More About Flexibility . . . Attitudes, Thoughts, and Opinions

Being flexible in our actions and reactions, in our willingness to do things differently, is an important part of flexibility. Remember the story in our last Refresher about the fly that had to learn to try smarter, not harder?

Now let’s have a look at another side of flexibility . . . our willingness to think differently. To really live the Key of Flexibility we need to be flexible in our attitude toward others, in our thoughts and opinions, and in our openness to new ideas.

Here are some great ideas for staying flexible in our attitudes, thoughts, and opinions. Keep them in mind and try them out—you’ll learn and grow as you embrace flexibility in all areas of your life.

1. Learn from any source you can. Friends, acquaintances, and coworkers. Books, magazines, and newspapers. New information is the source of new options, and new options offer greater flexibility.

2. Adjust your attitude toward others. If you tend to distrust strangers, try viewing them as friends you haven't made yet instead of potential threats, and you'll become way more flexible—and have more friends!

3. Whenever the opinions of others make you feel uncomfortable, don’t reject them before giving them the thought and attention they deserve. Move out of your comfort zone and look for hidden treasures—whenever we step out of our comfort zone, we learn and grow.

4. To be flexible, we must be willing to break from tradition, custom, and habit. We must be willing to question everything. Keep an open mind, and discover the value (or lack of value) in the ideas of others.

5. Don’t cling to your opinions. When listening to the viewpoint of another, don’t immediately reject it if it’s different from your own. When you remain open to the opinions of others, you have more ideas you can draw from, and you become way more flexible, creative, and solution oriented.

6. To benefit from the wisdom of others, don't get turned off by how they present their opinions. Focus on the substance, not on the presentation—focus on the gift, not on the package.

7. Don’t rely exclusively on the left hemisphere of your brain. That is, don’t depend solely on logic or rational thought. Increase your use of the right hemisphere, which is the seat of intuition and creativity. Become more attuned to the arts, nature, beauty, and the wisdom of your inner voice.

8. And last but not least, try viewing the world through the eyes of another now and then. How would you see things differently if you were an infant, five years old, or a teenager? What if you were a member of the opposite sex? Or ninety years old? Or gay? What if you were confined to a wheelchair or a prison cell? What if you were raised in poverty in the third world or were homeless in North America? What if you were a faithful follower of a different religion? What if you were a traffic cop, school teacher, or bank teller? Use the power of your imagination to place yourself in many different roles, for flexibility depends on understanding the viewpoints of others and learning as much as possible from them—all much easier when you can appreciate where they’re coming from.