

CHOOSE YOUR ATTITUDE

Each one of us faces some problems at any point in time. It could be a broken or not-working relationship, a D or F- grade in academics, delay in writing a PhD thesis or anything for that matter.

Strangely enough, even though each one of us may struggle to cope with our problems we still prefer them over someone else's unknown cup of woes. There is an interesting mythical story related to this : A king once talked to all the people in his kingdom and heard all their problems. At the end, he told everyone to put their problems in a sack and place it near the big well. Once this had been done, he asked each one of them to choose any sack from the lot and take it back home. Each one of them chose to take back their own sacks and deal with their own cup of woes rather than facing others' unknown problems.

Sometimes, all that we do is keep thinking about our problems which then seems to blind our vision and overwhelm our entire lives. While we may not have the power to totally eliminate our problems but what most people don't know is that we do have the power to not dwell on them. We have the power to get up each morning and choose our attitude for the rest of the day. When we go to our labs, workplaces and so on, we have the power to adhere to the attitude that we have chosen. Take it like a two-option menu, on one side we could keep a frowning face, disinterested, laidback expression with our minds dwelling on our problems, alternatively we could keep a smiling face with an energetic and creative intent and face the world by successfully pushing our problems to the back of our minds (*Stephen Lundin*).

There is this story of two men and a woman walking along when the woman was bitten by a snake. The two men took off after the snake leaving the woman alone to deal with the venom and she nearly died. The point is that at one time or another, life bites us all. The choice is the same in each case. We can either chase the snakes in our life or deal with the venom.

Maybe if we could just expand our vision and look at the bigger picture, it might be possible to put things in perspective. Try and remember some of the problems you faced a few years ago, during graduation, maybe even schooling days. At that time, those problems seemed to be only things that mattered, engulfing the entire horizon. Do all those issues really matter now! Probably not. It is necessary to accept problems smilingly as a part of life and not be overwhelmed by them. Life is a gift whose every moment is meant to be cherished. Learn to appreciate the positive aspects of life, things that we tend to take for granted rather than focusing only the negative aspects. The greatest discovery of my generation is that a human being can alter his life by altering his attitude (*William James*).

Finally, I would like quote these words by *John Gardner* on the "meaning of life". Meaning is not something you stumble across like the answer to a riddle or the prize in a treasure hunt. Meaning is something you build into your life. You build it of your own

past, out of your affections and loyalties, out of the experience of humankind as it is passed on to you, out of your own talent and understanding, out of the things you believe in, out of the things and people you love, out of the values for which you are willing to sacrifice something. The ingredients are there. You are the only one who can put them together into that pattern that will define your life. Let it be a life that has dignity and meaning for you. If it does, then the particular balance of success or failure ceases to be of great importance.