

Knowing + Doing = Being



Know+Do publishes monthly *think papers* for its subscribers and clients highlighting different issues that promote the philosophy of '**knowing+doing=being**'. Our approach is: if you cannot define where you want to **BE**, how can you **KNOW** your plans are correct and what you are **DOING** will help you reach your goal? This is a seasonal special *Thank Paper*.

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An Attitude of Gratitude

Thank Paper No 1. Seasonal Special



Welcome to this exclusive seasonal special *Thank Paper*. A twist on our ever popular *Think Papers* the *Thank Paper* reminds us to take stock as we draw this year to a close. We really enjoy writing these papers and sharing with our subscribers our thoughts and values in business.

This seasonal special has been prompted by a reflection of the partners of *Know+Do* as they sat down to review 2014 and plan for 2015. It sparked thoughts and conversations and as we talked with clients and peers, we realised that whatever has happened this year we have a lot to be thankful for.

An Attitude of Gratitude.

A lot of our work over the last few years has been supporting organisations to manage and respond to an ever changing marketplace. Many established organisations experienced significant and sustained change post the global crash of 2008 and the continued fall out could not simply be ridden out; this time was different. In supporting businesses we realised that one of the key factors for those who responded positively was the attitude of the people involved. But what exactly is 'attitude'.

The Oxford dictionary describes it as "*A settled way of thinking or feeling about something*". We can all have attitude and display it in many different ways. The more we researched this article the more that we discovered that too many times it's displayed as a negative or edgy concept. E.g. in the popular press teenagers apparently have too much attitude. Attitudes can change and if harnessed can be levered to great effect as they are a precursor to behaviour.

To understand how attitudes change it's worth considering what psychology can teach us. A key underlying factor or assumption is that attitude and behaviour are consistently linked. Meaning that we usually expect the behaviour of a person to be consistent with the attitudes that they hold.

Saul McLeod¹ wrote: *This principle of consistency reflects the idea that people are rational and attempt to behave rationally at all times and that a person's behavior should be consistent with their*

¹ McLeod, S. A. (2009). Attitudes and Behavior. Retrieved from <http://www.simplypsychology.org/attitudes.html>

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attitude(s). Whilst this principle may be a sound one, it is clear that people do not always follow it, sometimes behaving in seemingly quite illogical ways; for example, smoking cigarettes and knowing that smoking causes lung cancer and heart disease.

Attitude affects behaviour and its worth breaking this down into the component parts to make it easier to understand. This is known in psychological terms as the ABC Model of Attitudes:

Affective component:	This involves a person's feelings / emotions about the attitude to the object. For example: "I am scared of spiders".
Behavioural component:	The way the attitude we have influences how we act or behave. For example: "I will avoid spiders and scream if I see one".
Cognitive component:	This involves a person's belief / knowledge about an attitude object. For example: "I believe spiders are dangerous".

Attitudes are not fixed but can change and be influenced and we have the power to influence our own attitudes but only if we are open to this notion. The renowned leadership speaker and author John C Maxwell² expressed his views on attitudes thus:

*For years, I've tried to live by the following statement: **I cannot always choose what happens to me, but I can always choose what happens in me.** Some things in life are beyond my control. Some things are within it. My attitude about the areas beyond my control can be the difference maker. My attitude about the areas that I do control will be the difference maker.*

*In other words, the greatest difference my "difference maker" can make is within me, not others. **When you are trying to change someone, just try and change yourself.***

He offered the following thoughts in response the question - What can your attitude can do for you?

- **Your attitude makes a difference in your approach to life.** All's well that begins well. We've always heard this phrase the other way around: All's well that ends well. Ask any coach of a sports team, and they'll tell you the attitude of the players going into the game will be a determining factor in the outcome of the game.
- **Your attitude makes a difference in your relationships with people.** When someone has a difficult time with people, almost always it's an attitude issue. People who fail in relationships almost always fail in the area of attitude toward others. Your attitude has a tremendous impact upon your relationship skills.
- **Your attitude makes a difference in how you face challenges.** Successful people don't have fewer problems than unsuccessful people—they just have a different mindset. Take, for example, Napoleon Bonaparte. His school companions mocked him because of his humble origins and poverty. He responded by studying harder, and soon he became the best student in the class and went on to become one of the greatest generals in history.

Maxwell noted that 'Often the circumstances seemed to be instrumental in the creation of great leaders and thinkers. But that is the case only when their attitudes are right.'

² <http://www.success.com/article/john-maxwell-attitude-is-the-difference-maker#sthash.FaXqKX9a.dpuf>

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In closing the year we believe that it's important to finish with an attitude of gratitude - that is to be thankful for the year. Whatever the circumstances throughout the year it's a choice as to whether *you* learn and take forward the many lessons that the year will have provided. Some of these lessons might have been painful, life changing and left you metaphorically bruised and battered. However these circumstances can provide us with the opportunity to step up and make a change. Business and life will always have it ups and downs but be thankful for the life you lead and develop an attitude of gratitude when this is linked to a clear purpose then magic happens.

The author, educator and pastor Chuck Swindoll, wrote a poignant piece called *The Power of Attitude* in it he states:

The longer I live, the more I realize the impact of attitude on life. Attitude, to me, is more important than education, than money, than circumstances, than failures, than successes, than what other people think or say or do. It is more important than appearance, giftedness or scale. It will make or break a company... a church... a home.

*The remarkable thing is we have a choice every day regarding the attitude we embrace for that day. We cannot change our past.... We cannot change the fact that people 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.***

As we close the year we are thankful for the opportunity we've had to work with and support the many individuals and organisations we've met in the last 12 months. Some, indeed many, were repeat customers and clients and others were new – yet all were a joy to work with as we co-created and developed new circumstances, and ways of thinking and doing to respond to ever changing market conditions.

On a personal note there are those we knew that passed during the year and again we are grateful to have shared time with them as they enriched our lives.

Think about closing your year with a positive attitude of gratitude, giving thanks to all that you have achieved. Give thanks to all the circumstances and the learning that has helped you grow and develop. Reflect on the behaviours linked to the ABC Model and set a clear purpose for 2015.

We wish you a peaceful and prosperous New Year ahead.

Future *Think Papers* will cover communication and motivation of teams to support managers in creating and keeping a high performance culture. To help managers, *Know+Do* offer in-house training on a range of business growth and management issues. We also have expert performance coaches available to support leaders in business. For more information or to book a masterclass please contact us on info@knowanddo.com or call (0161) 280 4567.

Authors: Andrew Ramwell [[🐦 @rammers02](https://twitter.com/rammers02)] and Bernard Clarke [[🐦 @berneeclarke](https://twitter.com/berneeclarke)]