



Attitude: Hyman's Seafood Motto

When I started my small business twelve years ago, I started collecting positive thoughts, sentences, and ideas.

I believed then—and believe today—that my ultimate success or failure in this business is pretty much up to me, and to me alone.

All the things we worry about—market shifts, competition, rising fuel costs, and everything else—are not as important as how I react to them.

Here, then, is a quote I kept in 1999 from Chuck Swindol in his book, "Attitudes".

The longer I live, the more I realize the impact of attitude on life. Attitude, to me, is more important 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, or a home.

The remarkable thing is we have a choice everyday regarding the attitude we embrace for that day. We cannot change our past. We cannot change the fact that people act in 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% what happens to me, and 90% how I react to it.

And so it is with you, we are in charge of our attitudes.

Zig Ziglar has a similar homily: "Change your attitude, and elevate your altitude."

Ever have those days when you just hate to go into work? Hate facing an irate customer? I look at it this way: "Every new day is the first day of my new business." I know I will make mistakes, but I also know that I will bend over backwards to make good that mistake so my client doesn't suffer.

And if I can't make the client happy, I'll just go on to the next opportunity. I've lost a few, but not very many clients with that philosophy. And most of the clients I lost were people that were probably not those that you could build a successful business around.

Now I prepare small business and personal

income taxes to earn my daily bread, so I'm in a position to see people's responses in a stressful part of their lives. It is an honor to be invited into someone's inner life, and requires that I treat that privilege with trust and respect.

But most of us only experience the Tax Stress once a year. I go through it hundreds of times, and I want to share with you two experiences, maintaining of course full confidentiality by suppressing all identifiable characteristics.

One person started a small business that required a high capital investment, which was provided from a lifetime of personal savings.

But the business started slowly, and because of the high initial commitment of capital, it needed to produce a positive cash flow within a few months of beginning operation.

You can probably guess where this is going. Generating a high cash flow starting from Ground Zero means sales. And sales starting at Ground Zero means cold calling all day, every day.

Cold calling means having the ability to deal with rejection. Statistics say that some 90% of cold calls produce rejection. The rejection is not personal, though it certainly feels that way.

If your attitude doesn't help you bounce back from that rejection, you end up finding any excuse to avoid accepting more of that pain.

And you therefore avoid doing the one thing that is most likely to lead to success!

Isn't that true in all aspects of our lives? We ultimately don't approach a friend to mend a damaged relationship, and we don't talk to our children and our spouse.

My client's business closed last year, recording some \$734 of new business sales. The official reason was price cuts from better-financed and more entrenched competition.



Attitude: Hyman's Seafood Motto

Probably true, but I think attitude was a more important factor.

The client with the most positive attitude I encountered this year has also had a turbulent year, losing a major client that generated a significant amount of the total business revenue.

But my client recognized that other alternatives existed, and proactively sought and won new business. When I delivered the tax return, s/he was comfortable with what it said, and emotionally and intellectually had already moved on to new areas.

This person with the most positive of all attitudes had moved on.

Total tax liability? Greater than \$100,000. I think there is a correlation.

