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A Key to Thriving During Turbulent Times - Positive Attitude

There is an immense amount of worrisome facts, figures and stories reported on the news every day. To make matters worse, now that we are connected 24/7 with cell phones, iPods, Facebook, TV, email alerts, etc, there is no escaping - even on vacation. In watching businesses, leaders, friends and family handle these processes, it has become apparent that one of the keys to thriving during the current turbulent times is a simple yet difficult-to-implement characteristic - a positive attitude.

It is amazing how maintaining a positive attitude can be your key to success. It seems that a unique skill, a Harvard degree or 30 years experience would be the #1 key to success; however, although they can be undoubtedly important, a simple, non-capital intensive positive attitude can outweigh them all. Why? In my experience, it takes an incredible amount of energy and creates stress to focus on the negative. Instead, focusing on the positive frees time and energy to think innovatively, brainstorm solutions and thrive during the current turbulent times. Additionally, I've seen many examples where the mind is powerful. Just thinking about what will go wrong is likely to cause it to go wrong; instead, think about what will go well and you'll create success. So, how do you gain a positive attitude?

First, value people and relationships. I've read quite a few books, newsletters and articles about the current turbulent times from a business and investment perspective, and one common theme focuses on relationships - those who value relationships will be much better equipped for success. Relationships provide a multitude of benefits, aside from companionship - a brainstorming partner, an editor, a sounding board, an advisor, etc. In essence, create your own unique pool of resources/ advisors and supporters. In my experience, this has been not only a key to success to thriving during challenging times but it has been integral to my best achievements.

Second, train your mind. Instead of immediately jumping to why something cannot be done or why you could never achieve a goal, think about HOW you will. Think solutions! This could be harder than it sounds to do, but do not give up, and you'll be thrilled with the results. Throw out your worries about whether the "how" is practical or achievable; instead, pretend that anything is possible and let your mind ponder the possibilities. For some people, it helps to set a goal. If you are one of those people, set a goal to think of three ways to achieve 'how' it can be done. Then, once your mind is flowing with ideas (and perhaps you've asked your trusted advisors), your challenge will typically change from considering all the ways everything will go wrong to deciding among options to achieving your goal.

Third, reward progress. This might sound corny but it works. Whether it is a personal reward or rewarding your team's progress in a work setting, it will "get the ball rolling". It is amazing how a simple thank you and/or recognition for the small win can not only keep the momentum going but also can create a trajectory of success. Whether you have \$0 or \$10,000 for a reward, it is irrelevant. Be creative. For example, I reward myself by going to lunch, reading a book, watching a TV show or seeing friends/ family, and I reward my team members with immediate, positive feedback for wins, by asking for their advice on how to solve problems and listening intently to their ideas/ suggestions, and promoting their ideas throughout the organization while providing credit - none of which require cash flow or 'approval'.

Focusing on developing and maintaining a positive attitude is not expensive in terms of capital or resources. Yet, when I compare my business associates and friends who are in similar circumstances and have a positive attitude to those who focus on the negative, the end results are significantly different - at least twice the results, and many times an extrapolated 5-10 times difference. Invest some energy and time into developing a positive attitude, and the results will follow.

Lisa's Tips: Skills Development

During tough economic times, skills development is critical. As jobs are tougher to find, those candidates embracing continual learning and skills development will have a leg up on the competition.

1. Read voraciously - read a few of the bestseller business books and/or ask your mentors and colleagues for recommended books.
2. Keep up on the news - do not spend 24/7 engrossed in the news (as it can be quite overwhelming and time consuming), but read and /or listen to the highlights.
3. Webinars/ teleconferences/ newsletters - there are many free resources on an unlimited number of topics. Look on-line and you'll find several sources for skills development.
4. Find a mentor - search for mentors who have experienced success in an area, business or role you'd like to pursue. In my experience, this approach can be one of the best ways to quickly increase your skills and avoid common pitfalls. Make sure to find a way to make it a win-win relationship.
5. Go to a class / seminar - keep up on the latest trends and cycles and/or learn something new.
6. Experiment - try out your newly learned skills in a safe environment. Practice and preparation are keys to success.

Recommended Reading

"[*The 4-Hour Workweek: Escape 9-5, Live Anywhere, and Join the New Rich*](#)" by Timothy Ferriss - it is an interesting story of how one person went from an overworked employee and entrepreneur to creating a 4-hour workweek lifestyle. I thought it offered valuable ideas and insights that can be applied regardless of specific work and life goals.

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