

## INTRODUCTION ---

# The Night That Changed My Life

*The greatest discovery of my generation is that human beings can alter their lives by altering their attitudes of mind.*

—William James

**I**n 1980, I graduated from law school and thought I'd be a lawyer for the rest of my life. After all, that's what I'd wanted to do since my early teenage years.

At first, everything went according to plan. After lots of studying that summer, I passed the Bar Examination and was admitted to practice law in New York. My personal life was also on the upswing. In early 1981, I married Dolores, a law school classmate. I was on my way to much success and happiness.

Or so I thought.

But, after practicing law for a few years, I realized I wasn't happy at all.

Sure, there were some things I liked about being a lawyer. I enjoyed helping people resolve their disputes, especially when I could save them the agony of lengthy court proceedings.

Yet, there were so many things about being an attorney that I disliked — and that just seemed to drain the life out of me. Mounds and mounds of tedious paperwork and motions to be filed. Constant delays and postponements. It was not uncommon for a trial to be postponed 10 times.

### **I Dreaded Going To Work**

I continued to grind out the work but grew more and more dissatisfied as an attorney. I was frustrated and very depressed. To put it bluntly, I didn't like my life, and saw no way that things were going to improve.

Have you ever had a job where you dreaded going to work most days — where you felt the “weight of the world” on your shoulders each day?

Well, that's how I felt. I was literally hunched over... and in pain, both physically and emotionally. I looked much older than my years. I began to get headaches all the time, and my stomach was constantly churning. Fearing that I had some serious health problem, I saw some doctors and they ordered a battery of tests. Every test came back with the same result — they couldn't find anything physically wrong with me. One of the doctors suggested that I take Maalox to calm my upset stomach.

Spiritually, I was dead. Nothing in my life had much meaning. This day-to-day drudgery was also affecting my appearance. Although I was in my late 20s, I looked like I was 40!

In the early part of 1985, shortly after I had turned 30 years old, I was burned out. And, one particular evening, while sitting alone in my den, I knew that something had to change. Not knowing what to do, I simply said out loud,

*“There's got to be more to my life than this... there's got to be more than this misery and unhappiness.”*

### **Help Comes From An Unlikely Source**

Later that night, I was watching TV in the den. It was around 1:00 am, and my wife, Dolores, had already gone to bed. But I was feeling so down I couldn't sleep. I “channel

surfing" looking for something to occupy my time. I tuned in to, of all things, an infomercial.

Normally, I would have changed that channel in a fraction of a second, but for some reason, I listened.

The product being peddled was called *The Mental Bank* and was endorsed by actress Florence Henderson of *Brady Bunch* fame. *The Mental Bank* was a home-study course that explained how everything we achieve in life is based upon our subconscious beliefs.

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*You are not what*

*you think you are.*

*But what you think —*

**YOU ARE!**

— Dr. Norman Vincent Peale

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I felt so desperate at that point that I decided to go for it. I pulled out my credit card and ordered the program.

*That night in my den was the turning point of my life.*

By the way, when I sheepishly told Dolores what I had done a day or two later, she was shocked.

"You did what?" she asked in amazement. It's not that she objected to the purchase — it was just so out of character for me to buy something like that on impulse... and worse yet, from a TV infomercial!

Several days later, *The Mental Bank* program arrived at my doorstep. And I was fascinated and excited to begin learning how our thoughts determine the quality of our lives. Prior to that time, I had never heard these ideas. Unfortunately, they don't teach you this stuff in school!

*The Mental Bank* program spurred me to seek out other motivational resources. I began to read books by Napoleon Hill, Og Mandino, Norman Vincent Peale and Robert Schuller. I started reading the Bible on a regular basis. And I eagerly listened to inspiring audio programs by Zig Ziglar, Earl Nightingale, Jim Rohn, Bob Proctor and many others. I felt like a person who had wandered for days in the desert with a parched throat... and then suddenly found a stream of water!

Now, I can't tell you that everything in my life changed overnight, because it didn't happen that way. But, from the

moment I began to change from a negative attitude to a positive attitude, I started to get significant results.

I felt better. I had more energy. And I started to achieve goals that I would never have accomplished before... all because of a change in my attitude! I'm also happy to report that when people now ask how old I am... and I say 52, they invariably reply, "You look much younger!"

*It's all in the attitude.*

### **From Lawyer To Motivational Speaker**

I continued my self-study program in my spare time, while I worked full time as a lawyer. The positive thinking was helping my attitude at work, but I felt a passion for my "hobby" that I never felt for my work, and I dreamed about the day I could walk away from my job.

In 1989, after four years of intensive research about attitude and motivational concepts, I agreed to present some adult education seminars in the evenings at a local high school. I was to be paid \$30 for each two-hour class. Not the kind of money that lets you quit your day job!

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*Never underestimate  
your power to  
change yourself.*

— H. Jackson Brown, Jr.

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As I stood in front of the class to start my first seminar, I was petrified. My heart was pounding and I was sweating. But somehow I managed to muster the courage to just do it. The students loved the class, and I got a real adrenaline rush from presenting the material that had revolutionized my own life... and that had the power to do the same for others!

*I was on my way.*

Eventually, the speaking fees grew a little larger, and in 1990, I decided to phase out my law career over the next few years. This wasn't a simple decision. I had gone to four years of college and three years of law school to obtain my law degree. On top of that, I had spent 10 years of my life as a practicing lawyer. When you have that much invested in a career, it's not so easy to walk away.

Then, of course, there was the money issue. As a lawyer, I was on track to earn \$100,000 in a few years, and I'd be earning that much — and more — for the rest of my professional career.

### **Taking A Stand**

Although I was earning a little more income from my new “hobby,” I realized that I'd have start-up expenses in launching my new enterprise. Fortunately, Dolores and I had saved some money over the years. To supplement my income, I began to sell a line of merchandise with my unique “Attitude is Everything” logo. But there was no way to avoid it — I'd have to take a huge financial step backward to start my new business... at least in the beginning.

And yet, it was time to move on. I felt as if I was being pulled out of the legal profession and into my new career. Whenever I spoke to an audience or wrote a motivational essay, I was so invigorated and full of life. I knew that's where I belonged.

So, I made a gradual transition — working four days a week as a lawyer, then three days a week... and then two days a week... until, in 1992, I began working full time as a motivational speaker and writer.

Trust me, my mother wasn't thrilled when I told her that I was giving up the practice of law to speak about attitude. After all, it doesn't carry the prestige of saying “My son is a lawyer!”

But these are issues you have to deal with when you take a stand in life. You have to face the fact that some people will disapprove of your decision. I also learned that you often have to let go of some things in your life and take a few steps backward before you can move forward in a new direction. Part of the price I had to pay was giving up the money, prestige and security of my legal career.

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*A positive attitude  
is a person's passport  
to a better tomorrow.*

— Unknown

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By the way, as it turned out, my mother became very supportive of my new career, especially when she saw that I was making progress — and that I really enjoyed my work.

Why am I telling you all this about my career transition? It's not to impress you with what I've done. Believe me, I've made plenty of blunders and mistakes along the way.

I'm sharing my story because I want you to know how drastically my life changed — and how much better it got — when I made a change in my attitude.

*Proof positive that, indeed, attitude is everything!*

### **How You'll Benefit From This Book**

Some final thoughts before we launch right into this material: This book can help you, no matter how positive or negative you are right now.

If you're negative, don't despair. You can use these concepts to develop and maintain a positive attitude... and to

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*Think, act and talk  
with enthusiasm  
and you'll attract  
positive results.*

— Michael LeBoeuf

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achieve incredible breakthroughs in your life.

If you're already a positive person, you can use these principles to soar to even greater heights of success and fulfillment.

I've spent more than 20 years researching why it is that some people succeed while others achieve disappointing results. During that time, I've read a few hundred books and thousands of magazine articles on attitude and success. I've listened to more than 3,000 hours of audio cassette programs. In addition, I've interviewed countless high achievers to learn their "success secrets."

More importantly, I have personally applied each and every success strategy that is described in this book. So, I know from firsthand experience that these ideas work — and that they have the power to literally transform your life!

Please don't misunderstand me. I don't claim to be a "know-it-all" on these subjects. Far from it. I consider myself a "work in progress" and I continue to learn every day.

However, I know what it's like to have a negative attitude, because that's the kind of attitude I had for the first 30 years of my life. I know what it's like to doubt yourself and your abilities, because that's what I did for 30 years. All of the positive changes that I've made in my life are the result of practicing the principles you'll read about in this book.

### **Think... Speak... Act**

This book is conveniently divided into three Parts, and each Part contains a series of lessons. So, if you ever need reinforcement in a particular area, it will be easy for you to turn to that lesson and re-read it.

In Part 1, *Success Begins in the Mind*, we'll be focusing on the power of attitude and belief to shape your destiny. You'll learn how your success initially depends on the way that you THINK.

In Part 2, *Watch Your Words*, we'll concentrate on the way that you SPEAK... how your attitude is reflected in your words... and how positive language can help to propel you toward your goals.

In Part 3, *Heaven Helps Those Who Act*, we'll cover the final leg of our journey. Even if you think positively... and speak positively... you won't achieve your dreams until you ACT. You can't sit back and just expect success to pay you a visit. In this section, you'll learn the action steps that will turn your dreams into reality.

When you THINK, SPEAK and ACT in ways that support your success, you're firing on all cylinders... and on the way to achieving phenomenal results in your life.

You're about to embark on a journey that will bring you success and happiness beyond your wildest dreams, so let's get started....