

## Attitude is Everything

Happy New Year! January through March were always my favorite months for teaching. There were no immediate concerts to prepare, the children were settled down after Christmas vacation and I could spend time reinforcing the basics, including **Attitude**.

**Attitude** is an expression of how you feel toward a person, place, thing, or event; a feeling or emotion toward a situation. Lou Holtz, former Notre Dame Football Coach states, "Ability is what you're capable of doing. Motivation determines what you do. **Attitude** determines how well you do it."

**Attitude** can also be the position of an aircraft in relation to the horizon. Pilots are concerned with attitude because it shows the plane's performance. Instructors teach "attitude flying." When a plane is climbing, a "nose high" attitude points above the horizon; when it is diving it has a "nose down" attitude. Unlike an airplane, we don't have built in attitude indicators, but we do have the gift of intuition, common sense and compassion.

A **positive attitude** can help us cope more easily with the daily affairs of life. It brings optimism into our lives, and makes it easier to avoid worry and negative thinking. It is certainly a state of mind that is well worth developing. The future not only looks bright when the attitude is right, but also the present is much more enjoyable. The person with a positive attitude understands that **the journey is as enjoyable as the destination**.

The theme of this year's Midwest Clinic Conference in Chicago was "**Honoring our Mentors**". I am grateful to my mentor, Dr. Tim Lautzenheiser, for helping shape my attitude. I met Dr. Tim when I was a beginning teacher at an In-Service in Williamsport, PA in the early 1980's shortly after he started his Attitude Concepts for Today Corporation. During my 36-year career when I attended many of his Leadership sessions, he asked me why I was there again. "Because going to your sessions is like attending church," I replied. "I know what the message will be, but I keep attending to get recharged." I attribute much of my success as a teacher, musician and a mother to what I learned from Dr. Tim.

Our surroundings help create our attitudes. Dr. Viktor Frankl, survivor of a Nazi concentration camp said in his book, *Man's Search for Meaning*, "The last of the human freedoms is to choose one's attitude in any given set of circumstances." He was saying "Attitude is your Paint Brush; It Colors Every Situation," which ironically is the title of the book by James Moore that I have used as a guide to compose this letter about **attitude**.

Life's air currents can jolt us out of line and keep us from achieving our goals. Unexpected weather can change our direction and strategy. When changes disrupt our routines, our attitudes need fine-tuned, or as with an airplane, trimmed to perform effectively. The secret to safe arrival is to continually adjust.

The power of musical sound is a vehicle for expression, creativity and human emotion. Music is joy. Music is solace. Music is our universal language and can bridge our international community. Music can reach and enrich the inner-self because of its therapeutic nature. Music performance teaches teamwork and cooperation and instills self-confidence and poise.

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The saying, "People don't care how much we know until they know how much we care" is true. Musicians care, and they show what they care about through **Positive Attitudes**.

The **Attitude of Joy** is one of the greatest assets we can develop. It's not artificial sunshine, but honest happiness in what we do and it is contagious. We must be carriers of joy rather than waiting to catch it from others. To be joyful, is to experience a continuous deepening of gratitude. It is a feeling of happiness about all the good things in our lives and our work places. To be joyful is an internal emotion that radiates outwards and affects others positively. It alleviates the stresses and strains of life and makes our senses more receptive to beauty and goodness around us.

We are happiest when we possess the **Attitude of Gratitude**. That feeling exhibits itself when we show appreciation to our audiences, our patrons, our families and friends our directors, our music librarians and helpers. It expresses thanks for gifts received. Research shows that grateful people have "higher reported levels of positive states of alertness, enthusiasm, determination, attentiveness and energy."

When we reach out to others as individual musicians or as an ensemble we show the **Attitude of Compassion**. We are self-giving from the heart. Our compassion drives us to share our talents and skills with others with the **Attitude of Sharing**.

The April 12, 2011 Salzburg Global Seminar meeting on "The Transformative Power of Music" recognizes music as a proven gateway to engaged citizenship, personal development and well-being. Only through urgent and sustained action, can we foster a new generation of energized, committed, self-aware, creative and productive members of society. Through the **Attitude of Preservation** the Association of Concert Bands must continue to "**Fight for Music Education in our Schools**" to safeguard and perpetuate our great Band Heritage!

Exposure to new experiences, new music, new leaders etc. with the **Attitude of Open-Mindedness** offers opportunities for growth. It isn't simply about being open to new ideas, but also about being mindful of the ideas that you do accept. Aristotle wrote, "It is the mark of an educated mind to be able to entertain a thought without accepting it."

Finally, as community band members and leaders, the **Attitude of Confidence**, the difference between feeling unstoppable and feeling scared out of your wits, has an enormous impact on how others perceive us. The more confidence we have, individually and as a group, the more likely we will succeed.

As President of the Association of Concert Bands organization I have **confidence** in the ACB Board of Directors, the Appointed Positions and the Executive Committee. I am grateful, proud and honored to have served in many capacities of leadership over the last ten years and am **confident** the future of ACB will be "nose high" with many exciting times ahead for all our members.

*Judy*

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