

## Learning to Control Your Attitude

**1 Understand how your attitude affects your life.** Your attitude towards life determines how happy or unhappy you are. You can't always change what happens to you, but you can change how you react to what happens to you.<sup>[1]</sup> You make a choice each time you are faced with a situation.

- For instance, say you get a flat tire. Nobody likes dealing with a flat, but you have options for how you react to the situation. You can get mad and throw a fit, elevating your blood pressure, and then go get your tire changed. If you get mad, you'll spend some time very unhappy.
- On the other hand, you can chock it up to a normal part of life, take a deep breath, and go get your tire fixed. By not reacting, you won't spend that time angry. In fact, you can turn it into something positive. Maybe while you're fixing your tire, you can catch up on a good book you haven't had a chance to read in a while. <sup>[2]</sup>

**2 Frame events in a positive way.** The way you talk about events can affect your attitude. For instance, if you talk or think about an event in a negative way, you'll continue to think about it in a negative light. However, if you talk about it positively, you'll begin to change your attitude about it.<sup>[3]</sup>

- For example, say you get an upsetting email early in the morning. You could think, "Well, that means this day is going to be awful." On the other hand, you could think, "Well, that was bad, but my day can only go up from here." The event remains the same, but how you think about it moving forward can affect your attitude.

**3 Change your language.** Words such as "I can't do that" encourage you to think that way. If you say something is impossible, you'll likely believe it. Instead, use positive language, such as, "I can do this if I take it step by step."<sup>[4]</sup>

**4 Be proactive instead of reactive.** In every situation, you have another choice: you can complain, or you can do something about your problem. Complaining makes you



unhappy but taking action will almost always make you feel better about the situation. It makes you feel productive and like you are actually getting something done because you are.

**5 Enjoy the small things.** Like most people, you may focus on your big goals all the time, always looking forward to the next vacation or next holiday. While looking forward isn't inherently bad, it can sometimes cause you to overlook the joy in your everyday life. A piece of cake or a walk with a friend is a simple, everyday pleasure that you may not value if you're only thinking about what's ahead. Instead, try to be in the moment, and take joy in what you're doing.[\[5\]](#)

- For instance, if you find your mind racing to your next vacation while having a chat with your friend, pull yourself back to the moment. Truly listen to what your friend is saying instead of letting your mind wander.

**6 Practice gratitude.** Gratitude is essential for a good attitude because it helps you appreciate the good things you have in your life. Instead of focusing on what's going wrong, practicing gratitude teaches you to focus on the good things.[\[6\]](#)


- Take time each time to think about what you are thankful for. Maybe you can come up with three things each day that you appreciate, and write them in a journal.[\[7\]](#)

**7 Stop reaching for the next big thing.** If you're always on the lookout for the next TV, the next smartphone, the next nice car, you won't appreciate what you have. You are placing your happiness in what you don't have instead of what you do have, which means you'll feel like you're always searching for something that will make you happy.[\[8\]](#)

- In other words, instead of thinking, "I have to have that awesome new phone," try instead to think, "You know, this phone I have is really amazing. A phone 10 years ago wouldn't have done nearly this much."

**8 Combine fantasizing about goals with realism.** Popular belief states that if you can imagine yourself achieving a goal, it helps you get there. However, studies have





shown that if you only imagine the end goal and happiness, it may actually slow down your progress.[\[9\]](#)

- Instead, take a few minutes to imagine the end goal. However, you should also spend some time thinking about the obstacles in your way, as it balances out the fantasy.[\[10\]](#)
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