

# Building & Maintaining A Positive Attitude

Sandy Kutler, LPC

[acpcounseling@hotmail.com](mailto:acpcounseling@hotmail.com)

People who cultivate consistently positive attitudes are likely to achieve great things. In fact, research has revealed that optimistic people are happier, healthier, and more successful than those with a negative outlook on life.

No one is born with a positive or negative attitude. A positive attitude is encouraged, developed, and nurtured. The ability to see the cup as "half full" instead of "half empty" can also be learned.

Your attitude is not completely positive or negative at any given time. Most people have a "combination" attitude that changes with the situations we encounter. Spend some time keeping a journal of your moods. When are you most positive? Be specific - what time of day is it? Where are you? Who is around? What are you doing? Keep the same kind of journal for negative moods. Maybe there's something outside of you that is triggering those negative thoughts. Can you identify the causes? When you've identified times when you tend to be most negative, write the words, "WHAT AM I THINKING?" on a sheet of paper. Carry it with you, especially when you know you'll be in situations where you've been negative before.

When you can step back from the situation and ask yourself what you are thinking, that's the first step to changing your attitude. Happiness does not result from wealth or power or status. It is determined by you and your satisfaction with friends, family, and your circumstance

## Tips for Improving Your Attitude:

- ÿ *Don't hang around negative people.* These people like to dump their problems on those around them. Seek out positive people as role models instead. *Watch out for bottled up negative emotions.* People who keep negative thoughts inside of them get sick more often, stay sick longer, and die sooner than those who *let it out!!* Unexpressed negativity can also lead to anxiety, depression, or anger.
- ÿ *Don't give in to guilt.* Guilt is a form of negative thinking. We feel bad about doing something and guilt is a way of punishing ourselves. You can make guilt a positive thing - a catalyst for real and lasting change. If you experience guilt before deciding to do something, you have a choice. You can decide to do something else instead.
- ÿ *Don't wish for everything at once.* We compare ourselves to our neighbors, our co-workers, and our friends. Instead of celebrating their successes, we covet them, we begrudge them, and we envy them. You can have anything you want, but you can't have everything! Pick the one thing you want most and work toward achieving that goal. Then build on that success.
- ÿ *Don't get discouraged.* Courage is a wonderful thing. It comes from following your heart and your dreams. When you stop setting goals and stop dreaming of bigger and better things, discouragement sets in. Refocus on your dreams and start again.