

## How To Maintain A Positive Attitude

Many sales professionals know that a positive attitude is a key element, perhaps the most important element, to success in sales. Even though they know this, most sales professionals find it extraordinarily difficult to maintain a positive attitude all day, every day. The reason: most likely because they believe that their attitude is the result of external circumstances rather than something that is within their control.



Here are some tips to help you stay positive:

1. **Create a new definition for yourself of "external circumstances."** You might think that hitting a few red lights on the way to an important meeting with a prospect could be seen as "bad luck" and put you in a bad mood. Definitely not a mood you want to convey to your next potential client! However, if you view those red lights as an indication to yourself of how wise it was of you to leave early, they take on a whole new meaning.

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## The Customer Is King!

*"The service we render others is the rent we pay for our room on earth."* Wilfred Grenfell

Last evening I saw a stand up comic go through his customer service routine. He was very funny and had the audience of about 200 people roaring with laughter. But I found myself thinking of his basic premise as being very different from my research and experience.

He said that, by definition, a customer needs something (I would add, or wants something). And that anyone who needs something is vulnerable. Therefore customers are vulnerable and you (the business or organization) need to treat them with care because of this vulnerability.



Yes, customers may need or want something; but in this day and age, that makes them anything but vulnerable. (Unless you are the only one selling water in the desert.) Customers are actually empowered: they have the power to give or take business from you; to give you a piece of their mind; to go somewhere else for what they want; to bargain for prices; to cost you business with a careless comment; and other forms of customer power.

So, as I see it, the element of customer service is more about surviving in business than it is about acting out of the goodness of your heart for the "vulnerable" customer. Although the paradox is that sincerity and genuine care are critical for the best customer service.

This boils down to identifying customer needs; providing solutions; keeping the focus on the customer; dealing with complaints and bad moods without taking things personally, and most of all – not taking yourself so seriously.

Source: Dr. T. Elaine Gagné. © Engaging Change. All rights reserved.



# ONE MINUTE IDEAS

## Learn how to Save, Invest and Manage Your Money Better –

MyMoney.gov is the U.S. government's website dedicated to teaching all Americans the basics about financial education. Whether you are planning to buy a home, balancing your checkbook, or investing in your 401k, the resources on MyMoney.gov can help you do it better. Throughout the site, you will find important information from 20 federal agencies government wide.

The U.S. Financial Literacy and Education Commission established MyMoney.gov to provide financial education resources for all Americans.

Check it out at: [www.MyMoney.gov](http://www.MyMoney.gov)



*Happiness is not in the mere possession of money; it lies in the joy of achievement, in the thrill of creative effort.*

Franklin D. Roosevelt

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Dedicated to helping individuals, teams and organizations achieve their dreams and goals.

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If you are late because of those lights, take it as an opportunity to collect yourself and brainstorm a damage-control strategy.

- 2. Begin every day with 15 minutes of positive input.** If you fill your mind with positive thoughts, you'll have a larger library of positivity to pull from when your day might not quite go as planned. Read an inspirational book or listen to motivational CD's in the morning. We happen to know where you can get a few of those! Might we suggest popping in your Sales Development CD's on your way to prospecting meetings? (If you need one contact us today)
- 3. Choose your news.** You get bombarded everyday with a news media that believes in the mantra, "*If it bleeds, it leads!*" followed by commercials designed to make you feel better. Our media strives to ramp up your feelings of anxiety by highlighting horrific stories and follows them with advertising that helps you to buy comfort food or medications to relieve the pressures of everyday life. Unplug yourself from this negative imagery. Find alternative sources to keep yourself up to date with the day's events, such as public radio or print news. It's easy to choose what to read and listen to.
- 4. Surround yourself with positive people.** Business associates, friends, and relatives who have a negative view about life can make it hard for you to maintain your positive attitude. These people can drain you mentally and physically. Wherever possible, avoid them or at least limit your contact with them. If you cannot avoid them, don't get drawn into lengthy gripe sessions. Listen empathetically and turn the conversation to a more positive topic as soon as you can. On the other hand, positive people can enhance your life and help to keep you upbeat and with a good outlook on your world.



## Keeping Good Records

**Y**ou can avoid headaches at tax time by keeping track of your receipts and other records throughout the year. Good recordkeeping will help you remember the various transactions you made during the year, which in turn may make filing your return a less taxing experience.

Records help you document the deductions you've claimed on your return. You'll need this documentation should the IRS select your return for examination. Normally, tax records should be kept for three years, but some documents — such as records relating to a home purchase or sale, stock transactions, IRA and business or rental property — should be kept longer.



In most cases, the IRS does not require you to keep records in any special manner. Generally speaking, however, you should keep any and all documents that may have an impact on your federal tax return:

Good recordkeeping throughout the year saves you time and effort at tax time when organizing and completing your return. If you hire a paid professional to complete your return, the records you have kept will assist the preparer in quickly and accurately completing your return.

*For more information on what kinds of records to keep, see IRS Publication 552, Recordkeeping for Individuals, which is available on [IRS.gov](http://IRS.gov).*



## Perspective of a Life – Emily’s “True New Beginning”

As we have continued in the ongoing grief process of Emily’s death through questioning God, flipping through her Bible, talking and crying with family and friends, looking at photographs, getting off by ourselves, reading emails and cards, praying in our pain, and praying in the celebration of having Emily as a daughter...a reoccurring theme surfaces; life goes on with the true new beginning.

A friend of Emily’s took this picture and labeled it **Bridge to Nowhere**. Look closely and you can see Emily standing where the end of the bridge and the water’s edge meet. It looks as if there is nowhere else she can go, or is there? If we look at life from our human perspective, we may see things as a bridge to nowhere. But when we have an opportunity to see the bigger picture (usually after the fact) that God has designed for our life in Him, we will see much more. From our Christian perspective, we know the pathways and bridges that we travel do not come to such an abrupt end leaving us nowhere else to go. Our loving Father transitions us to an eternal life where we will go on with Him forever.



Emily’s human life did end on an old, dark North Carolina Highway 86 on December 29, 2007. As an organ donor she gave others a gift that continues a small part of her physical life. But we believe that Emily’s true life now continues in the spiritual realm in the presence of God. Emily had highlighted in her Bible, “Jesus Comforts His Disciples – *Do not let your hearts be troubled. Trust in God; trust also in me. In my Father’s house are many rooms; if it were not so, I would have told you. I am going there to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come back and take you to be with me that you also may be where I am. You know the way to the place where I am going.*” John 14:1-4.

In reference to this scripture, Max Lucado writes in **God’s Promise for You** on page 147, “*He (God) pledges to take us home. He does not delegate this task. He may send missionaries to teach you, angels to protect you, teachers to guide you, singers to inspire you, and physicians to heal you, but He sends no one to take you. He reserves this job for Himself.*” When we consider what must have been the horrible, last moments in Emily’s life, we believe that God Himself met Emily on the roadside, embraced her with the best welcome-home hug she has ever received, took her hand, and began leading her toward Heaven. At that moment, Emily heard the best and most indescribably beautiful music she had ever heard and “***I can only imagine,***” she and the Lord danced all the way into Heaven with a wonderful celebration.

That off-and-on rainy December evening, Emily’s journey on this earth **transitioned** ... from an area of the country that she considered very beautiful ... to the “*I can only imagine*” of God’s beautiful presence! The EMT’s words not only comfort us, they affirm God was with Emily in that moment, “...we could tell there was **something very special** about her. ...there was still **a presence** about her that we’ll never forget and **cannot explain.**”



In the February article we shared that Emily was struggling and searching to fulfill the calling for which she believed God had designed her, and that the search had been completed. Through the years we had observed and experienced that when Emily made up her mind and committed herself to something, she pursued it wholeheartedly. This was apparent in her decision to help others through being a psychologist, as the following words of her instructors’ witness:

1. “Emily was a student in my General Psychology course last fall. Her curiosity and dedication made her stand out. I am quite saddened to learn that her life has been cut short. It’s unusual for a student in an introductory class to make such a strong impression, but her probing questions and earnest desire to pursue a career in psychology distinguished her.” Dr. Will Sampson.



2. “I was the teaching assistant in the Abnormal Psychology class Emily took last semester. I met her on the first day and was excited to hear that she was planning to pursue a career in psychology. Her poise and presence in the classroom were noticeable and I always appreciated her engagement. In a class of 125 students, she stood out as a mature, involved student and I thought she would excel in her chosen field.” Maggie Bromberg.



We believe we need to pursue God’s calling in order to utilize our gifts, talents, and the design that God has provided for us here on earth. We believe that Emily had been affirmed in the direction her choices and life were now taking her. We also believe that in God’s bigger picture, He has something in store for her and for us - God’s ultimate vision for our life to His glory – our future in the **true new beginning**.

Emily and her family shared a love of music. We really listen to the words and find deep meaning in songs that speak to our hearts and life experiences. We now have all of Emily’s CDs. As we have begun to listen to the ones that she had chosen to have in the car with her at the time of the accident, it has facilitated some thoughts about her life and her death. As we listened to this music, we have heard Emily’s struggles and pain, hopes and dreams, joys and happiness; and some songs we now consider prophetic. We wish we had taken better advantage of opportunities to share about these songs and their specific meanings to her.

At the moment of her accident she was listening to the Tracy Chapman CD, *New Beginning*, the track was the song “New Beginning.” This song expresses the hurt and bad in the world and **the hope that life can be better** if we take responsibility to change and “start all over.” *“There’s too much pain, too much suffering. Let’s resolve to start all over, make a new beginning. Now don’t get me wrong. I love life and living. But when you wake up and look around at everything that’s going down, all wrong. You see we need to change it now.”*

Emily had resolved how she was going to seek to change and influence the world for the better. Her new beginning was to be a psychologist who would use dance and movement therapy (“*make new symbols*”) in working with women and children so that their suffering would end and they would live successfully and abundantly.

Another song on a CD in her car says, “*Oh very young, what will you leave us this time? You’re only dancing on this earth for a short while. And though your dreams may toss and turn you now. They will vanish away. . . . Oh very young what will you leave us this time? . . . and if you want this world to see a better day. Will you carry the words of love with you? Will you ride the great white bird into heaven? And though you want to last forever, you know you never will. You know you never will. And the goodbye makes the journey harder still. Oh very young, what will you leave us this time? You’re only dancing on this earth for a short while. Oh very young, what will you leave us this time?*” Cat Stevens.



As we have struggled with her newly found knowing where and how **she was going into the future with a purpose** and a passion for that purpose, how could she die so young? Why now? Why couldn’t she experience some of “**Heaven’s here on earth**” before death came to her young life? As Steve shared this with Phil Hardin (friend and colleague), Phil shared Jeremiah 29:11. “*For I know the plans I have for you, declares the Lord. Plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future.*”

When Steve got home that evening, he took Emily’s Bible and turned to Jeremiah 29:11 and found that Emily had underlined that verse. In follow-up with Phil, Steve asked that he share more about this verse and interpretation of the words, particularly the word future. Phil’s response:

1. “The Hebrew word of ‘future’ = the idea of a row boat ... the future is what you are rowing toward ... you cannot see it because you are seeing your past ... beginning to understand the past and seeing what God is moving you toward as you leave your past ... you see your past in the redemptive way God intended ... you are being prepared for something you cannot see, but that past has prepared you for.
2. God is pursuing = He shows us our past in the light of our present to give us hope for the future.

3. Jeremiah 29:11 is a promise in the shadow of the tragedy of Jeremiah 2:2, 3, 5.

Emily was prepared for what God had for her ... little did she or we know HE was ready to bring her HOME and celebrate the beauty of her life and the fruitfulness of even her death ... You will see her again, but NOT YET."

Lastly, as we reflect on **God's true new beginning** for Emily, we also realize it is not really a new beginning; it is **continuation of life** that goes on in Heaven with our Lord. Psalm 139: "O Lord, you have searched me and



*you know me. You know when I sit and when I rise; you perceive my thoughts from afar. You discern my going out and my lying down; you are familiar with all my ways (Emily underlined). Before a word is on my tongue you know it completely, O Lord. . . . For you created my inmost being; you knit me together in my mother's womb. I praise you because I am fearfully and wonderfully made; your works are wonderful, I know that full well. My frame was not hidden from you when I was made in the secret place. When I was woven together in the depths of the earth, your eyes saw my unformed body.*

***All the days ordained for me were written in your book before one of them came to be. . . . See if there is any offensive way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting***" (again Emily underlined). We thank the Lord for protecting her soul!

Again, we thank God for the gift of Emily and Laurie in our lives. May we in all our activities be able to glorify Him today and tomorrow, even in the midst of our grief that Emily's life has been taken away. "**Our God is a great God.**" Thanks be to God!

Striving in the love of Christ,

Steve & Diane

February 14, 2008