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## Attitude

Define successful attitude.

Mystery Guest - Abraham Lincoln  
obstacles & defeats had to overcome

"Your mind is like a computer"  
You can program your mind  
Who do you know that is always  
happy?

Derek Jeter story - not allowed  
to say "can't do it"

Bad attitude: recruits other people  
Be with positive people.



## THAT'S NOT FAIR

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### TOPIC AREA: Achievement, Judging Others

**CONCEPT:** "That's not fair!" How often have you heard that phrase? Well life isn't always fair. Resources, such as money, time, power, ability, etc., are not spread evenly throughout our society. Some people have more and some people have less. Does that mean that those that have been given more should look down on those who have ended up with less? Should those that have less give up and not even try to realize their dreams? Uneven distribution of resources does not mean that some people are better than others nor does it give some people the right to take advantage of others to get more. The story is often told about someone who turns to crime or selling drugs because they don't have the ways or means to support themselves using traditional avenues. Tragedy or unforeseen circumstances can also strike and take away what you have. What makes some people fight back after a tragedy while others give up?

**METHOD:** Classroom activity

**TIME ESTIMATE:** 20 minutes plus discussion time

#### MATERIALS NEEDED:

- 32 straws per team of three (These are easily acquired at your local fast food outlet. Let the manager know what you will be using them for and they will usually be donated.)
- Masking tape

- 1 piece of paper per team of three with messages already written
- 1 ruler per team
- 1 paper bag per team

**ACTIVITY:** You will need to do some preparation before hand. First prepare the materials for each team. Have some extra materials. Each team will not receive the same amount of materials. Vary the number of straws per team from a low of sixteen to a high of forty-eight. Give them approximately ½ inch of masking tape per straw. For example, a team that received sixteen straws would get eight inches of masking tape. Put all of the materials for each team in a paper bag so the variations in supplies won't be noticeable immediately. Also prepare a message for each team. Write on different pieces of paper the following messages:

- Your team is doing a good job. Keep it up!
- Your tower has experienced an earthquake and was completely destroyed. Go up to the teacher, get a new set of building materials and start over again.
- During construction, strong winds blew away one half of the straws that you have left. Take one half of your remaining straws and turn them into the teacher.
- You have been given a business award by the city. You can go take two straws from any team you wish (the straws must not already be part of their tower).
- You have been given a grant by the city. You may go up to the teacher and receive four extra straws.
- The worker's union has declared a silence strike against your building company. Your team members may not talk for the rest of the building time.
- A shipping error has been made. You can go up to the teacher and receive an extra six inches of masking tape.

- All of your workers have been injured in a freak accident. From now on they can only use their left hands.

You will prepare enough of these messages so that each team will receive one. Depending on how large your group is, some teams may receive the same message. After you write these messages, fold the papers and staple them shut.

Now you are ready to begin. Divide your group into teams of two or three. Explain that their goal is to build the tallest freestanding tower that they can using only the materials you have given them. Randomly pass out sets of materials to each group. They will have about 10 minutes of actual building time to complete their tower. Adjust this time according to the abilities of your group. Do not count the time you spend distributing the messages as part of the building time. At the end of the building time the tower must stand by itself for fifteen seconds before they can measure it. When teams notice that the materials have not been evenly distributed, just explain that you are aware of that fact and they should do the best they can with what they have.

Half way through the building process, stop the group. Ask them to send one member from each team up to the front and give them one of the messages that you have prepared. Have them wait until everyone has returned to their groups so that all of the messages will be opened at the same time. Then continue the building process with whatever changes the messages have called for. At the end of the building time, wait fifteen seconds to be sure that the towers have been sturdily built and then measure to see which tower was the tallest.

## DISCUSSION IDEAS:

### *“What” Questions*

- How tall was your tower?
- How was your building plan developed?
- If you were to design your tower over again, what changes would you make?
- If you would have had more materials, would your tower have been taller?

### *“So What” Questions*

- How did you feel when you noticed some teams had more or less materials than your team?
- How would you have felt if your team was given a grade on who had the tallest tower?
- Would grading the towers on how tall they were be fair? Why or why not?
- What can this activity tell us about people and the resources that they have to work with?
- What are some circumstances that give some people more and some people less resources to work with?
- Describe some situations where some people have an advantage over others due to money or power.
- Do we always have control over our circumstances? Why or why not?
- Do the amount of resources that we have determine how much we will be able to achieve in life? Why or why not?
- How do resources influence our thinking?
- Is it important to consider individual circumstances before judging other people?

### *“Now What” Questions*

- How should we react when faced with less resources than others? With more resources?
- What are some things that we can do to help us understand someone else’s circumstances?