



Attitude is everything. Give me, *please*, a person with the right attitude that includes the willingness to learn over the person with great technical skills but believes that he knows it all and will never make an error. So just what is an attitude, where does it come from and what can

we do about it? Webster's dictionary defines attitude as: **a feeling or emotion toward an act or state.** So what they are trying to say is that your attitude is NOT based on clear rational thinking but rather on a feeling or emotion that to you, at least, is somehow right.

As a child you were born with and develop certain social skills some of which will serve you well if you can only still apply them today. They are the "sandbox" rules.



☺ *to communicate your feelings.* Most young children are very good at that.

☺ *to share your toys with others.* Not all will do this without coaxing but if left alone they usually will find it more fun to share.

☺ *to accept others no matter how different they may be* They don't see the skin colour or difference at a young age

☺ *to forgive, to forget and get on with enjoying life.* Children will fight but be back to playing before you can even intervene.

☺ *to enjoy life for the moment.* They don't worry about the future or the past.

Thankfully, our attitude changes as we age. Can you imagine if you had the same attitude as you did as a teenager?

Daniel Goleman referred to our mind as having an Intelligence Quotient (IQ) and an Emotional Quotient. (EQ) His book entitled "Emotional Quotient," while a rather long read, will tell you all about it.

I believe the EQ is your attitude and as he says, your success in life is 10% your Aptitude (ability to learn) and 90% your Attitude. He also says and I agree that: life is 10% what happens to you and 90% how you react to it. You control your attitude if you only take the time to realize what it is and how to control it in a positive way.



Your attitude (EQ) develops as a child from **Early Life Decisions (ELD)** made from experiences from which your "EQ" develops "values". The following are the three major attitude development stages in our young lives. See if you can recall some of yours



0 to 7 years old = **Imprint** age where everything is unconditionally accepted as true unless learned otherwise. One's parents are usually the major influence in this time frame. (*Santa Claus and Tooth Fairies exist because of this age*) Be very careful what you say to a child in this stage, even jokingly, as it can be taken as a truth and affect his/her adult life.

8 to 13 years old = **Modeling** age where we look to model our lives after some person, real or seen on TV. The school and TV are the major influence in this age bracket. (*Spiderman or a much loved uncle becomes their hero*)

14 to 20 years old = **Socialization** age where conforming and being part of a group becomes a major force in one's life. Peers are the major influence during this time of personal development. (*But everyone has a ring in their belly button so why can't I?*) It is also known as the "Bulletproof Age" as the person tries to "be their own man" and make their own decisions no matter how foolish they are. Some people take a lot longer to grow out of this age.

After about 20 years old, our attitude requires a conscious effort to change unless a **Significant Emotional Event (SEE)** takes place or we make a conscious effort to modify it. Significant Emotional Events can alter your EQ for the better or worse. For example if a close friend was killed by a drunk driver you could develop a strong dislike for anyone who drinks, even if previously you yourself did the same thing. War is a SEE that often leads to PTSD discussed in the Stress article last April 2017

EQ can be altered by consciously talking to it and questioning any decision made on the basis of emotion or Early Life Decisions. For example: The idea that all Blondes are stupid or that no man can be trusted after you've undergone a nasty divorce.

We are not locked into our past unless we let it be! We can't change the past but we certainly control and can change the future. Let's look at the differences between the Rational Mind or IQ and the Emotional Mind or EQ

IQ

versus

EQ

Is a part of all decision making

Controls your reasoning

Born with a finite amount

Can improve it only within a very limited range of your born IQ

Environment has little influence on it

Is developed mainly by learning

Measurable

Will help determine **what** you do in life

Can do little about it

Is a part of all decision making

Controls your emotions and happiness

Born with a full range of emotions

Can be increased, massaged or squelched. Limited only by one's willingness to apply

Environment has a great influence on it

Is developed mainly by experiences

Very difficult to measure

Will determine **how well** you do in life

Can do everything with it **if** willing to make the effort

In 1943 Abraham Maslow developed his hierarchy of needs or motivators that influence human behavior. He stated that the first physiological needs (food shelter) must be met before the next can become the dominant motivator.

While he called it life growth I feel it is also attitude growth.

To reach your full potential you must reach the 5th level of self-fulfillment. It is at this level that one reaches their full potential and strives to give back to society. Sadly, not everyone reaches this stage in life or attitude. We are very fortunate that we live in a part of the world where this level of needs is attainable.

Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs Model 1943



So what can we do to improve our attitude? The following are five simple steps that applied will help ensure that your attitude is the best that it can be.

Step one. **Know your emotions.** Remember that attitude was defined as a feeling or emotion toward an act or state. What is your key emotion? Take some time to analyze what emotions are controlling your attitude.

Step two. **Control your emotions.** If anger is your key emotion, you may benefit from professional help because if that emotion is not controlled you will lead a difficult and likely unhappy life. This step is vital to improving your attitude

Step three. **Recognize emotions in others.** Each of us is different and have different attitudes. Try to understand what emotions are driving their attitude.

Step four. **Develop empathy for their emotions.** By that we mean that we can “*cut them some slack*” once we understand the emotions that have lead to their attitude. That can lead to an improvement in your own attitude. Perhaps reread last month’s article on Wabi-Sabi that illustrates that no one is perfect.

Step five. Learn and practice self motivation. We are complex creatures with a tendency to be negative thinkers. Positive thinking can go a long way toward changing one’s attitude for the better.

When things appear to be going wrong always remember Mom’s advice.

Remember that Mothers are NEVER wrong.

STOP – Take a few seconds to assess the situation

For example: someone just cut you off and you had to slam on your brakes to avoid a collision.

LOOK – at the situation rationally.

Do not let the initial emotion of anger take control.

LISTEN – to the rational mind. In the big scheme of things there was no damage or injuries and life is back to normal.

ACT – by, in this case, not reacting to the initial emotional response you were tempted to do.

Mom’s advice can serve you well in life.

Finally, someone with way too much time on their hands came up with this truth about life.

If a, b, c, d, e, f, g, h, i, j, k, l, m, n, o, p, q, r, s, t, u, v, w, x, y, z, equaled 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20, 21, 22, 23, 24, 25, 26, than $H+A+R+D+W+O+R+K = 8+1+18+4+23+15+18+11 = 98\%$ Close but not there.

Knowledge would = **96%**. That would be about right. **Love** would = only **54%** and **Luck** is even less at **47%**. As you might guess **Attitude** = **100%**. It certainly determines just what your life will be like so I agree with the truth.

Then I thought, Bullshit and Ass kissing would get you 103% and 118% respectively. Stick with Attitude and you'll be a lot happier for it.