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MOTIVATED

THE MAGAZINE THAT MOVES YOU!



What Matters

Today's Responsibilities
The future is now!

Parenting From the Heart
Hopeless case?—A true story

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Character is...

Wouldn't we all just love to live in a positive, problem-free world? Unfortunately, that's not the case. It would be no use to gloss over the world's problems, and make them appear to be simple. They're not.

Here is an interesting phenomenon of modern life, paraphrased from *Raising Positive Kids in a Negative World*, by Zig Ziglar:

If I were to stand in front of an audience of virtually any kind and advocate violence, immorality, smoking, drug and alcohol abuse, they would look at me in stunned astonishment. If, while talking about these things, I would sprinkle foul language, and four-letter words throughout the presentation, there isn't one group in a thousand that would sit still and listen. The parents in the audience who knew I was going to be making the same speech to their sons and daughters at the local school the next day would move heaven and earth to get my speaking engagement cancelled.

Yet, the fact is that this same song is sung to us and the minds of our children with a beat, dozens, even hundreds of times daily through movies, music, and the modern media. The impact is far greater than the same words would have if I used them in a speech, and they were heard only once.

How can we change things for the better, and turn things around? I believe that working on building good character traits might be one of the most important things we can do.

William Cottringer said, "Good character is when your head, heart, soul, and hands agree to do the right thing, in the right way, for the right reasons, and the combined effort gets the right results in the midst of the most adverse of conditions."

I hope the articles in this issue of *Motivated* will provide the boost and inspiration we all need to continue to be a positive influence on our children and those around us, which, if we keep at it, will change our world.

Christina Lane
For *Motivated*

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What Matters

Author Unknown

A few years ago at the Seattle Special Olympics, nine contestants, all physically or intellectually challenged, assembled at the starting line for the 100-yard dash. At the sound of the gun, they all started out—not exactly in a dash, but with a relish to run the race to the finish and win.

All, that is, except one boy who stumbled on the asphalt, tumbled over a couple of times, and began to cry. The other eight heard the boy cry. They slowed down and looked back. When they saw what had happened, they all turned around and went back—every one of them. One girl with Down's syndrome, upon reaching him bent down, kissed him, and said, "This will make it better." Then all nine linked arms and walked across the finish line together.

Everyone in the stadium stood, and the cheering went on for several minutes.

People who were there are still telling the story. Why? Because deep down we know this one thing: What matters in life is more than winning for ourselves. What truly matters is helping others in their race, even if it means slowing down and changing our course. ■

Qualities to Cultivate

AVAILABILITY

Making my own schedule and priorities secondary to the wishes of those I serve.

BOLDNESS

Confidence that what I have to say or do is true, right, and just.

CONTENTMENT

Realizing that true happiness does not depend on material conditions.

DISCRETION

Recognizing and avoiding words, actions, and attitudes that could bring undesirable consequences.

Qualities to Cultivate

ENTHUSIASM

Expressing joy in each task as I give it my best effort.

FAITH

Confidence that actions rooted in good character will yield the best outcome, even when I cannot see how.

GENEROSITY

Carefully managing my resources so I can freely give to those in need.

HUMILITY

Acknowledging that achievement results from the investment of others in my life.

Resigned to Win

By Marie Boisjoly, adapted

The other day a bumper sticker caught my attention. Resigned Alcoholic. It was meant as a joke, I'm sure, and it got a smile out of me, but as I thought about it more I realized how easy it is to resign ourselves to weaknesses or circumstances that hold us back from becoming all we could be. We may not think of ourselves as defeatists, but if we accept that rationale, we're defeated. When we start excusing ourselves, we stop progressing.

I'm an avid reader, and I always keep some uplifting reading on my bedside table. One of my favorites is a collection of short biographies and quotes from great men and women—not that I aspire to such greatness, but I find their examples a source of strength to meet life's daily challenges.

What made these people great? Some of the qualities most often cited by both historians and their peers were their foresight, moral character, selflessness, and perseverance in the face of seemingly insurmountable obstacles. I'm sure that each of those great men and women had other intangibles, but for one man in particular it was his faith and tenacity. His name was William Wilberforce (1759-1833).

During his 18-year parliamentary campaign to abolish the slave trade throughout the British Empire, his first 11 bills were defeated. At times, the political hostility against him erupted into personal hatred, insult, slander, and even a threat on his life by a sea captain involved in the slave

Qualities to Cultivate

INITIATIVE

Recognizing and doing what needs to be done before I am asked to do it.

JOYFULNESS

Maintaining a good attitude, even when faced with unpleasant conditions.

LOYALTY

Using difficult times to demonstrate my commitment to those I serve.

ORDERLINESS

Arranging myself and my surroundings to achieve greater efficiency.

trade. But he never accepted defeat.

“It is necessary to keep an eye on him,” one adversary remarked of Wilberforce, “because he has been blessed with a good quantity of this enthusiasm spirit that is far from giving up and that gets more vigorous with every blow!” Where did he get this “enthusiasm spirit”? Biographers may not agree on every detail of his experience, but all credit his faith with fueling his fire.

All the while, he also contended with debilitating health problems. His eyesight was so bad that he once wrote, “I can scarce see how to direct my pen.” Bedridden for weeks at a time, he also suffered from curvature of the spine (one writer of his day likened him to a “human corkscrew,” and he wore an iron corset for 15 years), an ulcerated colon, and a severe bout of influenza from which he never fully recovered. And of course medicine 200 years ago was not what it is today. At one point Wilberforce became addicted to the latest “wonder drug,” opium. Had Wilberforce given up his fight, others would have quickly excused him for health reasons, if nothing else. But he was looking for change, not excuses.

The Slave Trade Act was passed into law in 1807, and in 1833, three days before he died, he received word that enough votes had been secured to ensure passage of the Slavery Abolition Act, and the emancipation of slaves.

I’m no William Wilberforce, but why resign myself to what are really petty problems when there’s a world to set free, starting with me?

I’m resigned to win! ■

TODAY'S

Qualities to Cultivate

PATIENCE

Accepting a difficult situation without giving a deadline to remove it.

PUNCTUALITY

Showing esteem for others by doing the right thing at the right time.

RESOURCEFULNESS

Finding practical uses for that which others would overlook or discard.

SENSITIVITY

Perceiving the true attitudes and emotions of those around me.

By Becky Roach, adapted Web Reprint

I once heard a lecture entitled, "The Future Is Now." I remember the title because I found it so intriguing. I wish I had paid much more attention to the truth of that message! How wise was that speaker, and how true the quote, "You cannot escape the responsibility of tomorrow by evading it today."

If a businessperson wants his business to be successful, he must do every day the things that are necessary for it to prosper. Daily discipline is not an option. I, for one, have learned that lesson the hard way in some areas of life. It is so easy to put things off and think that we will do better tomorrow.

They are usually little things, or at least what seem to be little things, that cause the problems. Things such as, "I know I should diet and exercise, and I'm going to, but one more day won't hurt. I'll begin tomorrow." But the future is now and before we know it we are twenty pounds overweight and it is harder than ever to start dieting and exercising. We make our lives so much harder because we think we can wait until tomorrow.

If we want to save money for a rainy day, or for old age, or for our children's college, we must begin now. If we don't begin to save when we are quite young, it will likely never happen.

RESPONSIBILITY

The future is now!

Time and opportunities slip by so quickly. We must discipline ourselves to exercise, or to save, no matter how great the sacrifice, for it will be worth it. When “tomorrow” comes, we will be glad if we lived responsibly each day.

If we want successful and fulfilling marriages and family relationships, again we must discipline ourselves to fulfill daily responsibilities that will develop those relationships. If spouses and parents spend all of their time at work or indulge in hobbies or other kinds of personal pursuits and neglect each other and/or their children, they will be disappointed, disillusioned, frustrated, and, perhaps, even despair when they realize their marriage has failed and their children are grown and gone. They will have completely missed the joy they could have had, if they had devoted more time to each other and their children.

We have responsibilities (that are also privileges) that we must carry out every single day. To put them off until tomorrow can bring us great sorrow. However, when we discipline ourselves to perform these responsibilities diligently, our days and our future can be joyful and meaningful beyond our imagination.

Success and happiness tomorrow are determined by what we think, say, and, most of all *do*, each and every day. The future is now! ■

Qualities to Cultivate

SINCERITY

Eagerness to do what is right with transparent motives.

TOLERANCE

Realizing that everyone is at varying levels of character development.

TRUTHFULNESS

Earning future trust by accurately reporting past facts.

WISDOM

Seeing and responding to life situations from a perspective that transcends my current circumstances.

HOPELESS CASE?

A TRUE STORY



Go with me to a crowded courtroom in a metropolitan city. A boy sixteen years of age, accused of stealing an automobile, stands before the judge, awaiting sentence. In a chair nearby, a mother sobs hysterically. An attorney has just testified that the young offender has been a constant nuisance to the community. Previously the chief of police had told how the boy had been arrested on numerous occasions for stealing fruit, breaking windows, and committing other acts of vandalism.

Now the stern cold-eyed judge, glaring over the rims of his spectacles, launches into a bitter tirade against the youth, reminding him of the dire consequences which will result from his lawless acts. Every word from the thin-lipped judge is like the crack of a whip, as he mercilessly berates the defendant for his irresponsible conduct. He seems to be searching his vocabulary for the cruelest words he can find with which to humiliate the lad who stands before him.

But the boy does not cower before this bitter tongue-lashing. His attitude is one of reckless defiance. Not once does he lower his eyes from the face of the judge. With compressed lips and flashing eyes, he glares at his persecutor. When the judge pauses for a moment to let his words take effect, the boy looks him straight in the eye, and from between clenched teeth come the words, "I'm not afraid of you."

An angry flush spreads over the face of the judge as he leans over his desk and snaps out, "I think about the only language you can understand is a six-month sentence in reform school."

"Go ahead and send me to the reform school," the boy snarls. "See if I care."

The feeling in the courtroom is tense. Spectators look at one another and shake their heads.

"That kid is hopeless!" an officer has just remarked.

All of the criticism hurled at the boy has served only to stir up a deeper feeling of hatred and resentment in him. The scene is much like that of a lion trainer jabbing at a caged beast



By Clarence Westphall, adapted

with a pointed stick, with every thrust goading the victim to renewed fury.

At this point, the judge spies among the spectators a man from a nearby town, the superintendent of a home for problem boys.

“Sir,” he says, in a tone of weary resignation, “what do you think of this boy?”

The man in question steps forward. He has an air of assurance that immediately commands respect, and a kindly look in his eyes that makes you feel that here is a man who really understands boys.

“Judge,” he says quietly, “that boy isn’t really tough. Underneath that bluff of his he is completely and thoroughly frightened and deeply hurt. My belief is that he has never had a chance. Life has been bewildering to him. He has never known a father’s love. He has never had the hand of a friend to guide him. I’d like to see him given a chance to show what he’s really worth.”

For a moment the courtroom is quiet. Then the silence is suddenly broken by a stifled sob, not from the mother, but from the boy! The kind, sympathetic words of the superintendent have broken him completely. There he stands with shoulders drooped and head bowed, as tears slowly trickle down his cheeks. One kind word has reached the boy’s heart, whereas a half-hour of denunciation had served only to make him the more resentful.

The judge coughs to hide his embarrassment and nervously adjusts his spectacles. Then the chief of police, who had testified against the lad, slips from the room, followed by the attorney.

After a moment of deliberation, the judge turns and says, “If you think you can do anything with the boy, I’ll suspend sentence and turn him over to you.”

The conclusion of the story is that the lad was given into the superintendent’s charge, and from that time forth he caused no more trouble. The friendly gesture of the man who had come to his defense that day in the courtroom had put his feet on a new path and helped to bring out those finer qualities of character, which no one previously thought even existed. ■

THE POWER OF WORDS

By Colin Dunbar, adapted Web Reprint

I've been fascinated with words for as long as I can remember, and after reading my first copy of *Think and Grow Rich*, I began a life-long journey into the power of words. When words are read not only as groups of characters, but as thoughts or emotions, the real power of words can help, inspire, encourage, and motivate us.

Although it's more than 20 years since my daughter was born, I can still remember that day, when the doctor shouted, "It's a girl!" Those three words changed my life. And that's the power of words.

And there's the handwritten note given to me by my son with the words, "I love you Daddy." Nothing comes close to words like these!

One of my favorite passages from *The Power of One* by Bryce Courtney is this:

"...always in life an idea starts small, it is only a sapling idea, but the vines will come and they will try to choke your idea so it cannot grow and it will die and you will never know you had a big idea, an idea so big it could have grown thirty meters through the dark canopy of leaves and touched the face of the sky. ... The vines are people who are afraid of originality, of new thinking; most people you encounter will be vines, when you are a young plant they are very dangerous. Always listen to yourself... It is better to be wrong than simply to follow convention. If you are wrong, no matter, you have learned something and you will grow stronger. If you are right you have taken another step towards a fulfilling life."

Think back to when you were a kid, and the words of encouragement you got from your dad, mom, teacher... and even later, as an adult, words of encouragement from a boss, a coach, and especially from a loved one.

This is where the power of words is unquestionable—being encouraged when a job or task is done well; it gives us such a boost to our confidence, and makes life a pleasure to live.

Our words can encourage, inspire, comfort, teach, and a whole lot more. Wherever and however words encourage and positively affect you, take them, use them, share them, and discover the joy and rewards you get. ■

10 WAYS TO SHOW ENCOURAGEMENT TO OTHERS

By Colin Dunbar, adapted Web Reprint

I have never met anyone who did not like to be praised. Some find it harder than others to accept praise, and some can be embarrassed by praise, but we all like to have some.

Praise is something that we can all give freely. It will make the other person feel good and you yourself will benefit from knowing that you are responsible for having had this effect.

When we praise and encourage others, we can sometimes kick-start a positive spiral of behavior in that person:

- He will feel more accepted and valued.
- He is more likely to put in effort on other occasions.
- He is more likely to be successful in his efforts.

WE CAN ENCOURAGE OTHERS BY:

1. Showing interest in them.
2. Saying, "Well done."
3. Saying, "Thank you!"
4. Writing thank-you letters after receiving gifts.
5. After going to a friend's for a meal, phoning later or dropping an email to praise the meal and company.
6. Reciprocating favors.
7. Sometimes confiding in someone or asking for their advice, which lets them know that we value and trust them.
8. Being prepared to recognize when someone else needs help, and offering to lend a hand.
9. Calling around or making some recognition of someone else's loss, bad news, or distress.
10. Offering genuine friendship.

Finally, remember that it is also important to encourage and praise yourself. Do this regularly! ■



CHARACTER IS ...

Good character is the quality which makes one dependable whether being watched or not; which makes one truthful when it is to one's advantage to be a little less than truthful; which makes one courageous when faced with great obstacles; which endows one with the firmness of wise self-discipline. *-Arthur S. Adams*

Character cannot be developed in ease and quiet. Only through experience of trial and suffering can the soul be strengthened, vision cleared, ambition inspired, and success achieved.
-Hellen Keller

Hard work spotlights the character of people: some turn up their sleeves, some turn up their noses, and some don't turn up at all. *-Sam Ewing*

Try not to become a man of success but rather try to become a man of value. *-Albert Einstein*

It is with trifles, and when he is off guard, that a man best reveals his character. *-Arthur Schopenhauer*

Every man's work, whether it be literature or music or pictures or anything else, is always a portrait of himself, and the more he tries to conceal himself the more clearly will his character appear in spite of him. *-Samuel Butler*

If we want our children to possess the traits of character we most admire, we need to teach them what those traits are and why they deserve both admiration and allegiance. Children must learn to identify the forms and content of those traits.
-William J. Bennett

Character is like a tree, and reputation like its shadow. The shadow is what we think of it; the tree is the real thing. *-Abraham Lincoln*

Fame is a vapor, popularity an accident, riches take wing, and only character endures. *-Horace Greeley*