**Motivational Minutes on Attitude from 2015**

 **(Also see Adversity, Thoughts and Gratitude files.)**

1. **I Was Practicing For This**

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**Quote of the day:**

“What ought one to say then as each hardship comes? I was practicing for this, I was training for this.” — Epictetus

**Reflection:**

Many people comment to me that they’ve heard that positive thinking can make all the difference in difficult situations, but sometimes they are at a loss for things to be positive about. They want to know what they can do to get on a positive channel when everything seems to be going wrong.

When your heart is weighed down with worry, fear, sorrow, or pain, instead of dwelling on them, remember you were “training for this.” The best way to get on a positive channel is thinking about your blessings. If nothing else, you can be grateful for all the other problems you could have but don’t. Think on the good things. If you’re thinking about goodness and making that the focal point of your concentration, then this pushes all the negative out of the way. You can’t be positive and negative at the same time, so fill your mind with the light of praise, and it will push the darkness out.

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1. **An Invincible Host Against Difficulties**

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**Quote of the day:**

“Your success and happiness lies in you. Resolve to keep happy, and your joy shall form an invincible host against difficulties.” — Helen Keller

**Reflection:**

Some say that happiness is what we make it and I tend to agree with that. I have a friend who works at a homeless shelter and he told me this story about a man who lived at the shelter.

*John has Parkinson’s disease and a deadly form of skin cancer. He could barely walk or get out of a chair by himself. Two surgeries stopped the cancer before it could spread, and medication and therapy are helping him deal with Parkinson’s. Still, on a bad day there are very few things that he can do for himself. In spite of his troubles he is still positive and cheerful. He has a secret agenda: never leave anyone without a smile and in this he always succeeds. He learns everyone’s name, includes it in his cheery goodbye, and remembers it next time. He finds opportunities to build people up and is generous with compliments. He tells corny jokes. He pokes fun at himself*—*whatever it takes. A lot of people, if they were in John’s position, would blame God or become bitter, but not John “That’s no way to live—and I’ve still got a lot of living to do,” he says.*

Let’s take a lesson from John, that no matter what circumstances we find ourselves in to choose to be positive and as the quote says it will “form an invincible host against difficulties”.

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1. **Things Always Work Out For Me**

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**Quote of the day:**

"Things are always working out for me." -- Ester Hicks

**Consider:**

I love that quote as it rings so true. I decided I would believe things are always working out for me even when I wasn't quite sure yet. I've learned that deciding is an important action step, too. I started taking the attitude of expecting things to be easy, to be fun, to happen exactly when they should and in the best possible way. Of course, what supports this way of thinking is to be unattached to the outcome. That's why I also love trusting that everything happens for my highest good even when I don't yet realize it.

I'm already seeing how the expectation "things are always working out for me" is showing up in my life. I've been so excited about how this expectation has worked that I wanted to share it with you this week so you can use it, too. It's a comforting affirmation. Give it a couple of weeks and you'll be amazed by what happens. Plans will change effortlessly. Life will get easier.

Ready? Look up, put a big smile on your face, and repeat after me: “Things are always working out for me, things are always working out for me, things are always working out for me.”

Use this affirmation to begin installing this expectation into your brain. The more you use it, the quicker you'll create a new neural pathway for this useful affirmation. Before you know it, life will start proving you right!

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1. **Is It Time to Start the Change Process?**

 

**Quote of the day:**

“We cannot become what we need to be by remaining what we are.” — Max Depree

**Reflection:**

We sometimes need to shed old memories, habits and other past traditions in order to move forward. Only when freed from past burdens, can we take advantage of the present. But you may ask, “But why is change needed?” Many times, in order to survive we have to initiate a change process no matter how painful it might be. This reminds me of the story of the eagle.

*The eagle has the longest life-span among birds. It can live up to 70 years, but to reach this age, the eagle must make a hard decision. When it reaches 40 years its long and flexible talons can no longer grab its food. The eagle’s long sharp beak becomes bent and its old-aged heavy wings, due to their thick feathers become stuck to its chest and makes it difficult to fly. The eagle is left with only two options: die or go through a painful process of change which lasts 150 days. The process requires that the eagle fly to a mountain top and sit on its nest. There, the eagle knocks its beak against a rock until it plucks it out. After plucking it out, the eagle will wait for a new beak to grow back and then it will pluck out its talons. When its new talons grow back, the eagle starts plucking its old-aged feathers. After five months the eagle takes its famous flight of rebirth and lives for 30 more years.*

Do you need to start a change process in your life? Although it seems painful for the eagle, there is no other alternative but to die. So take heart, and the next time you are faced with the need to change, remember the story about the eagle.

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1. **Seeing From the Other Side of the Desk**

 

**Quote of the day:**

"Do not judge your neighbor until you walk two moons in his moccasins.” – Cheyenne Proverb

**Reflection:**

A friend of mine sent me this story that I thought I would share with you as it has a good lesson.

*I was doing some legal business and had to submit some paperwork, and to my dismay there were several things that needed to be changed. Something that at first appeared easy to rectify, instead took several weeks and numerous appointments to sort out.*

*At one of the offices where I had been sent, I came face to face with Mr. Grumpy. He struck me as efficient, but rather curt. We got off to a rough start. My problem was most likely the hundredth problem he had had to deal with that day, and it seemed I would get no sympathy from him. To make matters worse, his computer froze and he had to reboot.*

*Sitting there in the silence, I suddenly saw things from a different perspective. For a moment I put aside my aggravation with how things were going and tried to imagine what it was like to sit on the other side of that desk. As we waited for his computer to reboot, I asked if he had encountered my specific problem before. That was the beginning of a dialog between two tired, frustrated people.*

*Over the next few days, we spoke on the phone a number of times as I checked on the progress of my paperwork. Each time our communications grew friendlier and more relaxed, and when I visited his office to collect the finalized document, he took extra time to verify that everything was correct and we parted as friends.*

The moral of the story is taking a personal interest in someone else’s problems had transformed a mutual ordeal into a mutually positive experience. What situation do you need to take a look at from the other side of the desk?

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1. Two Dogs



**Quote of the day:**

“Experience is not what happens to you; it is what you do with what happens to you.” — Aldous Huxley

**Consider:**

How true this quote is! It reminds me of a story of the two dogs:

*There once were two dogs, both at separate times walked into the same room. One came out wagging his tail while the other came out growling. A woman observing this went into the room to see what could possibly make one dog so happy and the other so mad. To her surprise she found a room filled with mirrors. The happy dog found a thousand happy dogs looking back at him while the angry dog saw only angry dogs growling back at him.*

Both dogs had the same experience but with different attitudes. What you see in the world around you is a reflection of who you are. Why not make it a happy experience?

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1. **Surrounded By Wolves**

 

**Quote of the day:**

“We are all faced with a series of great opportunities brilliantly disguised as impossible situations.” — Charles Swindoll

**Reflection:**

I read this cute story that illustrates how difficulties can be turned into opportunities. It’s all in how we look at it.

*An organization in Montana offered a bounty of five thousand dollars for every wolf captured alive. Two hunters decided to head for the hills and make some money capturing wolves. Day and night, they scoured the mountains and forests, searching for their valuable prey. Exhausted after three days of hunting without success, they both fell asleep. During the night, one of the hunters suddenly woke up to find that the two were surrounded by a pack of fifty wolves, their eyes flaming and teeth bared. At once, he called to his friend, “Hey, wake up! We’re gonna be rich!”*

Sometimes we feel in over our heads in difficulties. They surround us like that pack of wolves preparing to pounce. But perhaps these obstacles are actually opportunities?

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1. **Can You See the Stars**

 

**Quote of the day:**

“Two men looked out from behind prison bars. One saw mud, the other saw stars.” –Frederick Langbridge

**Reflection:**

The first law of perception is that you see what you want to see. Your eyes do the seeing, but it’s your mind that decides what you focus on. So in other words, you see what your mind is looking for.

Because of this the cynic and the optimist have never been able to agree on what they see. Because of their different philosophies of life they both see things differently, but which one is right? They both are—because both good and bad are all around us! Just like the quote above, the mud and the stars are both there. The cynic sees exactly what he’s looking for. He sees there’s no hope in the world. On the other hand, the optimist is also right, because he sees what he believes too. He sees the world of hope. Both of them are right. Both of them are actually choosing their experience. And both of them are choosing what they focus on.

If we have the choice, why choose unhappiness? I choose to see hope, goodness and love—the stars. I choose to be positive. What do you choose?

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1. **The Process of Choosing a Positive Attitude**

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**Quote of the day:**

“The greatest discovery of my generation is that a human being can alter his life by altering his attitudes.” — William James

**Reflection:**

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 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 can be powerful. Rather than allowing one incident ruin our day, with a positive attitude we are able to shrug it off and continue on without a hitch. By choosing a positive attitude each day, we are actually attracting more positive experiences, and reducing the likelihood of negative ones.

I like this thought! Today I choose to attract more positive experiences. If you do the same, let me know what positive happenings come your way.

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1. **Two Salesmen**



**Quote of the day:**

“I have always believed, and I still believe, that whatever good or bad fortune may come our way we can always give it meaning and transform it into something of value.” —Hermann Hesse

**Reflection:**

A major factor in making progress is shedding any mindset that holds you back, and taking on a new mindset that will have a positive effect on your behavior and outlook. We all have some wrong attitudes, so it behooves us to find out what those are and work to do whatever is necessary to transform them into positive ones.

The definition of mindset is, “A set of beliefs or a way of thinking that determines somebody’s behavior and outlook.” What this means is that the way we look at things, our attitudes, the things we think and believe, determine our behavior.

*To illustrate this point, consider the story about two shoe salesmen who were sent to Africa. The first salesman wrote the home office saying, “Nobody wears shoes here,” and turned in his resignation. The second salesman was thrilled with the potential he found and wrote home saying, “Everybody in Africa needs shoes!”*

The first fellow’s mindset, his negative attitude‚ caused him to resign. He had the wrong outlook about the situation, and this way of thinking determined his behavior, which in this case was to give up in despair. Contrast this to the other fellow who had a positive mindset. “Everyone in Africa needs shoes!” What a difference! The positive mindset brought faith. Where one man saw an impossible situation, the other saw endless possibilities. Clearly, our mindset affects our outlook and, most importantly, our behavior.

To get the most out of life and give the most in return, it’s important that we shed any negative mindsets that hold us back, and instead embrace new, positive mindsets that will change our behavior and performance for the better. A positive mindset will help us to act in a positive manner.

What mindsets do you need to change?