



How to Control Your Destiny Through Your Attitude

Dr. Audri G. Lanford
Interviews Joan Gustafson

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Success Without Struggle™: How to Control Your Destiny Through Your Attitude

Dr. Audri G. Lanford Interviews Joan Gustafson

In this new ebook, Joan Gustafson will share with you:

- 10 strategies for creating success in your life.
- How — and why — to avoid the 3 C's.
- Creating miracles in your life — easily.
- 9 specific ways to develop a more positive attitude.
- And much, much more!



Joan Gustafson has an exceptional ability to bring others to the same level of dedication and passion she has for the task at hand. She coaches and builds confidence in others to reach higher than they've ever reached before. Many careers and lives have blossomed under her tutelage. She is a living example of what she teaches.

— **Joan C. McBride, retired, 3M Public Relations and Corporate Communications Department**



Audri: Welcome, Joan! It's my real pleasure to talk with you today about such an important topic: "How to Control Your Destiny Through Your Attitude."

Joan: Audri, I'm excited about this, too. I feel so strongly about attitude and how it can control your destiny, and I'm really looking forward to this interview.

Audri: We're going to talk about specific things you can do now that will generate some dramatic changes — easily and quickly.

Let me just give our readers a very brief introduction to you before we get started.

Joan is an award-winning international speaker on the topics of success, leadership, and change. She is president of Success and Leadership Dynamics, a consulting company specializing in organizational productivity and personal development.

Prior to founding Success and Leadership Dynamics, Joan was a member of the Corporate Marketing Management Committee at 3M, where she held international leadership and management positions for 26 years.

Joan is the author of *A Woman Can Do That! 10 Strategies for Creating Success in Your Life* (published in 2001) and *Some Leaders Are Born Women* (to be published in 2002). She is also on the faculty of the University of Phoenix, where she teaches graduate level courses in International Management and e-Business.

We have some very exciting information you'll be able to easily apply to your life. I'd like to suggest that you get out a pen and paper (or use your word processor) and jot down ideas about how what we're talking about can apply to *your* life.

Write down your ideas as you read this ebook — don't wait until you're done, or you'll lose some of your best ideas! And read actively — in other words, as you read, ask yourself, **“How can I apply this to my life?”** That's how you'll get the most benefit from what we're talking about.

OK. Let's start off with what our readers are going to gain from this ebook — and who will benefit from reading this ebook.



A positive attitude can open doors to opportunities.



Joan:

Readers will first learn ten strategies, or keys, for success. When they are integrated, these strategies become even more powerful.

Then we will focus on one of these strategies/keys — maintaining a positive attitude — and discuss how readers can control their destiny through their attitude. We will review nine ways for a person to develop a more positive attitude, and we'll give examples and action steps for each one.

After reading this ebook, readers will understand the relationship of attitude to success, and they will have the tools and methods for developing a more positive attitude.

My hope is that each reader will become more successful by controlling his/her destiny through his/her attitude!

The people who will benefit most from this book will be those who really want to become more successful — not only in their careers but in their lives.

Audri: You say, “A positive attitude can open doors to opportunities.” I think a great way to start is with your own story. Can you tell us what happened to you — and how you learned about the importance of your attitude?

Joan: One of my best memories is from when I was 14 years old, and I had the opportunity to go to work one day with my Uncle Ralph. This uncle had been my idol ever since I was a small child. I remember when he went into the Marine Corps and would write wonderful letters back home. I wasn’t old enough to read yet, but he took the time to interpret the letters for me by drawing pictures.

The first letter contained the drawing of a man with spikes on top of his head. He was showing me that he had a brand new Marine haircut. I had never seen a haircut like this, and I was impressed!

I became even more impressed with him as time went on, as he was the first one in our entire family to graduate from college. When I went to work with him at 14, he was a computer systems engineer.



When I told him about this, I thought he would be excited, but instead he was quiet for a minute. Finally, he scratched his head and said, ‘Well, I suppose a woman could do that,’ and then he added, ‘but you’ll never make as much money as a man.’



Those were the days of the first generation of computers, the days when a computer filled a room about the size of a gymnasium. Those were also the days

when this same computer had a fraction of the capacity of the tiny palmtop computers we use now.

It was interesting to me that all of the computer engineers and programmers in Uncle Ralph's company were men.

I was fascinated by the computer! I made a career decision that day to work with computers, just like Uncle Ralph.

When I told him about this, I thought he would be excited, but instead he was quiet for a minute. Finally, he scratched his head and said, "Well, I suppose a woman could do that," and then he added, "but you'll never make as much money as a man."

At that time, my goal was not to make as much money as a man. I just wanted to have an exciting career.

Although I had high goals and aspirations as a teenager, I didn't do the things I needed to do in order to reach these goals. When I graduated from high school, one of my gifts was an engagement ring. Since I'd been dating this boy for five months and didn't want to hurt his feelings, I agreed to marry him.

Shortly after we were married, I learned that my husband was deeply in debt, and all of his income was needed to pay his past expenses. I needed to work full-time in order to support the two of us.

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I decided I would change my attitude. Instead of an attitude of worry, I would have an attitude of success — I was going to succeed in life. I started changing my attitude.

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I couldn't afford to go to college, and almost every computer programming job, at that time, required a college degree. I gave up on my goal to have a career in the computer field.

The marriage ended in divorce, and, in my twenties, I found myself the single mother of two children, and the sole support of these two children.

I began to worry. Would I be able to support my children? Would I be a good enough parent? What would people think of me?

As I worried, I became physically ill, and I spent most of my twenties in and out of hospitals. When I was 29, my doctor diagnosed me with a serious heart condition. He said, "Joan, there is no way you'll ever be able to work again. Your health will not sustain it. You need to quit your job, stay home, and take care of yourself."

So I quit my job, stayed home, and worried even more. I worried about whether I would even live long enough to see my two precious children grow up. I became even more ill.

Then I read something that changed my life. It was written a long time ago by William James, who said, "The greatest discovery of my generation is that human beings can alter their lives by altering their attitudes of mind."

I started thinking about what that meant to me... a human being could alter his or her life by altering his or her attitude.

I decided I would change my attitude. Instead of an attitude of worry, I would have an attitude of success — I was going to succeed in life. I started changing my attitude.

A few months later, I was on a routine visit to my

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I was living with a ‘victim mentality.’ When I finally decided to turn this around and alter my attitude and no longer be a victim, I was then able to take control of my life.

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doctor. He examined me and said that he was amazed. He had never seen this happen before. He said I had recovered significantly and was well enough to go back to work part-time.

During this period, I also developed other strategies for my own success. These became the ten major strategies I have used for my own success.

I didn’t develop all of the strategies at the same time. But, as I started integrating these strategies into my life, I became more successful. I went from working part-time to working full-time. I went back to school at night while I was working full-time and raising my kids. I earned my Bachelors degree and my MBA, both at night, while I was working full-time.

I did become a computer programmer, a systems analyst, and a systems supervisor.

When I graduated with my MBA, I transferred into marketing, then marketing management, and then international management at 3M.

I kept working on my attitude during this entire time... and became very successful.

During this time, I also worked with other people in integrating these strategies — especially attitude — into their lives. They also became more successful, both in their careers and in their personal lives.

Audri: Wow, that is a really wonderful story. What you've just described is starting very young and knowing what you want, then having all these things happen — marriage, divorce, severe illness, children — and then completely turning your life around. It's very inspiring.

Joan: Yes. I also went through what a lot of people go through when they ask, "Why me? Why is this happening to me?"

When I was 14, I thought I had my whole life planned. I was going to be a computer programmer; I was going to enjoy this exciting profession. And then, all these things happened to me.

I was living with a "victim mentality." When I finally decided to turn this around and alter my attitude and no longer be a victim, I was then able to take control of my life.

Since that time I've been able to create the dream life for myself — the life that I had always hoped would be possible.

Audri: Do you believe it is common for very successful people to have significant obstacles in their lives that they have to overcome?

Joan: Let me answer that with a short story. When I wrote my book, *A Woman Can Do That! 10 Strategies for Creating Success in Your Life*, I asked my interviewees, who are extremely successful people, if they had ever had any failures.

Most of the interviewees have powerful business careers (but not all of them). They are all successful in



life. They are people with high standards and integrity. They are very successful, but they don't flaunt their success.

When I asked the interviewees if they'd ever had any failures, some would be quiet for a few minutes and then say, "No, I guess I haven't." Others would respond right away and say, "No, I've never had a failure in my whole life." Others would think for a moment, and finally they'd mention a failure, because



...we all have failures in life. It's a common, almost everyday thing that happens to all of us. But that word 'failure' is so threatening to most people. Many people are so afraid of failing that they don't make the attempt to be successful.



they thought they had to answer the question.

When they mentioned something that other people might consider a failure — like failing an exam in school, or going through a divorce, or getting fired from a job — they'd say, "But I never considered that a failure. I considered it a learning opportunity for me. If that would not have happened in my life, I might not be as successful as I am right now."

Audri: Have you ever had any failures?

Joan: Well, I've been divorced, and some people might view that as a failure. When I lived in France, I failed my driving test the first time I took it. Since I had many illnesses when I was a young adult, I could look at that as a failure or a weakness in my life — but I don't.

I think these were things I needed to go through at

the time in order to make me the strong person that I am today.

Audri: That's interesting. I've asked that question much more often to men than I have to women. Usually the response that I get is they laugh and say, "Of course I've had failures!"

Nonetheless, very often they will also say exactly what you just said, which is "But I needed to go through that to become as successful as I am now."

Joan: Who hasn't had a failure as the world defines "failure"?

For example, in my business, if I make a cold call and the person says, "No, I'm not interested right now," I could look at that as a failure, because I didn't get the account. However, we know that all cold calls do not result in sales, especially on the first call.

Audri: Obviously.

Joan: So we all have failures in life. It's a common, almost everyday thing that happens to all of us. But that word "failure" is so threatening to most people. Many people are so afraid of failing that they don't make the attempt to be successful.

When we look at some of the people who have developed large businesses, there are many who have supposedly "failed" and later have become very successful. An example is Walt Disney — and look at what he was able to create. However, he was not always successful. In fact, he was engaged in many endeavors that went nowhere, before he created the ideas of Mickey Mouse and Disneyland. Although he had done several things that didn't work in his life, we look at Walt Disney as a huge success.

Audri: You and I both know many, many people who are incredible successes and I can say that I don't know anyone who has had major success and has not had at least one very large what other people would perceive as "failure" in their life. I literally can't think of one.

I'd like to add one other thing. My perspective on "failure" is "testing." If you try something and it doesn't work, that's just an example of something that doesn't work, so you put that in the imaginary "doesn't work" pile. The next thing might work and you put it in the "does work" pile.

This takes the "emotion" out of it.

That is the point, I believe, you're making.

Joan: It's like a laboratory experiment. We try several different formulas until we find the ones that work best for us.

Audri: Exactly. Let's get a bit more specific now in terms of developing those success strategies and how attitude relates to those.

Joan: I've used ten strategies in my life that have helped me become successful. When I coach and mentor people, I also share these strategies. It's been so much fun for me to watch them create the lives that they really want to live.

Here are the 10 success strategies:

SUCCESS STRATEGY #1: Believe in yourself.

I call this a "foundation strategy." All of the other strategies build upon this.

Most of the people I work with have a lot of self-confidence because of the positions they're in. They

wouldn't have gotten into those positions if they didn't have self-confidence.

However, for many of the most confident people, they still have times during the day or week when they don't feel as confident as they do at other times.

It's usually at the time when they're doing something that's unfamiliar to them. When they're stretching themselves outside of their comfort zone — to do something they don't feel is a real strength yet, and their confidence might not be as good as it is at other times.

In the bonus, *10 Success Strategies Follow-Up e-Course*, we discuss how they can improve their self-confidence. These include spending time with positive people, looking and feeling your best, practicing self-affirmations, as well as several other action steps.

STRATEGY NUMBER #2: Dare to dream.

When I talk about dreaming, I'm talking about intention dreaming — visualization — actually taking time out of your day to close your eyes and to picture what results you really want in your life. What are the results that will bring you the success, joy, and happiness that you want in your life? Picture this as if it's already happened.

This was the last of the strategies that I myself started using. At that time, I was already successful. I wrote goals and achieved those goals — so I didn't think I needed visualization when I first heard about it.



But, I had heard that Albert Einstein said, “Imagination is more important than knowledge,” and I thought to myself, “Einstein was a pretty smart guy, and, if it’s good enough for him, then it’s good enough for me.”

So I actually took the time twice a day to visualize — even though I had thought that my time was completed filled already.

And even though I was already successful, I found that once I started visualizing, my results went straight up... and I became even more successful.

Audri: What’s the next strategy?

STRATEGY NUMBER #3: Determine your priorities.

Joan: I feel that this one is one of the most important. I find that many of us, especially people who have been involved in pretty high-powered careers, might have problems with priorities.

Many people will say Yes whenever they are asked to do something, and then realize that they don’t have enough hours in the day to do everything to which they have committed. They then become overwhelmed.

So it’s *very* important to determine our priorities.

Stephen Covey talks about the things we do every day and how these things can be classified according to two different criteria. They are either “important” or “not important,” and they’re either “urgent” or “not urgent.” Most adults spend most of their time doing things that are urgent, whether or not they are important.

So we need to determine what our priorities really are — and then to do the things that are important to us.

Audri: Yes, I've found that distinction very useful. What's the fourth strategy?

STRATEGY NUMBER #4: Set powerful goals.

Joan: When I talk about powerful goals, I'm not talking just about incremental goals. Incremental goals are good, but we also need to have powerful goals — those that will help us achieve the great things in life that we want to achieve.



Again, this can sometimes be overwhelming. We may look at a great big goal and say, “This is going to take forever. Where do I even start?”

I advise people to break those goals into milestones, to make each milestone a mini-goal, and then to reward themselves after accomplishing each one of these mini-goals. Before they know it, that powerful goal will have been achieved.

STRATEGY NUMBER #5: Take action.

Not a lot happens if we don't do anything. Visualization is great and it will help, but visualization isn't what gets us there. It's action.

Audri: This is probably the one I think is most important. ;-)

Joan: Yes, it's *very* important to take action steps. I recommend writing action plans.

It is also important to make sure our dreams, priorities, goals, and actions are in alignment with each other. When they're not in alignment, that's when people tend to get overwhelmed. They begin to think it's not possible to do everything they want to do.

STRATEGY NUMBER #6: **Focus.**

In some studies that I've read, I've learned that attention spans of the current generations are not as great as those of previous generations.

I've done some surveys and found several reasons for this. One response to why this happens was, "Well, it's because of the remote control for the TV. You can be multi-tasking by watching several different TV shows at one time by flipping back and forth."

Someone said that it was the way we communicate these days. Thinking back to when I was a child, most of our communication was in person over the backyard fence, or it was on the telephone. We had one telephone in our house with a four-party line.

Younger people today don't even know what that is. When we had a four-party line, the phone would ring in four different houses at the same time. We would know if it was for our family by the type of ring. So there weren't as many phone calls then as there are now.

If we compare that with the way we communicate now, we each have several telephones in our homes. We have phones in our offices. We have cell phones, email, fax machines, and pagers. When I get into my office, I'll be turning on all these things at once. I'll be turning on the computer to check email, I'll be dialing my voicemail, and I'll be checking the fax — all at the same time.

This is good because it can help us to be more productive. But we have to remember that when we're focusing on a major goal/objective, we need to set aside time to focus just on that one goal.

Audri: Good. What's the seventh strategy?

STRATEGY NUMBER #7: Live your life with integrity.

Joan: When I interviewed people for my book, I asked them about each of these strategies and how significant each of them had been for their success.

I asked them to rate each strategy on a scale of 1-5. (5 meaning extremely significant.)

They all rated "integrity" as a "5." They said that if you don't have integrity, you couldn't possibly be successful. Someone said, "If you don't have integrity, you couldn't look at yourself in the mirror." If you can't look at yourself in the mirror, how can you say that you're successful?

Audri: I couldn't agree more. It's interesting because this doesn't necessarily jive with what many people consider as part of being successful. I think you're bringing out a very important point here.

Some people think you can be successful by stepping on other people, or doing dishonest things, etc. I know that neither you nor I have this perspective.

Joan: There might be people who have done this, but at the end of the day, I'm wondering if those people really do feel successful.

Audri: True. What's number eight?

STRATEGY NUMBER #8:
Remain positive, no matter what.

Joan: A positive attitude can open doors to opportunity. We'll be discussing this in much detail later in this ebook.

STRATEGY NUMBER #9:
Take time to enjoy your life.

Audri: I like number nine. (Laughter)

Joan: Sometimes we think that if we work all the time, we're going to be more successful. I used to do that. There were times during my life when I would have described myself as a workaholic.



Since then, I've found that when I take breaks, I'm able to be more productive when I go back to work.

If you look at the word "recreation," you see within that word another word, "recreate." When you take time to enjoy yourself, you're taking time to "recreate" yourself, reinvent yourself, refresh yourself, and renew yourself.

This helps you to become even more successful than you were in the past.

Audri: I'll add an anecdote here. Jim and I have an agreement that no matter what, we take Sundays off. That has been very important. We always have one day — and this isn't for errands — this is simply a day to enjoy our lives, usually together. It makes a huge difference. It makes us so much more creative — and happy. In fact, we're experimenting with expanding this.

Joan: You're exactly right. I had made that decision a number of years ago, too. Sunday was my "family day" and nothing would interrupt this unless it was a true emergency. I never felt that I missed anything.

Audri: OK. What's number 10?

STRATEGY NUMBER #10: Continue to learn.

Joan: We all grow through learning. When I talk about learning, I'm not saying that you have to go back to school for a formal education like I did. That's good for some people, but it's not right for others.

There are so many other ways that we can learn. We can learn through educational TV shows, listening to tapes, reading good books, listening to and observing other people, and by doing new things and stretching ourselves.

Audri: And seminars as well.

Joan: Yes — definitely seminars.

Audri: I read a statistic that showed that only 10% of business owners do Strategy #10. I'd bet that's the 10% of people who are really successful.

Joan: I really believe that. Often, business owners think they need to put every waking hour into the business part of their business. They don't invest the time in the learning that they need in order to be more successful in that business.

In integrating these ten strategies, learning is somewhat connected to priorities, as well as taking time to enjoy life. Learning can be very enjoyable.

Audri: We should congratulate all our readers, because they're doing that right now.

This is wonderful — these are great strategies. (And our readers will get even more on each of these 10 strategies in the bonus follow-up e-course.)

How important do you think attitude is in terms of your success?

Joan: I think attitude is not only important to one's success, but that it is *essential* to one's success.

Audri: Your story clearly illustrates how important attitude can be. And you've given some very specific strategies for becoming more successful.

Now let's move on to the nine specific ways that people can create a more positive attitude.

Creating a More Positive Attitude — #1:

Joan: The first way is to refrain from Complaining, Criticizing and Condemning.

I call these the “3 C's.” When I first heard about the 3 C's, I thought to myself, “I never complain, criticize or condemn... I'm just stating a fact!” (Laughter).

However, I decided that I was going to become more aware. During the next two weeks I monitored every time I caught myself using these 3 C's. I was surprised — because I found myself using them a lot. I just didn't realize I was doing it.

Audri: Did you write it down, or mentally note it?

Joan: I mentally noted it at the time. But now I advise people to write it down, because as they become more aware of it, their use of the 3 C's will decrease.

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In order to change a behavior, you need to first be aware of that behavior. So, by becoming more aware at the time the behavior is happening, you will know exactly how you're doing and will be able to change that behavior.

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They can then ask themselves, “If this happens again, how will I handle it?” The awareness helped me to decrease the number of times I used these 3 C’s.

The person who was giving the seminar where I learned about the 3 C’s talked about the “Square Tongue Rule.” If you catch yourself using one of these 3 C’s, gently bite the tip of your tongue. But, be careful, because if you do this too often (i.e., you’re using the 3 C’s too often), you might bite off the tip of your tongue. That’s how I always think about this rule.

I found that by reducing and eliminating the 3 C’s from my life, I was able to become much more positive.

I also found that positive attracts positive.

Have you ever noticed when you walk down the street, if you smile, how many people will smile back at you?

A positive attitude will attract positive things — and positive people — into your life.

Audri:

Let me make sure our readers can implement this — that they can take action. What you’re saying is that the first thing you do is to become more *aware* of the 3 C’s. And when our readers see themselves complaining, criticizing, or condemning, they can lightly bite the tip of their tongues — but they need to make sure their tongues don’t become square. <g>

The goal is to become aware of when you use the 3 C's so that you reduce how frequently you complain, criticize, or condemn — and hopefully start eliminating the 3 C's from your life.

Joan: In order to change a behavior, you need to first be aware of that behavior. So, by becoming more aware at the time the behavior is happening, you will know exactly how you're doing and will be able to change that behavior.

The next step, of course, would be to actually change the behavior.

Audri: OK, so let's say you discover — probably most of our readers will — that you're doing a lot of the 3 C's — you become more aware of it. Is the act of noticing the behavior sufficient, or is there something else our readers need to do?

Joan: They need to desire to make the change in their life, and to make a new habit by making this change.

After they make the change, they'll start seeing results. Everyone I know has seen results. They've been able to attract more positive people and positive things into their lives, and this will help them get to where they want to be.

Audri: The powerful rule behind this is that positive attracts positive. I've heard it called The Law of Attraction.

Let's go on to number two.

Creating a More Positive Attitude — #2:

Joan: Number two is to eliminate worry.

Worry generates negative energy. For some people, it's very difficult not to worry. We all have serious

things happening in our lives. It might be the serious illness of a loved one or the loss of a job. It's difficult not to worry about these things.

I thought I had recovered from worry when I was 29 and developed a more positive attitude. Many years later I met Cliff, who became the love of my life. Shortly after we started dating, he had a heart attack. I lived in constant fear that he would have another heart attack and I would lose him. He was the best relationship I'd ever had, and I wanted this relationship to last forever.

I asked Cliff to promise that he would call me every day when he got to work to let me know that he had made it through the night. I know no one wants to be put into a situation where they're obligated to call someone and say, "I'm still alive."

Some days he wouldn't call until 10:30 or 11:00 in the morning. When he finally called, I'd say, "Where were you? I was so worried about you." No one likes to hear that, either.

Other than that, our relationship was great. We talked to a mutual friend about this situation, and the friend said, "Let's look at Cliff as being healthy."

Just then, a light bulb went on in my head. I realized that this worry wasn't doing me any good, and it wasn't improving Cliff's health, either.

If he was going to have another heart attack, I wasn't going to be able to prevent it by worrying about him.

I decided I would do something more positive. I would not worry. I would enjoy the relationship and let him know how much I cared for him.

As soon as I made that decision, our relationship became even better, and he proposed. We were married

the next year. Cliff and I now celebrate our wedding anniversary every month.

Audri: Excellent. What's number three?

Creating a More Positive Attitude — #3:

Joan: Number 3 is to put on a happy face.

Have you ever noticed that when you're pleasant, people really want to please you?

Audri: Yes.

Joan: People want to please other people more when those people are pleasant.

When I was working for 3M, I decided to conduct a hallway experiment. 3M is a big campus — about one square mile with lots of buildings. The main buildings are connected by a skyway.

When I'd walk through the skyway, I'd sometimes meet other people walking in the other direction. If I knew them, we'd both say, "Hello." If I didn't know them, we'd both look in the other direction.

I thought that instead of doing that, I'd take the time to smile and see if they looked at me. Every time I did this, they smiled back. It wasn't long afterward that whenever I'd walk through the skyway, people would be smiling, because smiles are contagious.

I once participated in a fantastic class on creating the "ideal life." Since I was so impressed with this class, I asked the people who had developed this class to come to 3M and give a presentation to the managers who directly reported to me.



The managers decided that they all wanted to take the class together. The developers of the course put on a special executive session just for our group, and it was wonderful.

When I told a colleague that my whole group was going to this class together, she looked at me and said, “Oh no, that’s all we need! We’re going to have a bunch of little Joan’s walking around here. They’re going to be smiling at everyone and getting all the promotions. I wish I could be like that.”

Well, she could be like that, because it’s so easy — it just takes a smile.

We don’t see things as they are. We see things as *we* are.

Audri: Tell us what you mean by that...

Joan: We’re looking through our own lenses. An example is a story I heard about a traveler who was traveling through a town. His name was Joe. In this town, he met a man named Sam and he stopped to talk to Sam. He asked Sam what kind of people lived in that town.

Sam answered his question with a question. Sam asked Joe, “What kind of people live in the town you came from?”

Joe said, “They’re cross and ornery, and they won’t give you the time of day.”

Sam said, “You know, Joe, you’re going to find the same kind of people in this town.”

Joe went on his way and decided not to stay there.

The next day, another traveler named John went through the same town and met Sam. John said, “Sam, what kind of people live in your town?” Sam asked, “What kind of people live in the town that you came from, John?”

And John said, “They are such gracious people, they are enthusiastic, they have a lot of energy, and their attitudes are wonderful. I loved being around them, because they are wonderful people.”

And Sam said, “You’ll find the same kind of people in this town.”

They’re the same people, but we see people the way that we are, rather than the way they are.

Audri: That’s a wonderful illustration.

Let’s move on to the fourth way to create a more positive attitude...

Creating a More Positive Attitude — #4:

Joan: Look for the good in everything.

This is another one that’s difficult for a lot of people, because there are so many things that happen to us that we think are bad. Again, we’re looking at it from a victim mentality.

Even in bad things, we’re able to find some good. I’d like to illustrate this with another example.

About 11 years ago, I met a wonderful woman named Mary. Since then, Mary has been a big influence in my life. We met at a class I was sponsoring at 3M for the managers who were reporting to me.

It was a class on meeting management, which was not a very exciting topic. The managers in my department wished they didn’t have to be there, but it was required, and so they came.

Mary was new in our office, reporting to one of my peers. She had asked if she could come to the class. Since we had openings, we were happy to have her join us.

When Mary came into the class, she was bouncy, bubbly, and enthusiastic. She said, “I am so happy I could come to this class! Thank you so much! I am so grateful to my boss for letting me come.”

I know my people were thinking, “How can she be happy to be here?” They would have preferred to be in their offices getting some work done.

Then she told her story. She said, “I just moved here from Washington, D.C. I was a lobbyist there. My job was eliminated, and that was wonderful!” Of course, we were all wondering how she could think it was wonderful when she had lost her job.

She said, “It was wonderful because it gave me the opportunity to decide what I wanted to do next in my career. I decided to move here to Minnesota, and I accepted a position in Corporate Marketing here.” She added, “I moved into an apartment near Lake Minnetonka.” This is geographically at least an hour’s commute (without traffic) to 3M. She went on, “It’s great!”

Again, we were wondering how she could enjoy an hour commute. She continued, “It gives me a chance to drive around the lake and see the flowers in bloom. I see a lot of wildlife, I listen to tapes on the way to and from work, and I love it here!”

At this point, people were looking around the room at each other, and I could almost read their thoughts. They were thinking, “Is this woman for real?”

We found out after a few classes that Mary was “for real.” This was really Mary. She had an incredible ability to make lemonade from any lemons that came into her life.



About two years later, I had an opening in my department for an account manager, and Mary applied for the job.

I interviewed Mary and about 11 other people for this position. Mary tied with another candidate for number one. I had two number one candidates. I again reviewed their qualifications, and they were indeed tied.

I hired Mary because of her attitude, and I never regretted doing that, because, when she moved into the department, the entire department became more positive.

A few months later, I started receiving phone calls from people in other departments at 3M saying, “Joan, next time you have an opening, I want the job. It seems like your people don’t have to work at all — they just have fun all the time.”

They did have fun, but the truth was that we were one of the most productive departments in that part of 3M at that time. I attribute a lot of this to Mary and her attitude.

Audri: That’s a great story. Do you have any other stories you can share with us?

Joan: I do — I have a lot. I’ll share one more. Life is a learning opportunity for all of us. For some of us, it is through formal classes and seminars, as we discussed before. For others, it is just learning like I did from Mary and her attitude.

This next story is about a seminar I attended with my husband, Cliff. He’s a chiropractor; he studied under another chiropractor, who, among other things, had developed a four-day seminar for chiropractors and

their critically ill patients. Since I wanted to learn more about my husband's career, I attended this seminar with Cliff.

The seminar consisted of chiropractic adjustments, lectures on nutrition, and also lectures on forgiveness.

When this doctor of chiropractic spoke of forgiveness, he talked about three steps.

The first step is to forgive the person who has wronged you.

The second step is to forgive yourself for carrying a grudge and/or for letting this bother you.

The third step in the forgiveness process is to look for the good in what happened.

I decided that I wanted to experience this seminar as a patient. In order to do this, I needed to report a physical ailment to the chiropractor. At the time, the only ailment I had was that, about twice a week, I would have severe abdominal cramps. They would be to the point where it would be difficult for me to concentrate on anything else for a couple of hours until they went away.

Through the examination, the doctor was able to determine that there was something that had happened when I was 12 years old. When he counted back the years, he said there was something that happened in my life when I was 12 for which I might not have forgiven someone.

That was a long time ago! After much thought, I finally remembered. When I was 12 years old, I had witnessed an act of violence. A person who was in a position of authority had physically abused three children, and I had seen this happen.

At the time, I didn't feel I could do anything because this person was in a position of authority. But

somehow, even though I hadn't thought about this for years, this had lived in my mind all these years. It was manifesting itself in a physical ailment.

I went through the three steps of forgiveness that night. The next day when the chiropractor examined me, he said, "It's still there. Did you really go through the three steps?"

I'm a good "rule follower." If someone gives me action steps or rules or policies, I'll follow them to the letter. But even though I had followed the three steps of forgiveness, I didn't have my heart in them.

I was having a problem in looking for the good in a violent act against children. That night, I decided that I would truly forgive this man for what he had done. The man was no longer living, and I finally forgave him.

I went through the third step again to look for the good. How could I find any good in a violent act against children? I finally realized that, since witnessing this act, I have done everything I can do to prevent



Looking for the good is very important in the forgiveness process, and it's very important in maintaining a positive attitude.



the abuse of children. I don't know if I would have done this if I hadn't become aware of abuse by seeing it happen.

I will continue to do this. When I get to a point where I can retire from business, I plan to spend a lot of time doing volunteer work with abused children, and to prevent the abuse of children.

Since participating in this seminar, I have had abdominal cramps very seldom.

I saw some real miracles happen during this seminar. There was one man — a good-looking, 27-year-old, who came with his mother. They had been traveling around the country for three years looking for a doctor who could cure him. The man could barely walk. He had a cervical collar around his neck, and his mother carried three pillows with her. When they arrived in the classroom, she arranged the pillows on the floor. He lay on the pillows, because he wasn't able to sit in a chair like the rest of us.

He went through this same process. By the third day, he was no longer wearing the cervical collar, he no longer needed the pillows, and he was sitting in a chair.

To this day, he travels with this chiropractor as a testimonial of the power of forgiveness.

Looking for the good is very important in the forgiveness process, and it's very important in maintaining a positive attitude.

Audri: Joan, I'd like to share a story, too. It doesn't have anything to do with illness, and it's not as dramatic. It's also about taking something bad that we had no control over — and trying to find the good.

On December 18, 1998, Jim and I had the worst day that we've had since we started our business. We had launched a new Website and planned to send out a one-page press release.

The press release was sent out by a broadcast fax company — which means it was done electronically. Unfortunately, they had a BIG glitch. So, rather than sending out our one-page fax, they were sending out faxes that ranged from 20 to 500 pages to radio stations.

Not only that, but they kept having problems and resetting their system — so they would keep sending these long faxes over and over and over.

Jim and I spent 7 hours on the phone trying everything we could to get the problem fixed. First the fax company didn't believe there was a problem. Then, they couldn't fix it.

To make things worse, this was the same day that President Clinton was impeached and the US started bombing Iraq.

So here these radio stations are getting this press release about a toy called a Furby on one of the most serious news days of the year. And there was *nothing* we could do to stop it.

To make a long story short, after spending 7 hours receiving angry calls and making angry and pleading calls to the broadcast fax company to fix the problem, we decided to look at “what good can come from this?”

Again, it was not our fault. We did everything possible we could do to stop it. We'd get the problem temporarily fixed, and then their system would start shooting out the faxes all over again.

What we did was create a survival guide for dealing with run-amok technology. We called it *The Fax From Hell: A Survival Guide*. Readers can see it in the archives of our Internet ScamBusters site at:

<http://www.scambusters.org/Scambusters32.html>



Have an 'I can' attitude. Each of us is capable of accomplishing every objective that we have for ourselves.



Just the process of taking this awful experience and turning it into something that helped other people (we discovered many people had this problem, but not to the extent we did), was an opportunity for us to share how to turn something negative into a positive. It made a huge difference.

Years later, we can almost laugh about this. ;-)

Joan: It goes back to one of your earlier questions about having failures. This could be considered a failure by some people. You didn't cause this yourself, but it was a failure in technology that made it happen.

You were able to turn around this failure in technology, so that it became a positive for many people.

Audri: Yes. We will all have things that go wrong. It really is how you look at it and deal with them. What's the fifth way to create a more positive attitude?

Creating a More Positive Attitude — #5:

Joan: Number 5 is know that you can do it.

Have an "I can" attitude. Each of us is capable of accomplishing every objective that we have for ourselves.

I like to make points by giving some examples:

Bobbie Stevens, who is one of the people I interviewed for *A Woman Can Do That!*, was a flight attendant for Northwest Airlines. Several years ago, she decided she wanted to own a townhouse. There weren't many townhouses in the city where she lived; however, that didn't deter her. She thought, "I'm going to have this townhouse, I'm going to furnish it with all brand new furniture, I'm going to have a brand new car in my

garage, and I'm going to have a brand new grand piano in my living room."

She knew she couldn't afford all of this on a flight attendant's salary, so she studied real estate. Just as she passed the real estate exam, a townhouse development opened near where she lived.

She went into the development and applied for a job selling townhouses. The man who would become her boss said, "Well, that's fine, Bobbie, I know you passed the test, but selling townhouses is a bit different than what you studied. I'd like you to take some tests here, too."

Bobbie took the tests and met with him to review her scores. He told her that she did very well except for one question.

Audri: What was the question?

Joan: The question was, "How much money do you expect to make in your first year of real estate?"

To answer the question, Bobbie added up the payments for her townhouse, furniture, car, and piano, and that's the number she wrote down.

He told her that no one makes that much money during the first year of real estate. "It's simply not done."

Bobbie said, "I'd like to leave my answer exactly as it is."

She left her answer unchanged, and do you know how much money she made that first year?

Audri: How much?

Joan: She earned exactly that amount.

Bobbie knew she could do it. She hadn't sat down and calculated the number of houses sold by first-year agents and average dollars per house. She said, "OK, this is what I want to create my life. This is the lifestyle I want to have. In order to do this I have to have this amount of money."

She knew she could accomplish her objective, and she developed an action plan to do this.

Bobbie Stevens has accomplished every major goal in her life.

She went on to earn two Ph.D. degrees. She and her husband, Dean, founded a seminar company, and they have trained thousands of people on how to create an ideal life.

She wrote a book entitled, *Unlimited Futures: How To Understand the Life You Have and Create the Life You Want*. And that's exactly what she has done for herself.

Audri: That's wonderful. Would you like to give us another example?

Joan: Another example is a woman named Terri Bowersock. Terri is dyslexic. When she went through school, she had a very difficult time. One of the teachers would hit her over the head with a ruler in front of the class and would tell her she was "as dumb as a cue ball."

So, she had a lot of negative stuff fed to her when she was young. She made it through high school.

When she was in her early twenties, she started to learn about consignment stores. She had an idea that she would like to open a furniture consignment store.

She wasn't familiar with any furniture consignment stores, but she decided she wanted to do this.

Now, a lot of people might say, “Hey, Terri, you’re dyslexic. How could you ever run a furniture store?”

But she knew she could do it. She started her first store by selling her mother’s furniture and her own bedroom furniture.

Twenty-three years later, Terri now has over 20 furniture consignment stores around the U.S. All of these stores have done very well. She sells not only “gently used” furniture, but also new furniture.

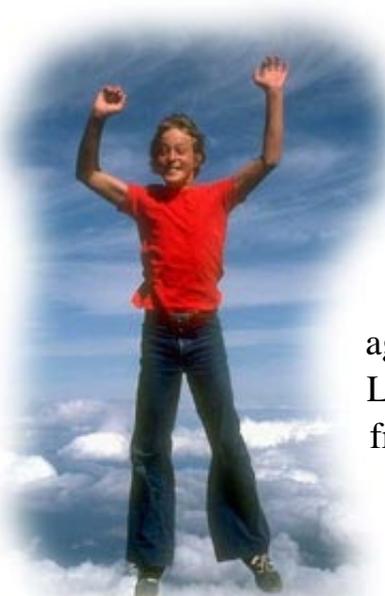
In addition, she has four other businesses. She is a professional speaker, and she has also written a book.

She said that she’s read only a few books in her life because it’s so difficult for her to read, but she has written a book. She knows that if she decides she can do something, she can do it.

Her attitude has helped her become very, very successful in life.

Audri: That’s great. Now, let’s move on to the sixth way to create a more positive attitude.

Creating a More Positive Attitude — #6:



Joan: The sixth way is to laugh.

You’ve probably heard that the medical professional has discovered fairly recently that there is healing power in laughter.

Having heard about this several years ago, I recalled it when I was on a trip to Los Angeles. As I was pulling my luggage from the baggage claim, I injured my back. It was so painful that by the time I got to the hotel, I asked the person at

the reception desk if there was a doctor nearby whom I could see.

He said they could do even better, as he could recommend a doctor who made house calls.

The doctor came to my hotel room and prescribed painkillers and muscle relaxers. I took them, but they didn't seem to do any good. I was miserable, and the pain was controlling my life.

I even missed my meetings the next day, which I had never done in my life. I was in so much pain.

Then I remembered what I had read about laughter. So I forced myself to laugh. I laid in my hotel room laughing. When the maid came in, I was lying in bed all by myself laughing. She said, "Oh, excuse me," closed the door, and left. I laughed harder.

I turned on the television, watched situation comedies, and forced myself to laugh.

The next day, I still had pain, but it wasn't controlling my life.

I became a strong believer in the healing power of laughter. I've read where people can cure themselves of life-threatening diseases by laughing.

The quote that I like to use is from Bob Hope. He said, "I have seen what a good laugh can do. It can transform tears into hope." I've also seen that happen with so many people.

“

When I started thinking about the value of people, the uniqueness of people, and the fact that people are precious, I found that I no longer encountered any cross people, and I stopped feeling that I had any competition.

”

Audri: That's beautiful.

Let's move on to number seven. What's the seventh way to create a more positive attitude?

Creating a More Positive Attitude — #7:

Joan: Value other people.

When I look at the people in this world, I see that each person is a miracle. Each person is unique and precious.

Sometimes during the course of the day, we'll encounter people who are cross, or whom we might consider as competition.

When I started thinking about the value of people, the uniqueness of people, and the fact that people are precious, I found that I no longer encountered any cross people, and I stopped feeling that I had any competition.

I feel that I can work in cooperation with people.

There was one person I worked with at 3M who everyone considered to be a very difficult person. He was very competitive. He was a person others would say had a big ego. He wanted to have all of the recognition himself.

I found that by working with him, rather than against him, both of us were able to accomplish more.

I started by complimenting him on a report he had written. I told him about the things I thought were really good in his report and how I really admired his genius for the ideas that he had, and I asked how I could support him.

He seemed surprised that I had asked him that, because most people didn't. They saw him as a cross person and a competitor.

Once he discovered that I wasn't there to take away his recognition and that I could add to it, we became very, very good teammates. We worked together very well. I think of him often as a person who helped me to grow in my career by being the person that he was.

Audri: That's a wonderful example. I think it's a fairly unusual perspective.

I share this with you. We don't believe we have any competition either. We work with every good company we can that is a "competitor" of ours. What we've discovered is that it enhances everybody.

I know by taking that perspective, we've been very successful in situations where others haven't. And there is no doubt in my mind that it is because of this approach.

Joan: In my business, one of the things I do is professional coaching. I'm now president-elect of the Phoenix chapter of the Professional Coaches and Mentors Association.

We're just starting the chapter, but we're already getting 50 to 60 people at our meetings. They could all be considered competitors, because they're in the same business. But I found that I really enjoy referring some clients to other coaches and mentors, because they might have a specialty different from mine, or they might be a better fit for a particular client.

They also refer clients to me. If we work in a spirit of cooperation, we're able to accomplish much more, and we can help to grow each other's businesses.

Audri: We wound up selling a business of ours to someone who could have been considered our biggest competitor. It worked well for all of us. We were bored with the

business and it was the direction the new owner wanted to grow in.

Joan: That's good. That helped you, too, in the funding for another business.

One of the quotes that I believe in is from Zig Ziglar. He says, "You can have everything in life that you want if you just give enough other people what they want."

It's important to be genuine and not to do it because you want to get something out of it, but to do it because you genuinely want to help the other person.



Once you've developed a positive attitude, you want to make sure your positive attitude shows all the time. It's a responsibility.



Audri: That's one of my favorite quotations as well.
Number eight?

Creating a More Positive Attitude — #8:

Joan: Number eight is to set an example.

Since the rumor has gotten around that I have a positive attitude, I want to keep that positive attitude at all times. When I'm out in public, I make sure that I'm the same person I am in private.

I make sure if I'm out with my husband and we're sitting at a dinner table somewhere, that we're talking about positive things. There might be someone there who knows me, and I want to set that example for them.

And there might be people there who don't know me, and I want to set that example for them, too.

Once you've developed a positive attitude, you want to make sure your positive attitude shows all the time. It's a responsibility. It's one of the standards I live by. This positive, optimistic attitude can be contagious.

Audri: OK. Last one — What's the ninth way to create a more positive attitude?

Creating a More Positive Attitude — #9:

Joan: Give back to society.

Did you notice after 9/11/01, how many people wanted to make a contribution? It was beautiful how people came forth from everywhere and wanted to give — wanted to do whatever they could for the families of the victims, and for the country.



These people, by giving, are also showing that they have a positive attitude. They also get a better feeling about themselves and what they are doing.

One example that I have here, not related to 9/11, is about a woman I interviewed for my first book. I met Gayle Crowell at an e-business conference in Chicago where she was a speaker.

I thought she was the best speaker I'd ever heard on the topic. After she finished her speech, I gave her my card and asked her if she could come to 3M. I was

sponsoring an e-business conference there, and I asked if she could be one of the keynote speakers.

Fortunately, she was available, and she instructed me to work through her assistant. When I called her assistant, I asked about Gayle's speaker fee. She quoted an amount and said if that was not within my budget, they could negotiate.

When I told her that the fee was within my budget, she added, "One more thing — Gayle would like you to donate her speaker fee to the Susan G. Komen Breast Cancer Foundation."

I had never had this happen to me before. Normally when I hired a speaker or a consultant, we'd make the check payable to them or their company.

I was very impressed with this. After I retired from 3M and was writing my book, I decided Gayle was definitely one of the women I would like to interview for the book. I was elated that she consented to an interview.

While I was interviewing her, I told her how impressed I was that she donated the speaker's fee.

She said, "Well, I have my priorities in life. First of all, society has been very good to me. I want to give back to society. I would love to do some volunteer work for my two favorite charities, but during this phase of my life, I'm not able to do that. I have six children. My family is my number one priority. When I interviewed for my last job, I told my interviewers that if I needed to take time off to be with my family, I intended to do that. I still got the job."

At the time, she was the CEO of a publicly traded company. It was a very high-powered job.

She added, "My job is very demanding, and that's my number two priority. I also like to spend time with my extended family and close friends. I know I need to

take the time to take care of myself. I need to get enough sleep, to exercise, and to take care of my nutrition. So during this phase of my life, my time is filled. I still want to give to these two charities. So whenever I speak, I consider my speaking as my volunteer time, and I give my fees to these charities.”



One of the things a positive attitude does for us is to change your frame of mind. When we're looking at things in a positive way, we're able to create more positive things in our life.



Audri:

That's a great example. I'd like to share one here as well.

Many people have heard of the concept of tithing or giving to charities or non-profits, both in terms of time and money. I wanted to share something that Jim and I decided to do.

We started this when I was at Stanford getting my Ph.D. Obviously, when you're in graduate school, you don't have a lot of money. I was on scholarship so I got just enough money to pay tuition, books, and to live on.

I decided at that point that even though we didn't have any money, I was going to start giving, at that moment, 10% of what I earned to the charities that I believed in.

That was an important decision for me. I've never felt as if there isn't enough money. And as we've become much more successful, the amount we've been able to give is quite a bit more than when I was in graduate school. ;-)

But regardless of wherever you are, you can give. You can do it with time, and/or with money.

I found giving is one of the absolutely most important things I do. It has so many different benefits. So, I wholeheartedly agree with this concept of giving back to society.

Joan: I'm a big believer in tithing myself. I started tithing about 22 years ago, and, since then, there have been just two years that I didn't do it. Those were the two most unsuccessful years in my life — financially, especially.

Finally, my husband asked me one day, "Have you been tithing?" I said, "No, I can't afford to do it." He suggested that I start doing it again. I did, and everything turned around again.

I don't promise that will happen for everybody, but I find that by giving back to society, whether it's time, talents, money, or all three, it helps us in our own lives.

Audri: Yes. In fact, my experience is that if you give what you want most, you're most likely to have it come back to you many times over. However, only if you give with no thought of getting back. I like to give both time and money.

Well, these nine ways to create a positive attitude have been really specific things that our readers can do. That's what we always want to do with these ebooks. I'd like to conclude with just a few more questions.

Can you summarize how a positive attitude opens doors to opportunity?

Joan: One of the things a positive attitude does for us is to change your frame of mind. When we're looking at things in a positive way, we're able to create more positive things in our life.

As I've said before, "Positive attracts positive." "Positive" will attract into our lives, the people and the things that will make our success more eminent.

Audri: What gem of information have you learned the hard way that can help all of our readers?

Joan: There have been quite a few of them. One is the tithing that we just discussed.

Another is the one I mentioned earlier about the worry. Worry is a big component in many people's lives. I never realized how much I worried until I decided that I would not worry anymore. Making a firm decision that I would eliminate worry from my life has helped me to become even more positive and more successful.



When a situation occurs that might have been cause for worry in the past, I think about my wise friend saying, "Let's look at Cliff as being healthy." I'm then able to catch myself and say, "Wait a minute here! The worry isn't doing you (Joan) any good, and it's not helping the person you're worrying about. Instead, use

your energy to do the things that are positive to help the situation.”

Audri: If you could have each person reading this ask one question of themselves, and the answer to that question would be a self-revelation, what would that question be?

Joan: What shifts can I make in my attitude to attract more positive people and positive things into my life?

Audri: What would you like everyone to remember about this interview?

Joan: A positive attitude can open doors to opportunities, and you can control your destiny through your attitude.

Audri: Thank you so much, Joan. I believe our readers have gotten the tools, strategies, and specific ways they need to make major changes in their lives.

What you’ve shared with us is so powerful that it can affect any aspect of your life: health — relationships — finances — careers — living your dreams — whatever it might be.

Thank you so, so much. We’ve all learned a lot.

Joan: Thank you. I’ve enjoyed talking with you.



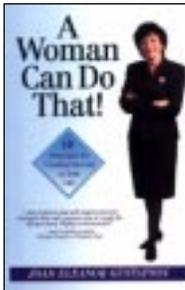
About the Author

About Joan Gustafson...

Joan is an award-winning international speaker on the topics of success, leadership, and change. She is founder and president of Success and Leadership Dynamics and has coached hundreds of individuals in achieving their desired results, both in their careers and in their personal lives.

Prior to founding Success and Leadership Dynamics, Joan was a member of the Corporate Marketing Management Committee at 3M, where she held international leadership and management positions for 26 years.

Joan holds a BA degree in Business Management and an MBA in Management. She is a member of the National Speakers Association, the Professional Coaches and Mentors Association, and International Coach Federation. She has spoken and consulted to businesses and professionals throughout the United States, Europe, Canada and Asia.



Joan is the author of *A Woman Can Do That! 10 Strategies for Creating Success in Your Life*

<http://www.amazon.com/exec/obidos/ASIN/0970302606/wzcom>

and *Some Leaders Are Born Women* (to be published in 2002).

She is also on the faculty of the University of Phoenix, where she teaches graduate level courses in International Management and e-Business.

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