



ATTITUDE AND GRATITUDE

I have found that there are specific habits we can incorporate into our lives that will help us jump start our weeks beginning every Monday, or any day, with gratitude and a great attitude. I have had to learn on several occasions how to pick myself up and move on with life again. I lost my husband, my dad, my sister-in law in 2012. I had financial losses, health issues, changed careers, moved to another city, and. We have to learn to pick ourselves up and look for the treasure among the trash. We have to be the one's who comfort ourselves. We need to have tools to work with during the darkest days until we can see the light again. It is always darkest before the dawn. The dawn will come. I have listed some small steps to jump start your days with a great attitude and gratitude for God's blessings in our lives when we are too blind to see them. I am now married again to my high school friend. I have my own successful small business and so much more. Attitude and Gratitude will take you to a peaceful place in life so that you can live through and beyond the struggles of life.

- 1) As soon as your eyes open in the morning, before your thoughts take full control, start saying to yourself that you are thankful. If all you can say is thank you for my heart beat, start there. Say thank you even if you feel there is nothing to be thankful for say it. Then begin listing in your thoughts the things you are thankful for. *I am thankful that I have a heartbeat, because that means I have a purpose. I am thankful that I have the choice to be grateful for what I have been given and then name it.* The next step is to smile. Smile before you get out of bed. Smiling will automatically change your perception. Try it now. Smile. You cannot smile and frown at the same time.
Do this for thirty days until it is a habit. If you find you are not doing this habit-forming drill, every morning, discipline yourself to start over for another thirty days. **It will become habit** And a part of your life.
- 2) Now that your mind is moving in a positive direction, write down, in the evening, ten things you are thankful and what you have accomplished that day. Everyday. Do this for thirty days and if you miss a day you have to start over for the thirty days. The goal here is to help you find those things you are thankful for and take for granted. Maybe it is just watching the birds outside your window, be thankful you have choices, or you were able to help someone with a project, look around you and find something. If we stop and use all of our senses throughout the day, we will find more than ten things to not only be thankful for, but ten things we were able to accomplish that we can feel proud of. Another idea is to make it symbolic, your choice, jewelry, card, or a rock. Make it personal to you and accessible. Something you will come across several times a day. A good friend of mine carries a gratitude rock in his pocket that he comes across several times a day and reflects on the blessings in his life.

Make it Sweet. Keep it Strong.



- 3) Exercise is the most underutilized anti-depressant there is and combining it with nutritious dense whole foods and drinking water is good for energy, moods, and vitality. If you are not currently regularly exercising, start now. You can begin the journey of health simply by moving more. Start slowly, you may walk only fifteen minutes, three to five times a week. Just start somewhere. Gyms are a wonderful place to meet people and exercise with others who have like minded goals like you. Even better is hiring a personal trainer, like myself, to get you started safely and hold you accountable. You could, also, start with a growth mindset coach, like myself, that will help you come up with a vision for where you want to go and goals to get you there.
- 4) Do something positive for someone else. This is the best antidote for self-pity and depression. It takes your mind away from your challenges. It can be as small as a phone call or an encouraging text. You can, also, volunteer for some cause that is on your heart. Non-profits are always looking for volunteers.
- 5) Write positive affirmations and repeat them daily. Affirmations are a great way to get your thoughts out of the negative thought loops. They are a great reminder that you are a spiritual being connected to your creator who loves you. Think and repeat *I am worthy to be loved. I am healthy and happy. I am loving and kind. I am loved. I choose nutritious foods that give me energy.* These are just some examples. You can come up with your own positive affirmations that fit who you are. Post them on your bathroom mirror, on your refrigerator, and in your car. Affirmations will help you start the process to change. They are not your change, but will start the process to feelings which turn into behaviors which turn into action. It takes time. Become your best friend not your worst enemy. Stop the inner critic in your mind that is negative. Come up with a vision of what you would like your life to be. Write a personal and business vision. Keep a vision board of your aspirations and goals. (google vision boards) If you have children, it would be a great project to do with them. You may have a vision of eating nutritious foods and exercising, a boat, a new business, a relationship, or whatever makes you smile and dream. Your why. Your passion.
- 6) If you find yourself overwhelmed or anxious about something, stop. Stop whatever you are thinking and get in the present moment. You may be driving and have your mind pre-occupied with worry or stress. Stop and think about how you are feeling while you are driving. What does the road feel like? What does your hands feel like on the wheel? What is on the radio? What is in front of you? Say it out loud. What is the weather doing? Become aware of your breathing all of your senses. Too often we get in a hurry and we rush around and stress out and we are pre-occupied with the next thing and worrying about things that haven't even happened. Relax, breathe, and enjoy the moment and how our senses are taking in that moment.

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- 7) Nature is the best place to get in touch with yourself and life at its purest. Maybe it's a walk in the woods, or a nature trail in the park, watching the sun come up over the horizon at the beach or a sunset. Watch the animals and insects; pay attention to how they live happily in their environment. Pay attention to the sounds, the smell, take your shoes off and feel the ground beneath you. How does it feel? Take it all in. Allow yourself prayer time and mediation time.
- 8) Allow yourself the gift of play and laughter. Find something fun to do like you did as a child. When we break down the word recreation it is simply recreation of the soul. Laughter decreases stress hormones and actually increases your immune system. Even the simple jester of a smile can change your thoughts and your mood. Someone I am sure could use a smile, and a friend to play and laugh with.
- 9) Get a positive attitude. Read or listen to personal growth books or audios. There are so many avenues now in which to watch, listen, or read from blogs from coaches, leaders, motivators that will empower you to change. Take advantage of all the free personal development avenues through social media.
- 10) Get two pieces of paper and on one list all the negative in your life. All the challenges that are holding you back from moving forward in gratitude and attitude. Then on another sheet of paper write the exact polar opposite of the negative and all of your accomplishments. Then, as a symbolic gesture, shred the negative list and keep the list of the positive and accomplishments. Work on two or three things each week that you would like to change in your life.
- 11) If something is troubling you or a big challenge for you, try looking at it from another perspective. Look at it as an opportunity to change. An opportunity to grow and learn. Think about someone you admire that you know is living a successful life with a great attitude and grateful and ask yourself how they may view the situation. Think about how you would be there for your best friend and what you might say to them.

“Nothing can stop the man/woman with the right attitude from achieving his/her goal, nothing on earth can help the man/woman with the wrong attitude.” (Thomas Jefferson)

Only you can change the way you see things in life. Only you can make the choice to live happily. The good news is that you do have a choice. You are always one choice away from changing your life. One choice.

May you remember if you have a heart beat you have a purpose. Never forget that.

Sweet Strength, Linda Timmons, Make it Sweet. Keep it Strong!

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