

# An Attitude on Attitude

The Power of a Good Attitude



A Report By Winsome Coutts  
[www.4lifehappykids.com](http://www.4lifehappykids.com)



# An Attitude

## on Attitude

Our Own Attitude  
Other People's Attitude  
Our Kids Attitude

The power of a good attitude  
By Winsome Coutts

### Our Own Attitude

*The attitude muscle – situated exactly half way between the heart and the brain.*

You must have noticed. Some people are always in a good mood and have a great attitude to life. Are they born this way or have they learned to have a positive outlook?

*“It’s not my fault, I was born this way”*

Although it has been argued by Tesser (1993) that hereditary variables may affect attitudes (maybe indirectly), it is now acknowledged that we choose our attitude to life.

*Are you saying that I am responsible for my bad mood some days, for feeling grumpy, unhappy and cross, even angry?*



Ouch, that’s a responsibility. Yes, but it is also very empowering when we realise that as soon as we step out of bed we can put on the attitude we want to wear for the day. In fact it’s the single most important part of being totally happy. Choosing our attitude. It is 100% in our control.

**The greatest discovery of my generation is that a human being can alter his life by altering his attitudes.  
~William James**

You Can Choose Your ‘State’ - It’s a moment by moment choice.



You always have a choice. Every day you decide how you are going to spend your time and you also choose how you are going to react to what happens. You get to decide – are you going to allow circumstances to control you and take away your energy, or are you going to choose how you respond. This is sometimes called your responsibility – or your **response ability**.

Your response ability and the attitudes you choose get you the outcomes you truly want. A positive attitude is the most important attribute you can develop. Everything else fits in to place when you choose an attitude that will serve you.

Maybe you do start the day off on the right foot. But things can go topsy turvy. The car won't start, you miss the bus, and you're late for work. Or you've been up all night with a crying baby, not only are you tired but you are peeved with your partner for sleeping through it all, why do you have to be the one, you worry if baby is sick. It's hard to control those feelings. Either way, it's your choice. What's your attitude going to be?

**A happy person is not a person in a certain set of circumstances, but rather a person with a certain set of attitudes.**  
~Hugh Downs

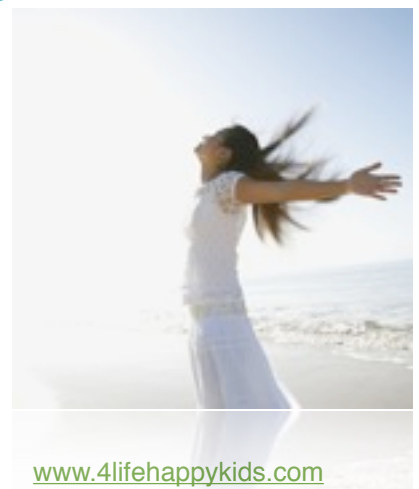
It's not just the little things – choosing an attitude when your car breaks down, or the dinner is burnt, it is the life changing effects that our attitude can create. There are numerous stories of poor kid makes good. How many times have we heard of young people from impoverished, uneducated, even cruel backgrounds choosing an attitude and propelling themselves out of there to a life we all admire?

There is the story of two young men whose father was given a life sentence for crime. One brother became a successful businessman with a happy family, the other a criminal himself, a deadbeat, unhappy, broke and continually in trouble with the law. When asked why they had turned out as they had, the first brother said 'How could I be any different with the father I had?', and the second brother answered the same question with: 'How could I be any different with the father I had?' They chose their attitude.

**Attitude is a little thing that makes a big difference.**  
~Winston Churchill

### **Attitude Can Change in a Second**

Quite some time ago I was feeling down – don't even know what about now. I arrived home to discover that my daughter was due to arrive unexpectedly (hadn't seen her for months as she had been interstate). Suddenly I was elated, rushing around the house getting ready for her, scurrying to create her favourite meal. I felt fantastic. Literally minutes before the world seemed quite grey. What changed? My attitude!





### Exercise Your Attitude Muscle

Remember it's a moment by moment choice. To break out of a state that you don't want to be in takes a bit of planning at first. Be prepared with some favourite inspirational music in the house, a great book, a very funny book of jokes, a CD or DVD of an inspirational speaker. Dip in to your pet attitude changer, actually square your shoulders and put a smile on your face and decide what attitude you will choose for now.

You are already more than half way there if you can take a step back and look at yourself and realise that you are in a 'state' (attitude) you don't want to be in. then it is just a matter of flexing that muscle, grabbing your book or music, putting on your smile.

**Happiness  
is an attitude. We either make ourselves miserable,  
or happy and strong. The amount of work is the same.  
~Francesca Reigler**

### Other People's Attitude

There's something else: You can choose your own attitude and you can even make choices about the attitudes of those around you. Perhaps you can't influence them (well maybe just a bit), but you can choose to spend time with them or not.

Years ago my mother-in-law told me that I didn't have to spend so much time with one of my closer friends, when I often came away from being with her feeling less than great; in fact feeling diminished. Now of course I know I am responsible for my feelings, but even though I was a bit shocked when she told me that, it actually worked. Just knowing that I could cut back my time with her somehow it made it a bit easier for me. I was actually changing my attitude about how I allowed myself to be upset with what she said.

Now I no longer allow negative people to be too much in my life. There are too many gorgeous people around to waste my time with grumpy-bums, sour pusses or sad sacks. How about you?

**Anywhere is  
paradise; it's up to you.  
~Author Unknown**

### Our Kids Attitude

#### Does Your Child Have Attitude?

Attitudes are learned, and attitudes can be unlearned. Our children learn attitudes from their school friends, the media, even us of course. We may feel guilty, but after a long day at work, collecting the groceries on the way home, we too can be short and grumpy. We may



indulge their demands for gizmos when we feel guilty about not spending time with them. So sometimes our children can become demanding, bossy, rude and disrespectful. The bottom line is that there's no one single cause or source of those attitudes. The good news is that though it takes a bit of effort, and a conscious decision, and some guidelines and persistence and pretty soon you will be experiencing much more positive attitudes.

Dr Michele Borba Ed.D, (Author of No More Misbehavin') has now written **“Don't Give Me That Attitude - Children and the parents they nag.”** Her book provides many of the hints offered here

As our cover reminds us children can be arrogant, sharing, judgemental, bragging, helpful, insensitive, happy, rude, kind, defiant, respectful ..... think of your own. We only want the positive attitudes of course. It seems that this generation takes the prize for being overindulged and manipulative, or as Dr Borba says “most people agree that the old standby, “spoiled brat,” suits just fine.”

**We awaken in others the same attitude  
of mind we hold toward them.  
~Elbert Hubbard**

Parents now seem to run around after their children, tidying up after them, and doing their chores because it easier than embarking on a battle with them. Meanwhile Junior lies on the couch watching his TV Show, way beyond what should be a reasonable hour for him to be either doing his homework, or in bed. Nobody ends up happy.

How does this all start? One of the major causes of these bad attitudes is allowing the child 'to get away with it' when it first appears. Then the attitude escalates and parents end up nagging, and kids manipulating. It's a vicious circle.

**Attitudes are contagious.  
Are yours worth catching?  
~Dennis and Wendy Mannering**

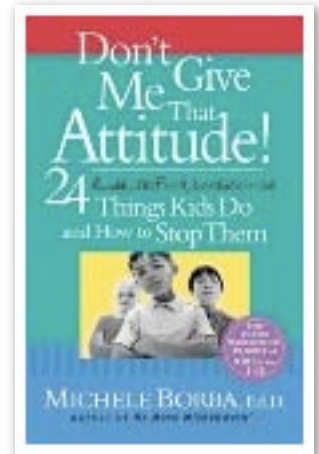


## Actions for Attitude



There are many 'Attitudes' to address and I recommend you to Dr Borba's book "[Don't Give Me That Attitude - Children and the parents they nag.](#)" but in the meantime here are some hints and guidelines:

❖ When setting new rules for behaviour don't try to change everything at once. Once you have worked out what you want to change explain to your child and be sure he/she understands the consequences. Then as the weeks pass, and your child challenges you (and they sure will), always try to speak about it in a calm manner. Don't let them see they are 'pushing your buttons'. Nagging and lectures are a thing of the past.



- ❖ To work out specifically what attitude you want to address, Dr Borba has created an ingenious process to help you figure out what's working and what's not:
  - "Fold a piece of paper it into fours.
  - On the first square write what it is that is bothering you. Be specific about what he is doing or saying that is bothering you.
  - Move to the next square. Write down when he does it. Is there a specific time you see the attitude flaring up? Maybe it's at 4:00 in the afternoon or maybe first thing in the morning. When did it start? You may get a clue when you think about it, that it started when he first started fourth grade. Maybe the class was too hard.
  - The next square is "where." Where is he doing it? Only in class? Only at home? Only at the soccer field? You may see a pattern for why he is using the attitude.
  - The last square is "who." Who does he do it with and whom does he not do it with? This is a big clue also. Kids use attitude because they work. You'll discover that drives parents crazy. "He doesn't do it with so and so, only with me."
  - Flip the paper over and write "how." How are you currently responding to your child? And what are you going to do differently next time?
- ❖ When you use this process you begin to see the situation clearly and more objectively, particularly WHY your child display that attitude; you begin to see patterns of behaviour
- ❖ Fit the consequence to the behaviour. Explain carefully the 'new rules' to your child, then stick to your guns. At first it may feel like a battle, and children will test you to the limit. Eventually they will get it if the consequence is fair and you are consistent. Depending on the age of the child, you might write a contract between you – say age 12 or more. An example could be a child who just drops their clothes wherever they take them off. The new rule could be that any dropped clothes are confiscated, he/she won't get them back until they fold and launder their own clothes.
- ❖ How to deal with bad manners: Deal with this in the moment. As soon as your child displays bad manners at the table for example, stop the conversation, and explain what you expect at that time.
- ❖ If you have decided you are not buying treats today – let your children know before you go into the store. Then if they are still demanding – nagging in the Supermarket for you to buy them a treat; stop, hold it there and quietly say no, there are to be no more requests for three weeks. Beware of displaying the bad manners you see of some parents as they loudly scold their children in public, when they are at the end of their tether.



Above all our children learn their attitudes from us. It can be tempting to blame their school friends, the TV or movies, but bottom line – we are the most important influence in their lives. Perhaps we don't teach them an attitude or bad habit, but we do condone it if we don't address it. Let's take charge, and help our children learn how to choose an attitude which will serve them for always.

The  
only disability in life is a bad attitude.  
~Scott Hamilton



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## The Bad Attitude Intelligence Test

### Just how much do you know about bad attitudes and how to change them?

Dr. Michele Borba, author of [“Don’t Give Me That Attitude! 24 Rude, Selfish, Insensitive Things Kids Do And How to Stop Them!”](#) says, “One of the biggest reasons bad attitudes stay is because of a number of misconceptions about them.” Answer Dr. Borba’s questions either true or false to see just how strong your “attitude intelligence” is. The results may surprise you.

1. **True or False?** Your child’s attitudes are predetermined at birth.  
**False.** Although some attitudes may be influenced by biological factors, most are learned.
2. **True or False?** Your child’s attitudes cannot be changed.  
**False.** Most attitudes can be changed by using the proven, research based interventions in this book. Long-term commitment is necessary for meaningful change and permanent attitude change. There’s no doubt about it; parenting is hard work.
3. **True or False?** Your attitude has a lot to do with your child’s attitude.  
**True.** That old mantra “attitudes are better caught than taught” is 1000 percent correct. Your kids are watching and copying everything you do, even stuff you’re not aware of. So watch out, and be ready for change yourself.
4. **True or False?** If your kid is smart and has good grades, he’s likely to have a good attitude.  
**False.** Don’t count on it. There’s not much connection between your kid’s school smarts and having a positive attitude. You have nurture your child’s learning as well as his character. Both are separate entities.
5. **True or False?** Being affluent and having a higher education has little to do with your child’s good or bad attitude.  
**True.** Being affluent and having a good education is no guarantee that your kid won’t be spoiled, self-centered, rude, or insensitive. In fact, it might be just the opposite.
6. **True or False?** A bad attitude is just a phase. Let it go—your kid will outgrow it.  
**False.** Don’t wait a moment before putting a halt to your kid’s bad attitude. The longer you wait, the tougher it will be to change.
7. **True or False?** Parents have more influence on their kids’ attitudes than their peers, the media, and school.  
**True.** You have the greatest influence over your child’s attitude than anything or anyone else. So use your power wisely and don’t blame outside influences.
8. **True or False?** Your child’s attitude is really at the center of their personality, so if you try to change it you’re destroying who they really are.  
**False.** It’s not our intention to help you change your child’s personality or temperament. But it is your job as a parent to stop your kid from being selfish,





narrow-minded, noncompliant, and have other bad attitudes that lead to weak character and poor moral intelligence.

9. **True or False?** No matter how much pressure face kids today, it's not okay to ease their stresses by doing some tough stuff for them.

**True.** One of your more important roles as a parent is to help your child become an independent, self-reliant, and resourceful. Always rescuing and doing our child's heavy creates a dependent kid who has trouble coping with the realities of life.

10. **True or False?** After age 11, there's not much you can do about your kid's attitude; it's set.

**False.** It's never too late to change bad attitudes. Yep, it may get harder as kids get older and more set in their ways, but that is no excuse. Plenty of older kids make big changes in their attitudes, and yours will be no exception.

**Check out your bad attitude intelligence score.**

10 correct = A+ excellent!

8 correct = B pretty good

6 correct = C average; you've got some work to do.

5 or less = F you're in trouble; commit this book to memory.

# Great Resources for Happy Kids

## E-Book



### 'Go for Your Goals – for Kids'

by Winsome Couatts, a Parent's Guide and two Kids Workbooks (different for appropriate age groups). This is not taught in school, but is one of the most important skills we can give our children. This e-book set is a brilliant process to follow for parents, teachers, grandparents. Walk through the goal setting process with your child with fun exercises and examples. They learn what a goal is, why it is important, what specific steps to take, and how to handle setbacks. Once they learn this skill and have success with it, they have it for life.

## Books

### 'The Optimistic Child'

by Dr Martin Seligman, an exceptional book by this noted psychologist strongly recommended for parents wanting to help their children to be positive and optimistic in life.

### 'Learned Optimism'

by Dr Martin Seligman This book is more directed at adults, and does spend considerable time discussing why becoming optimistic is good for us when we really want to learn how, but nevertheless, is well worth reading and learning from.

## Programs



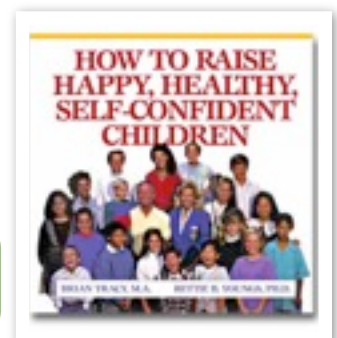
### 'Dream Big Collection'

by Jack Canfield: a really unique visualization tool that creates a private, sacred space for your child to define their dreams, goals and desires. Each Vision Book comes with a broad collection of inspirational words, quotations, and affirmations to select from and place them in their Vision Book. Combine them with pictures and images that inspire them and best represent their dreams and desires. A fun visual process.

*"When you're connected to a source and to each other through conversation, through making love, through meditation, playing games with your kids, all that stuff, then your self-esteem's going to go up."*  
- Jack Canfield

### 'How to Raise Happy, Healthy, Self-Confident Children'

by Brian Tracy; a 6-CD Program which teaches the four behaviors of effective parenting, how to communicate with your children on a deeper level and how to raise responsible happy children who are high achievers. In fact how to raise super kids!



*"If you raise your children to feel that they can accomplish any goal or task they decide upon, you will have succeeded as a parent and you will have given your children the greatest of all blessings."* - Brian Tracy

Free

**100 Ways to Praise a Child –**

A free poster for your fridge

**Kids Affirmations –**

Free affirmations for children to use



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*We want the world to be a happier place*

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