

## OPINION

## Our Attitude Leads to Our Altitude

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My high-school rugby coach Brother Bernard gave me sound advice, which I have cherished over the years. "It is not what happens that matters, it is how you react."

At the beginning of the season, the wise coach explained how he would choose the Under 13s team's captain. He would select the player with the right attitude, not necessarily the player with best skills. Being an ambitious youngster with the burning desire to be captain for our first trial game, I praised and encouraged my fellow players when they dropped the ball or missed a tackle - loudly within earshot of Brother Bernard. My positive attitude earned me the leadership role.

The right attitude makes all the difference in business too. Whether we want to lead a sporting team or pursue advancement at a new company, our attitude will affect our altitude.

Brother Bernard quoted Viktor Frankl (1963): "The last of the human freedoms is to choose one's attitudes." These wise words are reinforced in business every day and people with the 'right' attitude are always the highest performers. I constantly see these positive people shine in the pharma industry.

However, a bright attitude cannot make up for poor performance or lack of ability. My positive attitude as a rugby player was not matched with world-class rugby skills, and not surprisingly, I was never selected in Australia's national team, 'The Wallabies'. I may not have been blessed with super rugby ability, but I did discover my own talents. I have an analytical mind, can communicate effectively and I'm good with people. I pursued a career which allowed me to use these natural skills and these traits were enhanced by a positive attitude instilled by my high-school rugby coach.

People with focus and the ability to improve themselves will reach their potential in their chosen discipline and will also inspire others to greatness. A positive attitude inspires others to excel, and this attitude is clearly evident in the best pharma executives.

The first chapter of 'How to Win Friends and Influence People' by Dale Carnegie discusses the three Cs: "Never criticize, condemn or complain, any fool can do that and most fools do". Leaders are dreamers and visionaries. These men and women have the ability to see answers and solutions where others see difficulties and failure.

A pro-active and positive attitude is charged with creativity. When we adopt this frame of mind the answers will appear, no matter how gloomy the situation may first appear. Have you ever noticed how you can see all the positive possibilities when you are in a good mood? A positive attitude is entrepreneurial in nature and leads to opportunities and abundance.

A positive attitude is also good for your health. A study appearing in the July 2003 issue of *Psychosomatic Medicine*, reports that people with a positive attitude - energetic, happy, and relaxed - are less likely to catch colds than people who are depressed, nervous, or angry.

Whether in business, at home or even on the sporting field, our attitude makes a major difference. The pioneering American psychologist and philosopher William James may have said it best: "The greatest discovery of our generation is that human beings can alter their lives by altering their attitudes of mind. As you think, so shall you be."