

Attitude Activity 3: A Dozen Noticeboards

There's a department at Hertfordshire University called the Perrott-Warwick Research Unit. They're a research team that are interested in luck, and how/why people who consider themselves 'lucky' or 'unlucky' get that way. (*Wiseman, Richard, The Luck Factor, Century, 2003*) To begin their research, they asked for people who considered themselves particularly lucky or unlucky (there were 400 people in all) to complete a series of experiments.

In one experiment, subjects were given a newspaper to flip through and a task: 'count the number of photographs in this newspaper.' Three pages in, there was a large, half-page notice. It said, "Stop counting. There are 43 photographs in this newspaper." A few pages later, another large advert read, "Tell the experimenter you've seen this and win £100."

So what happened?

A large proportion of the people who considered themselves unlucky... flipped right past the adverts. The people who considered themselves lucky were much more likely to see them – and they ended up with the money.

The researchers concluded that people aren't lucky or unlucky, there are just **certain people who are better at noticing, or even creating, chance opportunities**. Their attention is open, and they see more of the world around them. They don't mind adjusting their routine or doing something new; they see things with fresh eyes rather than having 'selective attention.' These people end up with a wider range of experiences, meet more people and do more things... and they get more opportunities because of this.

The 'unlucky' people were stuck in routines and didn't notice new chances or opportunities. Their thinking is a little like this:

Attitude	Emotional response to challenge	Decisions and behaviour	Result
I'm unlucky. Other people seem to get chances and opportunities I don't.	I only have 'selective attention' about chances to try new and interesting things. Eg: I don't even see the posters advertising a particular competition. Now it's pretty much the deadline for entries.	I don't bother entering. A fellow student on my course does enter, and wins. The first prize is £1,000.	I miss out, and I reinforce my belief that good things only happen to other people. They are 'lucky' and I'm not.

An Experiment: A Dozen Noticeboards

If the research we've described is right, we've all had opportunities and chances to do something new and different, and many of us have missed them.

What might we be missing right now?

Here's an interesting experiment for you to try.

In schools and colleges up and down the country, in the corridors, receptions, community spaces and classrooms, **there are noticeboards**. Some of them display student work, some have sports results or calendars... but many of them have opportunities.

In this experiment, you're going to wander around the campus and look at twelve different noticeboards. And you're going to really notice the things on there – read the flyers, look at the posters, make a note of the clubs, competitions, societies or classes that are advertised there.

Noticeboard	Location (in case someone else wants to know)	Content
1		
2		
3		
4		
5		
6		
7		
8		
9		
10		
11		
12		

Once you've done this, consider the opportunities available in your organisation. Remember, the 'lucky' people in the experiment simply saw more things the world around them, and acted on them.

Could you do the same?

If you were forced to follow up just one of the leads you've discovered, which one would it be?