



The Elephant Of A Negative Attitude

From Jones Loflin-The Speaker With TWO Last Names



There is no question that having a less than positive perspective is a heavy weight when we are trying to move productively through our day.

*You start finding fault with everyone around you and suddenly realize that they haven't changed... it's your attitude that's different.
-Mary Laskowski*

I have discovered a new elephant in my life. Before I continue, an explanation is in order for those of you not familiar with my book, *Juggling Elephants*. In that book Todd Musig and I look at how the struggle of trying to get it all done is like attempting to juggle elephants-it's impossible. In our training programs we have participants identify their "elephants" and these could include anything from an assignment at work to a strained relationship to personal health challenges.

I never really thought about a negative attitude being an "elephant," but there is no question that having a less than positive perspective is a heavy weight when we are trying to move productively through our day. It adds a layer of resistance to tackling the tough tasks while creating unnecessary friction in our interactions with others. I don't know about you, but I need every resource available to get my work done-not struggle with an unnecessary burden.

Once I recognized how my negative attitude was limiting the number of "standing ovations" I was getting from my circus (another concept from *Juggling Elephants*) I started making note of when I was feeding this elephant so I could take the appropriate actions to starve it. Here's my current list:

When I forget that I can't get it all done. I still have some days when I am not as intentional about prioritizing my tasks, and I just "wing it." On such days I get caught up on number of tasks completed instead of the number of high priority tasks accomplished. It's about being productive, not just busy.

I start substituting blame for responsibility. It takes so much less work to just blame a challenging situation on the economy, the failure of others to perform, or a hundred other things. As Mary Laskowski said to me, "You start finding fault with everyone around you and suddenly realize that they haven't changed-it's your attitude that's different." And I've noticed that if I start blaming someone or something for poor results in one area, it spreads to other areas quickly. In those moments of blame I have to remember another line from [Juggling Elephants](#): *You are the ringmaster of your circus.* I am the one most accountable for my success or failure-not someone or something else.

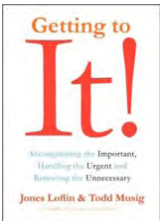
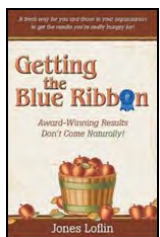


The Elephant Of A Negative Attitude

Page 2



When I go for just 2 or 3 days without physical or mental exercise, I find my attitude toward my work and life to be much less positive.



I envy someone else. Be it celebrity, successful business person, or someone with the latest electronic gadget, wishing I had their status, money, or object diminishes my attitude of gratitude. Admiring others and their accomplishments is one thing...wanting to be them instead of you is quite another. Once I start making my list of the things for which I am thankful, I get a more proper perspective on my situation.

I stop engaging in proven routines. Almost every morning for the past eight years you could find me getting physical exercise. It has kept me mentally sharp during the day, kept my waistline in check, and prevented me from having to resort to medication to control my cholesterol. When I go just 2 or 3 days without the exercise, I find my attitude toward my work and life to be much less positive. I also try to have at least one conversation per week with someone who I consider a professional or personal mentor. When I neglect this routine, I find my world view getting smaller, and a sense of urgency to improve some aspect of my life wanes.

I fail to forgive. Dan Schroer, Superintendent of Greene County Career Center in Ohio writes, "If you have been wronged by someone, you can not move on unless you have forgiven that person. You harbor bitterness and anger. Also, you must forgive yourself. You can't continue to dwell on past mistakes."

I put self above service. I find tremendous joy in encouraging others. Whether it's sending a personal note, congratulating them on an accomplishment, or just spending time in engaging conversation, I find that the enrichment to my own life is probably greater than what they receive. When I start saying to myself, "I don't have time for such things," I'm feeding my elephant a BIG meal.

What are the signs that you are feeding the elephant of a negative attitude?

Jones Loflin is an internationally-recognized author and speaker. His messages focus on change, motivation, time management and work/life blend. He is the author of three books, including *Juggling Elephants* and *Getting the Blue Ribbon*. Jones' new book, *Getting to It*, is now available wherever books are sold. His humor, energy and audience engagement make an **impact** on every member of your group, not just an impression. Learn more at

www.jonesloflin.com