

Colleagues:

Spring is right around the corner. The days are getting longer, the temperature is headed the right direction. Given these positives we all have down days, i.e.; "This is due tomorrow", "Charlie needs his make-up work", "Conference Thursday during my plan time", etc, etc.

I do not know where I got this story but I think it is great. Please keep it in your knee drawer and on "one of those days" take it out and read it. Take time to read the story about John and count your blessings.

John was the kind of person some folks might love to hate. He was always in a good mood and always had something positive to say. When someone would ask him how he was doing, he would reply, "If I was any better, I would have to be twins!" He was a unique manager because he had several waiters who had followed him from restaurant to restaurant. The reason the waiters followed John was because of his attitude; he was a natural motivator. If an employee was having a bad day, John was there telling the employees how to look on the positive side of the situation. Seeing this style really made me curious, so one day I went up to John and said to him, "I don't get it. You can't be a positive person all the time. How do you do it?" John replied, "Each morning I wake up and say to myself, 'John you have two choices today. You can choose to be in a good mood or you can choose to be in a bad mood.' I choose to be in a good mood. Each time something bad happens, I can choose to be a victim or I can choose to learn from it. I choose to learn from it. Every time someone comes to me complaining, I can choose to accept their complaining or I can point out the positive side of life. I choose the positive side of life."

"Yeah, right, but it's not that easy," I protested. "Yeah it is," John said. "Life is all about choices. When you cut away all the junk, every situation is a choice. You choose how you react to situations. You choose how people will effect your mood. You choose to be in a good or bad mood. The bottom line: It's your choice how you live life."

I reflected on what John said. Soon thereafter, I left the restaurant industry to start my own business. We lost touch, but I often thought about him when I make a choice about life and how I reacted to it. Several years later, I heard that John did something you are never supposed to do in the restaurant business; he left the back door open one morning and was held at gun-point by three armed robbers. While trying to open the safe, his hand,

shaking nervousness, slipped off the combination. The robbers became anxious and shot him several times. Luckily, John was found relatively quickly and was rushed to the local trauma center. After 10 hours of surgery and weeks of intensive care, John was released from the hospital with fragments of the bullet still in his body.

I saw John about six months after the incident. When I asked him how he was, he replied, "If I was any better, I'd have to be twins. Wanna see my scars?" I declined to see his wounds, but I did ask him what had gone through his mind as the robbery took place. "The first thing that went through my mind was that I should have locked the back door," John replied. "Then as I lay on the floor, I remember that I had two choices: I could choose to live or I could choose to die. I chose to live." "Weren't you scared? Did you lose consciousness?" I asked. John continued, "The paramedics were great. They kept telling me I was going to be fine. But when they wheeled me into the emergency room and I saw the expressions on the faces of the doctors and nurses, I got really scared. In their eyes I read, 'He's a dead man.' I knew I needed to take action."

"What did you do?" I asked. "Well, there was a big burly nurse shouting questions at me," John answered. She asked me if I was allergic to anything, 'Yes, I replied.....I took a deep breath and yelled, 'Bullets!' Over their laughter, I told them 'I am choosing to live. Operate on me as if I am alive, not dead.'" John lived thanks not only to the skill of his doctors, but also his amazing attitude.

I learned from him that every day we have the choice to live fully. Attitude, after all, is everything.

Remember, light is at the end of the tunnel, (and it's not an oncoming train). Hang in there, I'm only a page away.

Ed Baumgart