

THE RIGHT ATTITUDE

Written for Goodwill Industries-Essex Kent Lambton

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"I am so SICK of my job."

"I HATE my boss."

"This is not what I was meant to do with my life."

Have you ever heard yourself saying these words? Have you felt like quitting on the spot? Maybe it's time for you to look for a new job or to make a career change that will be more rewarding. A lot of people stay stuck in jobs they despise because they're afraid that the next job will be just as miserable or worse. The theory of self-fulfilling prophecy predicts that if people keep thinking negative thoughts, the next job will be as awful as they imagine it to be. But what if you could change your future and get the job you truly desire?

You can land the ideal job through positive thinking. Just as a negative attitude will produce a bad outcome, thinking good thoughts will help you get what you want out of life. Having a good attitude has a lot of benefits. First, you'll find that your health improves. Have you noticed that when you're in a job you don't enjoy, you tend to call in sick more often? Typical warning signs include a general lack of energy, sleeplessness and sadness. Turn your thoughts around and you'll find that these symptoms start to disappear. Second, when you're happy, the people around you tend to be a good mood, too. Together, you create a pleasant environment. Third, you'll find that once you start to look for positive outcomes, opportunities start to crop up.

To start enjoying the benefits of positive thinking, you need to incorporate it into your everyday outlook. There are a lot of things you can do to develop and maintain a positive attitude while job hunting.

Have a clear career goal and work towards it. If you don't know why you're applying for a job, then neither will the employer. By having a particular focus, you'll be able to direct your energy to activities that will help further your career. Let's say you wanted to be an elementary school teacher and you have the degree but not the experience. You could volunteer in a summer camp with children to pick up additional skills. You'll look more attractive to employers if they see that you've been busy building up your portfolio and that you feel good about helping yourself and others.

Use your time wisely. Worrying always comes hand-in-hand with job searching but it shouldn't consume you. Instead, create a daily or weekly schedule of activities that will push you forward. You might use your time to talk to experts or people in your field who have "been there and done that." You'll find that their experiences are similar to your own and that they have some gems of wisdom to share with you...and possibly some job leads!

Do your own research on the Internet or at the library. Learn more about the skill set you need or the organizations you'd like to work for. Research what makes for a good resume or cover letter. Find out what questions are the most likely to crop up during an interview and prepare and practice your answers. Go to workshops and seminars offered by your local employment centre. By using your time effectively, you'll feel productive and you'll be able to give yourself a confidence boost at the same time.

Get a new view. If you're feeling down, look at what you're doing to make yourself feel this way. Are you giving yourself negative self-talk? Are you blaming yourself for past mistakes? If so, then try to make a conscious effort to change your perspective. Replace thoughts such as, "I still haven't found a job," to "The right job is just around the corner!" Help yourself by posting notes around the house that remind you about your best qualities and talents.

Look at all of your experiences, good and bad, as life lessons. Use them as gifts of insight to prepare yourself for your next career opportunity. Even the smallest shift in the way you think will help to keep you optimistic.

Be kind to yourself. If you've been working hard to look for a job, then give yourself a break! Treat yourself to a weekend getaway, an inspirational movie or go out with friends for a special dessert. Do something to lift your spirits and you'll be ready to start fresh again the next day.

Exercise. Dance, run, jog, do aerobics! Exercise will help you in three ways. It will reduce stress. It will help you develop a positive body image and it will release endorphins, a chemical in your brain that makes you feel good overall. If all else fails, then "fake it 'til you make it." It's not easy to maintain a happy disposition 24-7 but you can at least keep up that appearance. Research shows that smiling, even when you're feeling blue, can put you in a better mood. Attitude is a state of mind. It shows the outside world how you're feeling inside. Like a common cold, attitude is catchy! If you don't feel worthy enough to fill a position that you're interviewing for, employers will catch on to that feeling and they'll also believe that you're unworthy. You need to go into all interviews believing that you are the person they've been looking for. Convince yourself of this and you'll be able to convince that potential employer, too. By maintaining a positive attitude, you're guaranteed to give yourself not only a better chance at finding a job, but also a better life.

Side Bar: Helpful Books on Attitude

What Color is Your Parachute? By Richard N. Bolles

This is an excellent guide for those who are looking for a job or who are thinking about a career change.

Who Will Cry When You Die? By Robin Sharma

This little handbook is full of ideas about making your inner and outer world more pleasant. It's easy to read and you'll find yourself referring to it often.

Who Moved My Cheese? By Spencer Johnson, M.D.

This is great little tale that points out positive and negative reactions to change. The author uses mice to represent people and cheese to represent the things people want. You'll be able to relate to mice in a maze that must deal with change when their cheese starts to disappear.

Chicken Soup for the Soul Series By Jack Canfield & Mark Victor Hansen

This series of books contains inspirational anecdotes and real-life stories including those related to attitude and work experiences.