

Attitude



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Thank you,



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Goal

On completion of this workshop learners will be aware of the importance of one's attitude and the role it plays in their overall well-being.

Outcomes

These outcomes build upon the belief that each person has the potential to understand the role attitude plays in overall well-being and take proactive measures continuously to shift your attitude in a positive direction. Upon completion of this workshop you will be able to:

- ✓ understand the role attitude plays in your well-being (Knowledge & Attitude)
- ✓ describe the underlying value in shifting your attitude in a positive direction (Knowledge & Attitude)
- ✓ demonstrate a number of different tools used to shift your attitude in a positive direction (Knowledge & Skill)
- ✓ understand the role choice plays in your attitude (Knowledge & Attitude)
- ✓ recognize that how you manage stress is a reflection of your attitude (Knowledge & Attitude)
- ✓ demonstrate a number of different tools used in managing your stress (Knowledge & Skill)
- ✓ critically evaluate the effectiveness of each tool in order to determine what is most appropriate for your own use (Knowledge, Skill, Attitude & Evaluation)



Section One

It Is All About Your Attitude!

Learning Outcomes

Completion of this section will enable you to:

- ✓ Understand the role attitude plays in your well-being (Knowledge & Attitude)
- ✓ Describe the underlying value in shifting your attitude in a positive direction (Knowledge & Attitude)
- ✓ Identify the areas that you need to work on in order to achieve a more positive attitude (Knowledge & Skill)

Attitude

“The longer I live, the more I realize the impact of attitude on life. It is more important than the past, than education, than money, than circumstances, than failures, than successes, than what other people think or say or do. It is more important than appearance, giftedness or skill.

The remarkable thing is that we have a choice every day of our lives regarding the attitude we embrace for that day. We cannot change the past. We cannot change the fact that people will act in a certain way. We cannot change the inevitable. The only thing we can do is play on the one string we have, and that is our attitude. I’m convinced that life is 10% what happens to me and 90% how I react to it. And so it is with you. We are in charge of our attitudes”.

Reflect on this quote and share your reactions with group members.

Why is it so valuable to acknowledge that we are in charge of our attitudes?

How do you see yourself?

Take paper, pencil, pens or pencil crayons and draw a picture of how you see yourself in the space provided or on another sheet.

While you draw, consider:

- What do you like to do?
- Are you a happy or a sad person?
- Does stress affect you in a negative way?
- Do you take care of your physical, emotional, spiritual, and mental self?

A large, empty rectangular box with a black border, intended for drawing a picture of how the person sees themselves.

How does your drawing demonstrate your attitude? What areas do you need to work on to achieve a more positive attitude?

You may choose to share your drawing with your group.

Do Positive People Live Longer?

http://www.huffingtonpost.com/david-r-hamilton-phd/positive-people-live-long_b_774648.html?view=print&comm_ref=false; David R. Hamilton

Most people assume that positive thinking is just something that we do to help achieve our goals, or even to get through difficult times. But a host of exciting research has shown that attitude affects our health -- so much so, in fact, that a positive attitude can add years to our lives.

Take [the following study performed at Carnegie Mellon University](#), for instance. In the study, each of 193 healthy volunteers between the ages of 18 and 55 was given nasal drops containing a cold or flu virus.

Participants were also assessed for their emotional style -- whether they tended to experience positive emotions, like happiness, liveliness and calmness, or whether they tended to experience negative emotions, like anxiousness, hostility, and depressive tendencies. Each person's health was then monitored in quarantine.

As the volunteers developed symptoms of infection, all the tissues that they used were collected and weighed so that mucous production could be compared in each individual across the group.

The results were clear. Those who were most positive actually produced less mucous. A positive attitude had a biological impact. Positive people were also found to have fewer overall symptoms. And not everyone got sick, but fewer people who had a positive emotional style got sick than those with a negative emotional style.

But it's not just colds where attitude makes it mark.

[A 30-year study of 447 people at the Mayo Clinic](#) found that optimists had around a 50 percent lower risk of early death than pessimists. The study's conclusion? "[M]ind and body are linked and attitude has an impact on the final outcome -- death."

This was further compounded by [a Yale study](#) that asked 660 elderly people whether they agreed that we become less useful as we age. Those who didn't agree, and therefore had the most positive attitude about aging, lived an average of 7.5 years longer than those with the most negative attitudes, who did agree that we become less useful as we age.

It was also shown in [a Dutch study that examined the attitudes and longevity of 999 people over the age of 65](#). The study reported a "protective relationship" between optimism and mortality. People with a positive attitude, quite simply, lived longer. They even had a 77 percent lower risk of heart disease than pessimists.

So why do positive people live longer? I imagine that it is because they get less stressed in day-to-day life. When something doesn't quite go to plan, a person with a

positive attitude might just deal with it, typically refocus, or even look for another solution. But a person with a negative attitude will typically complain more, get angry or frustrated, and they will expend a lot of energy going over and over in their heads what has happened and how much it is a real inconvenience for them.

Inside the body, the difference between the two people is stress. This is something we all know about. But stress is only part of the equation that describes the physical impact of a negative attitude.

Regular stress causes inflammation. Everybody has heard of inflammation. If you cut yourself, the wound becomes red and swollen. That's inflammation, and it plays a key role in wound healing because it helps to draw blood and nutrients to the wound site to facilitate repair.

But inflammation also occurs on the inside of the body. You just don't see it. It is a side effect of too much stress and/or poor lifestyle choices. It has a hand in most known diseases, most typically heart disease. It even speeds up aging, so much so that it has been called a "major ager," which is a phenomenon that ages the body fast.

Thus, a negative attitude, because it causes stress and inflammation, can speed up aging. This is likely why positive people live longer.

Positive people don't get stressed as much in day-to-day life, so they produce less inflammation. When stuff doesn't go to plan, they just get over it and get on with life. Less stress means less inflammation, which in turn promotes a longer life. It's a simple formula.

How do we turn our minds to more positive things? Counting blessings is a simple way. Make a list of five to ten things that you are grateful for that have happened in the last 24 hours, and do this every day for a month. Or challenge yourself to go three weeks without complaining, moaning, or criticizing.

Or do you have a tendency to "make mountains out of molehills"? If so, try out the opposite just for a week. Try making molehills out of mountains.

These simple techniques don't sound like much, but if they become a habit, they'll be some of the best habits you've ever adopted, because they might just add years to your life.

What is your reaction to this article?

Can you think of times in your life when you could see the connection between attitude and your health?

Defining Attitude

Dictionary Information:

“Position as indicating action, feeling, or mood; as, in times of trouble let a nation preserve a firm attitude”

"The attitude of the country was rapidly changing." J. R. Green.

(from <http://www.selfknowledge.com/6804.htm>)

What does attitude mean to you? Write down your answer and discuss it with the group.

Change Your Thoughts, Change Your Attitude

A story from Caroline Mayss during time spent in a Germany concentration camp:

Jewish men were forced to watch the execution of many of their friends and neighbours. One man ran back to his bed to pray. Another overheard this mans prayer. It was a prayer of thankfulness. The observer asked, "How can you focus on thankfulness at a time like this?" The man answered: "Because I am thankful that I could not do such a horrible thing as I just witnessed."

How does changing the way you think about something, affect your attitude?

Can you think of an example of a time where you shifted your thoughts on something you were experiencing? How did it affect your attitude? You may choose to share this with the group.

Experimenter Approach to Self-Regulation

Adapted from <http://www.attitudefactor.com/experime.htm>; Thomas R. Blakeslee

Self-regulation means that you *regulate* your own behaviour in response to the good and bad events in your life. Just as a *thermostat* regulates temperature by turning the heat off when it's too hot, we must regulate our behaviour based on the *results* it brings. When a thermostat gets stuck, the heating runs out of control making things get hotter and hotter.. When self-regulation breaks down, a similar thing happens to your life: Your problems just get worse and worse. The key to self-regulation is thus *paying attention* and continually trying to improve things.

Scientists and engineers accomplish amazing feats like sending a man to the moon by a simple process called experimentation. They break up seemingly impossible problems into small, manageable steps and then do experiments to find the solution to each step of the problem. This same approach can be applied to the problems in your life. It is called the experimenter's approach and, once you learn to use it, it has a power that is amazing. Many of the questions on the self-regulation test are actually testing how well you understand this principle.

Though the principles of the experimenter approach are simple and easily learned, learning to instinctively apply them to your life takes a lot of practice. Only by sustained effort spread over a year or so, can you really change your habits enough to make a difference in your health and happiness. By systematically applying the experimenter approach to the real problems in your life, you can form healthy habits which will help you for the rest of your life.

The first step is to take some time to think about the areas in your life that need work. Once you have identified these problem areas, you can use the experimenter approach to attack them, one small, manageable step at a time. Each problem is attacked by repeating the three steps below until the problem is solved:

1. **THINK** about ways to change your behaviour
 - To eliminate pain, create pleasure & well-being.
2. **IMAGINE** and rehearse the new behaviour
 - It is possible to foresee consequences in your mind.
3. **TRY** the new behaviour in real life
 - As an Experiment. Evaluate the results & LEARN.

(Back to step 1 until successful)

Some of your experiments will fail and some will succeed, but each one will teach you something that will move you closer to your final goal of long-term maximum pleasure and well-being.

Many of life's problems which seem to be caused by other people and seem beyond your control can actually be solved by changes in your own behaviour. You can discover these magical behaviour changes by using this trial-and-error, experimental process. One important principle to keep in mind is that achieving long-term pleasure and well-being often requires actions which are *less* pleasant in the short-term. We often remain locked-in to destructive behaviours because we fear the short-term pain and risk of changing the status-quo.

Generally there are three approaches to change to consider in the THINK stage:

1. **Behavioural change** that attempts to alter the situation.
2. **Avoidance** by letting go of people or situations you *can't* change.
3. **Attitude change** such that the situation no longer disturbs you.

Discuss with group members or reflect on areas of your life where you can use the Experimenter Approach. It may be helpful to think of some examples and work through the steps together.



The Power of Positive Thinking

http://www.successconsciousness.com/index_000009.htm; Remez Sasson

Positive thinking is a mental attitude that sees the bright side of things.

A positive mind anticipates happiness, joy, health, and favourable results.

If you adopt this mental attitude, you teach your mind to expect success, growth and favorable outcomes.

There are people, who accept positive thinking as a fact, and believe in its effectiveness. Others, consider it as nonsense, and scoff at people who believe or accept it. Among the people who accept it, not many know how to use it effectively to get results.

However, it seems that many are becoming attracted to this subject, as evidenced by the many books, lectures and courses about it. This is a subject that is gaining popularity.

It is quite common to hear people telling others to "think positive", while these same people do not follow their own advice.

Most people don't take these words seriously, since they do not know what they really mean, or don't know how to change their mindset.

How many people do you know, who stop to think what the power of positive thinking means?

Positive thinking is a way of life.

The following story illustrates how this power works:

Allan applied for a new job. However, he was sure that he was not going to get the job, since his self-esteem was low, and he considered himself as a failure and unworthy of success.

He had a negative attitude towards himself, and therefore, believed that the other applicants were better and more qualified than him. Allan manifested this attitude, due to his negative past experiences with job interviews.

Allan's mind was full with negative thoughts and fears concerning the job, for the whole week preceding the job interview. He was sure he would be rejected.

On the day of the interview he got up late, and to his horror he discovered that the shirt he had planned to wear was dirty, and the other one needed ironing. As it was already too late, he went out wearing a shirt full of wrinkles.

During the interview he was tense, displayed a negative attitude, worried about his shirt, and felt hungry because he did not have enough time to eat breakfast.

All this distracted his mind and made it difficult for him to focus on the interview. His overall behavior made a bad impression, and consequently he materialized his fear and did not get the job.

Jim applied for the same job too, but approached the matter in a different way. He was sure that he was going to get the job. During the week preceding the interview he often visualized himself making a good impression and getting the job.

In the evening before the interview he prepared the clothes he was going to wear, and went to sleep a little earlier. On day of the interview he woke up earlier than usual, and had ample time to eat breakfast, and then to arrive to the interview before the scheduled time.

He got the job because he made a good impression. He had also of course, the proper qualifications for the job, but so had Allan.

What do we learn from these two stories? Was there any magic used? No, everything happened in natural way.

With a positive attitude we experience pleasant feelings, and we visualize the results we want to achieve. This brings brightness to the eyes, more energy and happiness. The whole being broadcasts good will, happiness and success. Even our health is affected in a beneficial way. We walk tall, our voice is more powerful, and our body language shows the way we feel.

Positive and negative thinking are contagious.

All of us affect, and are affected by the people we meet, in one way or another. This happens instinctively and on a subconscious level, through our words, thoughts and feelings, and through body language.

Is it any wonder that we want to be around positive people, and prefer to avoid negative ones?

People are more disposed to help us, if we are positive, and they dislike and avoid anyone broadcasting negativity.

Negative thoughts, words and attitude bring up negative and unhappy moods and actions. When the mind is negative, poisons are released into the blood, which cause more unhappiness and negativity. This is the way to failure, frustration and disappointment.

Practical Instructions

In order to turn the mind toward the positive, some inner work is required, since attitude and thoughts do not change overnight.

1. Read about this subject, think about its benefits, and persuade yourself to try it. The power of your thoughts is a mighty power that is always shaping your life.

This shaping is usually done subconsciously, but it is possible to make the process a conscious one. Even if the idea seems strange, give it a try. You have nothing to lose, but only to gain.

2. Ignore what other people say or think about you, if they discover that you are changing the way you think.
3. Use your imagination to visualize only favorable and beneficial situations.
4. Use positive words in your inner dialogues, or when talking with others.
5. Smile a little more, as this helps to think positively.
6. Once a negative thought enters your mind, you have to be aware of it, and endeavor to replace it with a constructive one. If the negative thought returns, replace it again with a positive one. It is as if there are two pictures in front of you, and you have to choose to look at one of them, and disregard the other. Persistence will eventually teach your mind to think positively, and to ignore negative thoughts.
7. In case you feel inner resistance and difficulties when replacing negative thoughts with positive ones, do not give up, but keep looking only at the beneficial, good and happy thoughts in your mind.
8. It doesn't matter what your circumstances are at the present moment. Think positively, expect only favorable results and situations, and circumstances will change accordingly. If you persevere, you will transform the way your mind thinks. It might take some time for the changes to take place, but eventually they will.
9. Another useful techniques is the repetition of [affirmations](#). This technique is similar to [creative visualization](#), and can be used together with it.

Can you think of a time in your life when a negative attitude had a negative end result?

Can you think of a time in your life when a positive attitude had a positive end result?

Do you believe that your thoughts affect what you attract?

What steps do you plan to take to work towards a more positive attitude?



Section Two

Attitude Drives Behaviour:

When It Comes To Our Attitude, Do We Have Choices?

Learning Outcomes

Completion of this section will enable you to:

- ✓ Understand the connection between your attitude and your behaviour (Knowledge & Attitude)
- ✓ Demonstrate an understanding of the connection between choice and attitude (Knowledge & Attitude)
- ✓ Compare and contrast the different tools used to become aware of your attitude and behaviours (knowledge & Skill)
- ✓ Critically evaluate the effectiveness of each tool learned to date in order to determine what is most appropriate for your own use (knowledge, Skill, Attitude & Evaluation)

Quotes on Attitude

Reflect on the following quotes and share your thoughts with group members:

- ❖ “Character cannot be developed in ease and quiet. Only through experience of trial and suffering can the soul be strengthened, ambition inspired, and success achieved”. Helen Adams Keller
- ❖ “ No one can make you feel inferior without your permission”. Eleanor Roosevelt
- ❖ “The first step toward getting somewhere is to decide that you’re not going to stay where you are”. Unknown
- ❖ “When you blame others, you give up your power to change”. Douglas Noel Adams
- ❖ “I’m optimistic because it creates possibilities”. Tommie Lee Jones
- ❖ “I believe folks are about as happy as they make up their minds to be”. Abraham Lincoln
- ❖ “You can complain because roses have thorns, or you can rejoice because thorns have roses”. Ziggy
- ❖ “We didn’t lose the game; we just ran out of time”. Vince Lombardi

Have you read or heard any other quotes on Attitude that you would like to share?

What is your reaction to these quotes? What do they reveal to us about attitude?

Attitude and Behaviour

Attitude is how you feel about something, it's internal. Behaviour is how you act, and thus is external. How do attitude and behaviour work together?

When you have a negative attitude, how does that show in your behaviour?

When you have a positive attitude, how does that reveal itself in your behaviour?

Can We Choose to Have a Positive Attitude?

Consider this quote:



The quote implies that we have choice with regards to our attitude. Are you in agreement with that?

If there is such a correlation between our attitude and our behaviour, then perhaps we can work on improving our attitude in order to achieve more positivity.

Consciously Choosing a Positive Attitude

(<http://www.wingsfortheheart.com/consciously-choosing-a-positive-attitude.htm>)

Do you consciously choose your attitude each day? If you're like most people, probably not. Most of us tend to let our circumstances choose our attitude for us. We're in a good mood as long as we get up on time, the kids cooperate and get to school on time, the car starts without a problem, we don't encounter any traffic jams on the way to work, the boss doesn't yell, our workload is manageable, etc. This system can work fine as long as everything runs smoothly in our lives.

But that's not always the case, is it? Situations don't always adhere to our expectations. Accidents happen. Delays happen. Spouses and bosses can be difficult to please. Vehicles break down. Kids may resist our efforts to keep the schedule running smoothly. What happens to our attitude then? If we don't make the effort to consciously choose a positive attitude, we run the risk of developing a negative one at random.

How would our lives change if we consciously chose a positive attitude each day? For starters, we'd feel much happier about our lives. We'd feel more motivated about pursuing our dreams because we'd believe in the possibilities for making them a reality. We'd be able to enjoy the time spent with our friends and families more, because we'd want to share our joy with others.

We'd feel strong and empowered in our ability to do anything we set our minds to. We'd be able to overcome challenges with ease because we'd have a strong belief in our own skills and abilities. We'd be able to love deeply and completely without fear of rejection or betrayal. We would pause to enjoy the smaller, more precious moments in life, without feeling pressured to do more, be more, or prove our worthiness.

Wow, it sounds awesome, doesn't it? Is it really possible to feel that way all the time? Yes, but probably not in the way you're imagining it. Just because we choose a positive attitude doesn't mean that our lives will transform into smoothly-flowing works of art and stay that way forever.

Choosing a positive attitude is a process. We don't just choose it once and expect everything to be perfect from that moment on. We will still experience setbacks, delays, accidents, frustrations, arguments, fatigue, and fear. The secret is how we choose to react to these experiences. Do we want to let them ruin our day, or do we choose to pick ourselves up and look hopefully to the future again? We do have the power to choose.

You may be asking what the point of a positive attitude is. If we'll still experience negative circumstances, why bother with choosing a positive attitude? Ah, that's the true beauty of the creative process. What we choose to focus on the most, we create in our lives.

By choosing a positive attitude each day, we are actually attracting more positive experiences, and reducing the likelihood of negative experiences. You may have noticed that each experience often determines the quality of the next experience, causing a chain reaction in our lives. If one little thing goes wrong, it can throw off our plans for the rest of the day. In this context, it's easy to see how a positive attitude would be powerful. Rather than allowing one little thing to ruin our day, we would be able to shrug it off and continue on without a hitch.

Over time, this resiliency begins to strengthen and empower us, which will show through in our demeanor. We begin attracting people and experiences that more closely match our attitude, and our lives eventually transform into more positive, fulfilling expressions of joy.

And it all begins with a little thing called attitude! Again, this is a process, so go easy on yourself if you're trying to adopt a more positive attitude. Simply focus on developing a stronger awareness of your attitude moment to moment in your daily experiences, and begin choosing a more positive one more often. It takes time to realize the full benefits of this type of mindset, but it is time well-spent.

Before you know it, you'll be one of those people you used to admire for their tenacity and strength, and your life will transform in amazing ways.

Benefits of Having a Positive Attitude

Studies show that your mental health can influence your physical health. Personality traits such as optimism and pessimism can influence how well you lived and even how long you will live.

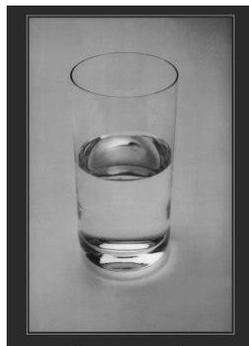
Is the glass half empty or half full?

Be Positive

It is up to you to find ways to improve your life and find a positive outlook

- Sleep 6-9 hours per night. Lack of sleep results in a foggy mind. A foggy mind makes life look foggy instead of bright.
- Every day is a new, fresh day. Approach it as such. It takes work, but in order to reach the summit you need to put in the effort.
- Look at the good in life. Even in rough times there is still good to be found. You control what you see; see the picture as okay, and you will be okay.
- Focus on the really important things, such as relationships. Stresses are temporary. Nurture good relationships as they are the means for happiness.
- Turn off distractions such as the TV and computer. Talk with others, get outdoors. Doing this will make life feel better and more productive.
- Simplify your life culture. Focus on good life skills and let go of the material things and the spending.
- Improve communication. Things do go wrong - choose to stay calm and talk calmly, don't react to it. When things go well, talk about it, praise more. Really listen to others and work together on solutions. Schedule time for talking with those you have relationships with.

(Adapted from: How to Improve Your Attitude – Seven Ways to Have a More Optimistic Outlook, Nicholeen Peck. <http://ezinearticles.com/?How-to-Improve-Your-Attitude---Seven-Ways-to-Have-a-More-Optimistic-Outlook&id=7526372>)



5 Steps to a Positive Attitude

(Adapted from: Jason Gracia, <http://www.selfgrowth.com/articles/Gracia5.html>)

1. Take Inventory

The first step is to realize you are in a bad mood. If you do not realize it, it is going to be tough to change it.

This realization can come from several sources. You are usually the best judge of your mood. You can also get that type of feedback from others.

2. Decide to Change

Now that you know you are in a negative mood, you have to decide you want to change it. This is not as easy as it sounds. When we are upset, we usually do not want to hear how we should be happy. We usually want to be left alone. That is why this is the toughest step.

Regardless, it is worth it. A few days a week in a bad mood can really add up. A friend might comment that you are usually in a negative mood without you even realizing it. Yes it is hard to make this decision, but after you have changed your mood, you will be happy you did.

3. Find the Source

You know you are not happy, and you want to change. The next step is to look for the source. I know that when things start piling up I get a little tense.

Once I feel that I am getting upset, I think about what things I am concerning myself with. Then I write them down and get to work on them. This helps to bring order to my cluttered mind.

Look for the source of the negativity. Did someone say something that upset you? Are you worried about something that you did? About something you still have to do?

4. Fix the Source

When you find the source, it is time to fix it. If someone upsets you, talk with him or her. If you are worried about getting something done, do it! If you are worried about something you cannot change, accept that you cannot change it and move on.

5. Do Something That Makes You Happy

Sometimes fixing the source is not enough to change our mood. In this case, think of things that put you in a good mood.

It could be anything that you choose. Calling a friend, going to lunch, playing golf, etc. If you fix the source of the problem and you still feel down, do something fun.

Turn that Negative Event into a Positive One

Attitude is Everything

- ❖ Re-wire your brain
 - Visualize the wire of negativity being cut
 - Re-route the wire to a positive connection

Think: "What is good about this?"

- ❖ Do not deny the emotion
 - It is not about bottling up the feelings
 - Release your emotions in appropriate ways
- ❖ Ask others about their negative events that they turned into positive events
 - i.e. Devastating situations can at times lead us to change our priorities
- ❖ Take inventory of your negative events
 - Consider things like:
 - Did the negative event lead to positive things down the road?
 - Did you learn anything?
 - What positive things can you find in the event?

Positively Present: How to Turn a Negative Into a Positive

(Adapted from: Diana Raab, <http://www.positivelypresent.com/2010/09/how-to-turn-a-negative-into-a-positive.html>)

When you're dealing with challenging times, consider this mantra: "From all bad comes good." In other words there are positive lessons to be learned from the challenging things that happen in our lives.

Sometimes it can be about thinking positive thoughts, such as: "Live every moment as if it were your last."

How To Turn Negatives Into Positives

Avoid ultimatums

Think through obstacles

Speak positively

Reach out to those who think positively

Focus on what you are good at

Force or encourage yourself to smile and/or laugh

Engage in activities that decrease stress

Journal positive thoughts

Practice deep breathing and yoga

Replace a negative thought with a positive one

Practising a Positive Attitude

On your own or with a partner, think of a time/situation that was negative and your attitude was likely the reason for it:

Write down or act out with a group member how you could have made the situation turn out differently:

(Adapted from <http://www.attitudeiseverything.com/success0210.cfm>)

Look at the following situations with a **negative attitude**: How might each turn out?

Situation One: Car goes by and splashes slush on you.

Situation Two: Car cuts you off

Situation Three: Partner ignores you when you are telling them something important

Now go back and look at each situation with a **positive attitude**: How might each turn out differently?

Situation One: Car goes by and splashes slush on you.

Situation Two: Car cuts you off

Situation Three: Partner ignores you when you are telling them something important



Section Three

How to Change Your Attitude: Our Attitude Determines How We Manage Life's Stresses

Learning Outcomes

Completion of this section will enable you to:

- ✓ Understand the connection between how you handle everyday stress and your attitude (Knowledge & Attitude)
- ✓ Demonstrate an understanding of different tools used to increase your positive attitude (Knowledge & Skill)
- ✓ Describe, identify, compare and contrast the different tools used to increase your positive attitude (Knowledge & Skills)
- ✓ Critically evaluate the effectiveness of each tool learned to date in order to determine what is most appropriate for your own use (Knowledge, Skill, Attitude & Evaluation)

Count Your Blessings

- If you woke up this morning with more health than illness ... you are more blessed than the million who will not survive the week.
- If you have never experienced the danger of battle, the loneliness of imprisonment, the agony of torture, or the pangs of starvation... you are ahead of 500 million people in the world.
- If you have food in the refrigerator, clothes on your back, a roof over your head and a place to sleep... you are richer than 75% of this world.
- If you have money in the bank, in your wallet, and spare change in a dish someplace... you are among the top 8% of the worlds' wealthy.
- If your parents are still alive and still married... you are very rare, even in North America.
- If you hold up your head with a smile on your face and are thankful... you are blessed because the majority can, but most do not.
- If you can hold someone's hand, hug them or even touch them on the shoulder... you are blessed because you can offer healing touch.

Have a good day, count your blessings, and ... pass this along to remind everyone else how blessed we all are.

Source: Author Unknown. Adapted from www.kubik.org/lighter/blessings.htm and www.moytura.com/reflections/blessings.html)

It's important to value our own experiences even if they don't seem as "bad" as others, however, these points are reminders of some of our blessings and that sometimes we need to look at things differently to see the positive in the situations we are in.

How to Change Your Attitude

Thought Record

Being able to record your thoughts for specific situations can help you to reflect back on how you reacted initially to the situation, and how you could have reacted differently in a more positive way

1. Situation	2. Moods	3. Automatic Thoughts	4. Evidence to Support the Hot Thought	5. Evidence that Does Not Support the Hot Thought	6. Alternative /Balanced Thoughts	7. Rate Current Mood
Who? What? When? Where?	What did you feel? Rate each mood – (0-100%)	What was going through your mind just before you started to feel this way? Any other thoughts? Images? Circle the <u>Hot Thought</u> that most strongly relates to the emotions/moods			Write an Alternative or Balanced thought Rate how much you believe in each Alternative or Balanced Thought (0-100%)	Re-rate moods listed in column 2 as well as any new moods (0-100%)

As a group, think about a situation and work through the Thought Record together.

When you finish, consider how the process felt and what you learned. Is this a tool that could be helpful to you?

Fill out your own Thought Record and discuss your results with the group.
 You may want to have extra copies for different situations.

1. Situation	2. Moods	3. Automatic Thoughts	4. Evidence to Support the Hot Thought	5. Evidence that Does Not Support the Hot Thought	6. Alternative /Balanced Thoughts	7. Rate Current Mood

How can using the Thought Record be beneficial to you?

Burnout Quiz

Have you noticed changes in yourself over the past 6 months?

Assign a number from 1 (for no or little change) to 5 (for a great deal of change) to the following questions:

- _____ 1. Do you tire more easily? Feel fatigued rather than energetic?
- _____ 2. Are people annoying you by telling you, "You don't look so good lately"?
- _____ 3. Are you working harder and harder and accomplishing less and less?
- _____ 4. Are you increasingly cynical and disenchanted?
- _____ 5. Are you often invaded by a sadness you can't explain?
- _____ 6. Are you forgetting? (appointments, deadlines, personal possessions)
- _____ 7. Are you increasingly irritable? More short-tempered? More disappointed in the people around you?
- _____ 8. Are you seeing close friends and family members less frequently?
- _____ 9. Are you too busy to do even routine things like make phone calls or take out the garbage?
- _____ 10. Are you suffering from physical complaints? (aches, pains, headaches, a lingering cold)
- _____ 11. Do you feel disoriented when the activity of the day comes to a halt?
- _____ 12. Is joy elusive?
- _____ 13. Are you unable to laugh at a joke about yourself?
- _____ 14. Does sex seem like more trouble than it is worth?
- _____ 15. Do you have very little to say to people?

_____ TOTAL (from H. Freudenberger and G. Richelson)

Burnout Quiz (Continued)

Results:

Do not let a high total alarm you, but pay attention to it. Burnout is reversible, no matter how far along it is. The sooner you start being kinder to yourself, the better.

0 – 25: Fine

26 – 35: There are things you should be watching

36 – 50: You are a candidate to eventually burn out

51 – 65: You are burning out

Over 65: You are in a dangerous situation, threatening to your physical and mental well-being.



(Adapted from <http://www.sarbc.org/sarbc/ciss8.html>)

Stress Management

Source: <http://achievebalance.com/stress/ccc.htm>

3 Primary Stress Management Strategies: Coping, Cooperation, and Changing

Coping Strategies are basically self-management. They use your personal strength and self-awareness. They are personal ways to deal with stress, they are your first lines of defence. Some examples are:

- Eating well balanced meals
- Self-awareness
- Letting-go/relaxation techniques
- Vigorous, regular exercise
- Time management
- Setting your priorities

Cooperating Strategies use support systems. The act of playing or working with others is usually supportive and rewarding. Your support systems can be very close, personal friends, or a larger social circle. Some examples are:

- Alcoholics Anonymous et. al.
- Civic organizations
- Role models
- Professional organizations
- Family members
- Friends
- Recreational/social groups
- Church groups
- Clubs
- Self Help support groups

Changing Strategies have to do with taking a good look at your situation and doing something about it. These strategies require you to modify something about yourself in a major way. Some examples are:

- Seeking professional help
- Becoming assertive
- Redefining what stress means to you
- Expressing your feelings openly
- Changing the situation
- Changing your values, beliefs and/or attitudes
- Expanding your life outside the job
- Becoming a part-time worker

3 Ways You React to Stress: Psychological, Physical and Social

Psychological: How you react to stress in this area depends on your personality, environment, support network and previous experiences. Here are some common PSYCHOLOGICAL reactions, broken down into two sub-categories: emotional and mental.

- Common **emotional reactions** include:
 - Depression
 - Fatigue
 - Anxiety
 - Frustration
 - Guilt
 - Anger
 - Apathy
 - Irritability
- Common **mental reactions** include:
 - Forgetfulness
 - Disorientation
 - Preoccupation with a particular fear
 - Inability to concentrate
 - Accident Proneness
 - Difficulty getting work done or in getting around to things

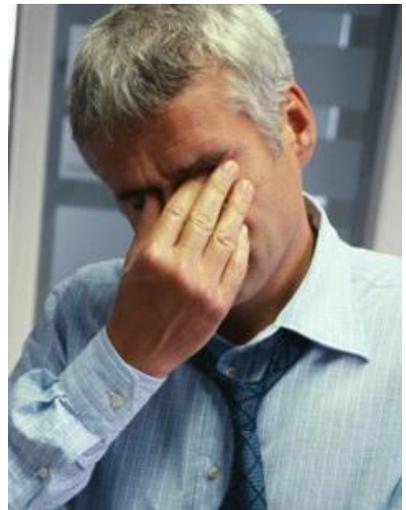
Physical: How you react to stress in this area depends on your physical condition, diet, health, nutrition and biological makeup. Common PHYSICAL reactions include:

- Headaches, possibly Migraine
- Fatigue
- Increased awareness of minor aches and pains
- Change of appetite
- Ulcers, upset stomach
- Stiff muscles/joints

Social: How you react to stress in this area depends on your upbringing, social and communication skills, the depths of your strongest relationships, personality, self-awareness, environment and previous experiences. Common SOCIAL reactions include:

- Withdrawing: not wanting to see friends or meet new people
- Denying there is a problem to others
- Not wanting to stop and take a breather, unwilling to self-assess; being too busy, hoping that if it is ignored it will go away
- Overreacting to little problems or situations with others
- Developing a short temper with others
- Not having balanced relationships with others, all give or all take

If you look closely at these lists, and you wanted to argue a point with me, you are very observant. The old 'which came first the chicken or the egg' syndrome can be found here. Did these symptoms come about because of stress, or were they lifestyle habits that brought about the stress? It's a wonderful gotcha, and shows how important it is to be aware of what we are discussing. It does not matter what caused what, because, once you are caught up in it, and do not take action to get out of it, you are in what seems to be an endless cycle. I do not really care which came first once I am stressed out. I want to end the discomfort of stress. I want to maximize the benefits it has for me. That is why I study the reactions and the causes, to see where there may be a link to break. Hey, if you have used the coping strategies and the cooperating strategies and some changing strategies and have not yet improved, the answer is simple (to an outsider): get professional help.



Practice Imagery or Relaxation Meditation

Here are two different types of relaxation exercises. You may prefer one to the other, or you may to alternate between them according to your situation or mood.

1. Imagery

This is when you close your eyes and create a relaxing scene that is personal you.

Try to find a safe, quiet space, with little chance of being interrupted. You may want to light some candles or have some soft music playing. Sit or lie down in a comfortable position, with a warm blanket if you choose.

Close your eyes, and create your safe place or happy place in your mind. Picture every detail of this space.

- What colours do you see?
- What sounds do you hear?
- What do you feel? Is the sun warm on your skin? Or are do you feel a fluffy carpet under your feet?

Stay in this place for a while, and let the feeling of relaxation fill your body and mind.

Any time you are feeling stressed or overwhelmed, come back to this place; even if just for a moment.

2. Progressive Muscle Relaxation

Muscle tension makes anxiety worse or is made worse by anxiety. The basic process is to relax one muscle group at a time and gradually learn to recognize when your muscles are overly tense

Try to find a safe, quiet space where with little chance of being interrupted. You may want to light some candles or have some soft music playing. Sit or lie down in a comfortable position, with a warm blanket if you choose.

Start by clenching the muscles in your feet and hold them tight for 5 to 8 seconds. When you release the muscles, visualize your stress being released as well.

If you have any pain or cramping when you clench your muscles, instead, visualize all of your blood rushing to that area, warming it and washing away the stress.

Continue working up your body until all muscle groups are relaxed.





Section 4:

Managing Life's Stresses.

Taking Care of Yourself is All About Your Attitude

Learning Outcomes

Completion of this section will enable you to:

- ✓ Critically evaluate the effectiveness of each tool learned to date in order to determine what is most appropriate for your own use (knowledge, Skill, Attitude & Evaluation)

3 Primary Stress-Management Strategies: Coping, Cooperation, and Changing

You have already had a chance to review the following stress management strategies in the last section. Here, list examples for each of the different strategies that you can use in your own life.

1. COPING STRATEGIES are basically self-management. They use your personal strength and self-awareness. They are personal ways to deal with stress, they are your first lines of defence. Examples I want to try are:

2. COOPERATING STRATEGIES use support systems. The act of playing or working with others is usually supportive and rewarding. Your support systems can be very close, personal friends, or a larger social circle. Examples I want to try are:

3. CHANGING STRATEGIES have to do with taking a good look at your situation and doing something about it. These strategies require you to modify something about yourself or your life in a major way. Examples I want to try are:

Taking Care of Yourself

On your own, work on a plan for yourself that looks at how you care for yourself.

Areas I want to improve in my self-care. (Example: Eat healthier foods)

How I will go about increasing my positive attitude. (Example: Spend time doing something I like)

How will I practice this in advance – ritual on making an attitude shift. (Example: When I am offered a compliment, I will just say “Thank you.”)

Discuss your answers with your group.



Your Attitude is Your Choice

We have learned that we get to choose our attitude. We know it's not always easy, but we have also learned that when we choose to have a positive outlook on life, we can experience more positive things, and in turn, have a happier life. This workbook has offered many ways to change our thoughts in order to change our attitude.

In an excerpt from the blog *The Inspired Artist*:

(<http://wendikelly.wordpress.com/2008/04/29/my-attitude-my-choice/>)

“You can change your attitude by changing your thoughts. If you can choose your thoughts, you can choose your attitude. By choosing your attitude, you can affect your outcomes. By affecting your outcomes, you can change your life. By changing your life, you change lives for everyone.

In the *Seven Habits of Highly Effective People*, Stephen R. Covey explains Victor Frankl's experience in the Nazi concentration camps. Frankl, both a psychiatrist and a Jew, was imprisoned along with his wife, parents, brother and sister. His parents, brother and wife all died in the camps, or were sent to the gas ovens. Frankl suffered the tortures and inhuman indignities, never knowing from one day to the next what his fate would be. Victor Frankl realized in the midst of such horror that in the moment between the stimulus and the response there was a fundamental principle about the nature of man... *the freedom to choose.*”

How neat it is that we get to choose our thoughts and our attitude. Sure, it's not always easy, but with persistence, we can create a better life for ourselves by working on the way we see things. Look at our income differently, look at our body image differently, look at our relationships differently – the possibilities are endless, and when we view these things more positively, we will feel more positive about them and ourselves.

