

Attitude:

A settled way of thinking, typically reflected in a person's behavior.



Pastor/author Charles Swindoll wrote that attitude has an enormous effect on our lives. "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." The way we think affects how live life. I think of a time many years ago when I worked as a telecommunications technician and had just shorted out some circuitry, causing problems in the network. In frustration, I lamented, "I don't have the aptitude for this!" In one of those times, I knew the Lord was speaking to me, I heard back, "Is it aptitude? Or attitude?" I changed my attitude and actually became a pretty good technician. It is the same in every area of life and especially in marriage.

When we have a poor attitude towards our spouse; thinking negatively of them, it will be reflected in our behavior. It may be the sighs or rolling of the eyes, or it may come to something more serious as responding angrily when our spouse speaks to us. As Dr. Swindoll wrote, our attitude is ours - we cannot blame it on our spouse, children, work, or circumstances. We must take ownership of our attitudes and make right choices in spite of what might be happening to us. Please hear me; I am *not* saying that sin or inappropriate behavior should be overlooked or dismissed. We are to address wrongs, but we are to address those wrongs with a right *attitude* - an attitude of love and grace.

We are to have the same mindset or attitude as Jesus Christ; being a servant, humble - thinking of others before ourselves (Philippians 2:3-7). In counseling, we have seen marriages change the fastest when attitudes change. Yet, so often, one or both spouses cling to their hurt and pain and their negative way of thinking and it dramatically reflects in their behavior towards each other. The change from a negative attitude to something more positive is critical to turning a dysfunction, unhappy marriage into a healthy, happy marriage. I think of one couple who endured a terrible situation. One person had a terrible attitude towards their spouse and it wasn't until they had no other option but to surrender their spouse to the Lord and change *their* attitude, that they were able to begin rebuilding their marriage.

What is your attitude towards your spouse? Does your attitude build up your spouse or tend to tear them down? Please honestly examine yourself; your thoughts and patterns of thinking towards your spouse. Do you expect the worse? Do you build him or her up? Or do you tend to tear them down? If you have a positive attitude toward your spouse; is there a way you can improve it? To be even more positive in your interactions with them? Take on Christ's attitude towards your spouse - His loving, humble, servant attitude.

Helpful Resources: *Fortified Marriages Resource page:* www.fortifiedmarriages.com

Articles to check out:

Battling Your Own Negative Attitude in Marriage by Sarah Sarniak - ministrymindedmom.com

Your Attitude Influences the Health of Your Marriage by Eagle Family Admin - eaglefamily.org

The Christ-Like Attitude in Marriage by Chris Garner - fortifiedmarriages.com