

The Role of Attitude

The secret of success in coping with an illness or disability is compared to the secret of making money in real estate investment. The three most important factors in selling properties are 1. Location 2. Location 3. Location. Similarly, in coping with a chronic ailment the three most important factors are 1. Attitude 2. Attitude 3. Attitude.

There seems to be little correlation between how happy a person is and his or her physical condition. Some, who have only a slight disability are bitter about their fate and continually ask 'Why me?' Others, who use a wheelchair, are cheerful, friendly and concerned about others. What makes the difference?

Much of the difference is related to the personality of the person before being diagnosed. The congenital optimist will continue to see the doughnut; the pessimist will keep his eye on the hole. Fortunately, the tendency to retain negative attitudes can be overcome. Sometimes the challenge of dealing with a disability or illness stimulates people to improve their attitude and thus enrich their lives.

The adage 'If life gives you a lemon, make lemonade' describes very graphically how attitudes can sweeten an otherwise sour situation. One beneficial side effect of coping with a disability or illness is the friends one makes in support groups where people give each other mutual comfort and camaraderie.

Laughter helps build a positive attitude, and a positive attitude is therapeutic. This is not to suggest that you should laugh your disability or illness away but you can make it more bearable and give an assist to the medical treatment you are receiving. Research indicates that laughter and other positive emotions cause great chemical changes in the body. The late Norman Cousins, who was involved in such research at the University of California, Los Angeles said, 'Your mind is your best pharmacopoeia'.

"The longer I live, the more I realize the impact of the attitude on life. Attitude to me is more important than facts. It is more important than the past, than education, than money, than circumstances, than failures, than successes, than what other people think or say or do. It is more important than appearance, giftedness or skill. It will make or break a company, a church, a home. The remarkable thing is we have a choice every day regarding the attitude we will embrace for that day. We cannot change out past. We cannot change the fact that other people will act a certain way. We cannot change the inevitable. The only thing we can do is play on the one string we have and that is our attitude. I am convinced that life is 10 percent what happens to me and 90 percent how I react to it. And so it is with you. We are in charge of our attitude."

~Charles Swindoll~