

good manners

Bad Attitude Escape

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Have you ever

noticed that some people seem to have an inner peace no matter what's going on around them? They remain calm. Unflustered. In control. Happy.

These are the people that whistle while they work. You know, like the seven dwarfs in the classic Disney movie, Snow White. They find joy in all they do.

They could be digging a ditch on a blistering hot day and be heard humming a happy tune. Their

ballgame gets rained out and they say how thankful they are for the cool rain. The boss doesn't show appreciation for their hard work, yet they continue to do their best. They smile at their grumpy neighbor, yield for other cars on the highway, and show patience while waiting in a long line.



I imagine these are the folks that say things like, "Every day's a good day," or "It's a good day when I'm on the right side of the dirt," or "Tomorrow is another day," or, one of my favorites, "Don't worry, be happy."

I guess you could say they have a good attitude. Attitude makes all the difference in how we view situations and others. I love sharing this story about attitude when teaching young people.

One day a young man was walking along a road from one village to another. As he was walking, he noticed a monk working in the fields. He asked the monk, "I'm traveling from the village in the mountains to the village in the valley. What is the village in the valley like?" The monk asked, "What was the village in the mountain like?" The young man replied, "Oh, it was wonderful. The people were friendly, kind, and helpful. The village was clean and beautiful." The monk said, "Well, I think you will find the same thing where you are heading." The next day, another young man was traveling along the road from the village in the mountains to the village in the valley. He also saw the monk and asked, "What is the village in the valley like?" The

monk asked, “What was the village in the mountains like?” The young man replied, “Oh, it was just awful. The people were mean and rude. The village was ugly and uninviting.” The monk said, “Well, I think you will find the same thing where you are heading.”

Each man in this story had a completely different experience even though they lived in the same place. When we are armored with a good attitude, it’s easier to see the bright side of situations and be positive.

Many times we decide to go on vacation to escape the rat race. Nothing wrong with wanting to get away. Sometimes we do need a change in pace. A change in scenery. Some time to relax. Sadly, though, for some, vacation is the only time they experience happiness, relaxation, or joy. But, maybe we just need to escape from our bad attitude and look at things differently. Maybe every day could be like a mini vacation if we wake up with a great attitude.

I have a dear friend who is going through chemotherapy right now. I don’t know what that is like but can imagine it’s pretty awful. My friend, whose name happens to be Joy, never complains. In fact, she commented on how much fun it was to go shopping for a wig. Can you imagine? She has good days and bad days, but through it all, she tries to find the positive and be thankful. Joy has a way of lighting up a room with her bright smile and kind spirit. That’s a positive attitude!

How do we escape, even when we’re not on vacation or when things aren’t going as planned? How do we develop an attitude that cultivates happiness and positively influences those around us? Consider some of these tips:

- Decide in advance: You can decide in advance how you will handle a situation. If you know that your annoying co-worker is going to be at the party, decide in advance that she is not going to bother you. Decide in advance that you will make an effort to say hello. Or, if you know that there are going to be huge lines at the shopping mall, decide in advance that you are going to be patient and considerate.
- Anticipate problems: Everything will not always go as planned. Know this and be ready to handle any problem that may come up. When a problem comes up, be the one to solve it instead of the one who complains about it.
- Learn from mistakes: After failing 1,000 times before inventing the light bulb, Thomas Edison said, “I did not fail 1,000 times. I successfully discovered 1,000 ways a light bulb will not work.” Never give up and keep learning.
- Laugh at yourself. Humor can change a mood. Don’t take yourself so seriously. There are times when a little humor lightens a situation and changes attitudes.
- Be grateful: Positive people don’t try to keep up with the “Jones’.” They are grateful for what they have. They set goals and strive to achieve them with honor and dignity.
- Give praise: Always acknowledge the success of others. Be the one who cheers others on. Encourage and help others reach their goals.

A positive attitude is a choice. Choose to escape the negativity that is so prevalent in our society. Choose to be an agent of change. Choose to be the one who whistles instead of complaining. Scott Hamilton once said, “The only disability in life is a bad attitude.”

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