

**Community Herald**  
**Councillor Matt Whitman**  
**District 13**  
**Hammonds Plains – St. Margarets**

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I am thankful to have this space to share a few thoughts with Residents.... I am sure many would rather see me type about plowing, mowing, recycling, policing or development, but that's what I do all week. This is an opportunity to share something relevant that I have learned over the past few months and years.

**Warning: By writing about this topic, does not mean I have this mastered....**

There are so many lists on the internet about how to live a happier, healthier, more successful life. I don't want to add to that traffic, rather share a few thoughts on what is working for me.

Here we go. Matt Whitman's Top 10 BE-attitudes

- 1 BE FORGIVING. Why wouldn't you forgive others? Have you ever required forgiveness? Besides, holding a grudge is so much effort.... When you hold a grudge, really you are only punishing yourself. The other person does not feel the grudge. So move on... Extend the olive branch, call an old acquaintance and forgive them.... Maybe your telephone will ring today also.
- 2 BE KIND. How did this make the list? Actually, how is this not #1 on the list? Isn't this the Golden Rule you were taught as a child? I shared last month that I believe the "secret sauce" for HRM is to "Do Unto Others". That means being kind to family, friends, co-workers, strangers in traffic, and even on the internet..... Kindness is key.
- 3 BE THANKFUL. My favourite word (or 2 words) is Thank You. I went to China 8 years ago and the only word I still know how to say is "Shee-shee" which means Thank You! If you are having a bad day pick up the phone, send a letter or an email that expresses your Gratitude to someone.
- 4 BE PRESENT. Sounds easy right? It means showing up on time and giving your undivided attention. Not using your Blackberry when someone is talking to you (unless you are texting or emailing to find a solution)... It means listening and caring when someone is sharing. Don't be in such a rush to get to the next meeting.... Schedule a little buffer time in between meetings in case a conversation goes over time.
- 5 BE CONTENT. In North America we keep spending and spending in search of this elusive contentment. It is ok to be ambitious and to have goals, but being thankful and content for what you have is the key to fulfillment. Thanksgiving should not just be a long weekend; it should be a daily mindset.

- 6 BE FOCUSED on others. That's the key to my occupation, and likely yours too. It's not about you, it is about others. The old selfish WIIFM attitude of "What's in it for me" is a root cause of many problems at home, at work and in the community.
- 7 BE TRUTHFUL. It goes without saying right? But still, it has to be said. There are no grey areas when it comes to being truthful. Sometimes the truth hurts, but the opposite hurts even more.
- 8 BE HEALTHY. Healthy may be tough to define. To me healthy is being able to accomplish what needs to be done and feeling good while doing it. For me that include exercising, eating well and getting a good sleep. I didn't always run marathons, and I don't always eat healthy, but I try. For you, maybe it means finally getting out for a 30 minute walk, or cutting back on KFC or smoking, or getting to bed on time..... Whatever it is, take that step in the right direction. Maybe Sept 1<sup>st</sup> can be a day of Resolutions.
- 9 BE ACCEPTING. Accept others for who they are the way they are. People are not perfect. Extend grace to our fellow imperfect human beings. Be patient of others shortcomings and allow others to accept you the way you are.
10. BE EXCUSE-Free. Last but not least. If you are still reading this, there may be some homework here... Some homework. Go ahead and try to improve yourself for you and then for others. No excuses. Take that first step.

Let me know if you have any feedback by contacting me by email at [Matt.Whitman@HALIFAX.ca](mailto:Matt.Whitman@HALIFAX.ca).