

ACTING YOUR WAY TO A BETTER ATTITUDE

It was mid-morning on a dreary day in Tallmadge, Ohio. It was early in my career and I was struggling to get my business going. I hadn't made one phone call that morning even though my goal was to make twenty by 9:00 a.m.

The phone rang and fellow franchisee Howard Tangler greeted me with, "What are you doing?" I told him, "Howard, I'm not going to lie to you; I'm sitting here shuffling prospect cards feeling sorry for myself." He asked me if I had at least five prospect cards and I told him I had several hundred. He told me to call any five and call him back in 10 minutes. I called him back in less than 10 minutes and he asked me how it went. I said, "Fantastic!" He said, "Tell me about it." I had called five random prospects, talked with three of them, and scheduled an appointment with one of them. And, as a result, went from feeling sorry for myself to feeling on top of the world.

Shortly thereafter I heard a speaker say, "It's easier to act your way to a new set of feelings than it is to feel your way to a new set of actions." I have benefited from this thought thousands of times in my career and have coached hundreds of people to use it to overcome inertia.

Although your emotions are many times more powerful than your thoughts, they are more difficult to access because they are buried deeper in your psyche. Think of concentric circles. Your thoughts are located on the surface of the circle. The next circle contains your beliefs, the next your attitude, and the innermost circle contains your feelings or emotions. Your feelings or emotions will only cause you to take action when something is serious enough to reach that deep. For day-to-day decisions, it is easier to act your way to a new set of feelings than it is to feel your way to a new set of actions.

When you catch yourself procrastinating, or otherwise not acting, consciously think about some short-term action you can take immediately, within the hour, or by the end of the day to eliminate procrastination and encourage action. When you are feeling sorry for yourself, take some short-term action. If you get disheartened or discouraged, take action. When you have a setback, take some action. Taking action will give your attitude a boost and once your attitude is boosted, it will have a tendency to take over.

Even if you don't have a choice about the circumstances you find yourself in, you do have a choice about your attitude toward the situation. The attitude you choose can change the outcome. The positive action you take will "kick-start" the positive side of your attitude.

One of the best investments you can make every day is to take action on your personal development. It is important to recognize that you will be no better tomorrow than you are today except for the books you read, the positive messages you listen to, and the people you associate with. What books are you reading? What personal or professional development CDs are you listening to? What seminars or workshops are you attending? Who are you associating with? In what ways are you getting better every day?

1. Look at all the things you do on a regular basis and pick one you'd like to improve.
2. Determine an action you can take to improve and take that action.
3. Repeat this process every day with the same area as long as needed or with a new area.
4. Say, "thank you" when people start noticing your improvement (be patient).

By devoting 10 minutes every day to continuous improvement, you will enjoy over 60 hours of improvement in a year. If you choose to only improve on weekdays, you will still enjoy over 40 hours of personal improvement. I'm confident you won't miss what you displace in those minutes. Decide now to act your way to a better attitude – every day.