



The determining power is within you

There is a Swedish Proverb which says ‘Those who wish to sing always find a song’. Yes, it is a matter of your own attitude that creates circumstances for you. Thus the determining power is within you!!

There is a story of identical twins. One was a hope-filled optimist. “Everything is coming up roses!” he would say. The other was a sad and hopeless pessimist. He thought that Murphy, as in Murphy’s Law, was an optimist. The worried parents of the boys took the suggestion of a friend.

He suggested to the parents a plan to balance the twins’ personalities. “On their next birthday, put them in separate rooms to open their gifts. Give the pessimist the best toys you can afford, and give the optimist a box of manure.” The parents followed these instructions and carefully observed the results.

When they peeked in on the pessimist, they heard him audibly complaining, “I don’t like the colour of this computer.... I’ll bet this calculator will break.... I don’t like this game.... I know someone who’s got a bigger toy car than this....”

Tiptoeing across the corridor, the parents peeked in and saw their little optimist gleefully throwing the manure up in the air. He was giggling. “You can’t fool me! Where there’s this much manure, there’s gotta be a pony!”¹

The Mother says, “You should not be so dependent on outward things; it is this attitude that makes you give so excessive an importance to circumstances. I do not say that circumstances cannot help or hinder – but they are circumstances, not the fundamental thing which is in ourselves, and their help or their hindrance ought not to be of primary importance.”

To strengthen your determining power, the first step is to learn to reflect.

Steps to Reflect

1. Make friendship with yourself and learn to talk to yourself.
2. Be real and honest to yourself.
3. Reflect on various circumstances – happy, exciting, sad, anger-raising, boring, etc. and question what, why and how.
4. Scrutinise what attitude you took during each circumstance.
5. Also think if you wanted to take a different attitude.
6. Analyse what your general attitude in different circumstances is.

The following chart may help you in identifying and reflecting upon certain attitudes.

Identify which animal you relate to

1. <i>Turtle</i>	Turtles withdraw into their shells to avoid conflicts. They stay away from the conflicts as they don’t like to face them. They lack energy and courage to face difficulties. They find themselves helpless.
2. <i>Shark</i>	Sharks try to overpower their opponents. They can force others to accept their solutions. For them their aim is important and they do not care for others.
3. <i>Fox</i>	Foxes are more compromising. They give up part of their aims to compromise with others. They like to work in agreement.
4. <i>Owl</i>	Owls are more confronting and courageous. They highly value their goals. They take difficulties as problems to be solved and seek a solution that achieves both their own goals and others’. They persevere till the end.

¹ Jack Canfield in *A 2nd Helping of Chicken Soup for the Soul* by Jack Canfield and Mark Victor Hansen (1995), p.180, Health Communications, Florida, USA