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## Assignment

**Ans1.** This is a more difficult question than it seems at first glance. My initial thought was, "Attitude, definitely.", but I started questioning that conclusion almost instantly. What good is a pleasing attitude to a person whose lack of intellect causes them unnecessary grief? A simple-minded but well-mannered person is easy prey for the wolves of society, and will often fall into ruin.

On the other hand, an intelligent person whose toxic attitude prevents them from enjoying the fruits of their intellect may as well not even have it. They are almost equally as prone to dysfunction and ruin as our ignorant friend who keeps getting the short end of the stick.

So, though both are deeply important, I think it is better to be armed with sufficient knowledge to defend oneself from the world of predators than to simply have a good attitude about things. After all, if someone is intelligent enough, there's a chance they will eventually learn to model a better attitude, but ignorance is like being trapped in an ice crevasse with no climbing tools. Stuck there long enough, one begins to believe the whole world is contained between those cold, narrow, suffocating walls.

From a purely pragmatic viewpoint, both are essential life skills, but although I may personally *value* attitudes more highly than IQ scores, I must reluctantly concede that the ability to see things clearly is the more important of the two.

**Ans2.** People constantly evaluate themselves, and others, in domains like [attractiveness](#), wealth, [intelligence](#), and success. According to some studies, as much as 10 percent of our thoughts involve comparisons of some kind. Social comparison theory is the idea that individuals determine their own social and personal worth based on how they stack up against others. The theory was developed in 1954 by psychologist Leon Festinger. Later research has shown that people who regularly compare themselves to others may

find [motivation](#) to improve, but may also experience feelings of deep dissatisfaction, [guilt](#), or remorse, and engage in destructive behaviors like [lying](#) or [disordered eating](#).

### **The Benefits of Comparison**

When individuals compare themselves to others as a way of measuring their personal development or to motivate themselves to improve and, in the process, develop a more positive [self-image](#), comparisons can be beneficial. It takes discipline, however, to avoid the pitfalls of negative comparison. In large part, how we react to comparisons depends on who we compare ourselves to: When we just want to feel better about ourselves, we tend to engage in comparisons to people worse off than we are, although this can become an unhealthy habit. When we want to improve, though, we may compare ourselves to people roughly similar to us but higher achieving in one trait or another.

### **The Dangers of Comparison**

Theodore Roosevelt called comparison “the thief of joy,” and he may have been right. Social comparison can motivate people to improve, but it can also promote judgmental, biased, and overly competitive or superior attitudes. Most people have the social skills and impulse control to keep their standards for social comparison to themselves, and not to act on any envy or resentment spurred by comparison-making. But their true feelings may manifest in other ways.

### **Comparison and Bias**

Many people fall into the trap of positional bias, comparing "up" more often than "down" relative to their own standing. A fascination with celebrity culture and the prevalence of carefully-manicured social-media feeds only exacerbates the effect by exposing people to an endless stream of others' seemingly perfect images, homes, jobs, skills, and families.