

**Ferris State University – University College
Educational and Career Counseling Center
Starr 313, 591-3057**

Developing A Positive Mindset: Changing Your Attitude to Change Your Life

Attitude: You have a choice in the way you perceive whatever is going on. You have the power to choose whether you think the glass is half full or half empty. If you're currently struggling with making a commitment to completing your education you may want to ask yourself the following questions:

- What is your interest and attitude toward college?
- Is college important to you?
- Are you willing to give up whatever it takes in order to be successful in college?
- How clear are you about your own educational goals?
- Is school really important or worthwhile to you?
- Do you have a "Plan B" or second major in mind?
- Are you able to eliminate negative "self talk?"

Try to consider how a college degree fits into the future you see for yourself. Attitude is everything. These tips will help you create a winning attitude, and help others to do the same.

- **Use the right words.** Use statements like, "I have a positive attitude," or "We'll find a solution," in daily conversation. The words you use on a daily basis have a major impact on your attitude and moods.
- **Strive for Optimism.** Having a positive attitude is something you should strive for. It isn't something you are or are not, it is something you become.
- **What company do you keep?** Do your friends have negative attitudes? Does it rub off on you? Many times the company we keep can affect our attitudes. If your group at work or home negatively affects your attitude, take the necessary steps to change the situation. If all else fails, change the people around.
- **When you know you need a Change.** When you know you aren't happy, admit it to yourself and take action to reverse it. This is a very difficult thing to do especially when you aren't in the mood to admit things to yourself. It may be hard, but it is worth it. When you are negative, realize it and change it.

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- **Listen to What Others Say.** We may like to tell ourselves that we are positive people, but it's not always true. Listen to what your friends say about your attitude. They may say things that you don't want to hear, but sometimes the best changes in life come from constructive criticism.
- **What Makes You Happy?** When you know what makes you upset, you will be able to avoid these situations and save yourself the tension and frustration they bring. If it is a situation that you cannot avoid, learn how to make the best of it. This is vital to your attitude and mood. Your "happy" buttons will serve to improve your attitude again and again.
- **Appreciate the Things You Have.** Look around you and learn to appreciate everything you have in your life. Your family, friends, career, home, food, car, etc., is enough to create a positive attitude because no matter how bad things get in life, we still must be thankful for everything we still have. Put things into perspective, and enjoy the good things in your life.
- **Think Twice before you Act Once.** Look at problems logically. When you let emotion take over, you may do things that made sense at the time, but in the end were not the best choices. Before you act, think about what your action(s) will cause. If a person does something wrong that negatively affects you, don't attack. Think about the best response. Only after you have done this twice should you take action.
- **React VS. Respond.** These two words are the difference between a happy, enthusiastic, positive person and a sad, frustrated, negative person. When anything happens in life that affects you, both directly and indirectly, respond to the situation. This means you think about it, use reason to find a solution, and take the appropriate measures. When you react, you skip the reasoning stage and do what comes naturally in the moment. This only serves to cause more problems and frustration. Respond, do not react!
- **Don't Join the Gossip.** Don't join on the negative conversations around you. If you see a conversation heading towards that road, excuse yourself politely and leave.
- **Start in the Right Direction.** Wake up with a smile and with energy. You have a lot to accomplish and enjoy today. Life is short, and you are going to make the most of this day, and every day after that.
- **Focus in on interesting ideas or concepts** in every class you attend. Be prepared to "enjoy" your studies. Do not accept the work as drudgery or painful. Make it joyful by looking for a positive aspect.

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- **Associate with “positive” people** in your classes and on campus. I would suggest you partner up in study groups and even look to either socialize or join resume building activities clubs. High achievers, as do poor students with poor attitudes, rub off on anyone associating with either group.
- **Tell your friends of new discoveries.** Explain to them an idea or concept and share your passion and positivity! I would also suggest that you share this with your instructors or student advisors if they have time to devote to listening. It is always great to get feedback from an authority. Sometimes these sessions lead to information that would not normally come up in classes, lectures.
- **List and document your progress** in discovering new ideas. Keep a journal of your positive attitude and how it is effecting your outlook on school, how it is effecting how others perceive you, and how you feel in comparison to your “old” way of thinking.

Improving Your Attitude Toward School

- **Focus on what you can learn** rather than the degree you will earn.
- Write down your reasons for attending college and for earning a college degree.
- **Think about your reasons** for attending FSU? What do you want to accomplish while at FSU?
- **Make your college experience**, both classes and extracurricular activities, fit your interests and personality.
- **Define your career goals** by carefully researching your options and your interests.
- **Make a commitment** to following through with achieving your goals.
- **Take responsibility** for your future.
- **Attribute academic successes to your efforts.** Focus on the positives of your college experience. Let go of negativity.
- **Introduce yourself to your professors.** It is easier to learn from someone you know and like.
- **Look to develop friendships** with people who have similar interests and who have a positive attitude about life (and school).

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Improving Your Attitude Toward the World and People in General

- **Don't listen to your mind's negative thoughts.** The nature of the human mind is to offer worries, anxieties and fears. However how often do these actually come true? The mind can easily exaggerate problems making them appear more serious than they actually are. Our thoughts are also very powerful and will determine our perception of the world
- **Look for good qualities in people.** When dealing with other people, such as friends and families, it is often easy to see their numerous imperfections. If somebody has annoyed or upset you, just try to think of their good qualities. It is by focusing on people's good qualities that we are able to make progress. When we bring people's good attributes to the fore we make these qualities stronger and more powerful.
- **Remember bad events can lead to good things.** Often we wish things to occur in a certain way, when they don't happen as we planned we feel miserable. However no matter what happens we should try to make the best of the situation we are currently in. For example if you are made redundant it may become an opportunity to try new things and a new direction in your career.
- **Don't take yourself too seriously.** It is easy to feel bad if your ego is hurt. Nobody like being made a fool of in front of other people. However if you do not give too much attention to your ego and are able to laugh at yourself; you can turn embarrassing moments into opportunities for giving joy to yourself and others.
- **Difficulties lead to Progress.** Trials and tribulations give us the opportunity to progress. It would be unwise to look for problems but if we come across difficult situations or/ people we should look at this as an opportunity to overcome difficulties. For example, if we can learn to deal with argumentative people, it will be of immense benefit in our later life.
- **Remember the Benefits of Smiling.** Even when are difficulties are seemingly insurmountable there is no harm in smiling at our difficulties. When we smile it releases a chemical, serotonin, which makes us feel better. Also others will respond better to people who are smiling.
- **Happiness spreads.** Your state of mind and attitude will undoubtedly effect other people. When you can look on the bright side of life you will definitely inspire others to do the same. This will encourage you to do the right thing, as facing a problem with the right attitude is not just good for you, but your friends and colleagues as well.

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- **Life is always moving on.** Bad times don't last forever. Say to yourself, "This too will pass."
- **Live in the present.** The past cannot be changed and the future may not come. Bear in mind that this could be your last day on earth because one day it will be! Life is too short not to make the most of every day we are lucky enough to be given. Do what you can do and let go of the rest.
- **Pay attention to nature** as it is an endless source of joy. Take pleasure in the world around you, e.g. listen to the birds singing, bask in the warmth of the sun on your skin, enjoy a cool breeze, notice the perfume and color of flowers. Feed your spirit with beautiful scenery. Take the time to visit a beautiful garden, or grow one of your own. If you can't make the time, buy some fresh flowers so that you can still enjoy the beauty.
- **Count up the many good things in your life** and be grateful rather than spending time concentrating on what you don't have.
- **Be courteous.** Even just the gesture of giving way to someone on the road builds a bridge of positive feeling between you.
- **Remember that adversity can be an opportunity to learn** more about yourself, other people and how to cope with life, however unpleasant the actual lesson may be.
- **Be active**, get out there and see what the rest of the world is doing. Being active feels good and seeing what others are up to can actually inspire you to get more involved too.