



SOCIETY OF ACTUARIES

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# Orchestrating your Actions

## ORCHESTRATING ATTITUDE – PART 4

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*Editor's Note: Catch up on Parts 1-3 of "Orchestrating Attitude" in the January, April and July 2008 issues of The Stepping Stone.*

In the last column we discussed how positive and powerful words create commitment for your actions. In this column we will address the aspect of attitude that proves your commitment to your words—your actions.

Life rewards action! But even greater rewards await those who orchestrate *positive* actions. For example, in 1990 while he was still relatively unknown, comedian Jim Carrey wrote a check to himself for \$10 million for "acting services rendered." As Carrey later explained, it wasn't about money. He knew that if he was making that much he'd be working with the best people on the best material. As they say in Hollywood, the rest is history.

Life's rewards—loving relationships, meaningful work, financial security, time to recreate, leaving a lasting legacy—come to those who act to bring them about. Although life isn't always easy and there are plenty of excuses not to be our best, **the rewards go to those who let their actions rise above their excuses.**

Sometimes our actions get lost in our intentions. Have you ever heard someone say, "I intended to tell her how important she is to our team before she left," or "I intended to volunteer last weekend," or "I meant to vote this past election," or "I intended to keep my commitment, but ...?" Well, the truth is, **we judge ourselves by our intentions, but others judge us by our actions.**

If you have practiced the instruments for orchestrating your thoughts and words, your actions will naturally be aligned with your commitments. The result—a positive person of integrity who is getting the best from herself and others!

Now, let's move on to the three instruments for orchestrating your actions:

1. Have a need? Help someone succeed.
2. Move through adversity.
3. Stay connected.

### HAVE A NEED? HELP SOMEONE SUCCEED

When we have a need we tend to worry, obsess and continually focus on that need. Maybe it's a financial need, or a need for recognition, love, a new challenge or companionship. We are typically drawn inward by our needs in hopes that we can somehow come up with a way to meet the need. However, our inward focus often turns into a spiral of despair. We can quickly find ourselves consumed with fret, worry and wallow. This is actually a self-absorbed spiral, not to mention a futile one.

So, the next time you have a need, help someone else succeed by asking the right question. Instead of asking, "What's in it for me?" ask the WIIFO question: "**What's in it for others?**" Get your mind off yourself and direct your actions toward someone else. If you find yourself feeling discouraged, visit children in the hospital or cheer up a friend who is lonely. If you are looking for a job, help someone else with their job search. **If you want to get the best from yourself, first give the best of yourself.**

Helping others not only helps you shift your focus outward, but also stimulates feelings of gratitude. There is nothing like a dose of gratitude to pick us up. Most importantly, **meeting others' needs brings out our true spirit—it reflects our positive human character.**

But here's the caveat: If you expect something in return for your help, your act of kindness is really an act of trading favors. Be a giver, not a trader.

The help you give others is an important part of the legacy you leave. If you don't know where to start, start close to home or work. There is always someone worse off than you are. If a colleague has a Little League game he needs to attend, pick up his load so he might leave early to get to the game. If a neighbor is not feeling well, buy an extra take-out dinner portion on your way home from work. If a friend is struggling with a relationship, lend an ear. If a young new employee is having trouble adjusting to a new company, offer to show her the ropes. **Help is not help until it is given, so turn your intentions to help into acts of help.**



## MOVE THROUGH ADVERSITY

Adversity is not reserved for daytime soap operas. Even the most fortunate of us have experienced adversity of some type: loss of job, health problems, failed relationships, disappointments at work, financial difficulties, death of loved ones, etc. I intentionally used the word *move* in this instrument. Since adversity has an uncanny knack of paralyzing us, it becomes critical to keep moving through it. Otherwise, we will be stalled in the grip of our adversity. Here are three specific actions to help you move through adversity.

1. **Take inventory.** When we are dealt a loss, we tend to think all is lost. Identify what is lost or changed and what is not. Then, express your gratitude for what still remains. **An attitude of gratitude creates happier, more resilient people.** In fact, more and more studies are showing that gratitude is the most common characteristic amongst the happiest people.
2. **Convert turning points into learning points.** Use your adversity as a time to pinpoint opportunities to improve, learn, grow, rebuild or test your own character or faith.
3. **Plan for the future, but live for the present.** Don't obsess about yesterday and don't be seduced by the promise that tomorrow all will be better. My favorite poem says it best:

*Yesterday is history,  
Tomorrow is a mystery,  
Today is a gift,  
That's why we call it the Present.*

## STAY CONNECTED

The strength of our relationships is perhaps the greatest measure of the quality of our lives. It is also a key predictor of our sense of internal joy and contentment. **Our relationships should be the place where we act our best and give our best.** Strong relationships are built on two-way streets—they must be mutually beneficial. Each person must bring something of value. Otherwise, relationships will not endure.

There are many ways to stay connected, including professional and personal interest groups. These

groups are important, but a few strong bonds play a pivotal role in staying connected and orchestrating your actions.

An excellent way to stay connected is to **build your own BEST team—Buddies who Ensure Success and Truth.** Take some time to review your life and think of people who have made a difference for you and for whom you have made a difference.

Choose wisely those you want on your team. Ensure they offer the energy, truth and positive perspective you need to orchestrate your actions. There is no better test than time when it comes to relationships, so start small and build your BEST team slowly. The key is to connect with your BEST team, individually or as a group, on a consistent basis.

Depending on the relationship, we can play the role of teacher and/or student. In either role, we all need people who will support our success. Your BEST team can help you:

- Move through adversity. They can help ensure you go through the three steps previously outlined.
- Hone your self-awareness. Depend on your team to give you truthful, constructive feedback to keep beliefs based in reality.
- Affirm that your thoughts, words and actions are aligned with your goals.
- By giving you a chance to help them. As the Proverb says, "In teaching others, we teach ourselves."
- Combat negative input you might be receiving at home or work.
- Rehearse challenging situations with friends before you have a live performance.

Your BEST team is a personal and powerful way to ensure you are staying connected and orchestrating your actions.

*Take a FREE Attitude Tune-up! A five-minute investment will help you practice these instruments and more effectively orchestrate your attitude! Visit [www.theLgroup.com](http://www.theLgroup.com).* ●

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