Character

To say America can have strong leadership without strong character is to say we can get water without the wet. *(J. C. Watts)*

I was going to sue for defamation of character, but then I realized I have no character. *(Charles Barkley, TV basketball analyst)*

Somebody once said that in looking for people to hire, you look for three qualities: integrity, intelligence, and energy. But if they don’t have the first, the other two will kill you. *(Warren Buffett)*

Calamity is the test of integrity. *(Samuel Richardson, in Clarissa, or, The History of a Young Lady)*

Any fool can criticize, condemn, and complain, and most fools do. But it takes character and self-control to be understanding and forgiving. *(Dale Carnegie, in How to Win Friends and Influence People)*

**Competition doesn’t create character, it exposes it. *(Bits & Pieces)***

Character is a diamond that scratches every other stone. *(Cyrus A. Bartol, minister)*

People rarely disclose their character so clearly as when they describe someone else’s. *(Bits & Pieces)*

English legal doctrine holds that a dog is of good character unless proven otherwise. *(L. M. Boyd)*

Dollars have never been known to produce character, and character will never be produced by money. *(W. K. Kellogg, in I'll Invest My Money in People)*

Personality can open doors, but only character can keep them open. *(Elmer G. Letterman, author)*

Character is higher than intellect. *(Ralph Waldo Emerson)*

The most futile thing in this world is any attempt at exact definition of character. All individuals are a bundle of contradictions. *(Theodore Dreiser)*

Your character is your fate. *(Maya Plisetskaya, ballerina)*

Psychologists have said the child delights in what he has, the youth in what he does, and the adult in what he is. Possessions and experience are parts of growing up, but our goal must be character – because God looks at our hearts. *(Betty Rossen)*

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You can easily judge the character of a man by the way he treats those who can do nothing for him. *(Goethe)*

Talent develops in quiet, character in the torrent of the world. *(Johann Wolfgang von Goethe)*

**Men show their character in nothing more clearly than by what they think laughable. *(Goethe)***

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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. *(John Luther)*

A man chosen for jury duty very much wanted to be dismissed from serving. On the first day, he decided to give it one more shot. As the trial was about to begin, he asked if he could approach the bench. “Your honor,” he said, “I must be excused from this trial because I am prejudiced against the defendant. I took one look at the man in the blue suit, with those beady eyes and that dishonest face, and I said, “He’s a crook! He’s guilty, guilty, guilty.” So I could not possibly be on this jury.” “Get back in the jury box,” the judge replied. “You’re just the kind of juror we are looking for – a good judge of character. That man is his lawyer.” *(The American Legion magazine)*

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The Great Wall of China is a gigantic structure that cost an immense amount of money and labor. When it was finished it appeared impregnable. But three times the enemy breached it – not by breaking it down or going around it. They did it by bribing the gatekeepers. Dr. Harry Emerson Fosdick, in referring to this historical fact, had this to say: “It was the human element that failed. What collapsed was character that proved insufficient to make the great structure men had fashioned really work.” *(Bits & Pieces)*

Fame is a vapor, popularity an accident, and riches take wings. Only one thing endures, and that is character. *(Horace Greeley)*

**Rules cannot take the place of character. *(Alan Greenspan)***

Character is simply habit long continued. *(Plutarch)*

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, radio announcer)*

To keep your character intact, you cannot stoop to filthy acts. It makes it easier to stoop the next time. *(Katharine Hepburn)*

History is the record of an encounter between character and circumstance. *(Donald Creighton, in Towards the Discovery of Canada)*

Dustin Hoffmann’s career almost ended before it began, says Abigail Pogrebin in The Jewish Chronicle. When Hoffman began studying drama in 1958, he quickly found himself consigned to what were delicately called “character” roles. “The word ‘character’ had a hidden meaning,” he says, grinning. “It means ‘ethnic.’ ‘Ethnic’ means nose.” His Aunt Pearl agreed with the casting directors’ assessment. “You can’t be an actor,” she told him. “You’re too ugly.” When director Mike Nichols convinced him to audition for his breakout role in The Graduate, his insecurities erupted. The part of Benjamin Braddock was written for a WASP. “That day was torturous. Dear Mike, who was extremely courageous to cast me, was at the same time aware that I looked nothing like what the part called for. He’s saying with his usual wry humor, ‘What can we do about his nose?’ Or, ‘He looks like he has one eyebrow.’ I felt, from my subjective point of view, that the whole crew was wondering, ‘Why is this ugly little Jew even trying out for this part called Benjamin Braddock? The guy’s name is not Bratowski!” It was the culmination of everything I had feared and dreaded. Aunt Pearl was right!” *(The Week magazine, December 22, 2006)*

The proper time to influence the character of a child is about 100 years before he is born. *(William Ralph Inge, theologian)*

What gives us our deepest satisfactions in life? Psychologist William James answered that question in a letter written to his wife in 1878. Wrote James: “I have often thought that the best way to define a man’s character would be to seek out the particular mental or moral attitude in which, when it came upon him, he felt himself most deeply and intensely active and alive. At such moments there is a voice inside which speaks and says: ‘This is the real me!’” *(Bits & Pieces)*

The best lesson anyone can take from the life of basketball great Michael Jordan lies in a brief period when no one thought he was any good – during his attempt to play baseball. Those days of humiliation provide the answer to why the brilliant days are so often his. Just about every morning of that baseball summer, Jordan would urge his batting instructor to join him at the minor-league ballpark. Everyone knew Jordan wouldn’t make it to the majors, but he wasn’t about to concede. Instead, he worked and worked, hour after hour, trying to get better at something at which he had already been declared a failure. It was the best and truest Jordan. The great moments, when the world cheers, are not the moments that count. The ones that count are when it’s just you, and people have stopped believing in you. Those are the moments that define you. *(Bob Greene, in Chicago Tribune)*

Character cannot be developed in ease and quiet. Only through experiences of trial and suffering can the soul be strengthened, vision cleared, ambition inspired, and success achieved. *(Helen Keller)*

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The true measure of a man is how he treats someone who can do him absolutely no good. *(Ann Landers)*

Character is what you are willing to do when the spotlight has been turned off, the applause has died down and no one is around to give you credit. *(Quoted by Ann Landers, Creators Syndicate)*

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Nearly all men can stand adversity. but if you want to test a man's character, give him power. *(Abraham Lincoln)*

Character is like a tree and reputation like its shadow. The shadow is what we think of it; the tree is the real thing. *(The Wit & Wisdom of Abraham Lincoln, edited by Alex Ayres, p. 38)*

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When wealth is lost, nothing is lost: when health is lost, something is lost: when character is lost, all is lost. *(German proverb)*

How a man plays the game shows something of his character; how he loses shows all of it. *(Camden County, Georgia, Tribune)*

Character consists of what you do on the third and fourth tries. *(James Michener, author)*

Character is what you are in the dark. *(Dwight L. Moody)*

Financer J. P. Morgan was once asked what he thought the best bank collateral was. “Character,” he replied. *(Bits & Pieces)*

If you don’t have enemies, you don’t have character. *(Paul Newman)*

No one knows his true character until he has run out of gas, purchased something on the installment plan, and raised an adolescent. *(Edna McCann, in The Heritage Book 1985)*

Characters live to be noticed. People with character notice how they live. *(Nancy Moser)*

Character is much easier kept than recovered. *(Thomas Paine)*

Of all the properties which belong to honorable men, not one is so highly prized as that of character. *(Country Extra magazine)*

A THOUGHT TO REMEMBER: The real character of a man can be measured by what he does when no one’s looking. *(Reminisce magazine)*

The sky may be falling on Wall Street, said Kansas banker Bill Wyckoff. But Chicken Little isn’t running around here in the heart of Kansas, where “community banks like mine are still making loans.” Community bankers have long worried about how to compete with those “too-big-to-fail” banks that talk in multi-million-dollar ad campaigns about putting their customers first but haven’t a clue what that really means. The heads of those banks “don’t list their personal numbers in the phone book and probably aren’t driving the volunteer fire truck.” Small banks get to know their customers in a way the “monsters” never can, which is one of the reasons it’s business as usual in southeast Kansas. “My father always told me that character repaid many more debts than collateral ever would.” That lesson was lost on the big banks, not to mention the regulators now having to bail them out. *(The Week magazine, October 17, 2008)*

Reputation is character minus what you've been caught doing. *(Michael Iapoce, in A Funny Thing Happened on the Way to the Boardroom)*

**A person reveals his character by nothing so clearly as the joke he resents. *(G. C. Lichtenberg)***

People grow through experience if they meet life honestly and courageously. This is how character is built. *(Eleanor Roosevelt)*

Character, in the long run, is the decisive factor in the life of an individual and of nations alike. *(Theodore Roosevelt)*

A tree is best measured when down, and so it is with people. *(Carl Sandburg)*

Bear in mind that brains and learning, like muscle and physical skill, are articles of commerce. They are bought and sold. You can hire them by the year or by the hour. The only thing in the world not for sale is character. *(Antonin Scalia, in a speech)*

I’ve met a lot of leaders in the Army who were very competent – but they didn’t have character. And for every job they did well, they sought reward in the form of promotions, in the form of awards and decorations, in the form of getting ahead at the expense of someone else, in the form of another piece of paper that awarded them another degree – a sure road to the top. You see, these were competent people, but they lacked character. I’ve also met a lot of leaders who had superb character but who lacked competence. They weren’t willing to pay the price of leadership, to go the extra mile because that’s what it took to be a great leader. And that’s sort of what it’s all about. To lead in the 21st century – to take soldiers, sailors, airmen into battle – you will be required to have both character and competence. *(Gen. H. Norman Schwarzkopf)*

The severest test of character is not so much the ability to keep a secret as it is, but when the secret is finally out, to refrain from disclosing that you knew it all along. *(Sydney J. Harris, Field Newspaper Syndicate)*

Character is like chiseling a statue; one has to knock off huge hunks of selfishness, which requires self-discipline. Only then does character begin to emerge. *(Bishop Fulton J. Sheen)*

A signature always reveals a man's character -- and sometimes even his name. *(Evan Esar, humorist)*

Character – the willingness to accept responsibility for one’s own life – is the source from which self-respect springs. *(Joan Didion, in Slouching Towards Bethlehem)*

Character is a strange blending of flinty strength and pliable warmth. *(Robert Shaffer, in 20th Century Proverbs)*

Character is the sum total of all our everyday choices. *(Margaret Jensen, in A Nail in a Sure Place)*

There is no better test of someone’s character than their behavior when they are wrong. *(Bits & Pieces)*

**A good character is the best tombstone. Those who loved you and were
helped by you will remember you when forget-me-nots have withered. Carve your name on hearts, not on marble. *(Charles H. Spurgeon)***

No man knows his true character until he has run out of gas, purchases something on the installment plan, and raised an adolescent. *(Marcelene Cox, aphorist)*

It is not worthwhile to try to keep history from repeating itself, for man's character will always make the preventing of the repetitions impossible. *(Mark Twain)*

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Your character is what you are; your reputation is what people THINK you are. Once you get a reputation as an early riser, you can sleep ‘till noon. *(Abigail Van Buren)*

The best index to a person’s character is (a) how he treats people who can’t do him any good and (b) how he treats people who can’t fight back. *(Abigail Van Buren)*

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Character is what you do when nobody is looking. *(Henry Huffman)*

Character is what you know you are, not what others think you are. *(Marva Collins and Civia Tamarkin, in Marva Collins’ Way)*

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