

adventures in attitudes

Robert W. Pike

What an unusual recipe . . .

Take: 30 or so people with different backgrounds, interests, and occupations.

Add: a few with different income levels and people with varying levels of "success."

Add: a room that doesn't seem like a classroom with tables that seat half a dozen people.

Blend in: a teacher who doesn't teach and who talks less than the students.

Add: 30 hours of discussion, sharing, role playing, and case studies where the time flies and no one wants to stop.

What's the result of this recipe? An unusual and unique personal growth experience entitled "Adventures in Attitudes."

What Is It?

The program was designed on the premise that all learning is self-learning and that all development is self-development. It puts the participants in situations where they can think, talk, share, discover, and analyze their approach to life's little problems and big challenges. They have nowhere to look but to themselves (and the other participants) for the answers with the program materials serving as a catalyst.

In a fast-paced fashion, the participants find themselves hurdling communication barriers, applying a six-step process to solving some pretty knotty people problems, thinking about and setting goals for their life, talking about their purposes in life, and gaining greater self-confidence. The result is people who are excited about their lives and who have a new appreciation for the differences in others.

Why Participate?

Why do people take such a program? Some say they're looking for answers—and they don't want to wait two or three years for them. Others say they make a habit of doing something once or twice a year to grow personally—get the kinks out and take a fresh look at the direction their lives are taking. Some are interested in increasing their communication skills.

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What happens to people as they apply the program to living their lives? Here are a few examples:

"Don't disrupt the family routine." That was Jim's attitude before he and Shirley experienced the Adventures in Attitudes program. But Shirley had a part-time job she didn't like. Previously, when she'd mentioned doing something different, Jim's reaction had been negative.

At the beginning of the sixth session, Shirley stood up, eyes shining and a huge smile on her face. She told the class that her husband had really listened and encouraged her to "go ahead" and look for a different job.

Shirley wanted to work in a bank. She applied for a job, and was told that she'd hear whether she was hired in a couple of days. On the morning of the second day she wrote on her calendar, "This is the first day of my new job." At four o'clock that afternoon, the bank called to say that she had the job!

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The owner of an automobile dealership enrolled in Adventures in Attitudes with his new car sales manager. He found the greatest benefit to be an increased awareness of the importance of being a good listener.

"I think that my working on this one point has greatly improved the communications with my managers as well as all the employees. By being a better listener, I think they're all more aware of the fact that I'm interested in them as people, as well as employees," he said.

When asked what effect Adventures in Attitudes had had on the sales manager, he said: "The salesmen are all aware of the fact that Vern is interested in them and in seeing them earn more money. He's been giving them a lot more help as he tests and uses the ideas that he's been getting in the workshop."

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Gail, an insurance sales representative, feels Adventures in Attitudes helped her develop traits that are invaluable in her work, including leadership, understanding, listening, and communications skills.

"The skills of communication, management, motivation, and goal setting have helped me become agent of the month with my company, which has made me proud, since I have only been active in this field for two months," she said. "The course offered me an adventure in life."

That's why people are excited about this program. So excited, in fact, that nearly 100,000 have participated in the past six years. People are excited because:

1. It's practical. It deals with everyday living skills.
2. It's a low risk and nonthreatening program—one participant wrote it was "the most fun program and the most rewarding I've ever taken."
3. It focuses and builds on people's strengths, rather than their weaknesses.
4. It's relevant. Every part of the course can be related to each individual's particular life or job situation. Whether that person's a homemaker or a corporate president or an Extension agent, there's something for everyone. One side benefit is an awareness that each person within the community has something to offer everyone else.
5. It's low cost—in most communities less than you'd pay for two semester hours of graduate credit (30 contact hours).

What It Offers

Adventures in Attitudes offers people a chance to look at their lives and encourages individual and group participation and involvement. If you want a tremendous personal growth experience and want to create some excitement in your attitude toward Extension programs, why not take Adventures in Attitudes in your area. It will help you develop your positive attitudes.

For more information on Adventures in Attitudes in your area, write to:

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