

Do You Have An Attitude?

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We all possess attitudes. We have attitudes about going to church, getting an education, going to war, getting married, to name only a few. Our attitudes may be positive or negative, strong or weak. If we know someone well, we can usually predict his or her attitude to a given issue. Have you ever wondered how attitudes are formed and if they can be changed? Is there an ideal example in attitudes for us to follow?



Attitudes have several sources. They may arise from an imitation of others. Most of us pick up attitudes from our parents and early associates and, in later life, from people we admire. An attitude may be formed as the result of a single dramatic experience which makes a lasting impression on us, or it may be confined to the group in which we happen to mix. Attitudes are also built up over long periods of time as experiences are assimilated and integrated. These are most difficult to change, since they spring over from a rich background of direct personal experience.

Once an attitude has been formed on any given issue, it affects the behaviour of the person who holds it in a particular direction. Popular protestant minister, Norman Vincent Peale once said, "Any fact facing us is not as important as our attitude toward it, for that determines our success or failure." "Attitude, to me," said Charles Swindoll, "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, 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 that we have a choice every day regarding the attitude we will embrace for that day. We cannot change our past, we cannot change the fact that people will 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 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 attitudes."

Yes, attitudes are crucial to our everyday lives. They help us to interpret our surroundings, guide our behaviour in social situations, and organize our experiences into a meaningful whole. Usually, to say that we have a certain attitude toward something or someone means that we have feelings or thoughts of like or dislike, approval or disapproval, attraction or repulsion, trust or distrust, and so on. Such feelings will tend to be reflected in what we say and do, and how we react to what others say and do. As Christians, we are encouraged to let our "attitude be the same as that of Christ Jesus" (Philippians 2:5, NIV), who came to this earth not to be served, but to serve.

Educationally speaking, we are here to serve you. Six years ago I invited you to give us your input and feedback as we pursue excellence in Adventist Christian education in Canada. Thank you to all of you

who have talked to us and offered your valuable opinions and counsel in person, or by completing the [general education survey](#). A few years ago, an education summit of over 120 representatives across Canada made recommendations on how to improve our educational system. Action plans to implement those recommendations have been addressed and the report may currently be read in the resources section of our Canadian Adventist Teachers Network ([CAT~net](#)) website as a part of our five year (2001-2006) education [master plan](#).

The recommendation to survey parents in the constituent churches can finally be addressed. We now have contact information for most parents in the constituent churches of our schools, and will be grateful to receive the completed survey from as many parents as possible. The [survey](#) findings will give us a better insight into parents' perceptions and attitudes toward our schools, and their opinions on how to improve our school system. We believe that the closer we come to meeting the expectations of parents and students, many more Adventist youth will choose to walk the corridors of our schools.

Thank you for your continued support in the fulfillment of our mission slogan "Educating Youth for Time and Eternity."

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