

CHARACTER

Martin Luther King hoped one day that his children would be judged not by the colour of their skin but by the content of their character. It is such a powerful statement and particularly so given the racist backdrop when he spoke those words.

However, it is as true today as it was then and this is how ALL of us, I believe, should be judged... by our character. We aim to develop physical attributes, intellectual ones too and character in all our students; but because the first two are menaces without the third, the greatest of these is without doubt character."

But, what is it and how do we acquire it?

The dictionary describes it as all the qualities and features that make up a person. A set of values that are not political, religious, or culturally biased.

Confucius said by looking at a man's faults, you know the man's character and to reveal his character, test him when he is tired.

Tell me your companions and I will tell you what you are.

Judge a great man by watching what he does in little things.

Character is what we do when no-one else is looking. The true test of character is not how much we know how to do, but how we behave when we don't know what to do."

Good character is more to be praised than outstanding talent. Most talents are, to some extent, a gift. Good character, by contrast, is not given to us. We have to build it, piece by piece -- by thought, choice, courage, and determination.

I would suggest there are 6 pillars of character.

Trustworthiness

Be honest • Don't deceive, cheat or steal • Be reliable — do what you say you'll do • Have the courage to do the right thing • Build a good reputation • Be loyal — stand by your family, friends and country when it is right to do so.

Respect

Treat others with respect; follow the Golden Rule • Be tolerant of differences • Use good manners, not bad language • Be considerate of the feelings of others • Don't threaten, hit or hurt anyone • Deal peacefully with anger, insults and disagreements

Responsibility

Do what you are supposed to do • Persevere: keep on trying! • Always do your best • Use self-control • Be self-disciplined • Think before you act — consider the consequences • Be accountable for your choices

Fairness

Play by the rules • Take turns and share • Be open-minded; listen to others • Don't take advantage of others • Don't blame others carelessly

Caring

Be kind • Be compassionate and show you care • Express gratitude • Forgive others • Help people in need

Citizenship

Do your share to make your school and community better • Cooperate • Get involved in community affairs • Stay informed; vote • Be a good neighbour • Obey laws and rules • Respect authority • Protect the environment

Parents and teachers, homes and schools can only give good advice or put YOU on the right paths, but the final forming of a person's character lies in their own hands.

