

RiseZine

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Welcome to **RiseZine** my electronic magazine (ezine) that can help you solve problems in your business and your life. It is my desire to bring you inspiration from my life experiences and those I gained during the twenty (20) years I spent as a Judge of the Denver County Court participating in the transformation of lives. I'm convinced that those experiences will heighten your knowledge, sensitivity and outlook on the issues you face in your business and your life. I am honored to share your precious time with you.

“ATTITUDE DETERMINES ALTITUDE”

Last Winter I had the privilege of Keynoting the Annual Conference of the Southern Association of College and University Business Officers (SACUBO) in Austin, Texas. The title of my speech was “Maximizing Your Leadership Superpowers” because, having spent my early professional life as a college administrator, I know Business Officers need to find strength to meet the significant challenges their institutions face in achieving their goals in this economic climate. During the speech, I asked that audience of about 400 administrators (which also included Presidents, Vice Presidents and Program Directors) to think about the most successful higher education administrator they knew. Then I asked them to think about what they felt made that person successful. Further, I asked them to call out the words that epitomized the characteristics they felt made that person successful. After about 10-15 words were written on the flipchart, I asked that audience if the words described skills, knowledge or attitude. **All the words described ATTITUDE.** It was evident that their ideal administrator's attitude was the dominant factor in his or her successful leadership. I further told them that great leaders are thermostats, not thermometers.

It's important to know the difference between a thermometer and a thermostat? A thermometer merely measures the temperature in a room but does not control it. A thermostat changes the temperature in a room and thereby controls the environment. Then I asked, "Do you want to be a thermometer or a thermostat?" Your attitude is within your control. If you want to continue to achieve your goals as a successful business officer, project a positive attitude. I left that audience with the phrase, "Your **ATTITUDE DETERMINES YOUR ALTITUDE.**"

After the program Kiran Grimaldi, one of the audience members, approached me and told me he was a pilot and asked me if I knew the genesis of the phrase I used, "**Attitude determines Altitude?**" I confessed I didn't know. He told me that phrase came from aviation and my interest was piqued. I researched the phrase and found that The Academic Press Dictionary of Science and Technology defines attitude in aviation as "[T]he position or orientation of a flight vehicle as determined by the relationship between its axis at some reference line or plane (often the angle in reference to the earth); the pitch. Whereas, altitude equals the height a plane can soar above sea level."

When I served as Chief Presiding Judge and Appointing Authority during my judicial career, I observed that the staff members who rose to supervisory positions were those who had the better customer service skills. Those skills were important because when a party came to court they weren't always in a good mood. The court staff member who can disarm them with a high level of service will impact that party's experience before the judge. If the parties are courteous, attentive and communicative, then they are likely to have a better experience and outcome; it's human nature! Thelma, my Bailiff for most of my years on the bench, was my "thermometer". She would assess the "temperature in the courtroom" and alert me to the "kind" of group I had any given day before I took the bench in the busiest court in Colorado. They might be rowdy, rambunctious or reserved. It was my job to take that information and begin my greeting with an eye toward setting the tenor or "temperature" of the room to create an atmosphere of trust, confidence and order. Projecting a positive attitude was my most powerful weapon in instilling those values.

A positive attitude can impact, not only a work environment, but can also elevate the attitudes of others around you in social settings. When my wife and I were

deciding where we wanted to fly to spend our 15th wedding anniversary, we had differing destination desires. My favorite place in the world is Paris, France; I love the sites, the people, the bustling city life, the Metro that takes you anywhere around the city and the language. “Beau” is French for a handsome, charming escort. ☺ Joyce’s favorite European country is Italy. She loves the wine, the food, the language, the people, the cities and the countryside. Did I say she loves the wine? My wife’s friend Rebecca told us that she was taking the Hilton Head Chamber of Commerce sponsored tour of Italy, so where did we celebrate our 15th Anniversary... in Italy. (Married men, don’t act surprised!)

Thirty-five other people were on the tour with us. Susan and Michelle were friends from the Hilton Head Island Bridge Club. Bob and Leigh were celebrating their First Wedding Anniversary. Takako (Taki) was celebrating her Eightieth birthday. From the moment the plane touched down in Rome,” the eternal city and the center of European culture,” I knew we had made the right choice for our anniversary celebration. The plane landed on time and so did our luggage. Not so lucky were Bob and Leigh. Their luggage was left on the tarmac in Atlanta! Despite the airline’s assurances to the contrary, Bob and Leigh’s clothes didn’t arrive at the hotel later that night as promised. When they learned of their luggage’s fate, they smiled and said, “We won’t be dressing up for our first dinner in Rome tonight.” Bob and Leigh were delighted to take pictures of Joyce and me as we stood in front of Trevi Fountain on our walk to dinner. Yes, I tossed a coin in the fountain to ensure my return. (See photo below).



As we continued our walk to dinner, we entered the Piazza di Spangna (plaza) and were given a chance to ascend the world famous Spanish Steps (138 steps) to the Trinita dei Monti Church at the top of the steps. I was hesitant to begin the walk up those steps until I saw my tour mate Taki begin to walk up the stairs without hesitation. What greater evidence of the power of a positive attitude than to have an 80 year old climb briskly up 138 steps. I had trouble keeping up with her pace; she

inspired me with her attitude of “I can”.

After we “conquered” the Spanish Steps and people-watched from Trinita dei Monti Church, we walked to Re degli Amici restaurant for dinner. Bob and Leigh were our table-mates at dinner that night and we laughed and joked about their day-old clothes. They demonstrated a positive attitude and sense of humor as we enjoyed our first great Italian meal. Bob’s second glass of Lemoncello might have contributed to their laughing, engaging and positive attitude in despite their day-old clothes. I saluted Bob and joined him with my own glass of Lemoncello; Joyce enjoyed her wine. Bob and Leigh’s positive attitude permeated the group and made the dining experience memorable for all.

The next day, we began our day with a tour of classical Rome. Our guide for the day was Federico. Enthusiastic and well-informed, Federico symbolized the exuberance and excitement of the “the Eternal City”. Having recently seen the Woody Allen movie “To Rome with Love,” I would describe Federico as the police officer at the beginning movie as he set the scene for our touring partners to “conquer” the Coliseum. Like the characters in “To Rome with Love,” after our excursion through the Coliseum, my wife and I shared a desire to express our love for the city by touring the streets of ‘Roma’. Countless people have found love on the streets of Rome; others have merely expressed their love there. As we slipped away from the tour to see the Pantheon and explore Piazza (plaza) Navona, we



were lost. I never admit I’m lost when I am heading in a direction with which I am unfamiliar, so we trekked several blocks before I concluded that I needed to ask for directions. With limited ability to speak Italian, I hailed a taxi and the driver sent me across a bridge in the wrong direction. After wandering for several minutes, I walked into a bakery with an English-speaking server who directed me to the plaza. I celebrated my arrival on the Piazza by dancing with the street mime. I began my trek for the best Gelato in Italy. The pistachio flavored gelato near the Pantheon was light,

creamy and smooth. It may have been the best in Italy, but I would test others.

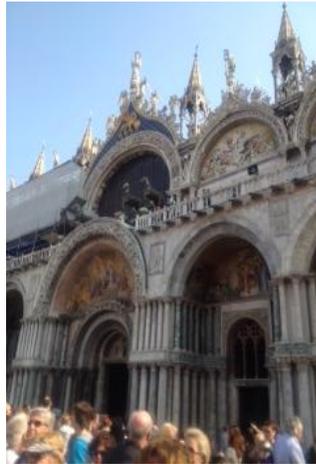
We dined that night with Bob and Leigh and they were excited that they were supposed to receive their clothes when we arrived at our next stop, Florence. Bob was still enjoying the tour with the attitude that there is so much to see and taste, wearing the same clothes won't spoil the trip. Bob and I compared the Lemoncello after dinner with what we had the first night and determined that the second night's bottle was better. We boarded the bus early the next morning for our trip to the famous Leaning Tower of Pisa. I made the commitment to correct the lean and restore the Tower to prominence. (See photo.) After that unsuccessful effort we boarded the bus for the guided visit and lunch at a region. We learned that Italy was "fast and furious"...no wonder they created the Ferrari prancing horse. Our bus driver Leonardo gained our respect with his adept road skills eluding crashes and stopped cars while navigating the hills leading to Tuscany. It reminded me of my favorite race car driver, Mario Andretti. Maybe I exaggerate!



What I can't exaggerate about is the quality of the experience at the San Vito winery. The winery used only organic wines, with no tannins that give me a headache. Did I say the food was great? Although the pasta looked like it didn't have a sauce, when it hit your tongue there was an explosion of garlic, cheese, olive oil and unknown spices that tantalized your palate. Joyce and I ate every noodle! (Wait until the end of the article for an update on my diet). It's also the first time we met another Collette Vacations group from Alabama paralleling our tour. When we arrived in Florence later that evening, we awaited Bob and Leigh's return from the airport to acquire their luggage. Alas, the luggage had been sent to Venice! Bob and Leigh had to endure another day without their clothing and cosmetics. Lesser mortals would have crowded of frustration, Bob and Leigh smiled, held hands and shrugged their shoulders. Leigh said, "We won't let it spoil our trip." It made the trip that much better for everyone. The power of a positive attitude!

As we boarded the bus for Venice the next morning, I anticipated seeing the Island city for the first time. We had to board a train to get to the city because there are no cars allowed on the island. As we met our local guide Delrina, we learned that there are no trees because there is no "earth" on the island, so no place for roots to take hold. Giant tides from the Adriatic Sea regularly overflow one side of the island. That day we boarded a boat that took us on a tour around the Venetian lagoon observing the bridges, and architecture, and landed on the famous glass-making island of Murano. The glass-blowing demonstration harkened us back to the 13th century when Venetian glass-making was a monopoly enterprise that lasted for centuries. Bob and Leigh made their trek to the airport that day, and alas, their luggage had arrived! They dressed for dinner!

The next, we landed near St Mark's Square where we observed the largest church in Venice, St. Mark's Cathedral. Curiously, it's the political center of Venice not the religious center. We happened to arrive at the Square on the day the new Bishop of Venice was being installed and the colorful ceremony brought hordes of



citizens to the Plaza.

We couldn't see Venice without tasting the gelato and watching the gondola float



down the Grand Canal.

As we completed our walking tour, Bob and I had to continue our quest for the best gelato. We rated Venice's gelato only fair. After a lunch of pizza and wine we boarded a train to return to our hotel. That evening everyone met in the bar at the hotel and brought all our left-over's from lunch and any wine we purchased at the winery in Tuscany. We shared our food and wine and spoke about our favorite locations on the tour. Finally, we celebrated with toasts to the "sporty clothes" worn by Bob and Leigh. It was memorialized with a group photo celebrating our successful trip and the arrival of Bob and Leigh's luggage. (Bob & Leigh left)



The next morning, we left for our final stop on the tour, Milan. When the bus arrived at the Gallery in one of the city's most elegant squares, we realized we were in the exciting and modern city of Milan. We visited the magnificent Duomo (Cathedral) and explored the city on our own. That night we joined our fellow travelers for a farewell dinner at the Crowne Plaza Malpensa Hotel. There were two connecting dining rooms divided by a serving station and the other Collette tour group from Alabama was there. They taunted us as they sang a song to their tour manager and driver. Not to be outdone, I created a Rap celebrating Maryse, our tour manager, and Leonardo our driver and engaged the teens Elizabeth and Daniel to help lead our group: "We're on our feet, and we take a stand, for our tour of Classic Italy; With Maryse and Leonardo as our driver and guide, we have

the best combo in history”. They gave us great care and kept us safe, and filled us with libation; every day on our tour has been memorable, now that’s a reason for celebration!” After a rousing applause, our tour was undeniably the best! That’s my story and I’m sticking to it.

As we prepared for our flight home the next morning, I relished the thought that I had experienced a beautiful celebration of 15 years of marriage. What if my disappointment in not flying to Paris for our celebration left me with a negative attitude and soured the trip? Not! Be the thermostat; controlling your temperature can make your trip and life soar.

ATTITUDE DETERMINES ALTITUDE

Postscript: I have lost 5 pounds since the beginning of the year. It was shy of my goal, but I am more determined to take off the remaining 5 pounds by the next RiseZine. Does anyone want to join me?

Can’t your organization use a healthy infusion of inspiration, motivation or training in Leadership, Decision-making, Communication, Ethics or Team-building? I can provide a keynote, workshop, seminar or individual coaching tailored to meet your needs and help you and your team ***RISE***.

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