

How to Change Negative Attitudes to Positive Ones

Whitney Hopler / Crosswalk.com

A positive attitude contributes to success in life more than anything else, according to a Stanford Research Institute study that shows a full 87.5 percent of people's success can be traced to their positive attitudes, while just 12.5 percent of their success comes from their aptitude, knowledge, or skills.

What can you do if your mind is weighed down by negative attitudes that limit your success? You can change your attitudes, with God's help. Here's how:

Understand the power of attitude.

If you allow negative attitudes (such as anxiety, envy, anger, bitterness, or pride) to grab hold of your mind, those attitudes will lead you to make negative decisions that will affect your life in negative ways. But if you choose to develop and maintain positive attitudes, your life will become positive as a result. Even when you encounter the challenges and tragedies of living in a fallen world, you'll be able to deal with them successfully when you choose to approach life with positive attitudes. But keep in mind that changing negative attitudes to positive ones isn't an instant event; it's a lifelong process that requires perseverance. Ask God to help you each day, and study Jesus' life, since He is the ultimate example of how to live in a fallen world with positive attitudes.

Respond rather than react to unexpected change.

Change will sometimes surprise you, and when that change is negative you may be drawn into a crisis. Whenever that happens, avoid reacting negatively and instead deliberately decide to respond positively. Keep in mind that you can't control situations or people, but you can choose how you'll respond to them. Ask God to give you four key gifts to help you respond to unexpected change in positive ways: hope, faith in Him, a clear vision of what He wants you to do next, and the energy to do what He wants you to do. Whenever it's possible for you to change troubling circumstances or relationships, make the effort to do so. Whenever you can't change them, ask God to give you the peace you need to deal with them.

Be accountable for your life.

Let go of a victim's attitude, since blaming others for what's happened to you (from divorce to a job loss) won't help make your life better. Avoid self-pity and excuses for not changing your life, too. Realize that no matter what has happened to you in the past, you *do* have the power to change, with God's help. Focus on God's promises to give you the strength you need to grow and move into a better future, and rely on that strength every day. Instead of looking inward, look outward to other people in need and obey God's call to help them; in the process, you'll start to feel better about your own life. Take responsibility for moving forward in the ways God leads you to move forward, and you'll see your life becoming more positive.

Examine your soul.

Ask God to help you take an honest look inside your soul to identify what specific types of negative attitudes are lurking inside, such as: pride, fear, anger, sadness, jealousy, doubt, resentment, bitterness, and low self-esteem. Then confess each of the negative attitudes to God and repent of them, inviting God to transform you from the inside out. Going forward, each time you become aware of an unhealthy, negative thought in your mind, give it to God in prayer and ask the Holy Spirit to renew your mind so you can think the way He wants you to think – which will help you develop positive attitudes to fill your soul regularly.

Forgive yourself and others.

Accept the forgiveness that God offers you for your sins, and be faithful to God's call to forgive others who have sinned against you. Doing so will release the poison of bitterness from your soul, which will flush out negative attitudes and make room for positive attitudes to take their place. In the process, your stress levels will decrease and the amount of peace you experience will increase.

Prepare for obstacles.

It's inevitable in this fallen world that you'll face difficult circumstances in the future that can lead you to give into negativity if you don't prepare for them now. So invest time in practices that will help you develop new habits of positive thinking that will solidify positive attitudes in your life. When fear and discouragement cloud your thinking, seek wisdom from prayer, reading the Bible, and talking with godly people you trust. Pray regularly for God to fulfill His unique purposes in your life, and expect big results, with faith in God's sovereign power. When you need encouragement, read God's promises to you in the Bible and spend time with encouraging people while avoiding negative ones. Be patient when working to reach the goals God has inspired you to achieve, relying on His strength each step of the way. Keep in mind that every obstacle you may face pales in comparison to the power of God's love for you.

Learn to receive and give love.

The more you can receive God's love and give it to other people, the more positive your perspective on life will become. So make your relationship with God your top priority, and devote lots of time and energy to prayer and other spiritual disciplines that will help you grow closer to Him. Ask God to help you see yourself as He sees you, and base your identity on the fact that you're God's beloved child. Pray for the Holy Spirit to manifest more love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control in your life, so you'll be empowered to love other people in the ways God wants you to love them.

Take charge of your thoughts.

Ask God to help you replace negative thoughts with positive ones, and practice thinking about what's true, lovely and honorable until doing so becomes a habit. Read the Bible regularly to remind yourself of how blessed you are as someone who is accepted, secure, and significant thanks to your relationship with Jesus.

Transform from the inside out.

Release control of every part of your life – from your relationships to your work – to God, trusting Him to guide you to what's best in all of your decisions. As you abandon a self-centered life for a God-centered life, you'll find that you'll be following God's guidance because you *want* to, not because you *have* to do so. Your sense of hope will grow in the process, which will nurture positive attitudes in your life.

Make a positive difference in God's kingdom.

Pray that God will make you a vessel for His love to flow through into the lives of other people. Every day, make the most of the opportunities God gives you to inspire other people to develop positive attitudes, by loving and serving them through both what you say and what you do.

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