

Executive Book Summary

S M Nazir Hossain

Course Code: EADM 892

University of Saskatchewan

John C. Maxwell

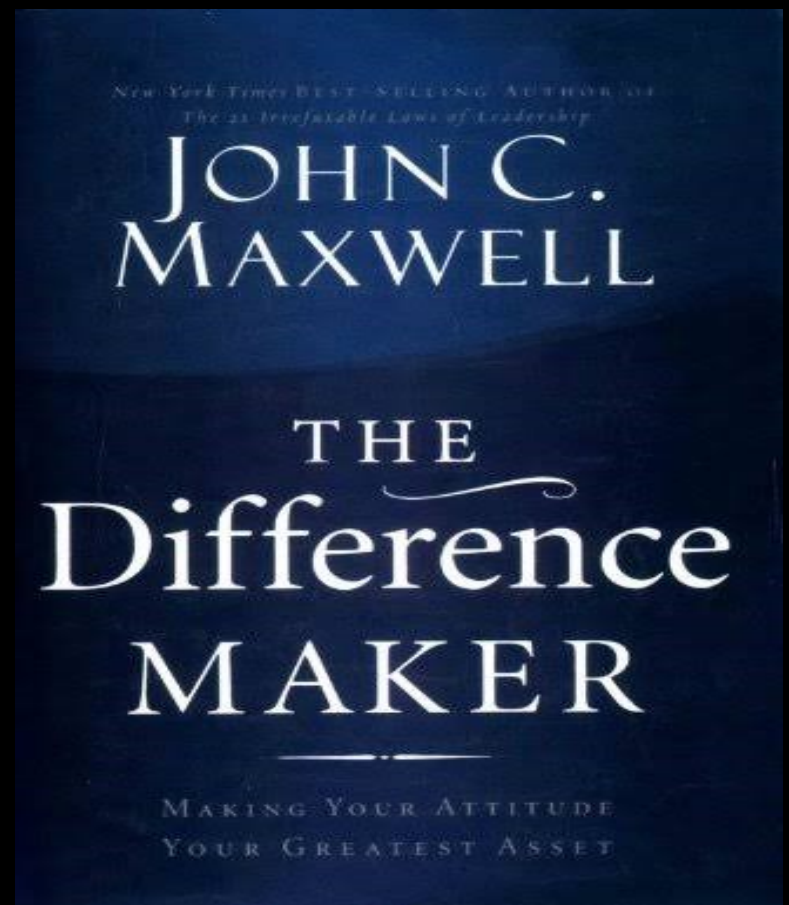
The Difference Maker: Making Your Attitude Your Greatest Asset

Content

Summary and About the Author	2
Chapter One	3
Chapter Two	4
Chapter Three	5
Chapter Four	6
Chapter Five	7
Chapter Six	8
Chapter Seven	9
Chapter Eight	10
Chapter Nine	11
Chapter Ten	12
Critical Evaluation	13

SUMMARY

In *The Difference Maker*, John Maxwell addresses issues of success and effective ways to live, which includes those in leadership positions and those who are not. It represents the author's motivational inclinations as he emphasizes an individual's overall attitude. Maxwell presents a short read which acts a quick fix for the maintenance of a positive mindset. The book addresses the importance of attitude in one's everyday life. However, he also makes an emphasis that attitude is not everything, but is an aspect that can be used to make a big difference.



ABOUT THE AUTHOR

John Maxwell has written more than 40 books on leadership (2019). He is identified as America's expert on leadership and speaks to a large number of people regarding the same topic every year. He has also founded a leadership and development service and Equip, a nonprofit development group (2019). His writings can be divided into two separate categories; inspiring leaders, and leadership and life-effectiveness. He has engaged in the communication of his principles to a variety of companies which includes large corporations, international marketing companies and even professional sports groups. He acts as the founder of Injoy Stewardship Services, along with other organizations whose dedication is teaching individuals to access their highest potential in leadership, he has also dedicated most of his resources to leadership training across the world. Some of his most well-known books include *Winning with People*, *Developing the Leader Within You* and *the 21 Irrefutable Laws of Leadership* (2019). Maxwell has received international recognition for the books he has written and the ideas and principles he has developed in relation to leadership development.

ONE: Where Did You Get Your Attitude?

'Attitude isn't everything, but it is one thing that can make a difference in your life' (p.2)

Attitude is outward behavior which is an expression of inward feelings. Attitude affects all the aspects of our lives; both current and in the future. Consequently, all aspects of a person's life affect their attitude. Personality. All individuals have different personalities which makes them unique. Hence, one's personality type affects their attitude. However, one is not trapped by their personality as they can decide to change it. Environment. The early environment that one is exposed to while growing up, such as parental divorce or the death of someone close, has a difference in the type of an attitude than individual develops across the years. The Expression of Others. The way people express themselves, through their words, to others has an impact on the way they feel. A few words, whether positive or negative, can significantly shift how the views of an individual and change the course of their lives. Self-Image. How you view yourself has a huge effect on the attitude you have. Poor self-image usually corresponds with a poor attitude.



Exposure to Growth Opportunities. Individuals experience differing growth opportunities. Based on growth experiences, an individual has to apply a different level of effort in the cultivation of a positive attitude. Association with Peers. The people you spend time with often determine the type of person you become. Hence, you imitate the attitudes of those around you. Belief. Thoughts are essential for the forming and sustenance of one's attitudes. Each thought that one has, affects the attitude one developed. Choices. The longer an individual lives, the more their life is structured by their choices. To change one's life, a choice must be made to take responsibility for one's attitude. An attitude can become a difference-maker, it highly depends on the individual.

TWO: What Your Attitude Cannot Do For You

'You cannot disconnect attitude from reality and expect success' (p.18).

For Attitude to become a difference-maker, it has to be integrated with reality. It is an additive but is not a substitute (p.19). There are several things that one's attitude cannot make up for.

Competence. Competence and confidence are two completely distinct elements. A good attitude can assist an individual personally but cannot help them positionally. Incompetence acts as a great distraction that cannot simply be substituted with a great attitude. However, if one develops competence, then a good attitude will be highly helpful.

Experience. Experience is only obtained through the development of lessons. When an individual is inexperienced and lacks the appropriate skills, then a good attitude will be of no difference. Competence, experience, and attitude are a good combination.

Facts. Specific aspects of life, such as aging, cannot be simply changed by attitude. Problems can be solved, but facts can only be lived with. As Maya Angelou said, 'If you can't change it, change your attitude,' (p. 25).

Personal Growth. Nothing can act as a substitution for continual learning. Individuals should take part in continuously developing their minds and souls and become the best versions of themselves.

Your Attitude Will Not Stay Good Automatically. One has to be constantly sensitive to their attitude indicators. Attitude cannot fix everything. It is by itself not enough. One has to be consistently invested in maintaining a good attitude.



THINK
POSITIVE

THREE: What Your Attitude Can Do For You



'The greater difference my difference-maker can make is within me, not others' (p.32).

Attitude is the largest difference maker between those who thrive and succeed and those who fail and give up. Therefore, an individual's attitude can be their greatest asset or liability (p.33). One's attitude in the areas they can control makes it a difference-maker.

Attitude makes a difference in your approach to life- one's attitude significantly affects how they approach life (p.33). This is because life often gives us whatever we expect from it. If you expect good then you will receive good and vice versa.

Your attitude makes a difference in your relationships with people- to be successful, one has to work collaboratively with others (p.36). Many factors are considered when it comes to skills working with people. But this is greatly affected by a person's attitude when it comes to deal with people and that time attitude makes a difference.

You're Attitude Makes a Difference in How You Face Challenges- challenges and obstacles cannot be avoided (p.39). However, the better your attitude, the higher the likelihood that you will overcome these difficulties, grow and proceed forward.

Your Attitude is the Difference Maker- your attitude profoundly changes how you view the world around you. While not being everything, it is essential- a vital difference-maker.

FOUR- How to Make Your Attitude Your Greatest Asset

'The remarkable thing is we have a choice every day regarding the attitude we embrace that day' (p.46)

Maxwell (2006) states that the first step is becoming responsible for your attitude. Attitudes come from within. You are responsible for the attitude that you possess and no one else's. So do not beat yourself up for your bad attitude- take personal responsibility for it.

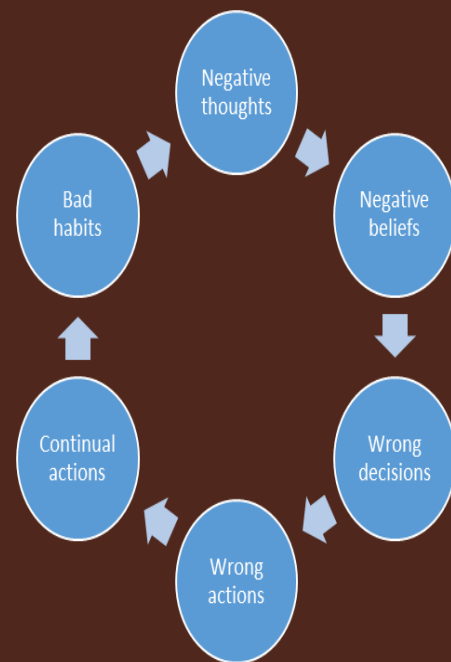
The second step is evaluating your present attitude. This requires an objective assessment of where you are from and the development of a high level of self-awareness. This involves identifying problem feelings regarding yourself, problem feelings towards others and any problem thinking that may exist.

The third step is the development of a desire to change. The desire to change is essential to growth in every aspect of life. Change only occurs when one consciously wants it but is not easy. Hence, an individual has to decide to cultivate this desire every day.

Next, one has to engage in changing their attitude by changing their thoughts. The human mind is significantly powerful and hence, what we are attentive to affects our actions. Therefore, we can have control over feelings by shifting the type of thoughts that we have. In this way, while talent is beneficial, only the right attitude can result in its significant development.

The fifth step is the development of a good habit. Most of our daily actions are based on habitual behaviors. If one wants to have different outcomes in life, then there has to be a shift in the way they think and their habits as well. To change your attitude, start with changing your behavior. Then, gradually, you will see the difference.

The last step is the daily management of one's attitude. Emphasis has to be placed on the management of decisions that are made. Once you decide to have a good attitude, then a plan has to be made to change the attitude. One's thoughts have to be managed and their actions directed to maintain consistency with the decisions.



FIVE: Discouragement

“Ninety percent of those who fail are not actually defeated. They simply quit” (p.63).

Discouragement is one of the largest attitude obstacles that exist. However, by viewing discouragement as being temporary, one can maintain their positive attitude. Maxwell (2006) presents five steps for dealing with discouragement;

Get the right perspective- having the right perspective can help you see beyond any discouraging factor.

See the right people- spending time with the right people will lift you. If you feel discouraged, spending time with the right individual can help in improving your attitude.

Say the right words- negative self-talk is a significant source of discouragement. Using positive phrases in a language that works for you can help in motivating you in a positive direction.

Have the right expectations- you have to be constantly flexible and not have an expectation that things will be constantly perfect. One has to focus on what they can achieve, not what they can't.

Make the right decisions- the decisions you make and how they are made have a significant impact on your outlook. One has to focus on doing the righting and timing the decision appropriately.



SEVEN: Problems

'A problem is something you can do something about. If you can't do something about it, then it's not a problem. It's a predicament' (p.107).

A Perspective on Problems

Problems can't be avoided but our perspective regarding them significantly affects how we deal with them. Problems are everywhere and everyone has a problem. They cannot be escaped, and each person, living or dead, had a problem. Our perspective on the problem, and not the problem itself, usually determines whether it's a success or a failure (p.101). An individual's perspective makes a significant difference in how they approach their problems. A difference exists between problem spotting and problem-solving. To become someone that overcomes problems, you have to become a problem solver. Problems when correctly responded to can help in forwarding advancements. Most problems that we face prompt us to greater achievements.

Wrong perspective (problems are ;)	Right perspective (problems are ;)
Unsolvable	Solvable
Permanent	Temporary
Not normal	A normal part of life
A way to make us bitter	A way to make us better

Principles for Handling Problems

There are several steps for actually handling problems. The first step is defining what a real problem is and then anticipating the problem. A problem anticipated is an opportunity (p.110). The next step is to face the problem as those who face their problems comprehend that the first step in problem-solving is to start. The fourth step is the evaluation of the problem. To understand the size and scope of the problem, one has to pause and take stock. The fifth step is embracing every problem as a potential opportunity. Problems can help an individual to utilize their abilities, converge their resources, and move forward. All the potentials ways to solve the problem should then be listed followed by a determination of the best three ways to solve the problem. Identifying the best three solutions creates an option and a back-up plan just in case the first solution fails. The last step is to refocus on the mission by using a positive attitude. In this way, attitude can be a significant difference-maker when facing problems.

SIX: Change

'If change doesn't cost you anything then it isn't real change' (p.90).

Change is difficult for everyone acting as one of the greatest attitude obstacles than an individual can face. There are several reasons that people resist change; personal loss, fear of the unknown, wrong timing, and awkward feelings (p. 81-87).

How to successfully deal with change

One of the ideas that can assist in dealing with change is accepting that it will happen whether you like it or not. Also, no improvement can take place without change. Hence, Maxwell (2006) states that we have to commit to pay the price for change. You cannot allow yourself to be paralyzed by the idea of change. Therefore, change must happen within you before it can happen around you (p.91). Once you dedicate yourself to grow and develop an appropriate lifestyle, then change becomes normal to you. A decision cannot also be made on factors that are non-negotiable to change which indicates that every other thing is open to change. Once this is done, then a positive attitude can be created in regards to change.

Attitude as a Difference Maker to Change

By understanding the change that you resist, then positive change can take place. For positive change to exist, one can commit to pay the price for change, have an understanding that change must first occur within yourself and also understand that it is never too late to change (p.98). Attitude can make a difference between,

Change = growth and change = grief.

EIGHT: Fear

'The only thing we have to fear is fear itself' (p.122).

The Destructive Effects of Fear

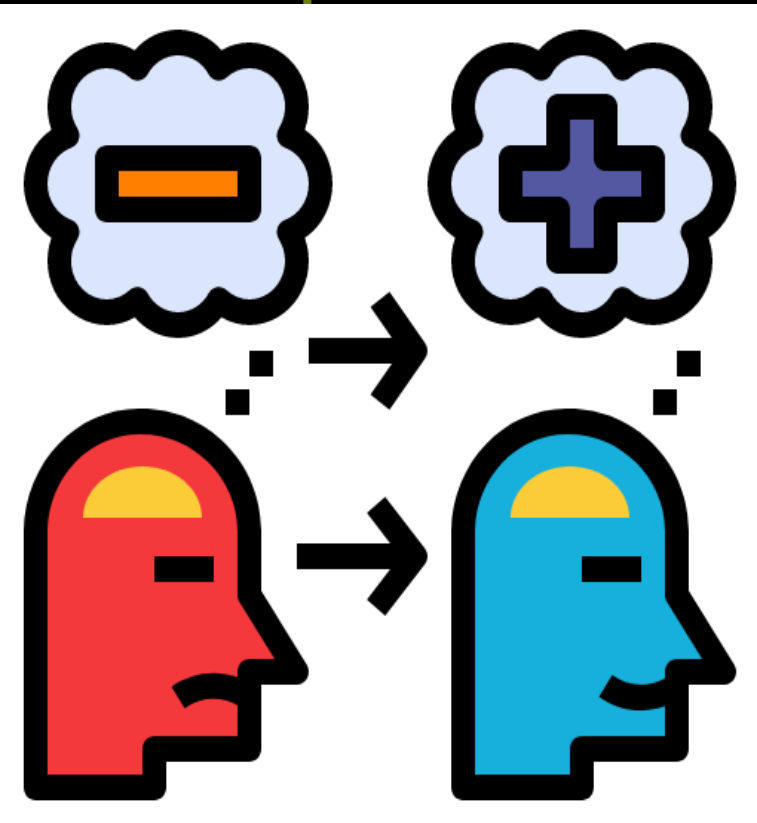
Maxwell (2006) views fear as a very destructive force that has serious negative effects. This includes breeding more fear and causing inaction. It makes us afraid

of doing something that might be beneficial for us. Fear also makes us weak as it is a debilitating emotion. It wastes energy as some people waste energy by developing fantasies about solutions to a problem they fear will come their way. In this way, it keeps us from reaching our potential. Once an individual gives in to fear, they are already beaten.

How to Handle Fear

Maxwell (2006) recommends several steps for handling fear. The first step is an admission of one's fear followed by a discovery of the source of these fears. This way, an individual can then make a realization of the fears that can limit you. There are no guarantees in life, and most fears are baseless. Therefore, we should not allow fear to limit us. The fourth step is having an acceptance of normal fear as the price of progress. After this fear can then be converted into desire as people can turn their lives around by using the energy to do something im-

portant. A focus should then be placed on things that can be controlled. This mainly refers to controlling one's attitude and calendar. One can then be focused on today as it is the only guaranteed time we have. The last step in handling fear is feeding the right emotions. This refers to emotions such as faith and courage while starving emotions such as fear.



NINE: Failure

'A man is not defeated by his opponents but by himself' (p.147).

Self-Sabotaging Behaviors

People can be divided into three types: the wills who accomplish everything, the won't who oppose everything and the can't who fail at everything. The can't group are defined by four self-sabotaging behavior. One of these is their expectation of failure. People who keep on failing are usually the ones who expect to (p.148). There is also personalization of failure and refuse to take risks. People who do not take chances usually resign themselves to lives of mediocrity. The last behavior is letting failure defeat them. Everyone experiences losses, however, only individuals that have the right attitude can get up and keep trying.

How to Profit From failure

With the right attitude, failure can be converted into an advantage. Maxwell maps out several ways that this can be done. These include changing your attitude, changing your vocabulary, paying little attention to the odds and allowing failure to point you to success. The author states that one can hold on to their sense of humor and make a decision to learn from their mistakes. One should not lose their perspective or decide to become too familiar with failure. Instead, failure can be converted into a gauge for growth and make a conscious decision not to give up. Hence, attitudes are a difference maker in regards to failure in four aspects; the expectations that are formed, the self-image that is developed, the role of risk in one's life and the level of tenacity.

TEN: The Difference Maker in Your Life Can Help You Make a Difference in the Lives of Others

Attitude is not everything, it is only a factor that can make a difference in your life. When a person makes a recognition that their attitude is not right, it creates a base for positive change and significant opportunity. Maxwell (2006) presents the following thoughts for integrating attitude as a difference-maker;

Decide to allow the difference maker to make a difference in your life

One should always remember that attitude is a choice. Only an individual can decide for themselves to utilize the power of the difference-maker.

Manage Your Decision Every Day of Your Life

Decision making is significant as no changes can happen without it. However, decision managing is even more significant. Every right decision that is made should be managed each day.

Do not Allow Adversity To Harm Your Attitude'

Maxwell presents the big five attitude obstacles which affect attitude; discouragement, change, problem, fear, and failure. The main aim is the maintenance of a positive attitude even in the face of these obstacles for attitude to have any change or effect on one's life.

Once Attitude Makes a Difference In Your Life, Help Others Discover the Difference Maker in Their Lives

Helping others in the discovery of the impact of the difference-maker helps in the further assistance of oneself in making the right decisions. Success each day should be judged based on the level in which others are helped. Therefore, after realizing the positive impact of attitude, one should work with others for the development of a better attitude.

Critical Evaluation:

In what ways can you change your life and the direction in which it is headed? What are the best channels for the achievement of your goals and dreams without being held back by challenges? Maxwell provides an in-depth look at how attitude affects our outlooks. He provides instruction on ways in which we can shift our lives. The book is well-structured and displays the difference between what is known as decision making and decision managing and that individuals can take actual responsibility in finding solutions to their problems. Maxwell presents a guide on how to view problems through a clear and objective lens. The reader understands that though they cannot make changes to the problems that they face, they can change their perspective regarding these obstacles. For example, lack of experience cannot be substituted by positive thinking, but a good attitude can act as a motivating factor to be invested in making better decisions. To obtain positive outcomes, there has to be an expectation that they occur, positive thinking is a conscious step which has to be practiced each day.

By introducing the audience to the five obstacles associated with attitude, Maxwell also teaches the audience to be more conscious about their decisions and how they manage them. The book shows that any individual can learn how to utilize their attitude to significantly shift their lives. Attitude makes a difference. The quotes and examples from influential individuals such as world leaders and celebrities help to make a further emphasis on Maxwell's belief that our attitude is important if we want to significantly improve our lives.

References

Maxwell, J. C. (2006). *The difference maker: Making your attitude your greatest asset*. HarperCollins Leadership.

(2019). Retrieved 23 November 2019, from <https://www.linkedin.com/in/officialjohnmaxwell>