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## CHOOSE YOUR ATTITUDE!

*Finally, beloved, whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is just, whatever is pure, whatever is pleasing, whatever is commendable, if there is any excellence and if there is anything worthy of praise, think about these things.*

*Philippians 4:8*

Last weekend, I was stranded in Detroit overnight, having missed a connecting flight. No, it wasn't caused by the giant snow storm on the East Coast. It was a case of simple human error. (I'm quick to point out that I am one of those mere mortals that is sometimes responsible for human error.) Anxiety and upset was contagious. Everyone was yearning to be on their way toward their destination. Information wasn't timely or reliable. Many of us sprinted to the gate of our next flight, hoping against hope that the plane would still be there ... and it wasn't. Promised gate agents weren't there to smooth changes and arrangements. All were tired and hungry. It was a recipe for emotional disaster. It didn't appear to be a Philippians 4:8 moment!

I'd been given a gift that brought out my best self, a seat mate on the flight from Buffalo to Detroit, who was peaceful, accepting, and calm. That, too, was contagious.

So, I took a deep breath and made a choice: I was not going to allow any airline to pull me off course from being my best self. Having no control over anything else - flights, delays, gate changes, missing airline representatives - I did have control over just one thing - my attitude. I chose to be my best self.

(I'm not proud of this, but I haven't always made that choice. I have gone to a dark place, expressing anger at people who had not caused the situation and couldn't remedy it. This time, I wanted to do it differently. Kids and others were watching. I wear a cross ... and I wanted to provide some evidence that I strive to follow the One who went to the cross for me.)

I connected with a delightful, if shivering, group of fellow travelers, who were waiting for a hotel shuttle. I observed a young man unzip his suitcase and give a young woman he didn't know, who was flying from South Carolina to LA, clad in a light cotton sweater, his heavy hooded sweatshirt. I saw others persuade an elderly Jewish woman that it was perfectly safe to ride with our delightful Arab van driver. Next morning, I watched people, quiet and friendly, ready for the very early van ride back to the airport after just a few hours of sleep.

Then, it was my turn. In the airport, I got to reassure and calm a frantic young mom, already away from her little

### FOR PARENTS

How does attitude figure in your family? Have a conversation with your kids about what are the things that give you a bad attitude? What are the things that give your kids a bad attitude? Consider what you can do to recover from a bad attitude or choose a good attitude:

- \* Model the attitude you want to see in your child.
- \* Talk about it.
- \* Reframe it (What is another way to see what is happening and find the positive?)
- \* Remember a time it was better.
- \* Predict a hopeful future.
- \* Catch your child being a great kid, being kind, and being faithful.
  - Tell them.
  - Tell someone else ... and let them overhear you.
- \* Pray about it
- \* Decide how you might be a family that focuses on the positive.

### FOR CONGREGATIONS

In your congregation, set the attitude. Take Philippians' lead: look for and name "whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is just, whatever is pure, whatever is pleasing, whatever is commendable, if there is any excellence and if there is anything worthy of praise, think about these things."

\* Name them out loud to adults and children and youth.

\* Catch kids in your midst doing something right. Describe the behavior. Thank them.

\* Label your kids as "great kids."

\* Write about them in your congregation's newsletter.

\* Use them as sermon illustrations.

\* Call the local newspaper and television station. Invite them to do a story on the great kids in your midst and all they contribute to the community, to the world.

\* Without being Pollyanna, help all reframe the hard things and look for the gifts, yes, even in the challenges.

\* Pray together and watch for God's action in your lives. Name them. Give thanks.

#### NEED SOME HELP?

Do you need some help gaining perspective, evaluating your ministries, reestablishing your priorities, discerning where God is calling your congregation now, and engaging all to participate? This might be the time for coaching with Marilyn Sharpe, a ministry partner who will focus, inspire, and walk with you and your ministry team to follow where God is leading.

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kids and husband for a week, that all will be well. She bought me coffee and we became friends, who could laugh when our gate changed, not once or twice or thrice, but four times, before we actually took off on time. New friend, coffee, laughter, and a warm memory - that was the gift I received for choosing to focus on what was good in our world that morning.

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