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Attitude Is Everything

Your emotions can sway like a palm tree in the breeze. Some days your emotions are up and other days they are down. How do you determine whether you are having a good day? It's all about our emotions.

Do we allow our emotions to take us on a trip like a dog owner who allows his dog to drag him all over town? Some days it feels like it, doesn't it? The first strategy to overcoming your emotions is to recognize what emotions you are feeling before you can overcome them.

Recently, I learned how to drive a car with a manual transmission. For seven days I was living in fear. I was in fear that I would hurt the engine. I was in fear that I would stall and people would honk at me in anger. It took me seven days to finally realize that I was experiencing the emotion fear on a daily basis. When I finally recognized it, then I could face it and overcome it.

The key is to manage your emotions before they manage you. First of all, we need to acknowledge what we are feeling. Has a rude driver ever cut you off? You grumble all the way into work. Once at work, a customer yells at you for an order they did not receive. Now, you are really ready to go home and start your day all over again.

What emotions went through your mind when you were cut off in traffic? Anger, resentment, indignation are just a few that I have experienced. How did you feel when a customer yells at you? Mad, upset, and frustrated? If left unchecked, these emotions follow you all day.

The first step is to acknowledge your emotions. It took me a whole week

to recognize that I was experiencing the emotion of fear when I was learning to drive. The earlier that you can recognize the emotion, then it can be dealt with rather than letting it run (or even ruin) your life.

Get in the habit of asking, "How am I feeling today?" Be honest. After about thirty days of asking this question daily, it will become a habit. Write down on your emotional calendar daily what emotions you experienced. The goal is to recognize and acknowledge what emotions you are feeling on a daily basis.

Let's take this thought a little further. Now a rude driver cuts you off in traffic. You are thinking, "I can't believe that guy." If your thoughts persist in the given direction, it is sure to upset the rest of your day. First of all, recognize that you are getting angry and that your thoughts keep you angry. Make a choice. Choose to turn your thoughts around. Make a decision to think; "I am not going to let someone else's rudeness ruin my day."

In 1960, Wilma Rudolph went to the Olympics to become the first American woman to win three track & field gold metals at a single Olympics. She was the fastest woman in the world. The perspective that helped her succeed was her mindset. She said, "I knew whatever I set my mind to, I could do."

Wilma's example proves that you can overcome your emotions. What can we learn from her example? Focus on positive thoughts. As you begin to recognize the emotions on your emotional calendar, you will be more prepared at overcoming those emotions. You will find that when a customer yells at you on the phone or your computer crashes that you will be able to let it go. Think, "I am not going to let that ruin my day".

Another exercise is to make a choice to have the opposite reaction that your emotions are displaying. If your emotions are in a fit of anger, choose to show kindness. If you are becoming impatient waiting in line then choose to be patient. In the end, you will find you are less stressful and happier.

Words greatly affect your feelings, which will cause your emotions to follow in an either beneficial or negative way. If you think negatively in your heart, your attitude toward that person can't help but be affected. Choose to use positive words daily. If you hear negativity, reject it and choose to forgive. This will also greatly reduce stress in your life.

Take a few ideas from you have learned and implement them on a daily basis. Maintaining a positive mental attitude will reduce stress and enhance your outlook on life. Choose to be positive!

This week's feature by
Evelyn Kraemer

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