

Attitude-Vital Component of Human Personality

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ABSTRACT

Jeff Keller said, "Attitude is everything". Indeed, attitude is everything and is a vital component of human personality. The world perceives us by our attitude; but have you thought about what is an attitude, how it gets anchored in our persona, what are its components, how many types of attitudes are found in humans, how its awareness evolved in us, can attitudes be changed and what importance does it have in our life? This paper attempts to answer the above questions. Needless to say, attitude is a small thing which makes a big difference!

Keywords: *Attitude, Human Behavior, Personality and Attitude, Human Traits, Persona and Attitude*

Managing people had been the most favorite and most difficult aspect during my 45 years of professional life. I have dealt with people ranging from docile, easily manipulative to hard nuts, from soft, pleasant to villainous and tough, from simple to scheming, from truthful to liars. People come in all shades, the shades are created by the attitudes they carry and for me, the greatest challenge had been to change the attitude of people. I had understood that unless attitudes are changed there cannot be a permanent influence on people; so, to mold them to orient them towards organizational goals, it was a basic necessity that I change the attitude of people.

Needless to say, that it is the hardest endeavor to change attitudes. Attitudes are deeply anchored in individuals as the attitudes are cultivated over their growing formative periods during which the attitudes get shaped through the teachings of parents, observations by the individual of people around them. The environment and society play a deep role in shaping the individual's attitude. Attitudes take shape over long periods spanning many years and these get ingrained permanently in the persona of individuals and are very deep-rooted which makes it nearly impossible to make a dent and change the attitudes.

I knew that unless I work on the attitudes of people, I cannot improve them and guide them towards organizational goals, and even though it was an uphill task I had to take it head-on. When I look back, I find that I could change the attitude of people from work shirkers to workaholics, careless to most careful, oblivious to observant, rebels to devoted, and treacherous to faithful, and so on... I could create the most efficient teams through the

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crusade of influencing people by changing their attitudes and the teams did wonders about the fate of organizations where I happened to work.

The above emphasizes the importance of attitude and in this paper, we shall examine different facets of "Attitude".

We shall understand the meaning of Attitude, how it gets cultivated and anchored in our personality, how the word attitude became a matter of study in psychology through past many years, what are its basic components, what are different types of attitudes, are there positive and negative attitudes, can attitudes be changed for improvement and if yes, how? As I said I have been adept at changing attitudes, I shall explain it with real-life examples.

We begin with understanding the meaning of "Attitude"

Meaning of Attitude

Oxford dictionary tells Attitude means "a way of thinking".

Meriam Webster dictionary gives the following meaning

1. The way you feel about someone or something
2. A feeling or way of thinking that affects a person's behavior

Cambridge dictionary says:

- Attitude is a feeling or opinion about something or someone or a way of behaving that is caused by this
- The way you feel about something or someone or a particular feeling or an opinion
- A feeling or opinion about something, especially when it shows in your behavior

Collins's dictionary posits the following meanings

- Variable noun—Your attitude to something is the way you think and feel about it, especially when this shows in the way you behave
- Uncountable noun—If you refer to someone as a person with an attitude, you mean that they have a striking and individual style of behavior, especially a forceful or aggressive one.

All definitions commonly say that attitude is how you think and behave in a situation. I would extend it further by saying that attitude is the pattern of thinking and behaving consistently in a situation. I added the word "Consistently" because many a time behavior may arise out without a thought i.e., on a reflex- that behavior is not attitude. Attitude is a behavior that arises out of thinking and thinking has its roots in our moral values that we have nurtured over our growing years and these moral values result in the same thoughts in a situation and those result in the same behavior in a situation. Consistency of actions is a must for attitude to manifest. Attitude is an anchor firmly rooted in one's personality and this anchor forms a major portion. Our outlook on the world is through our attitude. People form opinions about us mainly because of our attitude.

In psychology, *attitude* is a psychological construct, a mental and emotional entity that characterizes a person. They are complex and are an acquired state through experiences. It is an individual's predisposed state of mind regarding a value and it is precipitated through a responsive expression towards oneself, a person, place, thing, or event which in turn influences the individual's thought and action. Most simply understood attitudes in

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psychology are the feelings individuals have about themselves and the world. Prominent psychologist Gordon Allport (1935) described this latent psychological construct as "the most distinctive and indispensable concept in contemporary social psychology." Attitude can be formed from a person's past and present. ([https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Attitude_\(psychology\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Attitude_(psychology)))

Wikipedia posits some definitions of Attitude:

"An attitude can be a positive or negative evaluation of people, objects, events, activities, and ideas. It could be concrete, abstract, or just about anything in your environment, but there is a debate about precise definitions.

Eagly and Chaiken(1998) define an attitude as "a psychological tendency that is expressed by evaluating a particular entity with some degree of favor or disfavor."

Ajzen, Icek (2001) define an attitude as an affect towards an object, affect (i.e., discrete emotions or overall arousal) is generally understood as an evaluative structure used to form an attitude object.

Vogel, T., Bohner, G., & Wanke, M. (2014) say- Attitude may influence the attention to attitude objects, the use of categories for encoding information, and the interpretation, judgment, and recall of attitude-relevant information. These influences tend to be more powerful for strong attitudes which are accessible and based on elaborate supportive knowledge structure. The durability and impact of influence depend upon the strength formed from the consistency of heuristics. Attitudes can guide encoding information, attention, and behaviors, even if the individual is pursuing unrelated goals.

Jung's definition

Attitude is one of Jung's 57 definitions in Chapter XI of *Psychological Types*. Jung's definition of attitude is a "readiness of the psyche to act or react in a certain way".

As per Main, R. (2004), "Attitudes very often come in pairs, one conscious and the other unconscious. Within this broad definition, Jung defines several attitudes.

The main attitude dualities that Jung defines are the following.

- Consciousness and the unconscious. The "presence of two attitudes is extremely frequent, one conscious and the other unconscious. This means that consciousness has a constellation of contents different from that of the unconscious, a duality particularly evident in neurosis".
- Extraversion and introversion. This pair is so elementary to Jung's theory of types that he labeled them the "attitude-types".
- Rational and irrational attitudes. "I conceive reason as an attitude".
- The rational attitude subdivides into the thinking and feeling psychological functions, each with its attitude.
- The irrational attitude subdivides into the sensing and intuition psychological functions, each with its attitude. "There is thus a typical thinking, feeling, sensation, and intuitive attitude".
- Individual and social attitudes. Many of the latter are "isms".

In addition, Jung discusses the abstract attitude. "When I take an abstract attitude...". Abstraction is contrasted with concretism. By this, I mean a peculiarity of thinking and feeling which is the antithesis of abstraction".

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So much so about the meaning of attitude, which many people have described in their own ways but the short and sweet meaning is that attitude is a consistent way of thinking in a situation.

We come across people with divergent attitudes. Many are serious in their outlook, some jovial, some are philosophical in their thinking and others are materialists. In the next paragraphs we shall discuss the components and types of attitudes:

Components and Types of attitudes

Our attitudes get molded over a long period during our growing and maturing years and they get developed and structured and they are constituted in the basic three components:

- **Affective component:** this involves a person's feelings/emotions about the attitude object. For example: "I am scared of spiders". The feeling part is deeply correlated to emotions and the emotional component deals with the giving out of emotional stimuli, such as overreacting to simple things.
- **Behavioral component:** the attitude we have does influence how we act or behave. For example: "I will avoid spiders and scream if I see one". The behavioral component takes care of the way we react to certain things and is one of the primary things that we should take care of.
- **Cognitive component:** this involves a person's belief/knowledge about an attitude object. For example: "I believe spiders are dangerous". This component is based on the knowledge we acquire and feel confident about the fact that we are educated on that subject and can present someone with the relevant information.

This model is known as the **ABC model of attitudes**. There is evidence that the cognitive and affective components of behavior do not always match with behavior. This is shown in a study by LaPiere (1934). (- Dr. Saul McLeod, 2018).

These components are an integral part of our attitudes but as I mentioned one of the underlying assumptions about the link between attitudes and behavior is that of consistency. This means that we often or usually expect the behavior of a person to be consistent with the attitudes that they hold. This is called the principle of consistency. The principle of consistency reflects the idea that people are rational and attempt to behave rationally at all times and that a person's behavior should be consistent with their attitude(s). However sometimes the people always do not follow it and they behave in an illogical way even though they realize it e.g., drinking liquor or smoking even when they know that these are not good for health. But most often the behavior in a situation is consistent.

Having looked into the components of attitude, let us have a peep into types of attitudes:

Types of attitudes

As most of the thinkers have posited there are four types of attitudes, viz. Positive, Negative, Neutral and Sikken

Positive attitude

Individuals with positive attitudes will always look at good sides in any situation or in any person with whom he/she interacts. Even in adverse situations, they will focus on opportunities rather than being depressed due to adversity.

Yashasvi (2019) sees a positive attitude as follows: Positive attitude means keeping a positive mindset and thinking about the greater good, no matter whatever the circumstances are. A positive attitude has many benefits which affect our other kinds of behavior in a good way. For example, a person who has a positive attitude and mindset will look for the good in other people's no matter how bad they behave or how bad is their attitude. The former person thinks about the greater good and that is why he is called a person with a positive attitude. These persons generally don't care about the hurdles in life. They nurture their skills daily and overcome almost anything and everything that comes in their way. These persons know about their mistakes when those happen and instead of being ashamed of them, they decide and take care not to repeat the same thing.

Persons with a positive attitude will essentially have the following attributes embedded in their personality

- **Confidence:** Confidence is a good attitude and one of the basic things in the list of positive attitudes. Generally, people with a plus or positive mindset are rewarded with this automatically. Confidence is necessary to approach life with zest. Looking at things confidently and saying "I'm up for this, is enough to reflect your attitude towards life in general and attitude in particular. Confidence in other elements in the world will start with being confident with self.
- **Happiness:** Happiness is the next type of attitude in the list of positive attitudes and behaviors. A happy mind is an abode for all the good things to self. Confident people are quite happy as they are not worried about results, interviews, etc., and other similar things in life that are meant to test us.
- **Sincerity:** An individual with a positive mindset is often found to be quite sincere. He or she is aware of the work to be done, and they know that the only way out of a situation is through it.
- **Determination:** A determination is one of the primary rewarding points for a person with a positive attitude. The right dose of hard work, effort, and determination are essential to get things the way you want. A person who is driven and properly determined will overcome all impossibilities.
- **Optimism:** The people with a positive attitude are beaming with optimism and nature has molded them to look for opportunities even in adverse situations. They are the ones whose view is that the glass is half-filled with water rather than feeling that glass is half empty
- **Sense of responsibility:** Positive attitude carries a sense of responsibility. People with a positive attitude are unlike careless people who are oblivious of their responsibilities to people around them or to their duties and profession. They are dedicated people and will act responsibly in any situation. They value relationships and owe a responsibility to their loved ones. In their profession, they own their failures and look forward to improving their faults. Whatever work they undertake they own full responsibility and carry out the work in a wholehearted manner
- **Flexibility:** People with positive attitudes are flexible in their thinking and actions. They are considerate to other people's views and would accept their viewpoint so long as the views are on a positive platter even though deviating from their viewpoints. They are not rigid and will not hold to their stand stubbornly if the opponent's viewpoint is logical and rational. They are never obstinate and are not forcefully irrationally anchored to a thought.
- **Reliability:** They are the most reliable. Once they accept a task, one can rest assured that the task will be sincerely done as they are reliable and we can have confidence

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that all possible endeavors will be pursued by the person to accomplish the task.

- **Humility:** The greatest asset of people with a positive attitude is humility. They never boast, nor show pride or superiority complex. They are humble and treat others with empathy and humility. They give importance to others and follow the principle-Treat others the way you would like to be treated in a situation.

Negative Attitude: A negative attitude is something that every person should avoid. Generally, people with negative attitude ignore the good things in life, and only think about negatives e.g., whether they will fail. They often find a way out of tough situations by running away from them. They often compare themselves with other persons and find only the bad in them. In short, they are exactly the opposite of the one with a positive mindset.

There are certain bad effects that a person with a negative mindset has to face.

- **Anger:** A person with a negative mindset is often found to be angry most of the time. Sometimes there might not be any kind of specific reason behind their anger. Anger is the root cause of self-destruction. While some amount of anger is good, extreme cases of anger only lead to destruction.
- **Doubt:** If you have a negative mindset, then you will often doubt yourself. Self-doubt will lead to no progress and will often lead to low confidence. Low confidence does not take you far and thus negative attitude people lose the path to their goals and are lost forever
- **Frustration:** A negative person is a frustrated person. As said earlier, attitude defines the person and that is why if you are frustrated that will show on your face and you will be facing some serious difficulties. Frustration will not help you build your career. It is an irritant and will keep preventing you from taking any positive step forward.
- **Hatred:** In a person with a negative attitude, hatred tends to overshadow good qualities; a person develops hatred on even the slightest pretext without rational judgment. Such people are often bad judges of people and lose valuable friends.
- **Pessimism** is another evil characteristic in people with a negative attitude. They always look for chances of failures and persistent apprehensions of failure result in their wrong actions which enhance the chances of lost opportunities and gradually persons go on the path of failures. Pessimism is a sure road to failure.
- **Jealousy**—People with negative attitudes do not look for goodness in other people, rather they become jealous of the better if someone brings it to their notice. People with a positive attitude admire other's goodness and try to learn to be good as them but a negative attitude makes a person only envy them and resent the praise given to others. Since their mind is closed with envy, they never improve and remain stagnant in their areas

Neutral Attitude: This is another type of attitude that is common. That mindset is a neutral one. There are no negative thoughts. Neither there is any kind of hope. People generally tend to ignore the problems in life. They wait for some other individual to take care of their problems. They generally lead a lazy life and they are often unemotional. It is as if they don't think about anything that much and don't care for the same as well; you can call them living a vegetative life. They never feel the need to change themselves as they can simply live the way they are.

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He or she will feel disconnected quite often and that is why having a neutral attitude is very bad and should be fixed as soon as possible.

However, a neutral attitude can be turned to positive through mental therapies which have led persons to a road filled with positive feelings.

It is generally believed that the attitudes are deeply rooted in people and it is extremely difficult to make attitudinal changes but it is comparatively easy to change attitudes of people with neutral attitudes compared to people with positive/negative attitudes.

Sikken Attitude: This is the most dangerous type of attitude. The Sikken attitude has the caliber to destroy every image that comes in connection with a positive image. This type of attitude is an aggressive form of a negative attitude and is very destructive. It often reflects the mind's extreme negativity. People with Sikken Attitude are unlike people with neutral attitudes and it is extremely difficult to change them because the attitude is extremely deep-rooted (more than positive /negative attitudes) within one's personality. Only time may bring changes in this attitude which is rare and long drawn spanning long years, if at all it happens. This attitude is self-defeating; though it hardly affects our society. But it makes a person *depressed and conservative and keeps him/her closeted in a shell*. This *attitude* affects a person's *mental and physical health*. This attitude also affects *learning* ability and deteriorates the level of *thinking and thought process*.

Tahir (2019) explains the symptoms of *Sikken Attitude* as follows:

- Self-Defeating Talk.
- Negative Assumptions.
- Negative Comparison with Others.
- Negative Rumination about the Past.
- Disempowering Beliefs about Difficult People.
- The Desire to Blame.
- The Struggle to Forgive Yourself.
- The Fear of Failure and Making Mistakes.

Sikken attitude is uncommon and rare; most people are found with the first three attitudes. We all have one or the other of the first three attitudes. While it is difficult to alter the attitudes because of their deep anchoring in the personality but as pointed out above the neutral attitude can be comparatively easily changed through mental therapies.

The negative attitudes can also be changed with persistent efforts. We shall see in the latter part of this paper how the attitudinal changes can be brought in the people with negative attitudes but first let us see some differences between positive and negative attitudes.

Differences between Positive and Negative attitudes

Jeff Keller (2017) beautifully brings out the difference between Positive and Negative attitudes in the paired lines as given below:

- The person with a negative attitude thinks, "I can't"
The person with a positive attitude thinks, "I can"
- The person with a negative attitude dwells on problems.
The person with a positive attitude concentrates on a solution.

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- The person with a negative attitude finds faults with others.
The person with a positive attitude looks for the good in others.
- The person with a negative attitude focuses on what is missing.
The person with a positive attitude counts his or her blessings.
- The person with a negative attitude sees limitations.
The person with a positive attitude sees possibilities.
- The person with a negative attitude sees gloom in failures.
The person with a positive attitude sees opportunities in failures.
- The person with a negative attitude repents on failures
The person with a positive attitude learns from failures

The above beautifully explains the difference between positive and negative attitudes. The attitudes whether positive/negative/neutral or Sikken are all our windows to the world. Keller says that we all start with a clean window at birth. Life starts throwing dirt on the window and

- Our windows get splattered with criticism from parents and teachers
- Our windows get smudged by ridicule from peers
- Our windows get smeared by rejection
- Our windows get soiled by disappointments
- Our windows get clouded by doubts

The accumulation of negative aspects does cloud our way of thinking and has an impact on our attitude. The problem is that dirt keeps building up, and all too many of us do nothing about it. They continue to go through life with a filthy window.

It's only when you clean your attitude window that the other success principles can shine through. If your window is smudged, only a fraction of the light of these principles can get through. Your success is limited or even blocked. Cleansing the window means changing negative aspects of our attitude to positive ones.

Here one thing needs to be cleared that human attitude does not have one shade all the time i.e., we are not positive/ negative/neutral or Sikken in our attitude in all situations. Attitude means that in a situation our behavior is consistent but a person exhibiting a positive attitude in one situation may become negative in another situation. The overall attitude is the one which has a major proportion over a span of situations. A person would look to have a positive attitude when in most situations his/her attitude is positive.

Situational negative attitudes can be turned into positive. How this is accomplished will be discussed after we explore how the concept of attitude comes into awareness in the psychology of mankind.

Evolution of awareness about Attitude

Christian Fleck (2015) in an article 'Attitude-history of concept' dwells on how the awareness of attitude got developed. He says, "Attitude entered the vocabulary of the social sciences early in the twentieth century. Unlike many other concepts of social science, the

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word 'Attitude' existed in more than one Indo-European language -Attitudine in Italian, Attitude first in French and then in English. The word goes back to medieval Latin Aptitude and the classical Aptus (Oxford Dictionary; Fleming,1967:292). Before becoming a social science concept, 'attitude was used in painting and in particular in sculpture to describe a bodily pose of an individual who presents him/herself.

By referring to something located inside a human and not easily observable, 'attitude' encompassed something which became attractive for social scientists. According to Fleming (1967:293-297), Charles Darwin made use of attitude for the first time conceptually. In *Expressions of the Emotions in Man and Animals* (1872) he discusses the fact that particular strong emotions are accompanied by gestures, bodily postures which can be read by others. Darwin said that Attitudes are strong motor expressions of a particular emotion. Since Darwin was read widely, one can presume that his repeated use of the term 'Attitude' paved the way in which the term entered the language of modern social science.

Fleming (1967) discusses how attitude could have become the concept it was from the 1920s onward. The then Psychologists worldwide looked at Germany as the most mature representation of the discipline, it could have been the case that the translation of the German *Einstellung* as 'Attitude' was the way attitude became the concept we know today

Franklin H. Giddings from Columbia University in his textbook *The Principles of Sociology: An Analysis of the Phenomena of Association and of Social Organization* (1896) describes the phenomenon of communication as a form of association: "The expression of conscious states employing attitude, muscular movement, and utterance is a language common to animals and men" (Giddings, [1896] 1916: 108).

More broadly and with higher impact is what William I. Thomas from the University of Chicago contributed to the establishment of attitude as a social science concept. He not only studied in Germany but read widely according to his biographers-interpreters and he was teaching a course on 'social attitudes' from 1900 onward (Fleming, 1967: 322). Fleming identified casual usage of attitude in some of the early writings of Thomas but there is widespread consensus in the small literature on the conceptual history of attitude that *The Polish Peasant in America* (1918) was the birthplace of the sociological and social psychological concept of attitudes, initially mostly used with the prefix social.

Thomas defines attitude as "a process of individual consciousness which determines the real or possible activity of the individual in the social world" (Thomas and Znaniecki, [1918]1927: 22).

Attitude entered center stage only when the statistical versatile psychologist L.L. Thurstone applied his measurement competencies to attitudes too. In 1928 he published a programmatic statement 'Attitudes Can Be Measured' which paved the way for the, until then, very vague concept. Similar to the concept of intelligence, which became usable via measuring it. Thurstone borrowed from psychophysical experiments the idea of the 'just noticeable difference' to propose a continuum with opposite extremes and a set of items in between. The 10 items running from one extreme to the other have been selected in a multilevel process.

Thurstone did not solve a single conceptual ambiguity but suggested a solution in the way to transform an undecidable conceptual problem into an empirical measurable analysis. The

next decades demonstrated the attractiveness of this proposal (an early affirmative review of the field of attitude research is Gordon W. Allport (1935), in particular, in psychology and social psychology measuring attitudes, forming and changing attitudes, and investigating the correlation between attitudes and behavior are still around.

The evolution of the concept of attitude is also brought out in another article by Pablo Briñol, Richard E. Petty, Richard E. Petty and Guyer Joshua J (2019) who also posit similar views as above when they say that the history of attitudes research can be organized into three main sections covering attitude definition and measurement, attitude-behavior relationships, and attitude change. First, an evaluation of the history of attitude measurement reveals three relatively distinct phases: an early phase in which the classic direct self-report procedures were developed, a middle phase focused on "indirect" assessment devices, and a modern phase in which various measures designed to capture people's automatic or "implicit" attitudes have flourished. Second, the history of attitude-behavior correspondence can be organized also around three broad themes: an early period in which the presumed close association between attitudes and behaviors was largely an article of faith; a middle period in which some researchers concluded that little if any, relationship existed between measures of attitudes and overt behaviors; and a more recent period in which the resolution of prior issues stimulated an explosion of research focused on identifying the moderators and psychological mechanisms responsible for attitude-behavior correspondence. Finally, the history of research and ideas regarding attitude change and persuasion can be organized around several prominent theories focused on distinct single processes, dual processes, or multiple processes, each of which is still used by contemporary attitudes researchers.

We have seen the evolution of the concept of attitude and the ultimate final aspect is related to attitudinal changes- is it possible to bring in changes from negative to a positive attitude in a situation.

We shall conclude the paper after exploring ways and means by which attitudinal changes can be brought:

Changing negative attitudes to positives in a situation

The negative attitude, the dirt on the attitude window is difficult to clean but not impossible. There are ways and means some long drawn and some instantaneous. The instantaneous ones are most effective but occur seldom by the circumstances which occur but rarely in one's life. The long-drawn ways and means are methodical and can be usually practiced. We shall discuss the latter one first and then shall take on the instantaneous ones.

The conventional approach for changing attitude

Dr. Devon Price (2019) gives some conventional tips for making attitudinal changes in people:

“As a professional, it is often your responsibility to inspire, change and persuade people that a shift in outlook or process is needed. But given that changing a person's attitude is extremely difficult, and that attempts at persuasion can backfire, how should you approach attitude change? Persuasion researchers have identified several methods of helping slowly shift employees' views. Below are some evidence-based tips for helping influence your employees' attitudes and outlooks in a positive way.

Lasting, meaningful attitude change occurs gradually, over the course of weeks, months, and sometimes years (Brinol, Rucker, & Petty, 2015). It also tends to occur through meaningful,

non-forceful discussions about competing viewpoints (LaCour & Green, 2014). The more an individual is allowed to slowly revise their views and arrive at a new outlook, the more effective an attempt at attitude change will typically be.

Following tips may work

- ***Don't pressure people into shifting their attitudes***--Do not try to pressure or cajole people into shifting their attitudes, outlooks, and viewpoints. Even if you are seeking to energize, motivate, or encourage, direct attempts at changing how a person feels and thinks will be met with resistance. Instead, engage with the person giving due respect to his/ her reaction while you are counseling the person towards a positive attitude. Explain viewpoints and feelings, and listen actively; when advocating for the view or process that you desire, speak from your own experience (Braddock & Dillard, 2016). While this process of positive influence may take a long time, and try your patience in some moments, it is far more likely to result in transformational outcomes (Yousef, 2017).
- ***Let people arrive at a new viewpoint on their own***--Research has shown consistently that when a person arrives at a new viewpoint on their own, their new attitude is more likely to be strong, impactful, and resistant to change (Barden & Tormala, 2014). Furthermore, the more deeply and carefully a person considers their beliefs and outlooks, the more likely they are to remain committed to those views, and the more likely it will be that this new outlook will influence behavior. People are generally more likely to seek out information on a topic, and reflect carefully upon it, and objectively about it, when they are able to choose to do so freely (Ranney & Clark, 2016).
- ***Encourage independent thinking and give others agency***--Rather than pushing a perspective or position on the person, then, you should encourage independent thinking. If you are seeking to implement a new process and want to convince that it is a desirable change, provide the person with clear information about your thinking that led you to your decision. Let the person see "behind the curtain" into your decision-making process, and grant them access to the research and logic that drives your decisions on the matter.
- ***Allow for dissenting views, accept and manage conflict in a constructive way***--Allowing and encouraging the person to reflect upon, and discuss, his/her views of the available information will leave the person feeling empowered and valued, which will generally improve his/her work outcomes (Wu, Griffin, & Parker, 2015). In the short term, this may also result in vocal dissenting views and hard conversations about whether your approach or outlook are the correct ones. However, as long as discussions remain civil and the person continues to do the work well, this increased autonomy and dissent will be beneficial. By trusting the person to form their own opinions, you are empowering him/her to engage in a meaningful, self-driven attitude shift (Vahasantanen, 2015).
- ***Don't rely on facts and statistics only to foster attitude change***--When making a persuasive case for your viewpoint, or trying to influence the person to take on a new outlook, be careful to not rely on dry facts or statistics. While crucial decisions ought to be informed by empirical facts and scientific logic, most individuals are not persuaded by such information (Best, 2018). Facts and statistics are often uninteresting to people and can be difficult to process into a coherent "big picture" idea of what is true or right. Most individuals are especially skeptical of the facts they are given when an attempt at persuasion is being made; people are acutely aware that

figures and statistics can be altered, or cherry-picked, to make a convincing case (Hutchens et al, 2016).

- ***Make sense of information organized as a “story” that progresses***-Psychological research indicates that when seeking to influence a person’s attitudes, using captivating narratives and compelling emotions is beneficial. Most people think and process information in a "narrative" format; it is easier to make sense of information if it is organized as a "story" that progresses (Cho, Shen, & Wilson, 2014). When advocating for shifts in the person’s outlook, you can emphasize how the times have changed. You can also use your own personal narrative of attitude evolution to persuade him/her – people are often positively influenced by learning about the shifting viewpoints and personal growth of others.
- ***Use emotional appeals to change human attitudes***-When attempting to influence a person’s attitudes or viewpoints, utilizing emotional appeals is also beneficial. An effective counselor will not attempt to emotionally manipulate the person; rather, they will convey important points using genuine, personal feelings. When discussing a change in their behavior, show authentic enthusiasm for the benefits it will bring. An emotive, warm counselor is more likely to be successful at transforming the person’s attitudes in a positive way (Prochazka, Vaculik, & Smutny, 2015).

The attitudinal changes by the above conventional approach may take a long time but persistence will ultimately bring in the desired changes. There is no shortcut to the conventional approach.

To summarize we can say that key points for making attitudinal changes conventionally are:

- Attitude change is gradual, and often requires multiple conversations with people of competing viewpoints.
- Attempts at directly persuading a person to take on a new outlook are likely to fail.
- To help a person to make a shift in the outlook, provide him/ her with information, and let him/her understand your logic, and give autonomy to form own views.
- Talking about your attitudes and views as a narrative “story” is more likely to be effective than conveying facts and figures.
- Positive, authentic emotions, such as hope and excitement, can help encourage shifts in a person's viewpoints.

The conventional approach has been used by me in my long-drawn professional experience of managing people while working as General Manager (operations) managing factory operations of multi-locational factories.

I share one of my experiences to elucidate the conventional approach. In one of the factories on joining I found that employees were tuned to an attitude of giving more importance to office timing than to the work that they were doing. As soon as the needles of the clock reached 6 O’clock (end of shift), each employee left his work irrespective of the state of the activity being done by him. Machines undergoing job change remained idle for the rest of the day because the job change was incomplete and the job change crew left because office time was over. The machine being repaired by the maintenance crew could not get started in the next shift because the maintenance crew left at 6 O'clock. Even Managers left without bothering about the progress of work which they were busy in. This attitude of lack of dedication to their duties was resulting in poor work efficiency and the need of the hour was

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to inculcate an attitude in them to respect their work and be dedicated to their duties rather than be a slave to the clock. It did not require them to stretch much beyond their capacities but they did not realize that just by staying one or two extra hours when needed occasionally, to complete half-done work would save the company from avoidable losses of downtime of the machines. An attitudinal change was badly required if the organization was to be made efficient.

I decided it had to change because it was absurd to see that machine became idle since people did not attend for an extra hour or so and productivity suffered, more so when job changes were left half done and there was a loss of production for the whole day. The attitudinal change was badly required and I knew it would not come by issuing orders to them for not leaving the work which was half done.

I was new and my ordering them would be laughed at.

I used a subtle approach, at 5.30 or so, I used to go to the machine which I knew would meet this fate and used to stand near the machine, and on the pretext of discussing and advising, I did not move away till the work was completed by them. The executives could not leave out of respect to my position and since I was with them and I myself was overstaying, they kept on working while conversing with me. Many a time I had to stand with them for more than 3 hours after the office hours but we could save production for the next two shifts. The staff could not leave out of respect to me since I was also with them for those extra hours. Slowly and gradually my practical counseling to them, it became a culture that people stopped looking at the watch and would not leave the work halfway. It took me more than 6 months to continue this persistent vexing behavior to my people, who gradually realized the importance of what I was trying to make them realize. People gradually became conscious of their attachment to their work and their attitudes changed in a positive way.

Needless to say, the conventional approach to changing attitudes takes a long time but is eventually successful. Today I see production people, maintenance and job change crew are staying more than their scheduled working hours almost daily as they want efficiencies to be maintained at higher levels which are linked to their performance appraisals and they get rewarded for high efficiencies. It is a win-win situation for the company and the people and this was possible only through the attitudinal changes brought through the conventional approach which was used subtly and persistently.

Instantaneous means of changing attitude

I mentioned in the above paragraphs that there is an instantaneous remedy for changing attitudes that comes out of circumstances. Basically, the instantaneous change in attitude occurs due to a "Spark" which comes into people's lives unannounced and this spark revolutionizes a person's way of thinking and brings in colossal changes in the attitude of a person. The moment spark happens, a person's outlook undergoes a total change, and his thinking behavior and action change. But the sparks are rare and circumstantial.

I shall elaborate on these sparks and resultant effects by narrating my personal experience.

I wish to take you to the first year of my college.

On entering college, the whole world changes, you get a new direction by learning new fields of knowledge, meet new people, make new friends, and start enjoying the freedom as you get freed from the tight surveillance of parents. This is a delicate period also because for many of us adequate maturity is still not achieved to understand what is good and what is bad and with tight surveillance gone, we tend to go astray. This is the time to focus on career building but

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there are many temptations that push you to get deviated. Attraction towards the opposite sex, and in the current age, the temptation of drugs because of easy availability leads many youngsters towards destruction path. Freedom if not enjoyed with caution may create havoc.

I got my share of downfall through misuse of freedom and swayed into bunking my classes to watch films in cinema halls. I had never gone to the cinema till my schooling was over. The newly found freedom could not prevent me from this desire. My attitude of being a student who is focused only on studies went for a toss with the newly acquired freedom.

This attitude of neglecting my classes and straying elsewhere resulted in my poor performance at college exams. After the annual exam of the first year, I prayed to God to somehow promote me to the second year. I feared badly about falling in the eyes of my parents and brothers/ sisters if I failed the exam; no one in the family had met this fate so far - all my brothers and sisters were good at studies, in fact, the sister just next to me was a topper in her class. Those were the worst days of my life when I was living with a fear of failing and as the day of result neared, my anxiety and fear went on mounting and this was telling on my health. I did not feel like eating and all the time was keeping silent and my sulking mood made me bitter. The memory of that time is so deeply etched in my mind that I get shivers even now when I think about those days. Finally, the D-day came and I went to college trembling with fear but kept on praying to God that please- please help me this time and never in the future I will indulge in misdeeds as I did in my first year of college.

I was behind the crowd of students gathered at the notice board to see the result and was gathering courage when one of my friends came out from the crowd and congratulated me for passing the exam. I was overjoyed, happiness was at its peak—I think that was my happiest moment so far in my life!!!.....

The resolve not to repeat the misdeed was with me but was slowly becoming feeble. After all the bad habits die hard, and the attitudes which got etched deeply in me (due to the changed way of fresh college life with newly acquired freedom) could not be parted with and I would have again drifted to my way of thinking and living as I did in the first year but then came a "Spark" which changed my life.

This is the "Spark" I mentioned in the above paragraphs which are circumstantial but are effective instantly in bringing the positive attitudinal changes.

Such "Sparks" are game-changers and give a person the direction and a goal that puts him/her on the right path. People who are not fortunate to have this "Spark" mostly tend to become non-entities and lead a mediocre life. I thank God to have given me the needed "Spark".

Dear reader, I am narrating the black portion of my life just to share the learning which will benefit young adolescents to avoid the luring trap presented by the newly got freedom from tight parental surveillance at the critical stage of growth of children where the mistakes often happen because the maturity, as thought by parents, has still not manifested.

I was talking about the "Spark"; here it is----

On the day when we proudly entered the second year of college, the class-teacher explained to us that this year the examination will not be the usual college exam but it will be the part-I exam for graduation which will be University exam; the marks of college exams of the first year do not matter but

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the marks obtained in university exam of part I and Part II next year will add up to make the final result of graduation.

Having informed this, He hurled the bombshell on me and to a friend of mine, "This year we have somehow promoted Naresh Kumar and Mr.X (I refrain giving correct name for obvious reasons) who were on verge of failing to give them a chance to improve, and they must work hard and concentrate on studies. Their conduct will be on watch so that they do perform better at university Exam."

I found myself dug into shame on receiving the reprimand before the boys and especially the girls present in the classroom. Such disgrace in my life was the first and worst in my life. In few days when I came out of the feeling of disgrace and shame, the "Spark" manifested in me and I resolved that from the status of backbenchers I will rise to become the top few in the class. I vowed that I shall prove to the class that I have the potential to be a leader and that was the day I got my right path. I forgot all world and got totally immersed in my studies. When other students were enjoying the sun in the field or were enjoying food in the canteen during the free period; I was busy in the library. I studied and studied and studied. Mathematics was my favorite subject anyway so I enjoyed my studies. I concentrated on Maths like a man who is possessed.

*When I look back today, I realize what impact that "Spark" had on me. I scored distinction and was ranked 3rd in the whole university in part I university exam. The class teacher on the **first day of the third year**, recalled before the whole class, "Remember. last year I had spoken about Naresh Kumar's poor performance and see today he has brought honor to our college."*

I passed out with 86% marks in graduation and was ranked 5th in the university. Bubbling with confidence, I could clear tough competition of entrance exam of Indian Statistical Institute and get admitted in world fame course of M.Stat. (Master of Statistics) and the rest is history, which I cherish.

The spark not only changed my attitude but it changed my life and today after my successful career when I look back, I am convinced that attitudes can get changed in a moment; only a "Spark" is needed

Later on in my professional career, whenever circumstances provided me an opportunity, I have provided this spark to many of my managers and officers and today they are grateful for bringing out a remarkable change in their attitudes which put them on the road to their successful careers and today they hold high positions in their work areas. They don't forget to remember me on two occasions in a year—on the Teacher's Day and on the day of Guru Purnima.

The sparks give an instantaneous needed drastic positive attitudinal change and take persons on an improvement path.

The attitudinal changes are needed in people who are being pushed back due to their negativity and the changes are possible, only it takes time and persistent effort. Advice from Jeff Keller is very apt--**Look for the positive**- You always have a choice. You can view your problems as negative and become gloomy and depressed about them. Let me assure you that

this approach will make things only worse. Or, you can see every seemingly negative experience in your life as an opportunity... something you can learn from...as something you can grow from. Believe it or not, your problems are there to serve you—not to destroy you. Don't let problems cloud your attitude window forever. Clear off that cloudy window. You may find after the dust settles, that you can actually see better than you did before. Just remember the words of Napoleon Hill-*Every adversity carries with it the seed of an equivalent or greater benefit.*

With this, we come to the end of the paper. Through this journey, I am sure we have covered a lot of ground and become aware of what is meant by attitude and how important it is and the attitudes can be changed even instantaneously.

It will not be wrong to say that attitudes make or break a person. The importance of "Attitude" can never be brushed aside; it is the single most powerful attribute of the human persona.

Charles Swindoll has summed up the importance of "attitude" in his famous quote which was used by Jeff Keller as a closing remark in his book, "Attitude is everything" and I also find no better way so I, also, conclude the paper with his famous quote which depicts the vital importance of attitude:

"The longer I live, the more I realize the impact of attitude on life. Attitude to me is more important than facts. It is more important than the past than education than money than circumstances than failures than successes than what other people think or say or do. It is more important than appearance, giftedness, skill,

*The remarkable thing is we have a choice every day regarding the attitude we will embrace for that day. We cannot change our past... we cannot change the fact that people will act in a certain way. We cannot change the inevitable. The only thing we can do is play a role on the one string we have, and that is our **attitude**,*

*I am convinced that life is 10% what happens to me and 90% of how I react to it. And so it is you...we who are in charge of our **Attitudes**"*

It would not be wrong to say that 90% of human persona is reflected by the attitude of a person. The attitude is a true anchor integrating almost all characteristics of the human persona which reflects the personality that we have.

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