

The Character & **Career** Connection

Grades K-5

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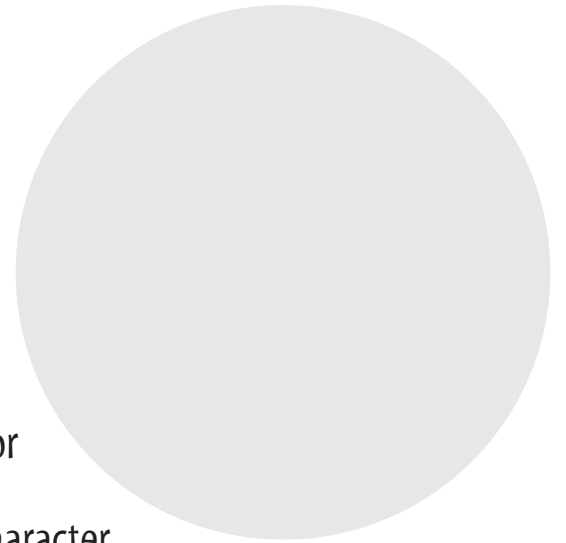
To my husband,

STEVE,

who is a model for

good character

both at home and work.



Acknowledgements

With Special Thanks:

To **NANCY REED** and **ROBERT RABON**

and other staff of National Center for Youth Issues,
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for her encouragement and guidance.



Why You Need This Book

Character is higher than intellect.

—Ralph Waldo Emerson

Having good character means that you are honest and honorable. It also means that you are reliable and responsible. Students who possess good character are trusted by others. They do their best schoolwork and excel academically. These students, upon completing their education, will be much in demand by employers not just because of the skills they have learned, but in large part by the good character they possess.

Some students lie, cheat and steal. These students cannot be trusted. They often are lazy and irresponsible with their schoolwork. Due to their lack of good character, they will have a difficult time obtaining and keeping a job.

Employers are looking for students who not only have high grades in school, but who also possess good character. Businesses are getting more involved in schools because it is understood that the key predictors of an employee's job success and continuance are character traits, not necessarily levels of knowledge. Foremost, businesses are looking for employees who are honest, cooperative, dependable and responsible. (*The Character Education Series*, by Dr. Phillip P. Vincent)

Inez M. Tenenbaum, South Carolina State Superintendent of Education, has stated "Strong character traits, such as honesty, integrity, and responsibility are not only what businesses expect of their employees but also what will lead schools and communities to higher levels of success and achievement."

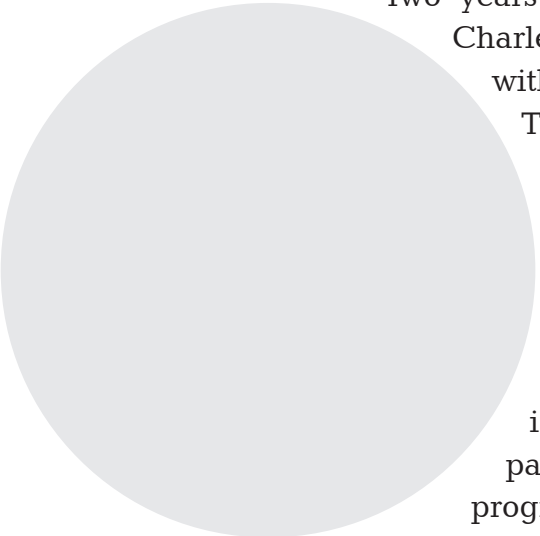
As educators, it is necessary that we teach character education along with career awareness and exploration. It is crucial that students understand that the development of good character is critical for success in the workplace and in life.

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Introduction

For the past eight years I have continually worked on having a meaningful character education program at my school. Having read Thomas Lickona's *Educating for Character, How Our Schools Can Teach Respect and Responsibility*, as well as many other character education publications, I believe character education training is vital for our students to achieve success.



Two years ago the Palmetto Pavilion Publix store in North Charleston, South Carolina became a business partner with my school, Windsor Hill Elementary. The manager, Tiki Vietri, wanted to support my guidance initiative "Kids With Character." At Windsor Hill, students earn "Kid With Character" slips for demonstrating positive character traits. Every Friday a student is honored as that week's "Kid With Character." Publix provides a special treat each week for the winner, and a large picture of the student is posted in a prominent spot in the Publix store. Teachers and parents agree that this is the most effective guidance program in helping students recognize the importance of developing positive character.

Every year our guidance department sponsors a "Career Day" or "Vehicle Day" in which business partners and parents share their careers with students. It is always important for the students to understand how skills they are learning in school are needed for jobs. In recent years I have noticed business partners and parents talking more than ever about how necessary it is for students to develop positive character in order to obtain and keep a job. No longer is "Career Day" a focus only on the importance of learning school academic skills.

I have come to the conclusion that positive character should be taught as a necessary ingredient for obtaining a career. Students may learn reading, math, and science skills, but just as importantly they must learn to be responsible, respectful, caring, and honest.

My hope is that this book will help all educators, both teachers and counselors, teach students the critical link that exists between good character and a successful career.

Amy R. Murray, M.Ed.

Consider These Facts...

- *The Wall Street Journal* says the average business manager spends the equivalent of **1 workday out of 5 (20% of his/her time) just dealing with office politics.**
- A national survey released by the Ethics Officer Association stated that **half of the employees surveyed admitted to acting unethically or illegally** while on the job.
- The Ethics Resource Center, Washington, D.C., found in a 2003 study that nearly one third of respondents say **coworkers condone questionable ethics practices for those who achieve success** using them.
- **Truth telling** is probably the single most cost effective way to make major leaps in productivity and worker satisfaction.
- According to a new University of Michigan Business School study, **small interpersonal acts of compassion** in the workplace have significant, far-reaching effects on co-workers.
- A Gallup study reveals that the best managers are ones who want to see **employees grow and succeed, and who focus on what's best in people.**
- A survey conducted by *The Wall Street Journal International Edition* and the *Nihon Keizai Shimbun* (the leading business newspaper in Japan) showed that **90 percent of the public interviewed considers ethics and values to be "very important"** in building a reputation for good corporate citizenship.
- Showing respect and listening to others increases our own ability to **think creatively, clearly, and effectively.**

Good Character In Action!

*If you don't like something change it; if you can't
change it, change the way you think about it.*

—Mary Engelbreit

Which of these character traits do you possess?

Circle the words that describe you.

Are these traits needed for a good job?

RESPONSIBILITY

reliable
dependable
accountable
trustworthy
loyal
faithful

HONESTY

truthful
trustworthy
honorable
upright
faithful

SELF-DISCIPLINE

self-control
discipline
obedient
restraint

PERSEVERANCE

keep trying
never give up
determination

RESPECT

look up to
follow rules
consider feelings of
high regard for
caring
listen to

COMPASSION

caring
kind
thoughtful
considerate
loving

COURAGE

brave
strong
valiant
bold

CITIZENSHIP

patriotic
help others
community-oriented

Good Character In Action At Work!

*Always be a first-rate version of yourself, instead
of a second-rate version of somebody else.*

—Judy Garland

How is character needed in the workplace?
Draw a line to connect the character trait to how it is needed.

Honesty	I treat everyone at work with courtesy.
Compassion	Everyone trusts me at work.
Self-discipline	I keep working until the task is finished.
Citizenship	I make sure I get to work on time.
Responsibility	My co-workers know that I care about them.
Perseverance	I am not afraid to try new things.
Respect	I try hard to make good decisions.
Courage	I follow all the rules at work.

The character trait I need to continue to work on is _____ .

I can do this by: 1. _____
 2. _____
 3. _____

Good Character For A Career!

*Attitude is a little thing that
makes a big difference.*

—Winston Churchill

Decide which character trait is most needed for each of the jobs pictured below.

Write your answer in the boxes below.

-
- **Responsibility**—reliable, dependable, accountable, trustworthy, loyal, faithful
 - **Respect**—look up to, follow rules, consider feelings of, high regard for, caring, listen to
 - **Honesty**—truthful, trustworthy, honorable, upright, faithful
 - **Compassion**—caring, kind, thoughtful, considerate, loving
 - **Self-discipline**—self-control, discipline, obedient, restraint
 - **Courage**—brave, strong, valiant, bold
 - **Perseverance**—keep trying, never give up, determination
 - **Citizenship**—patriotic, help others, community-oriented
-

