

# Positive attitude DO YOU HAVE IT ?

The lives of those who are successful are governed and guided by the thoughts of their best hour, greatest optimism, and most triumphant experience. Unsuccessful people, on the other hand, are controlled by their past failures and doubts. The creative genius, Thomas Edison invented one thousand and ninety three things. He held more patents than any man, at least one every year for sixty-five consecutive years. What made him what he was, was his attitude – consistent and positive!

Sanjeev Baitmangalkar

*"There is little difference in people, but that little difference makes a big difference. The little difference is attitude. The big difference is whether it is positive or negative."*

- Clement Stone

Being called a genius, Thomas Edison once said, "Genius is 99 per cent perspiration and one per cent inspiration". Perhaps a third quality that he left out was his 'positive attitude'. An optimist who saw the best in everything he once declared, "if we did all things we were capable of doing, we would literally astound ourselves." And he didn't consider the failures when it took him ten thousand tries before he found the right materials, and invented the incandescent light bulb. With each attempt or failure he learnt how the light bulb could not be made. "Many of life's

failures were people who did not realise how close they were to success when they gave up" said Edison.

"The greatest discovery of my generation is that; human beings can alter their lives by altering the attitude of their mind," quoted psychologist William James. Thomas Edison's laboratory and factory that was built over fourteen

buildings in West Orange, New Jersey was world famous, with its main factory bigger than three football fields. This is where he conceived his inventions, developed prototypes and manufactured products for customers. This is where he spent most of his time, and even slept. On one cold December day in 1914 his beloved laboratory caught fire and was razed to grounds. When people gathered after the fire he said, "I am sixty seven but not too old to make a fresh start, I am long on ideas but short on time. I expect to be able to live only upto a hundred." He died at the age of eighty-four.

As an inventor he had seen many failures, what kept him going in spite of it all, was his positive attitude. As the television journalist David Brinkley says, "A successful man is one who can lay a firm foundation with the bricks others have thrown at him." If you desire to be an effective leader, having a positive attitude is essential. It determines your level of contentment and impacts on how others interact with you.

The phrase 'your attitude determines your altitude' has almost become a cliché. Our attitude towards life determines life's attitude towards us. Our attitude towards others will determine theirs towards



us. Our attitude towards a task will be detrimental or beneficial to its outcome. Having a positive attitude does not guarantee success, but it will definitely improve our lives. Good thinking is fundamental to being an effective and successful leader.

Negative thinking creates clouds at times of making critical decisions. When a person always looks for, and finds the negative things in life he cultivates a habit that is hard to overcome. The negative person will always miss a positive opportunity. Blurred by his negative thinking, he will see every circumstance as a series of obstacles. The difference between an obstacle and an opportunity is merely your attitude.

Negative thinking is contagious. The proverb 'birds of a feather flock together' is more true with people who actually change and become like one another by spending time together. Be careful; if you spend more time with people who think negatively, it will begin to affect you. It's like radiation; it affects you without you knowing it as you soak in it even unintentionally. So, you should intentionally move away from negative thinking, negative speech, and negative actions. "Nothing is as hard as it looks; everything is more rewarding than you expect; and if anything should go right, it will be at the best possible moment", says Maxwell's Law. Negative thinking decreases hope. And where there is no hope in the future, there is also no power in the present. For negative people the glass of water is never half full, it is always half empty. Negative thinking limits our potential and restricts us from enjoying life.

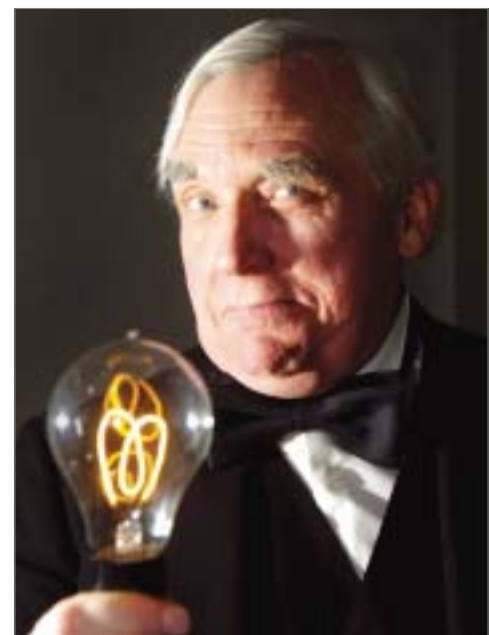
"The environment you emerge out of ... your thoughts ... your beliefs ... your ideals ... your philosophy ... is the only climate you will ever live in", said Alfred Montapert. Look around to see whether your environment is negative or positive. Places and circumstances never guarantee happiness. Happiness is a choice. Once you have decided, it's much easier using positive thinking.

A few points to think about to hone your skills in positive thinking:

**Your attitude is your choice:** "The last of our human freedom is to choose our attitude in any given circumstances", wrote psychologist Victor Frankl who survived a Nazi death camp where no matter how bad the ordeal, he never let his attitude deteriorate. The average person will wait for someone else to motivate him, while he believed that his circumstances are responsible for the way he thought. There is this famous argument, which came first – circumstance or attitude? It's like a chicken and egg situation. Really does it matter? It's not what happens to you that is important, it's how you react to it that is. No matter what happened to you yesterday, your attitude is a choice today.

**Your actions follow your attitude:** "The winner's edge is not in a gifted birth, high IQ or talent. The winner's edge is all in the attitude, not aptitude. Attitude is the criterion for success", writes Denis Waitley. "Nothing can stop the man with the right mental attitude from achieving his goal; nothing on earth can help a man with the wrong mental attitude," puts W W Zeige. When you are a positive thinker, you put yourself in the position where you can act rather than react and therefore produce results.

**Your people mirror your attitude:** It is amazing people display a poor attitude and yet expect others to be upbeat. Maxwell's law of magnetism says 'Who you are is who you attract.' It is said if you act, walk and talk like the person you want to become then you will. If you hold successful positive thoughts in your mind, they will mirror in your attitude. "The man who acquires the ability to take full possession of his own mind can take possession



One of the most famous and prolific inventors of all time, Thomas Alva Edison exerted a tremendous influence on modern life.



of anything else to which he is justly entitled.” Give your thoughts to what is positive and successful; do not feed the weeds. While working outside India, one of my assignment was heading a textile machinery plant. I began to think of the potential market out there. I could cater to rather than just look at the captive internal market. The company had never done this before. Everybody told me why

it was not possible to sell these products to external customers and why the costs could not be brought down. The dominant thought in my mind was how to rule this lucrative textile machinery market and nothing else. As I began to talk about my strategy of how I would do it, people began to see it that way. Little wonder then we eventually cut costs and lead-times and made the sales. Your people will mirror your attitudes, be careful whether it is positive or negative. **Maintain, not regain:** Maintain a good attitude rather than trying to regain one. The fruit of positive thinking is positive living. “Where success is concerned, people are not measured in inches or pounds, or college degrees, or family background: they are measured by the size of their thinking,” believes professor and author David Schwartz. How big you think is determined by the way you think and that determines the size of your accomplishments. Can you control your thinking? “We cannot direct the wind ... but we can adjust the sails.” Understand the power of your attitude:

- It is the ‘advance man’ in our true selves
- Its roots are inwards but its fruits outward
- It is our best friend or our worst enemy
- It is more honest and more consistent than our words

- It is an outward look based on our experiences
- It is a thing that draws people to us or repels them
- It is never content until it is expressed
- It is the librarian of our past
- It is the speaker of our present
- It is the prophet of our future.

### Bringing it home

Here are a few things you can do to improve your attitude:

**Serve your mind the right food:** To me my wife has been a textbook of good attitudes, and those of you who know her know this to be true. I always fell short. She kept telling me everything. I listened, never acted. Last decade, she gifted me a Dr Schuller book that changed my thinking and consequently my attitude. I subsequently bought and read many hundreds of other books over the last decade, which have changed me so much that now sometimes she finds me too positive for her. It was an amazing experience, everything she had told me was decoded in those wonderful books, but now I connected well enough to imbibe, inculcate and practice. I even gifted many minds that needed such food and today I can tell you that it made a difference to them as well whether it was in India, South East Asia, Europe or the US. If you are starved of positive thinking you need to feed your mind with motivational material – through books and cassette tapes. I read books that encouraged a positive attitude; you can too. I listened to motivational tapes to cement better thinking; you can too. The more negative you are, the longer it will take for you to turn yourself around. But more importantly the urge has to be within you as it was for me. But like me you need to consume a steady diet of this material daily, to become a positive thinker. Positive thinking is a learnt skill, it’s a developed attitude.

**One goal at a time:** If you get into a rut of negativity because you feel you are not making progress, then set small achievable goals on a daily basis. When

I started my consulting business, to me success in the beginning was, making an appointment, fulfilling the request for a quote, doing a presentation, etc, before I launched into active consulting. You find out what it could be for you, depending on what catches the imagination. A pattern of positive achievement will also help you to stay positive.

**Keep it visible:** Writing down where you see it all the time helps. Write your goals on the wall rather than in your computer. Put up awards that you have won on your walls. Some even use motivational posters or letters of commendation. Find something that will work for you and use it.

The bottom line is that positive thinking can be learned by anyone, regardless of circumstances, temperament or intellect. Here is the story of two different men who were moving to a new town. As the first man reached the outskirts of the town, he stopped at the gas station and asked the attendant. "How are the people in this town?" The attendant replied, "Well how were the people in the last town you lived?" The first man replied, "They were really awful and unfriendly". The attendant answered, "The people are just the same in this town". Later that day, the second man drove into the same gas station and asked the attendant the same question: "How are the people in this town?" The attendant replied, "Well how were the people in the last town you lived?" The second man replied, "Oh they were wonderful, they were really friendly". The attendant answered, "You'll find the people are just the same in this town". The attendant knew that the attitude you bring with you is the attitude you get from others. You carry your attitude. It's your calling card. It's your result getter. It defines your level of success. What attitude do you carry? Positive, or negative? That's an important choice you make. **MMT**



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