

# **Sharing Urantia Book Teachings - Attitude Matters!**

By Bruce Johnson

## **Introduction**

All of us want to achieve some measure of success in our lives. We want to make a positive difference. And as Urantia Book believers, we are energized by the Once-in-a-Lifetime opportunity to help spread its epochal revelations, to “introduce teachings of the book into other lives”! But before we enter a classroom, or begin our chosen project, it’s important not to overlook the value of bringing along a healthy ‘attitude’ for this challenging work.

This paper explores several aspects of Attitude that are closely related to Urantia Book principles. These are simple concepts, but being aware of them may significantly affect the outcome of your chosen work. Also, when it comes to the challenges of a new project, your ‘attitude’ is one of the few variables you (hopefully!) can control.

In particular, we will look at Attitude from four broad interconnected aspects:

1. Expectations - How attached should we be to the outcome of our work?
2. Teamwork
3. Role Models
4. How to embrace slow change during these critical times.

A preliminary ‘attitude’ thought to set the tone: Many times with past projects, I’ve bought the wrong boards, cut them too short, and hammered my thumb!.. Note to self: “Not so Fast. Think,... Before you Act!”

## **EXPECTATIONS.. or How Attached should we be to the outcome of our work?**

My brother recently remarked, “I think a task that is truly worthwhile, can’t be accomplished in just one lifetime”. Pretty wise! For a moment, I thought he finally had started reading the Urantia Book. But so far my ‘expectation’ for him to embrace the UB has been unfulfilled for over 45 years... We are all familiar with a loved one’s lack of interest in the UB.

We all like to succeed. We like results. We get rewarded with stick-on stars, a pat on the back, money, promotions, wonderful friends, etc. But failing, or the appearance (even the thought) of failure, can be deeply disappointing. So we learn how to succeed. Over time we enjoy wins and endure occasional loses; get to the point where we ‘go-with-the-flow’. We feel that most things ‘eventually’ work out OK. That’s all pretty normal.

But what about really big expectations that turn out to be unreachable, or seemingly go very wrong?

A familiar UB example:

Adam and Eve:

“For almost seven years after Adam’s arrival the Melchizedek receivers remained on duty, but the time finally came when they turned the administration of world affairs over to Adam and returned to Jerusem... Adam had several times requested his advisers to remain on earth with him, but always were these petitions denied. The time had come when the Material Sons must assume full responsibility for the conduct of world affairs.(74:5).... “Probably no Material Sons of Nebadon were ever faced with such a difficult and seemingly hopeless task as confronted Adam and Eve in the sorry plight of Urantia.

But they would have sometime met with success had they been more farseeing and patient... they were not willing to settle down to the long, long endurance test. They wanted to see some immediate results, and they did, but the results thus secured proved most disastrous both to themselves and to their world.”(75:1.6)

... This ‘epochal’ default is just one of many smaller, but pivotal, UB historic cases of dashed expectations.

When you encounter a new project, take time to examine your expectations. Include a ‘self-assessment’: Are you feeling a sense of urgency, and importance to complete your chosen task? Do you have strong attachment to high, preconceived expectations? Will you readily accept unexpected outcomes? Will you spend lots of time and energy trying to steer people on the ‘correct’ path?

For me, an ‘older and wiser’ friend, once helped me reflect on these questions. I was about 40 at the time, and he was approaching 60. I considered him a deep thinker, a man of accomplishment and wisdom. After many years of our discussing the ‘human condition’, he said that at this point he had reached only one basic conclusion:

“Not everyone sees the world as I do... and that’s OK.”

Well,,, at the time, I wasn’t too impressed! I had expected to hear something much grander! But now, almost 30 years later, those simple words continue to resonate with me. I realized that I did spend much of my life trying to convince others to see the world as I did. When I would let go of my urge to change other peoples minds, weight lifted off my shoulders... I’m still working on not interfering; simply acknowledging others’ points of view. I still have to remind myself, “Its OK that you see it differently”... But, isn’t this just another way of honoring ‘Free Will’? ..Hmmm.. We will have a bit more on this later.

Before long, this attitude spread into my broader social connections. I found myself less intent on ‘me’ being in charge of directing the group events around me. And something unexpected at this point: in hindsight, many times the scenarios around me actually exceeded my preconceived expectations. Also, I noticed my attitude had become more energized, with a feeling of adventure and spontaneity, imagining being on a modern version of a primal ‘hunt’.

An important point: This doesn’t mean you’re only an inactive observer. Its combinations of: observe.. act.. observe.. observe.. act.. Kind of like Jesus had periods of “waiting until my hour has come”; ..until... “my hour has come”. But for us, its a mini-mini-version, on a very tiny stage?

Short Version: “Don’t Push the River – It Flows by Itself”... (ps: choose your rivers wisely!).

Here’s one more UB insight about big expectations from Paper 103: The Reality of Religious Experience:

“The hunger and thirst for righteousness leads to the discovery of truth, and truth augments ideals.. our ideals tend to grow by geometrical progression, while our ability to live up to them is enhanced only by arithmetical progression...

.. Man cannot hope to live up to his highest ideals, but he can be true to his purpose of finding God and becoming more and more like him.” (103:4.2)

Now we’ll look at how ‘expectation attitudes’ mesh with Teamwork.

## TEAMWORK

The UB emphasizes how essential leadership is,

“much, very much, depends on an enthusiastic and effective load-pulling spirit. Ten men are of little more value than one in lifting a great load unless they lift together—all at the same moment. And such teamwork—social co-operation—is dependent on leadership... Leadership is vital to progress. Wisdom, insight, and foresight are indispensable... the quantity of such wise leadership has never exceeded one per cent of the population.”(81:6.42).

Wow – less than one per cent wise leadership! Hmm... So odds are, we're not all destined to be great leaders? Fortunately, leaders need a team, and there's no shortage of ‘teams’. A local community is full of opportunities to get involved.

But before going further -

“Unselfishness, aside from parental instinct, is not altogether natural; other persons are not naturally loved or socially served.”(16:9.7)

I must admit that in early life I avoided teamwork whenever possible. I cherished my independence, and groups made me anxious. No Boy Scouts. No Little League. No after school athletics or clubs. No church. I did have a few neighborhood friends, and school was OK. Living a simple life in the woods with a few friends was my childhood vision of a perfect life!

Not much changed right up to age 21, having then settled happily into a log cabin, near Boulder, Colorado. Then fate stepped in:

The Urantia Book had found me, and after 3 years of gradually opening up to its amazing ‘truths’ - I felt a deep desire to somehow get more involved with people. I had a degree in psychology and was quite interested in mental health.

So I volunteered with the nearby Mental Health Center, to assist with a group called the Friendship Club. The members all had past hospitalizations due to mental health issues. Friendship Club was a Thursday evening socializing activity. Things such as a movie, bowling, etc., followed by coffee and dessert. I felt comfortable in this group (usually about 10), people that were a bit out of the ‘mainstream’. I enjoyed assisting this weekly meeting for about 10 years, when I moved to Denver, plus got married. Definitely a new shift of involvement!

To tap into my first real ‘big city’ opportunity, I became a city bus driver: LOTS of people contact.. LOTS of, “Hey, how's it goin?”

... But, after a year, I realized I wanted more ‘meaningful contact’ from a career.

In the past, I had been really impressed by some nurses (Role Models), so I signed up for nursing school (very hard work!) and became a LPN, then Registered Nurse. I worked my way through school on a typical medical-surgical unit as a LPN, then I got a RN job in psychiatric nursing, working on an adolescent unit at the state hospital.

Now to get to the relevant part: In an effort to prepare students for actual career work, nursing school included a short course, called “Reality Shock”. Basically it was a ‘heads up’ that some ideal practices you learned in school, might clash a bit with the demands of ‘real-on-the-job’ nursing!... How right they were!

(Maybe UB educators should put together a course about: “Sharing the Urantia Book - AKA: U B Reality Shock”?)

Some workplace frustrations during my first year of nursing, led to my decision to quit, and find a ‘better’ nursing job. My head nurse then shared with me,

“I used to be just like you, and quit nursing jobs too... but these days, I’ve decided to remain, and try and change things from the inside.” ... Hmm...

So I stayed 6 more years – learned and experienced a lot!

Reminds me of these quotes: “One of the most important lessons to be learned during your mortal career is teamwork... Few are the duties in the universe for the lone servant.”(28:5.14)

“A social group of human beings in co-ordinated working harmony stands for a force far greater than the simple sum of its parts.”(133:5.6)

Next, a mention of a wider aspect of choosing your team involvement. I like to imagine the Celtic idea of ‘thin places’; looking for those ‘thin places’ separating the material and spiritual world. The idea is to seek out situations that stir up your spiritual energy, your higher ideals; in our case, recognizing a team with potentials that connects to your ‘talents’ and ideals. With a little imagination, you may be surprised to discover potential thin places already near by? Maybe a team within your comfort zone; but also stretching your envelop?... Or something a little (or lot!) different from what you’ve done before, to add a bit of adventure?

Lots of teams to choose from: “Different strokes for different folks”. What kind of team suits you?

## ROLE MODELS

Role Models soon came to mind when reading about our Seminar Objective: “.. to help each other to find ways for bringing teachings of *The Urantia Book* into the lives of those we encounter.”

The Urantia Book is full of Amazing Role Models! It seems that with almost every page of the UB, we find a ‘new’ Role Model. Our Seminar is bound to reflect on many of their inspirations and lessons.

Here’s just a sample of UB examples, with ‘lessons’ relevant to our Seminar:

“Van.. and Amadon were sustained by the technique of the tree of life.. one thousand years after the rebellion he had more than three hundred and fifty advanced groups scattered abroad in the world. Under the supervision of the Melchizedek receivers, Van and Amadon continued the work of fostering the natural evolution of the human race..”(67:6.4)

Van and Amadon were preparing for Adam and Eve’s arrival – Not knowing when it might happen. Here’s their timeline: Van and Amadon’s Urantia origins were 500,000 years ago, with Caligastia’s arrival. They persevered through the Rebellion 200,000 years ago, and then they successfully prepared for the next epochal revelation: the arrival of Adam and Eve (with Caligastia still on the planet!).. about 38,000 years ago. (And without ‘modern conveniences’) ... WOW! any volunteers!?

Next a story with several role models:

This is from the Urmia Lectures, Paper 134:3, where after participating in discussions, Jesus was invited by Cymboyton to give a lecture series.

“.. This was the most systematic and formal of all the Master’s teaching on Urantia. Never before or after did he say so much on one subject as was contained in these lectures and discussions on the brotherhood of men.”

“... Cymboyton or one of his three sons always presided at these sessions of teaching, discussion, and debate. The founder of this unique school of religions lived and died without ever revealing his personal religious beliefs.... These teachers of the various religions made a great effort to show how

similar their religions were in regard to the fundamental things of this life and the next... After the death of Cymboyton, his sons encountered great difficulties in maintaining a peaceful faculty... Cymboyton's eldest son had appealed to Abner at Philadelphia for help, but Abner's choice of teachers was most unfortunate in that they turned out to be unyielding and uncompromising. These teachers sought to make their religion dominant over the other beliefs. They never suspected that the oft-referred-to lectures of the caravan conductor had been delivered by Jesus himself.. As confusion increased in the faculty, the three brothers withdrew their financial support, and after five years the school closed... The repercussions of Jesus' teachings would have been much greater if the later Christian teachers who joined the Urmia faculty had exhibited more wisdom and exercised more tolerance."

... This story has several role models trying "to find ways to impact the progress of world". Some basic teaching 'attitudes' had dramatic lasting consequences... for better-or-worse!?

An interesting side note regarding the Urmia Lectures: The midwayer authors inform us; describing how seraphim committees disagreed with adapting teachings on progress, churches, religion and government, that occurred 2000 years ago, as compared to modern times.. See 134:3.8 for more.

Of course Jesus is Urantia's ultimate Role Model – From his pre-public Mediterranean trip:

"To the onlooking celestial intelligences of the local universe, this Mediterranean trip was the most enthralling of all Jesus' earth experiences, at least of all his career right up to the event of his crucifixion and mortal death. This was the fascinating period of his personal ministry .. This unique episode was all the more engrossing because he was at this time still the carpenter of Nazareth, the boatbuilder of Capernaum, the scribe of Damascus; he was still the Son of Man. He had not yet achieved the complete mastery of his human mind; the Adjuster had not fully mastered and counterparted the mortal identity. He was still a man among men."(129:4.1).

Jesus' impact before going public is fascinating! We are certain to study more episodes, elsewhere in Seminar topics and later discussion.

One more cautionary tale from the 1300s BC:

"Melchizedek had warned his followers .. it has often been the error of the teachers of new truth to attempt too much, to attempt to supplant slow evolution by sudden revolution... missionaries in Mesopotamia.. attempted too much, and their noble cause went down in defeat.. they became entangled in the apparently worthy cause of reforming the mores, and thus was their great mission sidetracked and virtually lost in frustration and oblivion...."

"Since the disappearance of Melchizedek in the flesh, no human being up to that time had possessed such an amazingly clear concept of the revealed religion of Salem as Ikhnaton. In some respects this young Egyptian king is one of the most remarkable persons in human history .. and had .. he manifested a political genius to match his surprising religious leadership, then would Egypt have become the great monotheistic nation of that age... With the most amazing determination this young ruler broke with the past, changed his name, abandoned his capital, built an entirely new city, and created a new art and literature for a whole people. But he went too fast; he built too much, more than could stand when he had gone... Had this man of amazingly clear vision and extraordinary singleness of purpose had the political sagacity of Moses, he would have changed the whole history of the evolution of religion and the revelation of truth in the Occidental world...

The son-in-law of Ikhnaton went along with the priests, back to the worship of the old gods, changing his name to Tutankhamen."(95:5)

Additionally, we each have our more personal role models. I try to keep in mind that in unknown ways, WE are All Role Models.

– Sharing more about our personal Role Models should be fun during discussion.

## How to Embrace Slow Change during Critical Times.

Today Urantia faces unprecedented challenges.

“The great danger to any civilization—at any one moment—is the threat of breakdown during the time of transition from the established methods of the past to those new and better, but untried, procedures of the future... the rapidly expanding culture of the twentieth century... is plunging forward under the force of the accumulated momentum of all the ages through which civilization has struggled.” (Paper 81 end)

The stakes are high, and a sense of urgency to ‘save the planet’ is nearly overwhelming. In addition, as Urantia Book believers, our shared sense of responsibility to spread-The-spiritual-good-news adds to the pressure to evolve Urantia - ASAP!?

What To Do!? Hmm...

Some pretty clear UB points:

“. No great social or economic change should be attempted suddenly. Time is essential to all types of human adjustment—physical, social, or economic. Only moral and spiritual adjustments can be made on the spur of the moment, and even these require the passing of time for the full outworking...”(81:6.40)

“But man is not saved or ennobled by pressure. Spirit growth springs from within the evolving soul. Pressure may deform the personality, but it never stimulates growth. Even educational pressure is only negatively helpful in that it may aid in the prevention of disastrous experiences. Spiritual growth is greatest where all external pressures are at a minimum.” (103:5.11)

Morontia Mota helps with perspective:

“Impatience is a spirit poison; anger is like a stone hurled into a hornet's nest.”

“Life is but a day's work—do it well.”(48:7)

Since we're likely not going to evolve the planet single-handed, we better take a quick look at an inherent part of teamwork: “Communication”.

Communication has been an ongoing challenge for me, and much of the time I feel I fall short. So I wanted to pass on some things from basic nursing, called “Therapeutic Communication” and “Active Listening”. They are a style of communication that probably sounds pretty familiar. I'll bypass the narrower nursing tips, but here's a few of the broader objectives:

Acceptance (neutral response... non-judgement)

Offering Self (I'm interested)

Giving Broad Openings (where would you like to begin)

Encouraging Description of Perception (what is happening... tell me)

Encouraging Comparisons

Focusing

Exploring

Consensus Validation (tell me if my understanding agrees with yours)

Collaboration (perhaps we can figure this out)

Using Silence

I try to keep a few of these ideas in mind – even during ‘normal’ conversation.

I like the ‘non-judgement’ part in particular. It may be one way to nurture the broader ‘free will’ principle?

Also, it’s usually productive to understand someone, or some thing, before making plans of action. So develop an ‘understanding attitude’? Healthy ‘Communicating’ takes conscious effort.

A personal ‘bonus’ thought: Sometimes, it’s fun to expand nursing perspective beyond patient contact; to a team, or a community, or larger level! It works pretty well, since the goal of nursing is to help heal, restore, and maintain good health (body, mind and hopefully spiritual).

Notice the ‘patterns’ occurring in your life... you might see your ‘path’ coming into focus?

For me, long before nursing, I’ve had interest and talent with repairing things. Nursing was kind of an extension of this ‘fixing’ energy... It’s been over 20 years since nursing (except for nursing both parents more recently, at their end-of-life). But I have continued the hobby of fixing things, more than ever. It’s expanded during the last 5 years, since I’ve been facilitating a weekly community group, called the Ithaca Fixers. We help people to fix their ‘things’ - lamps, toasters, etc. Fun! There’s an undeniable ‘kindred spirit’ among us ‘Fixers’! Who knows where that may lead.

And a recent twist: During my 20s, I had a small excavating-backhoe business in Colorado. I like machines, and also digging in the dirt! A year ago, a newer ‘natural burial’ cemetery had an unexpected opening for someone to prepare,.. and then fill in graves. I practically jumped at the chance! I’ve now surprisingly found large satisfaction in preparing over 20 graves, witnessing each burial ceremony, and then filling, mounding and smoothing their final, earthly resting place.

You’ve made it to the end of the article... so, how do we “embrace slow change during critical times”?

... I don’t really know - but all the above quotes do greatly inspire and comfort me. So for now, I’m OK with smaller, measured steps; and more pondering.

I hope you have found one or two ideas that may help you.

More importantly, I hope each of YOU - will keep finding Your own answers!

## SUMMARY

Review your ‘expectations’: too rigid?, not interested?, or a healthy ‘mix’?

Look for the Thin Places, already near your reach?

Get and Stay in Shape (attitude) and Join a Team.. but, Don’t Obsess on the Score?

Allow room for the Unexpected.

It’s not finding a specific ‘formula’. It’s not one-size-fits-all. You are unique, and so is your path.

Short Version: Let go – but hang in there – and see what awaits around the next corner!