



# Attitudinal Alignment

## Empowerment Strategy of the Future

The Corporate Vine | Bearing Fruit in Business

By Beverly Floyd

### The “Mind-Set of Me”

Gerry, approaches his new teammate, Julius. After some discussion about teamwork and accountability, Julius comments, “I’m supposed to wear myself out for the team? What team?! No, No. What I’m gonna do is, I’m gonna look out for myself, and I’m gonna get mine.”

“See, man?” Gerry responds, “That’s the worst attitude I ever heard.”

“Attitude reflects leadership, Captain,” remarks Julian.



You may recall that scene from the movie *Remember the Titans*. It is based on the true story of a newly desegregated high school football team who through winning games on the field, wins the hearts and attitudes of a stubborn community unwilling to change its belief about integration.

Although you’ll never find “*I’m gonna look out for myself, and I’m gonna get mine*” as part of any mission statement, corporate philosophy, or team-building effort - this “Mind-Set of Me” is active and running rampant in many organizations. As a result, employees are de-motivated and quit; teams lose commitment and divide; customers are dissatisfied and take flight; and businesses struggle to compete in their respective industries and close shop. **To stay alive, forward-thinking leaders are challenged to find a solution that works beyond the problems of today . . . they are looking for the empowerment strategies of tomorrow.** Like Gerry and Julian, they want a winning team - but will they run the extra yards during practice to develop one? Here are three empowering lessons from *Remember the Titans*:

1. We are all captains of a team - whether at home, work, or elsewhere
2. Attitude reflects leadership - and we are all leaders of our own mind
3. The worst attitude is one of serving self

**1. We are all captains of a team - whether at home, work, or elsewhere.** Take a moment to perceive the attitudes of the majority of the people where you have leadership responsibilities - do they boast, "*I'm gonna get mine,*" or are they chanting, "*We're gonna get ours*"? It's easy to take credit for team behaviors that bring success, but we tend to wash our hands clean of the "me" behaviors that wreaks havoc on a team. In *Remember the Titans*, Gerry does not have a comeback to Julian's remark that "*Attitude reflects leadership,*" all he could do was examine his personal leadership and hope that it would reflect positively in the attitudes and actions of his teammates. If you are concerned about the negative attitudes in your team - check to see if you have a plank of pessimism in your own eye, before trying to remove the speck of cynicism in theirs.

**2. Attitude reflects leadership - and we are all leaders of our own mind.** It is no longer a secret that "thoughts are things." Instinctively, our attitudes and behaviors will reflect what our heart feels and our mind thinks. To reach our goals, we must choose the "thing" we want to achieve and then work backwards and inwards until we reach our thoughts. At times, it may be necessary to exchange our old, doubtful, counter-productive thoughts for new, encouraging and dynamic ones. Changing our perspective on ourselves, our situations, and on others requires humility, self-control, patience, sacrifice and even some pain - yet the fruit seen in our lives and reflected back in those around us is worth it. As James Allen, author of *As a Man Thinketh*, so aptly stated:

**"Our life is what our thoughts make it.  
A man will find that as he alters his thoughts  
toward things and other people,  
things and other people will alter towards him."**

**3. The worst attitude is one of serving self.** The attitude spoken about in the Titan's quote is an attitude of serving self, "*... I'm gonna look out for myself, and I'm gonna get mine.*" Gerry said it was the worst attitude he had ever heard. Now Gerry Bertier was captain of the football team at T.C. Williams High School. *Popular kid?* I imagine so; *Philosopher?* Probably not. Yet Bertier may have been on to something . . .

I assume Robert Greenleaf, John Maxwell, Ken Blanchard and others who have shared their insights into the servant leadership model of Yeshua (Jesus) would agree. Their books and teachings (*Servant Leadership*, *The 21 Irrefutable Laws of Leadership*, and *Lead Like Jesus*, respectively) have challenged many executives trapped in the "Mind-Set of Me" to *altar* their egos and embrace selfless leadership. Like Bertier, these Captains have learned that if they are caught up in their own initiatives and neglect the needs of others - doubt and distrust will blaze through the organization like a wildfire, kicking off team fumbles, competitor interceptions, or worse . . . careers and companies down in flames.

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## Align Attitudes Today, So You Can Serve Tomorrow

If you haven't guessed yet, the empowerment strategy of the future is aligning workplace attitudes to your business mission and philosophy.

The unpredictable economy and ever-changing work environment, combined with the day-to-day stresses of managing work-life balance has left people frustrated, worried, confused, and insecure about their careers and their ability to care for their families. The result of these fears is that individuals and teams are functioning at only a fraction of their potential, not because of lack of skills or knowledge, but because of their attitudes.

*Forward-thinking leaders are challenged to find a solution that works beyond the problems of today . . . they are looking for the empowerment strategies of tomorrow.*

As managers continue to resort to punishment or termination as means of handling "attitude problems," retention and human resources persists as an enormous and expensive setback. However, it doesn't have to be that way. In fact, the more reasonable solution is practical, simple, and bottom-line friendly. Unlike most corporate strategies which require top-heavy steering committees, soliciting buy-in, and participating in long meetings - forward-thinking leaders can begin implementing Attitudinal Alignment processes without delay. The first step for leaders is to ask the person in the mirror: **How does my personal attitude align with the corporate mission and philosophy?**

To help answer that question are excerpts from *The Book of Best Practices*, outlining the eight essential "Be Attitudes" of amazing self, team and corporate leadership. When these attitudes are in action, most people *immediately* become more confident and considerate; teams become united and win; and ultimately organizations weather the storms of crisis and change.

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## The Eight “Be Attitudes” of Amazing Self-Leadership

Excerpts from the *Book of Best Practices*<sup>\*</sup>

**Be DEPENDENT:** You need the intellect, talent, skills, and abilities of other people. Encourage others to contribute, and trust people as part of your team.

**Be SINCERE:** The “I” in “team” are the individuals who make-up the team. Express genuine concern towards the unique needs of each person. Ensure everyone knows and understands their value to the team. Always remember to say please and thank you.

**Be HUMBLE:** Be quick to listen, slow to speak, and slow to get angry. Do not try to impress people; be willing to put your leadership status to the side and yield to others. Use your power to empower others. Admit when you have made a mistake. Respect and submit to your leaders.

**Be JUST:** Crave to do the right thing. Take responsibility for your words and deeds. Be willing to face the consequences of your personal actions and those of the team. Gently hold others accountable. Stand up for people who are treated unfairly.

**Be COMPASSIONATE:** Extend opportunities for people to correct their mistakes. Enforce appropriate consequences without ridicule or shaming others. Be patient with everyone. Encourage those who need encouragement.

**Be PURELY MOTIVATED:** Have true intentions to serve others with their best interest in mind. Do not be consumed with personal gain. Realize you will reap your reward as you help other people to succeed.

**Be RECONCILING:** Work to create a peaceful environment. Be committed to work wholeheartedly as a team. Promote unity, respect, and appreciation for others. Be proactive; plan and prepare to address challenges and conflict (see *Conflict as a Catalyst for Change*) before they escalate. Acknowledge problems, but focus on solutions.

**Be COURAGEOUS:** Stand-up for what is right despite the outcome and you will earn the respect of your team and countless others. Do not be persuaded or intimidated by those who can affect your career but do nothing for your dignity and honor.

*How does your  
personal attitude  
align with the  
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<sup>\*</sup> *The Book of Best Practices:* Matthew 5:3-11; Philippians 2:1-11

## Attitude is the Success Factor

Once a leader begins to strengthen their personal Be Attitudes, an amazing thing occurs . . . naturally, people around the leader begin to mirror the transformation. Psychologists recognize this occurrence as the number one tenant in behavior modification: **Before you can change anyone else, you must first change yourself.** The transference of this energy in a team environment is so powerful it has been the success factor in the world of sports and the difference maker in a lasting business.



So there you have it: Attitudinal Alignment is quickly becoming the number one training concern in business today, so companies can continue to serve their industries tomorrow.

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## Experience “Attitudes in Alignment”

The Corporate Vine’s *Attitudes in Alignment* program (AiA Classic) is a company-wide quality of work/life empowerment initiative. AiA Classic is designed to get people to come together with one mind and one purpose - despite the challenge of change. Because attitude *does* reflect leadership, the journey is experienced from the top of the organizational chart to the entry-level employee - until every person is empowered to make a positive and lasting difference within themselves and in their relationships at work and at home.

To learn more, please call 404.474.3554 or e-mail [solutions@corporatevine.com](mailto:solutions@corporatevine.com).

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