

SEVEN SACRED ATTITUDES®

How to Live in the Richness of the Moment

by

Erica Ross-Krieger



A Still Mountain Press Nonfiction Book

Copyright © 2005 by Erica Ross Krieger. All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted in any form or by any means, electronic, mechanical, photocopied, recorded, or otherwise, without the prior written permission of the publisher. For more information, write Still Mountain Press 1135 Terminal Way, #209, Reno, Nevada 89502-2168

Page design by ImageSupport.com, LLC.

Cover design by Kevin Stock, ImageSupport.com, LLC.



Still Mountain Press, LLC.

COPYRIGHT © 2005, Erica Ross-Krieger

All rights reserved

Publisher's Cataloging-in-Publication

(Provided by Quality Books, Inc.)

Ross-Krieger, Erica.

Seven sacred attitudes : how to live in the richness
of the moment / by Erica Ross-Krieger.

p. cm.

LCCN 2005909660

ISBN 0-9767703-7-7

1. Attitude (Psychology) 2. Self-actualization
(Psychology) 3. Conduct of life. I. Title.

BF327.R67 2005 158.1

QBI05-600203

Printed in the United States of America

10 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1

Dedicated with love

*to my husband, Steve, who holds open
a space for me in the world.*

“This engaging life manual teaches you to rely on Sacred Attitudes to nurture your inner wisdom, cultivate serenity and allow happiness to emerge. Following Erica Ross-Krieger’s simple daily process of Stop, Breathe, Notice and Choose will help you focus on the heart-centered present.”

ROGER JAHNKE, O.M.D.

Author of *The Healer Within*

and *The Healing Promise of Qi*

“Seven Sacred Attitudes is the road map for those seeking total well-being and balance in their lives, helping them avoid all the modern day pitfalls and learn to be a success in the game of life.”

GARY QUINN

Author of *May the Angels Be With You*

“In this personal, heart-full collection of essays, fables, and thought-provoking inquiries, Erica Ross-Krieger invites us to reflect on life’s greater purpose and meaning, tap our own intuition and cultivate insights that deepen our understanding of ourselves. Full of practical wisdom that can easily be applied, Seven Sacred Attitudes is a wonderful companion for all spiritual travelers and anyone seeking to enrich the quality of his or her life.”

ANN K. LINDSAY

Author, *Watercolor: A New Beginning:*

A Holistic Approach to Painting

“I laughed, I cried, I opened my heart, I examined my own attitudes. And in so doing, I moved further along my own path to wholeness. Thank you, Erica Ross-Krieger, for your insights, your humor, and your teachings. This must-read book will light the way for anyone recognizing the need for his or her own ‘attitude adjustment’ on their sacred path to healing.”

PATRICIA J. MEYER, N.D.

Naturopathic Physician

Founder, Namaste Natural Healing Center

“Caution! Reading Erica Ross-Krieger’s *Seven Sacred Attitudes* may change your life. Through a series of entertaining personal essays, each followed by a set of life-expanding questions, she invites us, with gentle yet compelling power, to reflect on the meaning and quality of our daily lives.”

A.J. GARROTTO

Author of *Circles of Stone*

“As you savor and contemplate the many delicious gems inside *Seven Sacred Attitudes*, you will find Erica Ross-Krieger has accomplished two marvelous things: first, by sharing her most vulnerable moments, she reveals the Heart of a true Teacher; and second, in entertaining style, she gives us a new model for being with ourselves, coaching others and making our lives full and meaningful. This book is a smorgasbord of delights and a must-read for all those called to awaken their passion.”

CRAIG CARR, CPCC, PCC

Founder, Coaching Elements, Inc.

Senior Trainer, Coaches Training Institute

CONTENTS

FOREWORD	i
INTRODUCTION	iii
SACRED ATTITUDE ONE: USE INNER WISDOM	1
Recovery from Unusual Attitudes	5
Five Dangerous Words	10
Bubbling Spring	13
Making Life More Comfortable	18
SACRED ATTITUDE TWO: ACCEPT WHAT'S SO	21
Don't Be a Hero	25
The Perspective Song	29
As I Am	32
You Are Not on the Road To...	34
What's So	38
What's Right with Me	40
SACRED ATTITUDE THREE: GO SLOW	47
Marge's Request	51
Autumn Leaves	53
Butterscotch Candy	55
I Would Have Stopped Anyway	59
Billboard Mania	63
Hummingbirds	65
Waiting for Myself	67

SACRED ATTITUDE FOUR: DO LESS	73
The Tao of Impingement	76
The “N” Exercise	80
Pursuing and Allowing	84
Fishing	90
Taking the Time	94
SACRED ATTITUDE FIVE: SHOW UP	97
Watch for the Blooming	101
The Arena	106
Tending the Garden	111
The Can of Pears	119
A Look in the Mirror	124
The Titles We Wear	126
SACRED ATTITUDE SIX: TRUST THE PROCESS	133
Stay on the Bus	137
Journey into the Pit	143
Finding My Own Way	148
A Safe Adventure	149
SACRED ATTITUDE SEVEN: BE WITH THE QUESTIONS	151
What’s Important Now?	154
Circle of Wisdom	159
Passports	164
EPILOGUE	173
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	177
Copyright Acknowledgements	180
ABOUT THE AUTHOR	181



SEVEN SACRED ATTITUDES

FORWARD

I first met Erica Ross-Krieger when she attended a two-day Taming Your Gremlin® seminar I was conducting in Northern California. I liked Erica immediately and was thrilled when she later applied for the Gremlin Taming™ Institute's Professional Training Program. I'm honored to claim her as a graduate.

Erica's commitment to authenticity is unwavering and she is extremely kind. This is a rare blend and as a result of it there is simple and beautiful elegance to the way Erica relates to people and events. This graceful style is reflected in her work with her clients and seminar participants and, as you will see in *Seven Sacred Attitudes®*, in her writing.

Erica uses entertaining vignettes from her own life to illustrate each of the *Sacred Attitudes*. Because her work is bereft of jargon and stilted concepts, and because she's a wise soul and a damn good writer, you are sure to enjoy this work immensely, to find it useful, and to want to share it with others.

Rick Carson

Author of *Taming Your Gremlin®*

|



SEVEN SACRED ATTITUDES

INTRODUCTION

Some of our attitudes hold us back from being and doing all we are meant to be and do. Some even rob us of the richness of the moment and make our lives more difficult and complicated than necessary.

There are other attitudes that foster meaningful action in our lives, lead to wellbeing, and deepen our learning along the way. I call these attitudes **sacred**.

One definition of the word *sacred* is “worthy of respect.” The attitudes that bring us more fully into the world are indeed worthy of our respect.

The small book you hold in your hands is not a book about *positive thinking*. Rather, it’s a book about *attitudes*. An attitude is all-encompassing. It includes more than just our way of thinking, it also involves our physical being. Ballet dancers and pilots are very familiar with how comprehensive the word “attitude” is; in their respective fields, “attitude” involves the physical position of

the body or an airplane.

To illustrate further, suppose I told you I went to a restaurant last evening where the young waitress had an “attitude.” Suppose I also told you that her “attitude” was even more evident when I asked her to bring my salad dressing on the side and my water without ice cubes. Now, if I were to ask you to stand up right now and adopt the actual physical posture of a waitress or waiter with an “attitude,” you would know exactly what to do. It would likely involve putting your hand on your hip, rolling your eyes upward, and maybe even clicking your tongue and sighing.

Once we become conscious of our attitudes—how they show up in our thinking and physical being, we become empowered to choose our attitudes.

My first awareness of the full concept of “attitude” came almost 20 years ago when I needed to slow down due to a physical health challenge. As I began to slow down, I noticed that the process involved much more than decreasing motion. Slowing down involved a new way of thinking and a new way of being. In order to slow down in every way, I needed to adopt a new *attitude*.

When I looked up “attitude” in Webster’s dictionary, I knew the word was the right one to describe what I was learning—**attitude: a physical posture either conscious or unconscious, (especially) while interacting with others.**

Yes, I thought, *Go Slow* is an “attitude.” I *am* different “with others” after adopting the *Go Slow* attitude. I stand at ease, have a different way of thinking, and I behave differently.

I found that I when I was in a *Go Slow* attitude, I saw things I

didn't see when I was in a "Go Fast" attitude. I noticed the sweet details of life, like the rhythm of my breath, the way my husband held his pen when he wrote, and how my food tasted.

I learned that it was unrealistic to expect the *Go Slow* attitude to take hold overnight or to set up a permanent camp in my life. Instead, I knew that developing the *Go Slow* attitude meant giving it my conscious attention on a daily basis. I would have to cultivate this attitude, much like a gardener tends crops.

After seeing what a remarkable difference adopting the *Go Slow* Attitude made in my life, I began a conscious journey to discover what other Sacred Attitudes might help me create a more meaningful life.

I began to pay attention to the attitudes I was harboring whenever I felt stuck, and I started to notice the effect different attitudes had on my life. The more aware I was, the more obvious the attitudes became. For example, someone we didn't know well invited my husband and me to a summer barbeque. For weeks before the barbeque, I struggled to remember why we'd said yes. I didn't want to go; I just wanted to stay home and work on an idea I had for this book.

One minute, something deep inside told me to go to the barbeque. A minute later, I found myself thinking the idea was ridiculous and inventing excuses so I wouldn't have to go. The inner battle continued.

And then I stopped. I purposely took a deep breath. I noticed my "attitude"—my physical posture—the way I'd been breathing. I noticed I was scrunching my brow, thinking too much, and holding my breath. I was ignoring the warm and calm feeling

inside that was telling me to go to the barbeque.

I purposefully took another deep breath and made a firm choice. I would use my inner wisdom. We would go to the barbeque.

Soon after we arrived, Tom and Julie, a couple we'd known for some time, showed up. We had no idea they'd be there or that they knew the host. Seeing them was a pleasant surprise and reason enough to be glad we came. But there was another surprise.

Later that evening, Tom told us a story about his recent pilot's license exam. The story was about the power of attitudes. (His story is in chapter one.) I was amazed. The story was just what I needed to round out my book idea. I wouldn't have heard it if I'd stayed home.

I realized I had come across another Sacred Attitude: *Use Inner Wisdom*.

There is no mistaking the presence of a Sacred Attitude. Once you allow one to enter into your life, there is more space for your natural self to shine—more room for you to “come to life more fully,” as author John G. Sullivan says. I believe there is also more room for *life to come to you more fully*, as it did for me that evening.

During my journey to discover more Sacred Attitudes, I continued my spiritual and psychological studies and expanded them to related fields. I spent time with many great teachers of spirituality, philosophy, somatic emotional psychology, Yoga, nutrition, Tai Chi, and the principles of Chinese Medicine. They

have all enriched my life. However, I have found that the greatest lessons of all come from giving daily attention to my attitudes and how they affect my life experience.

Over time, I have found Seven Sacred Attitudes that bring more meaning to my life:

- 1) **Use Inner Wisdom**
- 2) **Accept What's So**
- 3) **Go Slow**
- 4) **Do Less**
- 5) **Show Up**
- 6) **Trust the Process**
- 7) **Be With the Questions**

Making these attitudes a regular part of my life has become my top priority. The simple daily process I use for cultivating Sacred Attitudes is:

Stop Breathe Notice Choose

- **Stop** means to do just that.
- **Breathe** means to take a few slow, deep breaths and pay attention to the physical effects.
- **Notice** means to observe the “attitude” I am holding. Am I insisting? Going fast? Fighting for answers? Doubting myself? I notice the physical aspect of my “attitude.” Am I wrinkling a brow? Hunching my shoulders? Holding my breath? I notice what is before me. Right here, right now. If it is an emotion, I feel it fully. If it is a burned roast or a frozen computer, I just notice it (after I notice my screaming).

• **Choose** means to take an action that supports one of the Seven Sacred Attitudes I want to cultivate. Use **Inner Wisdom. Accept What's So. Go Slow. Do Less. Show Up. Trust the Process. Be With the Questions.** I might choose to stop rushing, and to *Go Slow*. I might choose to stop insisting, to experiment, and *Accept What's So*.

Stop Breathe Notice Choose

This daily practice is simple to do when all is right with the world. It is not so simple when we're faced with the challenges of our daily life or when in the face of tragedy. But if you've become accustomed to cultivating the Sacred Attitudes in the less challenging moments, it becomes easier to cultivate them in the hardest of circumstances. Cultivating Sacred Attitudes is an ongoing practice. We do the best we can do each moment in our lives.

You'll notice that I use many stories in this book to encourage you to explore and practice the Seven Sacred Attitudes. As Barry Lopez's fable, *Crow and Weasel*, teaches, "*stories are the way we care for one another and they are the bread for our journeys.*"

Stories can show us that we have options and that there are places for us to test out new attitudes. New postures. New ways of thinking and being in the world. And this is where the fun starts.

Each of my stories represents one of the Seven Sacred Attitudes in action. The inquiries—powerful questions to ponder—that follow each essay are meant to help you reflect on

the message of that story and see how it applies to your own life.

Use the stories and inquiries for inspiration. Use them for introspection. Use them for discussion groups with friends. Use them to help you cultivate the Seven Sacred Attitudes in your life.

Erica Ross-Krieger

Walnut Creek, California

December 2005