



ATTITUDE DETERMINES ALTITUDE

“The Secret of Change is to Focus all of our Energy not on Fighting the Old, but on Building the New”, Socrates.

Story of Two Brothers

Sometime not too long ago, there lived two brothers who were the case of an interesting study for many behavioural scientists who wondered how two siblings, who had the same upbringing and experiences in life from infancy to adulthood, were poles apart when it came to the way they lived their lives. While one brother was a drunkard who held no permanent job, beat his wife everyday, and cared not for his children who often had to rely on their father’s brother to get one square meal. He was also a habitual law breaker who had all the vices imaginable, was shunned by society and hence was a noted man in all police stations of the locality. His brother, however, was just the opposite. He was not rich, but was living his life modestly, providing in the best way he could for the well-being of his family and even his brother’s children with his meager but honest earnings through dedication and sheer hard work. He always had a kind word and smile for everyone he met, was an understanding husband and a compassionate father. He was also a regular at Church on Sundays.

When asked why they were completely different from each other, both had an interesting story to say. The first man said that he became a drunk and no-gooder on growing up seeing his father’s ways which he adopted, and so role-modelling his father, he turned out to be exactly the same. The second man said that his father was a drunkard who held no permanent job, beat their mother everyday, and cared not for his brother and him who couldn’t afford a formal education and often went to bed hungry. Their father was also a habitual law breaker who had all the vices imaginable, so theirs was a family shunned by society but their mother struggled to keep their bodies and souls together the best way she could. So he decided that whatever his father was, he would change to be the exact opposite. Through an attitude of conviction and perseverance, he became a good husband, responsible father and respectable citizen.

Attitude and dedication towards Change, it seems made all the difference.

I have read somewhere that the reason we are born before the next generation is to lead the next generation into a better, safer but much more challenging world. How else can we explain the reason for being born ahead of our siblings whom we are to mentor and guide through this world. Unfortunately, Cain never realized it and hence the goodness that could have emerged through Able was lost forever. How many Cains’ and Ables’ have we all come across in our lifetime?



Attitude Influencing Perceptions and Perceptions Shaping Attitudes – A Real Experience

Like most, I remember learning at nursery school A is for apple, B for bat, C for cat, D for dog and so on and I never gave it a different thought over the decades that passed since my kindergarten days until one incident made me immensely sad many years ago.

In my capacity as a Management facilitator and HRD coach, I was delivering training workshops and lectures at various educational institutions and corporate houses often travelling extensively. I had made one such journey to a smaller city and after the workshop for a corporate house, was being felicitated by the gathering for the “wonderful presentation, style, confidence, language” etc which had come to be the norm after most outings and this “feedback” was necessary those days to motivate me further, and I was feeling good about it.

There was one young lady in the group who requested to see me in private after the programme was over but her managers advised me against it as they felt that although she who had newly joined their organization was dynamic and a very good performer at work, was too forward and an upstart who didn't mingle too much. They were surprised at her requesting to see me in private as she was generally considered a bit of a loner and an unapproachable person especially towards men. Playing to the gallery and not wanting to be part of a very likely later gossip, I chose to avoid that lady who had been patiently waiting to see me and instead went directly to the railway station to catch my train back and forgot all about that incident until I had to revisit that town for another workshop with the same firm, three months later.

These same managers informed me that this lady had committed suicide by hanging at her home leaving behind her five year old son and this was a week after the earlier workshop. On further enquiry, I learned that she had a love marriage against the wishes of hers and her husband's family who had later disowned them. They were living quite decently until her husband died in a road accident six months before that workshop. She had been struggling to cope emotionally since her husband's untimely demise but was concealing it by a show of being 'unapproachable'. Maybe it was her way of keeping people from interfering with her life. Since her tragedy, she had been trying to desperately reach out to her family and her husband's family as well, but the latter's interest was only in her son whom they took away by force. The poor woman who didn't have her family's support had lost all hope and was desperately in need of counseling and maybe felt by seeking my advice, she could possibly cope better and maybe even win back her son. But that was not to be.

I was shell shocked by this incident and to this day, I ask myself if I had taken the wise and important decision of making the right choice in giving her a patient hearing, maybe she might have still been alive today and her son wouldn't have been orphaned. I was a successful professional trainer, but that day I failed to be a mentor and guide who is what I actually should have been and not have compromised upon.



This incident set me introspecting what A, B, C and D could mean and it took on a whole new dimension for me. I would like to share with you what I believe this to be although we can't prescribe this for kindergarten children. I believe that life is lived between B and D. To me, B stands for 'birth', D denotes 'death' and everything in between B and D is a C. Now in this everyone has an option. C could mean 'Change left to Chance' if one lives life that way or it could mean 'Change as a result of an informed Choice' if one decides to live it so. Whether it is a life dependant on chance or a life inspired by the choices one makes, it all comes down to that all important A that will help everyone to choose the right C and that A is 'Attitude'.

I am no one to be telling this august gathering what to do. You know perfectly well your vision and mission and are doing it better than I or most people can ever do. However, from the view point of having once been a teenager myself who has been blessed to have wonderful parents who in all their goodness gave their all and did their best for their children (God bless them), I can tell you there are many numerous young men and women who are confused, devoid of hope, or a clear vision, of a purpose in life, of a role-model need to be shown and guided along the right way. Fear grips them. But fear can either mean 'forget everything and run' or 'face everything and rise' – which is again a result of ones attitude. One's Attitude alone can determine one's Altitude and by virtue of being leaders in our own right, we are in a large way responsible for shaping the destiny of all those whom God Almighty in His Infinite Wisdom has entrusted to our tutelage and guidance. We could be doing the best possible, but my sincere thought which I am sharing aloud is '*Is this our best effort yet or can we better upon our best efforts?*' It sure is a challenge, but we can't spell *challenge* without change.

To sum up, let us work out a little arithmetic to illustrate my point that Attitude is a very vital ingredient in the recipe of successful change for a wiser living. If we number each alphabet in sequence it would read like this: A = 1, B = 2, C = 3, D = 4, E = 5, F = 6, G = 7, H = 8, I = 9, J = 10, K = 11, L = 12, M = 13, N = 14, O = 15, P = 16, Q = 17, R = 18, S = 19, T = 20, U = 21, V = 22, W = 23, X = 24, Y = 25, Z = 26, then ATTITUDE in terms of percentage scored would be:

A	T	T	I	T	U	D	E		
1	20	20	9	20	21	4	5	=	100%

In conclusion, let me make a statement with this verse:

***"OTHERS MAY DO A GREATER WORK,
BUT YOU HAVE YOUR PART TO DO,
AND NO ONE IN ALL GOD'S HERITAGE
CAN DO IT SO WELL AS YOU".***

Mark Antony Sequeira

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