

We Have Two Choices

Jerry is the kind of guy you love to hate. He is always in a good mood and always has something positive to say. When someone asks him how he is doing, he always replies, "If I were any better, I would be twins!"

Jerry is a natural motivator. If an employee is having a bad day, Jerry is right there telling the employee how to look on the positive side of the situation. Because of this attitude he has several waiters who have followed him around from restaurant to restaurant.

This really made me curious, so one day I went up to Jerry and asked him, "What's the deal with you? Nobody can be that positive all of the time! How do you do it?"

Jerry replied, "Each morning I wake up and say to myself, 'Jerry, 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."

"Oh come on, it can't be that easy," I protested.

"Yes it is," Jerry said. "Life is all about choices. When you cut away all the junk, every situation is a choice. You choose how you react. You choose how people affect your day. You choose to be in a good mood or bad mood. The bottom line is that you choose how you live your life."

I thought about what Jerry said for a long time.

Soon thereafter, I left the area to start my own business. We lost touch, but often thought about Jerry when I made a choice about life instead of reacting to it.

Several years later, I heard that Jerry did something you are never supposed to do in a restaurant business: he left the back door open one morning and was held up at gunpoint by three armed robbers. While trying to open the safe, his hand, shaking from nervousness, slipped off the combination. The robbers panicked and shot him. Luckily, Jerry was found relatively quickly and rushed to the local trauma center.

After 18 hours of surgery and weeks of intensive care, Jerry was released from the hospital with fragments of the bullets still in his body. I saw Jerry about six months after the accident. When I asked him how he

was, he replied, "If I were any better, I'd be twins. Wanna see my scars?" I declined, but 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," Jerry replied. "Then, as I lay on the floor, I remembered 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.

Jerry 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, blonde nurse shouting questions at me," said Jerry. "She asked if I was allergic to anything. 'Yes,' I replied. The doctors and nurses stopped working as they waited for my reply. 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.' "

Jerry is alive today, thanks to the skill of his doctors, but also because of his amazing attitude. I learned from him that day that we always have the choice to live fully. Attitude, after all, is everything.

Now you have a choice: you can forget this story, or you can choose to let it make a difference in your attitude and your life.