



# Key Attitudes You'll Need in Your Corner

*Because the opposites of these will cost you big!*

Some attitudes hold significant power for healing. They'll serve you well. Their opposites? Those attitudes will weigh you down and hurt. Read on...

**Antonym-** (an-tuh-nim)- noun. A word expressing an opposite meaning. *Fast is the antonym of slow.*  
[There is healing power in the attitudes we choose for life. Yes, I am reminding you (as many 12-step type programs will) that there is a fake-it-until-you-make-it component to Divorce Recovery. Sometimes in life, we have to choose what we want to be. Then we have to live in that way, until we reach the point of being able to own that stance. Following, we'll explore some attitudinal choices that carry tremendous healing power. And, we'll note their antonyms. When we are living these opposites, we'll pay their destructive costs. When we get in control of our living, better things happen!]

**You'll need to own some genuine goodwill toward your friends and family**

Your impulse would be to read this subtitle and say, "Well of course." Except that we can find ourselves unable to have goodwill toward others. You see, our pain can rob us of our ability to be happy even for those we love most. In your unhappiness, your friends and loved ones will still achieve. They will have good things happen to them while you are still feeling devastated. They will experience good fortune while you think nothing good is ever coming your way again. Envy is a destructive force. It can make you downright angry about their happiness. Instead, you could choose to be genuinely happy for those you love. Why should they go without your support during your difficult recovery chapter? Oddly, the capacity to be happy for others is likely to spark some new health for you. Goodwill could be one trail that leads you toward a different perspective about life.

**People who overcome terrible disappointment share a trait: they can sit in the ashes and envision their first steps toward a new chapter**

That's not an original thought. I wish it were. Actually, in a Harvard Business School publication, authors Warren Bennis and Robert Thomas explored this trait. We all get knocked down by life. Relationships fail, so do companies. Those more likely to rebound and thrive are those who find a way to capture a new plan. Even in the midst of the hurt, they have vision. Goals, action steps or just instinctual senses of direction—any of these are allowed to work! These folks can at least see that there is something better out there. They allow themselves to dream and to plan. They go to work learning from the disappointment so that they can eventually move toward the next chapter. What's the opposite? Tunnel-vision. A sense that your current hurt is all there will be to life from now on. Vision springs from a conviction that it's time to move forward.

**The stance of a Wounded Healer will help you give your way to richness**

You didn't choose this role. An antonym for "Wounded Healer"? Perhaps paralyzed. I'm not even sure I would try to convince you that helping others will eventually make your pain all seem worthwhile. For some of you, that might prove to be true. For many of you, not so much. This I do know: your lot in life as a divorce survivor is your new reality. That's not fair, nor even good. But, as such you will be uniquely

postured to lend help to others around you. Jack Lemmon, the actor, left behind this thought. He said, “I’ve found that when you have risen in life, you are obligated to send the elevator back down so it can lift others, too.” He’s right. Your pain and experience could make you the person someone else draws from in their divorce recovery. Wounded? Yes. Healer? That, too. The writer Henri Nouwen explored this concept and made us aware—from our brokenness (we all have some broken places) we can reach out. In doing so, we will discover new perspective. Fresh strength. New power.

### **The willingness to choose healthful attitudes is an attitude itself**

About now, one reaction could be that all these choices feel lacking. Specifically, one could feel that this intentionality lacks genuineness. And we all want to be able to say that we’re “...just keepin’ it real.” Here’s a tough adult reality: some right attitudes or actions in life still have to be chosen. Even in Christianity, sometimes the “will” to do rightly has to be learned. Chosen. So, when we are hurt we often lose touch with that willingness. As if life owes us a break, we feel that we should just be able to marinate in our misery. Not surprising, one antonym of willing is unwilling. But others include unable or disinclined. Some things that matter simply must be chosen. If we wait until we feel ready to live healthfully among other people, the world may be on hold for a while! Choosing to go in a helpful direction may lead us back to a healthier way eventually.

### **You will need to draw deeply from hope**

I wish there were a pill you could take that would replenish a sense of hope. If there were, I would get out a prescription pad and write one up for you. But there isn’t. So, let’s think our way toward an attitude of hope just for a moment. By the way, what’s the opposite of hope? Despair is one word. So, you say, hope just isn’t anywhere to be found. But despair probably isn’t where you want to stay either. Right? Look around you. You aren’t the first divorced person you’ve known. Take out a piece of paper and jot down four names of divorced persons who have eventually moved on to happier chapters of their lives. Focus on them. Interview them if you are willing. Listen to some of how they got there. Draw from their examples of hope. Believe that there is something else out there. You may learn from them just what their journeys were like. Expose yourself to living realities of hope until that attitude becomes a part of who you are again.

### **A curiosity about life will enrich and guide**

Divorce robbed you of some childlikeness. That is, if any of yours was still intact by the time your divorce or separation arrived. Those who endured years of brokenness in their marriages especially paid a price. Your life can bring you to a point where everything in sight appears very serious. In the midst of all that seriousness, we need to play. That’s right, PLAY! Oddly, those who renew their spirits—and their resources—often follow a sense of curiosity. Thinking about trying something new? Explore that possibility. Wondering about a subject that is new? Read up. Not sure what something is? Look into it. No one gets to set your life curriculum except you! Antonym for curious: uninquisitive. That’s not where I want to be in life. How boring would that be?

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