

Lesson 8 Teacher's Guide: Paradigms Part 2: Positive Emotion & Attitude

1. Lesson Header

Position: Lesson 8 of 20

Duration: 35–45 minutes

Age Group: 12–18 years, Liberia, West Africa

Core Idea: A new idea does not change your paradigm just by being understood. It needs positive emotion behind it, and attitude is the thoughts, feelings, and actions you choose to combine.

2. Learning Objectives

By the end of this lesson, students will be able to:

1. Explain why understanding alone does not change a paradigm
2. Define attitude as the combination of thought, feeling, and action
3. Reframe a moment of dissatisfaction as useful fuel rather than despair
4. Practice attaching real feeling to a chosen thought

3. Opening Hook (5 minutes)

Ask: “How many of you know you should study a little every evening?” Most hands go up.

“How many of you actually do it, every evening, without fail?” Far fewer hands.

“So knowing isn't the problem. Today we find out what is.”

4. Core Content

Understanding Isn't Enough

You can understand a new idea perfectly and still not change. Understanding alone doesn't reach the subconscious.

It needs positive emotion behind it. Feeling is what actually drives an idea past the gate.

Attitude, Defined Properly

Attitude is not just a mood. It is the combination of your thoughts, your feelings, and your actions, all pointed the same direction.

And here is the part worth repeating: attitude is something you choose. Nobody hands it to you.

Dissatisfaction Is a Good Thing

There is a kind of discomfort worth paying attention to. The feeling that something in your life should be better than it currently is.

That discomfort is not a sign something is wrong with you. It's fuel. Use the emotion in it to go looking for a new, worthy goal, instead of letting it curdle into complaint.

5. Story: "The Bench"

Augustine had played left wing for two seasons and spent most of last season on the bench.

He understood exactly what the coach wanted from him. Track back faster. Cross earlier. Stop drifting inside where the space disappeared. He could recite the instructions word for word.

None of it changed anything on match day. He understood the corrections perfectly and made the same mistakes anyway.

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After another Saturday spent watching from the bench, Augustine walked home along the dirt road past the market, angrier than he wanted to admit.

His older cousin, Varney, found him kicking a stone hard enough to lose his sandal.

"You're not tired," Varney said. "You're dissatisfied. Different thing."

"Same thing," Augustine muttered.

"No. Tired makes you stop. Dissatisfied is supposed to make you move."

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Augustine didn't have a good answer, so he kept walking in silence.

That night, instead of replaying the coach's instructions in his head the way he usually did, flat, memorized, bored of them, he tried something different. He pictured himself actually doing it. Tracking back. Feeling his legs burn doing it. Feeling the specific satisfaction of a cross that landed exactly where it should.

Not the words this time. The feeling underneath the words.

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At Tuesday's practice, something had shifted, though Augustine couldn't have explained what. He tracked back once without thinking about it, purely on instinct, and felt something close to pride the instant he did it.

The coach noticed. Said nothing yet. Just noticed.

Augustine noticed too. The dissatisfaction from Saturday was still there, underneath. He just wasn't kicking stones with it anymore.

6. Activity (10 minutes)

Materials: any paper, any pen or pencil.

1. Write down an instruction or piece of advice you already understand but haven't acted on.
2. Write down how many times you've heard it without it changing anything.
3. Close your eyes and picture yourself actually doing it, not the words, the feeling. Thirty seconds.
4. Open your eyes and write down the feeling you found, in your own words.
5. Write one sentence turning any current dissatisfaction you're carrying into a goal, instead of a complaint.

7. Discussion Questions

1. What is something you understand perfectly but still haven't changed?
2. What's the difference between being tired and being dissatisfied, in your own words?
3. Where have you felt a correction or instruction land differently once real feeling was attached to it?
4. What is one piece of dissatisfaction you're ready to turn into fuel this week?

8. Facilitator Notes

This is a shorter lesson than most. Don't stretch it artificially. Leave room for the visualization step in the activity; it's the heart of the lesson.

Some students will confuse 'attitude' with simply being cheerful. Correct this gently: attitude is thought, feeling, and action combined, not a fixed smile.

The dissatisfaction reframe is powerful but can be misused to justify constant complaint. Watch for that and redirect toward naming an actual goal.

This lesson connects to the fuller Stick Person diagram if available. Show it here if you haven't already in Lesson 6.

9. Bridge to Lesson 9

Before students leave, ask:

"If feeling is what drives a new idea into your subconscious, what do you think happens once it actually gets there?"

Let them guess.

"We follow it all the way through next time."