

The Path To Success

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In 1916, Jack Nabors of the Philadelphia Athletics lost a record nineteen straight games. During the process, he developed a losing attitude. However, for one game, things seemed to be different. For eight innings he pitched hitless ball and entered the bottom of the ninth leading one to nothing.

After getting the first batter out, he walked the next. That was followed by an error and a base hit, which knotted the score at one to one. With runners now on first and third, Nabors unleashed the next pitch over the catcher's head and high up on the backstop, allowing the winning run to score. When asked why he did it, he replied, "I knew we would never get another run. If you think I was going to pitch eight more hitless innings in this hot sun, you're nuts!"

Such is the power of attitude. When players feel like losers, they usually find a way to lose. However, when they become convinced they are winners, they often play high above others' expectations.

Norman Vincent Peale tells the story of a young man named Mike. Mike's failing grades, low attendance, and bad attitude caused his teacher to send him to the superintendent with a recommendation to be expelled as unreachable and therefore unteachable.

The superintendent tried to talk to Mike but was getting nowhere. Suddenly, to Mike's surprise, the superintendent said, "Mike hold out your hands...Mike, you've got wonderful hands, long and slender but strong, which is surprising for your stocky build. Boy, you've got the hands of a surgeon. Maybe that's what you are intended to be. Get going, Mike, and good luck."

Mike began to believe in himself, went on the medical school, and became a surgeon. Such was the power of the superintendent's words.

Think back over your life. Who are the persons that really helped you succeed in life? Chances are, they were persons who believed in you, persons who made you feel better about yourself.

I once read about a group of young adults who had grown up in a very poor section of an inner city but had gone on to achieve unusual success. Someone became curious why they had succeeded when most of the others from their neighborhoods remained trapped in poverty and lack of education. The answer? They all gave the credit to a certain teacher who had convinced them that they were valuable, that they were winners.

The greatest task I have as a pastor is to convince people that they are loved by God and therefore have the potential to be filled with his love and power. Once we become convinced that God can change us he becomes free to act.

Great teachers and great coaches build up young people until they feel like winners. Yelling and screaming about mistakes reinforces a losing attitude. Positive words build confidence quicker than negative criticism.

The Bible says, "*All things are possible for him who believes*" (Mark 9:23). The path to success begins with a positive attitude.