on a regular basis. That means catching your breath, finding quiet solitude, focusing your attention inward, and otherwise making time for recovery from the chaos of your routine.

### **Change your focus**

From the awareness of your thoughts and emotions you become able to consciously redirect your focus. It's time to take it willingly away from something that drags you down, and zero it in on something that inspires you. Focus on the next logical, meaningful step. There are no hopeless situations; there are only people who have grown hopeless about them. So keep your hope alive through positive awareness. Don't let the pain make you desperate. Don't let the negativity wear off on you. Don't let the bitterness steal your sweetness. Spend your energy moving forward. Change your thoughts and you change your reality. Our thoughts are the makers of our moods, the inventors of our dreams, and the creators of our will. That's why we must sort through them carefully, and choose to respond only to those that will help us build the life we want, and the outlook we want to hold as we're living it.

### **Surrender your worries and embrace acceptance**

Realize that, somewhere within us all, there does exist a supreme self who is eternally at peace. Because inner peace does not depend on external conditions; it's what remains when you've surrendered your ego and worries. Peace can be found within you at any place and at any time. It's always there, patiently waiting for you to turn your attention toward it. Peace of mind arrives the moment you come to peace with what's on your mind. It happens when you let go of the need to be anywhere but where you are, physically and emotionally. This acceptance of the way things are creates the foundation for inner harmony. The need for something to be different in this moment is nothing more than a worry, and worries simply lead you in circles. Remember, the same part of you that longs for peace is the part of you that experiences peace. It is not complicated to achieve and is as close as your next thought.

### **Practice gratitude**

What you must realize is that you don't really need more; you just need to appreciate what you have. It's a beautiful and bittersweet way of thinking all at once. If you don't have what you want now, you don't have what you want, but you still have enough. Be thankful for what is, and also be thankful for what has not yet come to you. For that means there are still many possibilities available. Find peace in the thought that you can't ever have it all or know it all either. You are always just a fraction of the whole. For if you weren't, there would be nothing more to experience. Value what you know, and also value the countless things you don't yet understand. For in what you don't understand, there is the joy of growth. Life will always be incomplete and a bit asymmetrical. Realize this and embrace it. Be happy and sad at the same time, be hungry and thankful at the same time, be nervous and excited at the same time, and be OK with it.

### **Reframe your struggles as growing pains**

Remind yourself that there's scarcely any happiness, passion or success without struggle. If the road is easy, you're likely going the wrong way. Everything that happens helps you grow, even if it's hard to see right now. Circumstances will direct you, correct you, and perfect you over time. Sometimes these circumstances knock you down, hard. There will be times when

it seems like everything that could possibly go wrong is going wrong. And you might feel like you will be stuck in this rut forever, but you won't. When you feel like quitting, remember that sometimes things have to go very wrong before they can be right. Sometimes you have to go through the worst, to arrive at your best. Because our most significant opportunities are often found in times of great difficulty. Thus, you will face your greatest opposition when you are closest to your biggest miracle.

### **Look for the beginning in every ending**

Everything in life has to come to an end sometime. It's important to acknowledge and accept the end of an era – to walk away sensibly when something has reached its conclusion. Closing the door, turning the page, moving on, etc. It doesn't matter what you call it; what matters is that you leave the past where it belongs so you can enjoy the life that's still available to be lived. This ending is not THE END, it's just your life beginning again in a new way. It's a point in your story where one chapter fades into the next. Take a look at the first page of this new chapter; it's a beautiful one.

### **When all else fails, use your body**

The mind reflects your body by responding to its levels of tension, rate of breath, speed of movement and mental focus. Likewise your body mirrors your thoughts, feelings, mood, and responds to your state of mind, the questions you ask and the words you speak. So if the mind and body are intrinsically connected – meaning that one has a direct affect on the other – it becomes clear that if we directly and consciously take control of one, it will influence and transform the other. So by mindfully adjusting how you use your body you can directly influence your state of mind, and dramatically transform your attitude. Just imagine you're sitting there in a bad mood, shoulders hanging forward, shallow breathing and frowning. Go ahead and do this right now to experience how it influences your state of mind. And then do the opposite: stand up straight and put a big smile on your face. Take some deep, strong breaths and stretch your arms into the air. Notice how you feel better? Bottom line: Take the vehicle your creator has given you and use it! Your body is the best tool for changing your attitude in an instant.

### **Afterthoughts**

I've said it before and I'll say it again, the mind is your battleground. It's the place where the greatest conflict resides. It's where half of the things you thought were going to happen, never did happen. But if you allow those thoughts to dwell in your mind, they will succeed in robbing you of peace, joy, and ultimately your life. You will think yourself into a nervous breakdown, into depression, and into defeat. I know because I've been there.

Truthfully, there is so much about your fate that you can't control, it makes no sense to neglect all the things you CAN control. You can decide how you spend your time, whom you socialize with, whom you share your life, money and energy with. You can pick your words and the tone of voice in which you speak to others. You can select what you will eat, read and study every day. You can choose how you're going to respond to unfortunate situations when they arise, and whether you will see them as curses or opportunities for growth... And most importantly, you can choose your attitude, which dictates pretty much everything else.

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