

The Importance of a Leader's Attitude and Character!

Dr. Tim Lautzenheiser

Over the years I have been responsible for selecting countless section leaders, captains, drum majors, officers, etc., to embrace the daunting, never-ending responsibilities connected with their leadership responsibilities.

True Story: During one audition process there were several very qualified candidates vying for the position of band president. After an extensive vetting (including detailed introspective questionnaires and personal interviews) I made a selection that took everyone by surprise since the candidate was not the most talented, was not a Senior member, and was not the most popular student. When asked WHY this individual was chosen, the answer was simple:

“HE HAS A POSITIVE ATTITUDE AND EXEMPLARY CHARACTER ATTRIBUTES.”

Then came the predictable question from those who weren't chosen: “How can you measure ATTITUDE and CHARACTER?” The answer:

“By the way the person approaches all aspects of his/her life.”

...and the explanation continued, **“The band president must portray the epitome of the finest role model so the band members will respect and trust the chosen individual.**

A POSITIVE ATTITUDE and a FIRST-CLASS CHARACTER are imperative.”

The famous-and-powerful quote (from the pen of Charles Swindoll) permanently rests on my desk to be viewed and reviewed each day:

The longer I live, the more I realize the impact of ATTITUDE on life. ATTITUDE, to me, 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 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 will act in a certain way. We cannot change the inevitable. The only thing we can do is play the one string we have, and that is our ATTITUDE... I am convinced that life is 10% what happens to me and 90% how I react to it. And so it is with you... we are in charge of our ATTITUDES.

ABILITY is what you are capable of doing.

MOTIVATION determines what you do.

ATTITUDE determines how well you do it.

John Maxwell's best seller, *Talent Is Never Enough*, reminds us we cannot rely on our innate talents to catapult us to the key leadership postures. The leader's ultimate efforts must be focused on the never-ending pathway of CHARACTER DEVELOPMENT.

TALENT is a gift, but CHARACTER is a choice.

CHARACTER is the sum total of our everyday choices.

CHARACTER rests on the foundation of integrity.

CHARACTER reflects a consistent level of self-discipline.

CHARACTER is a reflection of one's values, thoughts, feelings and actions.

After some four decades of working with student leaders across the country and around the world it has become vividly clear—the finest leaders are always the finest role models. They WALK THEIR TALK and they do it with a SENSE OF CLASS recognized and applauded by their fellow band members.

Let us always remember:

Leadership isn't something we do; Leadership is something we are.

Following his tenure in the college band directing world, Dr. Tim Lautzenheiser created Attitude Concepts for Today, Inc., an organization designed to manage the many requests for teacher inservice workshops, student leadership seminars, and convention speaking engagements focusing on the area of effective leadership training. To date, some three million students have experienced one of his popular sessions. Tim presently serves as Vice President of Education for Conn-Selmer, Inc. He is a nationally recognized voice touting the importance of arts education for every child. His books, produced by G.I.A. Publications, Inc., continue to be bestsellers in the educational community. Tim is also the Senior Educational Advisor for Music for All, and NAMM (The National Association of Music Merchants). He holds degrees from Ball State University and the University of Alabama. In 1995 he was awarded an Honorary Doctorate from the VanderCook College of Music. He continues to teach as an adjunct faculty member at Ball State University, Indiana-Purdue/Ft. Wayne University, and Butler University. In addition, he is a member of the Midwest Clinic Board of Directors and the Western International Band Clinic/American Band College Board of Directors. He is presently the Chair of the National Association for Music Education Music Honor Society (Tri-M).