

By Michael H. Cook, Editor

## Are You a 'Thermometer' or a 'Thermostat?'



**W**hile flipping through the pages of the advance program for ASTD's 1982 National Conference, May 16-22 in San Antonio, I couldn't help but notice Joel Weldon's name listed among the slate of distinguished general session speakers. His session title... "Jet Pilots Don't Use Rear View Mirrors!"

The write-up brought to mind the importance of "self-actualization" in our lives and the meaning behind a well-known Weldonism: "Jobs don't have futures, people do!" It is up to each of us to provide links between present activities and future goals, or time spent will be meaningless. Self-actualized persons are aware of their strengths as well as their weaknesses, and strive to use their abilities and potentials.

I last saw Joel Weldon when he spoke to a standing room only audience at the 1980 ASTD National Conference in Anaheim, Calif. Another catchy title... "Elephants Don't Bite, But Mosquitos and Gnats Do!" suggested it's not the *big* things in life that get us, it's the little things. "It could be the little things that make the *huge* difference in the programs you put on for the people you train," he emphasized.

### It's not the job...

How correct Mr. Weldon is! We can't just train people for the job... We must *build* better people! It's not the job... it's the *person* doing the job! If these people have positive, expectant attitudes, they will see the oppor-

tunities in their jobs and take advantage of them. Before you can improve *their* attitudes, however, you must have developed your own.

At that Anaheim session, I learned that people can be compared to *thermometers* and *thermostats*. The *thermometers* simply *react* to the way things are. If their training budget gets cut, they're down. If they survive the budget cuts and get the money they want, they're up! These are the people that are only positive when they have a "good" group to train.

There really is no such thing as a "good" or "bad" group... it's the person who is up in front of that group. It's you and your attitude.

If you're a *thermostat*, as Weldon pointed out, you control what happens around you. You can set yourself on "high" when training a group, and, regardless of their "temperature" to begin with, you can adjust them to that same level. It's you and your positive attitude!

Developing a positive attitude is a skill or ability that must be learned through trial and error and constant improvement. Bob Conklin of Personal Dynamics, Inc. often says, "Positive thinking is like driving a race car. In the hands of the skilled, high speeds and exhilarating victories can be achieved. The inexperienced at the wheel, however, can end up smashed against a wall!"

In developing this type of attitude, we must take personal responsibility for our work to get

results rather than give excuses. We must promise a lot and deliver even more! Tell your people what a great training program you have for them... what wonderful materials you're going to share with them... and then, give them more than they ever expected. As Joel Weldon's logo claims, "Success comes in cans, not in cannots!"

### If you're interested

Joining Weldon on the slate of general session speakers for the 1982 ASTD National Conference are: *Buckminster Fuller*, distinguished scientific thinker, inventor, philosopher and author; Barbara Marx Hubbard, founder of the Committee for the Future and responsible for introducing the concept of "futurism" to our society; Robert Blake and Jane Mouton, president and vice president of Scientific Methods, Inc. and developers of the Grid theory and technique, one of the most influential concepts in the history of HRD; and Lloyd Dobyns, writer and anchorperson of the award-winning NBC white paper, "If Japan Can... Why Can't We?" and its sequel, "America Works When America Works."

If you would like complete program and registration information for the 1982 ASTD National Conference, please contact: Conference Registrar, Suite 305, 600 Maryland Ave., S.W., Washington, DC 20024; 202-484-2390.