

BLUE PRINT FOR SUCCESS

Rev. Fr. Dr. T.J Joshua.

There was a man who made a living by selling balloons at a fair. He had all colors of balloons, including red, yellow, blue and green. Whenever business was slow, he would release a helium-filled balloon into the air and when children saw it go up, they all wanted to buy one. They would come up to him and buy a balloon, and his sales would go up again. He continued this process all day. One day a little boy came to him and asked, "If you release a black balloon, would that also fly?" Moved by the boy's concern, the man replied with empathy. "Son, it is not the color of the balloon. It is what is inside that makes it go up".

The same thing applies to our lives. It is what is inside that consists. The things inside of/in us make us go up in our attitude. We notice that some people are more successful than others. Why? Is it because they have good luck? It could not be true. Those people achieve success simply because they think and act more effectively. Their attitude towards life and situations is a decisive factor for their success.

William James of Harvard University said, "the greatest discovery of my generation is that human beings can alter their lives by altering their attitude of mind". The strongest buildings we find, have the strongest foundations. Just like a great building stands on a strong foundation so does success. The foundation of success is attitude.

It is said that attitude is the most important word in the English language. It applies to every sphere of life, including one's personal and professional life. Can a student be a good student without a good attitude? Can an executive be a good executive without a good attitude? Can a parent, a teacher, a salesman, an employer or an employee be good in their roles without good attitude?

We all know the story of David and Goliath. The giant was bullying and harassing the children of Israel. There came a boy, a 17 year old shepherd, to visit his brothers and on seeing the giant he asked, "why don't you stand up and fight the giant?" the brothers were terrified and they replied. "Don't you see he is too big to miss". We all know what happened afterwards. David killed the giant with a sling. Same giant, different perception.

Our attitude determines how we look at a setback. To a positive thinker it can be a stepping stone to success. To a negative thinker, it can be a stumbling block.

Factors that determine our attitude:

Are we born with attitudes or do we develop them as we mature? What are the factors that form our attitude? There are primarily three factors that determine our attitude. They are:

1. Environment
2. Experience
3. Education

These are called the triple E's of attitude. Let us evaluate each of the factors individually.

- 1. Environment:** The environment consists of the following: home, school, work, media, cultural background, religious background, social environment and political environment.
All of these environments create a culture. Every place has a culture. In a corrupt environment, an honest person has a tough time. Whereas, in a honest environment, the corrupt one has a tough time. In a positive environment, marginal performer's output goes up. In a negative environment, a good performer's output goes down.
- 2. Experience:** Our behavior changes according to our experience with people and events in our life. If we have a positive experience with a person, our attitude towards him becomes positive and vice versa.
- 3. Education:** Here it means formal and informal education, not just academic qualifications. Knowledge strategically applied translates wisdom, ensuring success. Someone has remarked "We are drowning in information but starving for knowledge and wisdom. Education ought to teach us not only how to make a living but also how to live.

The above factors should be conducive to develop a positive attitude in us. People with positive attitudes have certain personality traits that are easy to recognize. They are caring, confident, patient and humble. They have high expectations of themselves and others. They anticipate positive outcomes. A person with a positive attitude is like a fruit of all seasons. He is always welcome.

There are many benefits for positive attitudes. It increases productivity, fosters team work, solves problems, improves quality, breeds loyalty, reduces stress and makes for a pleasing personality. On the other hand the negative attitude produces, bitterness, resentment, ill health, high stress level for themselves and for others. Such people create a negative environment at home and work and become a liability to society.

How can we build and maintain a positive attitude? **We are responsible for our attitudes, regardless of our environment and education**, because we can change and improve our attitude by our sincere and earnest effort.

To maintain a positive attitude we need to consciously practice the following steps:

1. Look for the positive: We need to become good finders. We need to focus on the positive times in life. Let us start with looking for what is right in person or situation instead of looking for what is wrong. Even in paradise, fault-finders will find fault. Someone once said that even a stopped clock is right twice a day.
2. Make a habit of doing it now. Procrastination leads to a negative attitude. Because of our laziness, lack of courage and diffidence we postpone things. If we want to build and maintain a positive attitude, get into the habit of living in the present and doing it now.
3. Develop an attitude of gratitude: Many of us grumble. We complain for anything and everything. But we must count our blessings, not our troubles. Take time to smell the roses. Many of our blessings are hidden treasures.
4. Build a positive self-esteem: Self-esteem is the way we feel about ourselves. When we feel good within, our performance goes up, our relationships improve both at home and at the place of work. God has given everyone of us some talent or other. As the children of God we have a status in the world, and God has a purpose for everyone.
5. Stay away from negative influences: Today's teenager's learn from the adult behavior and the media. They face peer pressure. Peer pressure is not just limited to teenagers, it is also prevalent in adults. We should develop the will power to say 'No' to evil persuasions and compulsions. A person's character is not only judged by the company he or she keeps, but also by the company he or she avoids. Many people want to conform to peer pressure. We must stick to basic principles and uphold moral and spiritual values.

To achieve success is not an easy task but that is the one goal for which we should all strive and struggle.