

SAMPLE



Choose Your Attitude
FACILITATOR'S GUIDE



Choose Your Attitude p. 6

Leading This Program p. 7

Introducing the Video p. 8

Conversation Starters p. 9

Activities:

- The Power of Awareness p. 10
- Same Goal, Different Attitude p. 12
- Bonus Discussion: “Forever” Relationships p. 15
- Double Bonus Discussion: Your Words Create Your World p. 17

Follow-Up p. 18

SAMPLE

Choose Your Attitude



A group of neonatal nurses was discussing Choose Your Attitude. A bit cynical and world-weary, they questioned whether their attitudes had much to do with the quality of their workplace. Then one nurse spoke up, “I’ve noticed when I come to work in a grumpy or negative mood, the preemies seem to be more fidgety. They cry more and are much harder to work with. On the other hand, when I’m happy and positive, they seem to be happy, too.” She thought for a moment. “Wow, if my attitude has that much of an effect on preemies, how much effect does it have on everyone around me?”

Leaders typically spend a lot of time thinking about the attitudes of others. When attitudes aren’t what leaders think they should be, they remind, counsel, lecture, even scold their employees. But how often do leaders think about the messages in their *own* attitudes?

We all tend to operate as if our attitudes depend on what happens around us. If everything is going great, we feel great; if not, we don’t. According to this line of thinking, since we can’t control what happens to us, how can we choose a different reaction—especially if our reaction has become a habit we don’t even think about anymore?

There are times when it’s tough to Choose Your Attitude. But no situation or person can put you in a bad mood without your permission. If you are not choosing your attitude, who is?

When you take responsibility for the attitudes you choose, without trying to blame someone or something else, you have discovered the essence of leadership with integrity.

*“What lies behind us and what lies before us are tiny matters
compared to what lies within us.”*

—RALPH WALDO EMERSON



The resources in this guide were designed to lead a session from one to two hours, but you can easily adapt them to create a session of any length.

1. Video

Choose Your Attitude is nine minutes in length. Key themes include:

- Why attitude is always a choice.
- The attitude you choose impacts the people you lead.
- The importance of self-awareness.
- How a shift in the leader's attitude can shift the attitudes of a team working for a goal.

2. Conversation Starters

Targeted questions, prompted by the video, help your group to begin exploring your beliefs about leadership. These questions help you to honestly assess whether the impact you are having is the impact you want to have.

3. Activities

Choose from several activities to help participants become engaged in their learning and take ownership of it. If you have purchased FISH! For Leaders Participant Workbooks for individual participants, we've provided page references so you can help them follow along during the session.

Example: *(If using Participant Workbook, see Workbook page 6.)*

4. Action Plan

John Keats said, "Nothing becomes real until it is experienced." Here your participants come up with their own plan to act on what they have learned. The actions may be simple: If you feel you haven't been connecting with your colleagues, you might decide "the first thing I'll do when I arrive in the morning is to greet every person in my area by name."

5. Tips

If participants are not sure what to try or need more ideas, we've provided some suggestions.

6. Follow-Up

After you put your ideas into action, it helps to reflect on what you learned. What worked? What didn't? What impact did it have on others? What impact did it have on you?

Introducing the Video



Before your team watches *Choose Your Attitude*, it's helpful to give some context. Here's one way to introduce the film:

As leaders, there are going to be days when your attitude is not what you'd like it to be. That's understandable—you're human. But it's important to remember that as leaders, your attitude has a huge impact on the people you lead. Their attitude will reflect the attitude you are giving off.

So what can you do to show up with attitudes that will pick your team up, not bring them down? The first step is accepting that your attitude is your choice. Of course it's tough sometimes to choose the attitude you want. But no situation or person can put you in a bad mood without your permission.

Once you've accepted that the only person responsible for your attitude is you, the key is to stay aware of what your attitude is at the moment. As you watch the video, ask yourself, "Does my attitude reflect who I want to be as a person? Is my attitude working for me? Is it working for the people around me?"

Activity #1: The Power of Awareness



Bob Kohut’s third grade class has an attitude board. When students enter the classroom, they choose one of four different colored fish, each representing a feeling: happy, confident, sad or angry. They put the fish on the board by their names so they are aware of their attitudes at that moment. Students may change to a different colored fish anytime they want. “When you are clear that you are making a choice,” Bob explains, “you tend not to want to stay in that negative frame of mind too long.”

Awareness is a powerful tool at any age. To be aware takes effort; its synonyms are vigilant, awake, alert and watchful. Often our attitudes are rooted in anger about the past or mired in worry about the future. Awareness lives in the present: What is happening inside me now? Is it working for me? Is it working for others?

When Pete Cicero struggles with his attitude, he rouses his awareness by thinking: “Am I being who I want to be right now?” When you are clear who you want to “be,” you spend less time reacting and more time actually choosing. The lens of who you want to “be” focuses you on choices that are in line with your intentions.

Perspective is another awareness-raising tool. Depending on your perspective, a problem may appear much larger than it really is. Mark Lenz says when a situation upsets him, he gives himself “a little self-talk” about all the good things in his life. A perspective driven by gratitude helps you to pull back and see that in the big picture, the situation that upsets you is tiny compared to all the good that dwarfs it.

Instructions

This exercise helps people consider the role of choice and awareness. It starts the minute participants arrive at your meeting. As they come in, give each person a nametag. Ask them to identify the attitude they have at that moment and write it on the tag. Tell them to be honest. Whether it’s *grouchy*, *tired* or *excited*—whatever it is, write it. The point of the exercise is not to choose a particular attitude, but to be more *conscious* of the attitude you *have* chosen.

After everyone has arrived, tell the group: “You all got a nametag and wrote your attitude on it. A little later, we’re going to come back and talk about what you wrote.”

Activity #2: Same Goal, Different Attitude



Sometimes leaders deliver a message in a way that people are not ready to hear. There was a time at Tile Tech Roofing when, if the employees didn't follow safety procedures, team leaders would yell and swear at them. It wasn't effective. The roofers grudgingly complied—but only when they were being watched and only after they were reprimanded.

So owner Doug Vieselmeyer tried a different approach. He talked with the roofers about how he wanted them to go home safe to their families. Instead of yelling at roofers who weren't following safety procedures, team leaders helped them with their safety gear. Instead of watching roofers to catch them ignoring safety procedures, they watched out for them, calling out the potential hazards they noticed. The leaders themselves demonstrated safe work habits.

Eventually, the roofers made safety a part of their lives. “We showed enough passion and concern for the lives and safety of our workers,” Doug explains, “that they were willing to make the change themselves.”

Doug learned the way to build employee commitment to a goal is to show them what you care about, to live it yourself and to show that you care about them. Doug's goal—a safe workplace—never changed, but the attitude he used to build commitment for it did.

Instructions

In this exercise, participants see how the attitude they bring to a situation can make all the difference in how it works out.

1. Ask the group to come up with a scenario that might test a leader's attitude. Or choose one of the following:
 - An employee tried a new way to help a customer, but made a mistake that cost the company time and money.
 - An employee must tell the leader they fell short of their sales goal.
 - An employee's job performance has suffered, he/she says, because of personal issues at home.
 - Morale is down in the office. The leader wants to know why and the employee thinks the leader is part of the cause.

Bonus Discussion: “Forever” Relationships



If you have time for additional discussion, read this story to the group or ask a volunteer to read it:

One day Greg and his seven-year-old son, David, stopped by his in-law’s house to see their brand-new car. It was a green two-door with new car smell and a temporary license taped to the back window.

It was the first new car that Larry, Greg’s father-in-law, had ever bought. They admired it for a few minutes, then Larry took down an old bike from the rafters in the garage that had belonged to David’s mother when she was a girl. David peddled down the sidewalk as Larry and Greg went inside the house.

A few minutes later David walked in, wide-eyed and pale. He said to Larry, “Grandpa, I have to show you something outside.”

David guided Larry to the new car. A long, deep scratch ran down the entire length of the driver’s door. Tears welling in his eyes, David explained that he had ridden too close to the car. The old plastic handgrips had worn through, exposing the unfinished metal.

Larry got down on one knee, put his arm around his grandson’s shoulder, looked him in the eye and said gently, “David, I’m glad you told me about this. I hope you always feel you can talk to me about anything.”

“I’m sorry, Grandpa,” David said.

“I know you are, David. Don’t worry about it.” David gave Larry a hug and ran off.

As David’s father, Greg felt responsible for the scratch and apologized. “If I’d been in your shoes,” he said, “I probably would have gone ballistic.”

Larry spoke to his son-in-law as gently as he had spoken to David. “Cars are just metal, and they come and go,” he said. “But my relationship with my grandson is forever.”

Larry valued his relationship with his grandson. Because he didn’t want to do anything to damage that relationship, he put great care into the way he treated it.