

A Thanksgiving Perspective

AGRI-VIEWS

by Chuck Otte, Geary County Extension Agent

As we head into Thanksgiving week, it seems that I'm sensing a lot of negativity. Negativity about the weather. Perhaps negativity about all the negativity in the recent election. Regardless of where it's coming from, it's time to cast it aside. Over the years I've talked with folks about attitude, and I have several sayings that I have collected - some may be what I wrote some may be what others sent to me. I've lost track in some cases.

Regardless, as we head into Thanksgiving week, it's time we adopt an attitude of thanksgiving. One where we cast aside those negative thoughts and think about what we have, not what we don't have; where we realize that we are very fortunate with what we have instead of focusing on what we think we want.

Our attitude affects everyone around us. We may not realize it, but each of us can be the most powerful person in our home, our office, or wherever we are. If we are negative and sour, it brings down everyone around us. People are less likely to be helpful and cooperative. Everyone becomes more critical, more cynical and more easily discouraged.

If you turn that around, the exact opposite can happen. If you have a positive attitude, it lifts up everyone in your home or your office. You treat others better and they in turn will treat you better and it just keeps multiplying. Attitude is often the difference between success and failure, between resolution and conflict, between harmony and discord. You really are a very powerful person!

Let's take that concept and change it from a positive attitude to a thankful attitude. Instead of being negative about the cold weather, be thankful that you have warm clothes and a warm home. There are, after all, people in our community, state and country that aren't warm. Instead of being negative about the line in the grocery store, be thankful that we have farmers and a food industry that provide such a wealth of options to you at that grocery store. After all, there are many people on Thanksgiving Day that just hope for one meal that will quell the pangs of hunger that they feel every day.

As a group, Americans are spoiled. If that hurts just a little, perhaps makes you a little bit angry, then good. Even the most modest of us live like kings and queens compared to much of the world. But do we really appreciate that or just think about what we don't have, but want? In the age of 24/7/365 commercialism, and someone always trying to sell us something, it becomes very easy to forget that what should be most important to us, can not be bought.

Every day, from now through Thanksgiving and maybe even clear through to the end of the year, try to adopt an attitude of thankfulness, i.e., thanksgiving. When you find yourself getting frustrated or mad, reroute those negative emotions around to finding something in the situation to be thankful for. Think about the friends and family that you will be with in the coming days. Think about the joy that those visits will bring you. Think about the abundance of food that you will experience, not only next week but clear through Christmas. I know I have plenty to be thankful for, and I'm sure you do to.

One of my attitude collections is a poem called, "My Attitude". It has no author associated with it so I may have even penned it. But the last verse says "My attitude can improve the world, or destroy my community. What will my attitude be today?" You can be a little spark of positive thankfulness in the week ahead, or you can be a black hole of negativity. The choice is yours!