



Leadership ... It's an inside job.

Elizabeth Jeffries
CSP, CPAE

Warning! This message is not for pessimists! If you're one who pulls down the shades on Halloween so the children won't ring the bell, I guarantee you won't like it.

The intensity for my current optimism all started because I overheard a young man complain about how bad things were . . . with his girlfriend, his apartment, with his job, with his whole life. He didn't like anything about anything! But it really got to me when he used the "R" word!

That was it! When I hear that "R" word, I just want to escape into a long date with

Ben and Jerry or sink into a corner with a good book and a mocha Frappachino! See, I made a decision in the early 1980s when I started my business that I don't participate in "recessions!" I didn't participate then, and that was a tough one! And I don't participate now. It can just go on without me.

Funny thing about this work I'm in. The more I research, learn about, and teach leadership behaviors, the more I believe them. Like attitudes, which are really our view of the world.

Take a minute and look out the window. Suppose it's fall and you're looking out at a street scene. Some people will see trees starting to change into beautiful fall colors, lovers holding hands, and the golden sun setting on the horizon. Others, looking out at the same scene, will see fences needing paint, signs needing repair, and sad people walking with their heads down.

OK! I know there are challenges right now. But we

always have challenges, don't we? That's what life is! The media continues to remind me about the bleak events internationally, nationally, and locally. You know them, I know them. If I write them or speak them, I just take them deeper into my psyche. And since my non-conscious doesn't know truth from fiction, it will create whatever I put in there. And I don't want to create any more negativity and pessimism in the world. There certainly is enough without my contribution.

I figure I have choices, and that my choices determine my future. And my choice is to build a positive, productive future in the reality as I see it. And I see lots of greatness, excellence, and blessings around me!

I loved the story former President Reagan told about the little boy who got so excited about the stall full of manure in the barn. His dad couldn't figure out what he was so excited about. The little boy started digging and said, "With all this manure, there's got to be a pony in here somewhere!"

I don't think we should ignore reality. I do mean, however, that we create much of our own reality. The challenge is not the situation, but the way we react to it. It's easy to be positive and joyful when times are rich and full. It's the challenging times like low sales, or short staffing, or being laid off from a job, that either build or bust character.

That's why leadership is an inside job.

Deepak Chopra, M.D., says, "I am in charge of two worlds, the little one in me and the big one around me." The question is: Which one rules?

So look around. Is it time for an attitude check-up? Do you have a case of the “ain’t it awfuls?” Are you spending more time lamenting the problem or are you trying to figure out the solution?

Why not...

- Make a list of five things you’re thankful for today.
- Do something nice for someone else. It’ll take your mind off your own challenges.
- Watch who you’re hanging around with. Make sure they are positive people who support your values and goals.
- Teach someone a skill you’ve mastered. Be a coach.
- Listen to someone who can teach you something new. Be a student.
- Reward yourself for your positive leadership. Call in healthy and spend the day with a loved one.
- Play with a child. A child will teach you what’s important.

Practice these ideas. They’ll help you stay up in a world that’s upside down.

It’s what leaders do.

© Elizabeth Jeffries, CSP, CPAE Speaker Hall of Fame, works with leaders who want to master their influence and multiply their personal performance. She is a leadership consultant, executive coach, keynote speaker and author of several books, including *The Heart of Leadership: How to Inspire, Encourage and Motivate People to Follow You*. She can be reached in Louisville, KY at 502-339-1600, online at elizabeth@tweedjeffries.com and on the web at www.tweedjeffries.com.