

The background of the cover is a solid blue color. Overlaid on this are several faint, light blue gear patterns of different sizes. A large, white, 3D-style arrow points upwards from the bottom left towards the top left. The word "TURN" is written vertically in large, white, 3D block letters, positioned to the right of the arrow. The letters have a slight shadow, giving them a three-dimensional appearance.

TURN

HOW ONE TURN IN ATTITUDE
CAN LEAD TO SUCCESS

DR. ALAN R. ZIMMERMAN

CHAPTER ONE

Awareness

YOUR ATTITUDE DETERMINES YOUR ALTITUDE

The Importance of Attitude

I make my living flying across the country and speaking to all types of groups and all kinds of people. Although I spend a lot of time on airplanes, I seldom take the time to talk to my seatmate. But I'll never forget this one man who sat next to me. He looked terribly down, with drooping shoulders, a sagging face, and eyes that seemed to ask, what's the use?

So I greeted him with a cheerful, "Good to see you. How are you doing?"

He said, "Oh, okay, I guess." We talked for a few minutes and then he asked me, "What do you do for a living?"

I said, "I'm a professional speaker. Some people might call me a motivational speaker. I write books and give presentations on how to be a peak performer."

Then, out of nowhere, he said, "Tell me something. Why does everything go wrong for me?"

Well, I certainly didn't know. I had never met the man. I replied, "Beats me. But if you'll talk to me for a few minutes, perhaps we can figure it out."

For the next thirty minutes he went on and on about all his difficulties. His workload was getting heavier at work, and the management team seemed to change directions every other day. His marriage wasn't the best. His kids pushed their boundaries, and the bills always seemed to exceed the amount of money available to pay them. He repeated the same negative thoughts over and over. He kept saying, "I'll never get ahead. I just can't do it. Nothing ever seems to work out."

Then all of a sudden he exclaimed, "Hold it! Hold it! I know why everything goes wrong for me. It just came to me. Everything goes wrong for me because I'm wrong. I think wrong, speak wrong, and act wrong. I'm just too negative all the time."

He was right. He had gotten right to the crux of the matter: his attitude was determining his altitude.

The same is true for you. Your attitude is one of the most important, most powerful factors in your life. In fact, you can trace just about everything you achieve or don't achieve back to your attitude. Quite simply, good attitudes bring good results, and bad attitudes bring bad results. Your attitude, even more than your aptitude, determines your altitude.

Of course, motivational authors saw the connection between attitude and achievement years ago. James Allen wrote, "Man's rise or fall, success or failure, happiness or unhappiness depends on his attitude." Dr. Norman Vincent Peale said, "Any fact facing us is not as important as our attitude toward it, for that determines our success or failure." Unfortunately, it takes many people a long time to understand this concept.

The Psychological Evidence

Of course, many people think joking about their negative attitude is cool. Comedian W. C. Fields said, “Start every day with a smile and get it over with.” One negative person even carried a card in his wallet that read, “In case of accident, I’m not surprised.”

Sure, it can be fun to joke about a negative attitude. But in reality, nothing could be more serious. Benjamin Franklin knew that. He said, “Most people die at age eighteen, but we don’t bury them until they’re sixty-five.”

You, on the other hand, may think that all this talk about attitude is just a bunch of fluff. However, there is evidence to back up my claims. The best research comes from Dr. Martin Seligman. In his monumental, groundbreaking book, *Learned Optimism*, Dr. Seligman discovered that attitude was a better predictor of success than IQ, grade point average, or almost any other factor.

He found that negative people get sick more often, are divorced more frequently, and raise kids who get in more trouble. He found that negative people even make less money.

In one long-term study of 1,500 people, 83 percent of the people (group A) chose their particular jobs because they believed they could make lots of money. Only 17 percent of them (group B) chose their jobs because they had positive attitudes towards those jobs.

Twenty years later, the two groups had produced 101 millionaires. The amazing thing is, only one of those millionaires came from group A. One hundred of them came from group B. Now that’s significant.

Even more amazing, more than 70 percent of these millionaires never went to college. And more than 70 percent of those who became CEOs graduated in the bottom half of their class. Seligman concluded that their attitudes, rather than their aptitudes, had determined their altitudes. In no uncertain terms, he says positive thinking is *the* hallmark of successful people.

I find similar trends in all the audiences and organizations where I speak and consult. I always ask members of my audience to list the words they would use to characterize a winner, and I write down the first ten they give me.

What do you think they say? Regardless of the group, the answers are always consistent. They list attitude, enthusiasm, determination, motivation, confidence, optimism, dedication, happiness, balance, and patience. What's interesting is that none of these qualities has anything to do with physical or mental ability. But they all relate to attitude in some way or other.

The Medical Evidence

Your attitude can also affect your physical health. Dr. Thomas Hackett, a Harvard psychiatrist, found that sick people who minimize the seriousness of their condition by emphasizing their optimism, hope, trust, and humor have higher survival rates than chronic worriers. He said, "Sometimes the best medicine is in your head . . . a positive attitude has a lifesaving effect."

Leo Goldberger, professor of psychiatry at New York University, said, "We used to think of mind and body as two separate realms when, in effect, they are part and parcel of the same whole."

Grace Murphy of the International Center for the Disabled in New York City wrote, "In order to have a healthy body, you must have a healthy mind."

But Norman Cousins was one of the first to popularize the mind-body connection. As a respected journalist and professor, he wrote and spoke on the topic many times. One particularly interesting study that Cousins reported was conducted on forty patients who recovered from "irreversible" illnesses.

When these patients were told they didn't have much of a chance to survive, they all panicked. That was to be expected.