

## STEP 1: ATTITUDE

### *Accepting Loss and Opportunity*

“Eighty-five percent of the reason people get jobs and get ahead in those jobs is because of attitude,” reads a stunning statement written by world famous motivational speaker and author Zig Ziglar.

The fact is that most people enter career crossroads with a mixture of positive and negative feelings which influences their attitudes – for better or worse. For example, if you are:

- ❖ **Mis-employed:** You may feel frustration, restlessness, unhappiness, and confusion – or – your feelings may be filled with hope, excitement and anticipation of better things.
- ❖ **Happily-employed, but:** You may feel a incompleteness although everything is going great – or – your feelings may be deep and joyful as you seek meaning and purpose in work.
- ❖ **Unemployed:** You may be stunned, hurt, angry, fearful, depressed, guilty or ashamed – or – your feelings reflect relief, renewed energy and a positive outlook about a new future.

Whatever your feelings and your response to them, they play a critical role in your attitude being positive and motivated or negative and destructive. A positive attitude generates the emotional energy and endurance to move forward through crossroads and maximize your career potential.

That is why **ATTITUDE** is the first and most important step.

Let’s see where you rank on a 10-Point Attitude-O-Meter? First, select and briefly describe your circumstances – either good, bad or ugly and why. Then look at the Attitude-O-Meter with Joy at the top and at the bottom – The Pit. Be honest with yourself and circle the number that reflects your attitude right this minute.

Your Circumstances: Briefly Explain

<b>Good</b>
<b>Bad</b>
<b>Ugly</b>

Attitude-O-Meter

<b>Joy</b>
10
9
8
7
6
5
4
3
2
1
<b>The Pit</b>

If you are like most people, your attitude reflects how you see your circumstances. If your circumstances are not good, but rather bad or even ugly, then the temptation is to feel bad and/or ugly and behave accordingly. You begin to live in The Pit. Not a good place to be.

A positive attitude, however, turns stumbling blocks into building blocks and propels you above and beyond your circumstances. A positive attitude will make you feel better, sound better, and look better.

But is it possible to be in The Pit circumstantially, yet live each day with a positive attitude of Joy? Would you consider these stunning statements?

*Consider it pure joy . . . whenever you face trials of many kinds,  
because you know that the testing of your faith develops perseverance.  
Perseverance must finish its work so that you may be mature and complete, not lacking anything.*  
James 1:2-4

“Impossible” you might say? Yes, except all things are “HimPossible” to those who surrender to, depend on and trust in God. Let’s start with making a decision to reset your attitude. Go back to the previous page and draw a square around a higher number on the Attitude-O-Meter.

Congratulations! You have just begun working toward a new, more positive and joyful attitude. Now let’s look at the work required to reach this new attitude setting – contained in this amazing passage from the Bible....

*... forgetting what lies behind and reaching forward to what lies ahead,  
I press on toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus.*  
Philippians 3:13-14

Look carefully. You will see three principles at work: “forgetting what lies behind...reaching forward to what lies ahead...press toward the goal of the prize of the upward call of God.” From these principles, you can begin exercising the three processes necessary to achieve and maintain a positive attitude:

### ACCEPTING LOSS

Forgetting what lies behind does not mean burying negative feelings alive. It means acknowledging and actively processing whatever loss you suffered. Whether you have lost your job or you are in a job that you wish you *could* lose, you need to admit, understand, and grieve the loss, no matter how minor or major it may be.

You can expect to experience one or more of the following feelings at some level of intensity—maybe a little, maybe a lot. Do you ever hear yourself making any of these statements?

#### Statements

*This can't be. I don't believe it!*  
*What do I do? How do I handle this?*  
*They can't do that to me! I will get them!*  
*I'm tired and don't feel like doing anything.*  
*I have a headache/upset stomach/don't feel good!*

#### Feelings

Denial ↔ Shock  
Distraction ↔ Panic  
Irritation ↔ Anger  
Feeling Down ↔ Depression  
Stress ↔ Physical Illness

Begin by acknowledging the circumstance. It is what it is. Not what it was. Not what you wish it could be.

Next, be honest with yourself and how you feel. To help process, you might write about your situation and your feelings in a private journal. You can talk about it with people who care about you. Confide in people you trust: your spouse, a parent, a sibling, a friend or business associate, someone from church, a minister, or a counselor. If you keep your feelings inside, they will eventually cause damage – either imploding in you internally or exploding on everyone around externally.

As you admit your feelings about your situation, you may feel that you have been used, abused, and refused. Anger begins to build. Wrath runs through your veins. Bitterness begins to pool in your stomach. You are blaming guilty parties: your boss, a co-worker, someone else, maybe even yourself.

Anger is hanging on to the past – trying to “make things right,” but it’s like trying to collect a debt from a debtor who is no longer around. Instead, forgive the offenders every day, and let go of the past, so the past can let go of you. Only then can you reach toward the future. *“Do not let the sun go down on your anger.”* Ephesians 4:26

The key to overcoming anger is to exercise forgiveness toward everyone involved – not for their benefit – but for yours. As you write or talk about your situation, visualize every person you are blaming, and make a conscious decision to begin forgiving each one.

As you work through the applicable exercises in this Step, remember the principle of letting go of the past and trusting God in your current situation so you can move forward to your future. You can trust only one Person completely. He is God your Father, His Son Jesus, and the Holy Spirit living in you to guide you. God is sovereign, and He has your personal best interests at heart.

*“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.”*  
Jeremiah 29:11

## ACCEPTING OPPORTUNITY

Reaching forward to what lies ahead means you embrace incredible opportunities both in breadth and in depth.

**Breadth** - There are more than 1,000 different industries, each one with thousands of employers. There are more than 30,000 different occupations. You can get a job or you can work for yourself by being an independent contractor or by buying or starting a business. The market is global, and it is changing so fast that there are new opportunities every day. Opportunity abounds! The questions are, “Where is it?” and “How do I get there?”

**Depth** - This is the first day of the rest of your life. You can make decisions now for the better that will last forever. If this life is a journey, are you headed in the right direction? Do you know where you are going? If yes, are you getting there? Ask yourself:

“How would I like to see my future?”

“When I am 84 years old and looking back on my life, what would I like to see?”

“Did God put me here for some reason? “What is the purpose of my life?”

Dream “impossible dreams” because they may become possible. See a future for yourself in which you are maximizing your full career potential. Begin to picture your work and calling in ways in which you are content, fulfilled and in alignment with God’s will. Make plans and think about what it will take to accomplish them.

Walking through a career crossroads requires active faith in the face of fear. Going where you have never gone before and, in fact, not even knowing where you are going can be a fearful process. You can overcome fearful thoughts by focusing on Scriptures such as the following:

*For God has not given us a spirit of timidity, but of power and love and discipline. 2 Timothy 1:7*

*Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving,  
let your requests be made known to God. And the peace of God, which surpasses all comprehension,  
shall guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus. Philippians 4:6-7*

**PRESSING ON TOWARD THE GOAL**

Personal strength training creates much needed energy and endurance. Crossroads can be one of the most testing times of your life. You will need to build your strength for the journey ahead. And with strength comes courage. Consider this basic formula for your own personal strength training...

- |                      |   |
|----------------------|---|
| ❖ Eat right          | ❖ Physically                            |
| ❖ Exercise           | ❖ Mentally, Intellectually, Emotionally |
| ❖ Get plenty of rest | ❖ Spiritually                           |

Here are some examples...

- ❖ **Physically:** Pay attention to your nutrition; cut out fat and calories; reduce or eliminate caffeine and alcohol. Exercise 3-5 times a week, if your doctor approves. Get at least seven hours of sleep a night.
- ❖ **Mentally, intellectually and emotionally:** Give your mind a break. Spend time with good friends. Do things you enjoy. Spend time to be alone. If you feel counseling might help, make an appointment.
- ❖ **Spiritually:** Spend time alone with God every day by praying and reading the Bible. Start with 10 minutes, go to 20 minutes or more. Get together with others for Bible study, prayer, and fellowship.

Get help for other pressure points. If something is amiss in your work life, you're likely to feel it elsewhere.

**Financial stress** can turn a difficult situation really sour. Two ways to alleviate financial pressure are to earn more and spend less. Since you have more control over spending than earning, look at your spending habits and financial obligations. If you don't have a personal or family budget, create one. Alter your lifestyle to live within your means. If you have debt, add it up, and to pay it down. Check out these two resources.

- ❖ Crown Financial Ministries offers a remarkably effective small group study to train adults in the practical application of financial principles from God's Word to real life situations. Go to [www.crown.org](http://www.crown.org).
- ❖ National Foundation for Consumer Credit (NFCC): This national non-profit network of Financial Wellness Centers provides counseling to people with stressful financial situations. Go to [www.nfcc.org](http://www.nfcc.org).

**Family problems** can begin or worsen in the midst of a career crossing. Everyone in the family has a vested interest. Two resources that might help you are:

- ❖ Focus on the Family: This organization offers a variety of resources related to families and children. Go to [www.family.org](http://www.family.org) for more information.
- ❖ Divorce Care: Many churches around the United States offer this program for people who are single again and need help working through related issues. Go to [www.divorcecare.com](http://www.divorcecare.com) for more information.

**Personal issues** can sometimes be faced better with someone with whom you can talk. Find a person who cares about you, whom you can trust, who has no vested interest in what you decide, and who seems to have a level of competency to help: your church pastor, your best friend, or a professional counselor. If you need more help

- ❖ American Association of Christian Counselors at [www.aacc.net](http://www.aacc.net) for an online directory.

As you press on toward the goal, remember the ultimate source of help and strength...

*But those who hope in the LORD will renew their strength.  
They will soar on wings like eagles; they will run and not grow weary; they will walk and not be faint.*  
Isaiah 40:31

**“ANGER” IS ONE LETTER SHORT OF “DANGER”**  **EXERCISE**

Add “D” to “Anger” and you have “Danger.” When you burn with anger, let it be a warning. When you see red, it’s an alarm – “Danger Ahead!” Everyone feels anger sometimes. It’s what you do with it that counts.

Use these three steps to forgive yourself and others, let go of your anger, and put the past behind you.

1. List everyone whom you blame (this list may include yourself).
2. Describe the offense and how you feel about it.

First Name of “The Offender”	Describe the Offense—The Specific Action(s) That Made (Make) You Angry	How You Feel About the Offense

3. One key to being able to forgive is recognizing how much God, your Heavenly Father, has forgiven you. Every time you feel anger or bitterness, ask God to help you forgive. You may find the following prayer helpful.

*“Heavenly Father, thank you for the riches of Your kindness, forbearance and patience, knowing that Your kindness has led me to repentance (Romans 2:4). I confess that I have not extended that same patience and kindness towards others who have offended me, but instead I have harbored bitterness and resentment. I pray that during this time of self-examination, You would bring to mind only those people that I have not forgiven in order that I may do so (Matthew 18:35). I also pray that if I have offended others, You would bring to mind only those people from whom I need to seek forgiveness and the extent to which I need to seek it (Matthew 5:23-24). I ask this in the name of Jesus.”*

From *The Bondage Breaker* by Neil T. Anderson

**FACE THE F-F-F-FEAR  EXERCISE**

1. List people or things that make you anxious – especially as it relates to career exploration.
2. Moving through your fear rather than avoiding it is the primary way of overcoming what you fear. Otherwise, you can become paralyzed by your fears and unable to act in ways that move you forward. List specific steps you can take to “move through the fear.”

People/Things You Fear	Specific Actions for Moving Through Your Fears

3. Think of people who can encourage and pray for you. They may be family members, friends, people in your Study Course, your Study Course facilitator, or other Crossroads Career® Network volunteers. Ask them specifically to pray for you, and write their names here:

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

4. When anxiety appears as a companion to your day, greet it with this prayer.

*“In the name and by the authority of the Lord Jesus Christ, I bind all lying spirits causing fear and anxiety in me. I resist Satan and his evil workers in the name of Jesus and by Jesus’ authority I command them to leave my presence (James 4:7). I declare that Satan is already defeated by Jesus at the cross. God has not given us a spirit of fear and timidity, but of power, love and a sound mind/discipline (2 Timothy 1:7). I therefore reject all fear and choose to walk by faith in the Holy Spirit’s power, live in the light of God’s love, and think with the sound mind of Christ.”*

*From Freedom From Fear by Neil T. Anderson*

**PERSONAL VISION AND LIFE PURPOSE**  **EXERCISE #1**

This is a time of reflection and prayer with focus on one key Scripture.

*No eye has seen, no ear has heard, no mind has conceived  
what God has prepared for those who love him,  
but God has revealed it to us by his Spirit.*

*The Spirit searches all things, even the deep things of God.  
For who among men knows the thoughts of a man except the man's spirit within him?  
In the same way no one knows the thoughts of God except the Spirit of God.*

*We have not received the spirit of the world but the Spirit who is from God,  
that we may understand what God has freely given us.  
1 Corinthians 2:9-12*

**Pray and reflect on your life experiences. What do you think God’s perspective is on these times?**

Key watershed, decisive moments in your life	
Things that you did and/or things that happened to you	
The highest highs and the lowest lows in your life	

**Record your thoughts and reflections:**

**PERSONAL VISION AND LIFE PURPOSE**  **EXERCISE #2**

**Pray about, reflect on, and thank God for these *gifts and abilities* He's so generously given you.**

Skills	
Talents	
Spiritual gifts	
Education	
Special knowledge	
Understanding and insight	
Personality	

**Pray about, reflect on, and thank God for the *passions* He's so generously given you.**

Your concerns and burdens	
Your values	
Your interests	

**Pray and reflect on your favorite, most “meaningful-to-you,” Scripture verses. List them. Why is each one meaningful?**

Verse	Importance

**As you pray and reflect, what thoughts and insights come to your mind? Write them down.**

Read & Write Devotional



**BEARING THE UNBEARABLE**

*I can do everything through him who gives me strength.*  
Philippians 4:13

Imagine you are a Super Hero. On the outside, you can be mild-mannered Clark Kent. But on the inside, you leap tall buildings in a single bound, run faster than a speeding bullet, and are more powerful than a locomotive. Because the One who is in you is stronger than anyone or anything else.

As one of the psalmists wrote,

*My flesh and my heart may fail,  
but God is the strength of my heart and my portion forever.*  
Psalm 73:26

Write down the things you dread doing.

Pray right now and ask God to give you strength and courage to tackle these tasks.

Write the following on a card and a sheet of paper:

**I can do everything through him who gives me strength.**  
Philippians 4:13

Put the card in your wallet and post the paper on your mirror.  
Every time you see it, say it.



Log in and on the Career Explorer landing page, point to and select Career Explorer Guide - Attitude.



### For the Next Session: Step 2 – Aptitude

Read and complete instructions, exercises and the devotional. Be ready to talk about what you have learned. Make sure you've gone online to read articles and browse sites relevant to you.

1. Make arrangements to complete a professional career assessment. Check with your group facilitator or church to see if the *CareerDirect*® assessment is available to you, or you can choose another assessment from Career Tools on [www.crossroadscareer.org](http://www.crossroadscareer.org).
2. Make copies of the Reference Assessment form on page 3-7, and distribute the form to people you've chosen as a reference.



Use the space below—or your own journal—to take some notes about your specific prayer requests or insights that you have at this point for yourself or others in your group.