Ethics & Morality · GS - IV

"The greatest discovery of my generation is that a human being can alter his life by altering his attitudes." – William James. What does this quotation convey to you in the present context?

EXAM YEAR	PAPER	SUBJECT
2025	GS - IV	Ethics & Morality

MARKS	WORD LIMIT
10	~150 words

Answer Hint

Attitude, mindset, resilience, growth mindset, perception, behavioural change, optimism, emotional intelligence, public service, self-development

Model Answer

Introduction

William James highlights the transformative power of attitude. Although circumstances impose constraints, an individual's interpretation and response can substantially influence behaviour, relationships and outcomes.

Contemporary Relevance

1. From victimhood to agency: A constructive attitude encourages individuals to identify solutions rather than remain trapped in problems.
2. Resilience: Optimism and perseverance help people recover from failure, unemployment, professional setbacks or personal adversity.
3. Growth mindset: Viewing mistakes as learning opportunities promotes continuous improvement.
4. Social relationships: Empathy and tolerance can transform conflictual relationships into cooperative ones.

5. Public administration: A citizen-centric attitude can change bureaucracy from a control-oriented institution into a service-oriented institution.

Example

An administrator facing low vaccination uptake may either blame citizens or adopt a problem-solving attitude by understanding local fears, involving community leaders and improving communication.

Conclusion

Attitude cannot eliminate structural constraints, poverty or institutional limitations, but it determines how individuals respond to them. Thus, self-awareness, empathy, optimism and continuous learning can convert challenges into opportunities for ethical and constructive action.

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