

# Why Character First?

## Three Keys to Building Character

Character development takes place informally every day. In other words, our character is often formed and developed unintentionally. Daily life is a great place to build character, but we must be careful about letting our character develop by chance, for that places far too much control in the hands of our environment and the people around us. The goal of *Character First!* is to help individuals and organizations take responsibility for their personal character growth. By applying the following three keys, you can place a new level of intention on your character development.

### 1 Emphasize

To emphasize good character, simply heighten the awareness. Study character qualities. Read stories of men and women who show good character. Surround yourself with reminders to practice qualities such as responsibility, truthfulness, and compassion. Participate in character-based training opportunities. The more you think in terms of good character qualities, the easier it becomes to make the qualities part of your life.

### 2 Require

Good character is required by raising standards of good character and lowering acceptance of bad behavior. Evaluate your attitudes, words, and actions according to the forty-nine character qualities. Were you paying attention? Did you convey gratefulness? Were you responsible? Did your actions show truthfulness? Focus on character, or the lack of it, when correcting bad behavior.

### 3 Recognize

Everyone desires recognition and praise. Furthermore, we all have a natural tendency to do things that result in recognition. Thus, it is critical to look for good character in others and to praise it. Telling your coworker that he is doing a good job mopping the floor is a good step, but think how much more you could communicate by telling him how thorough he is. Do you think your coworker would rather be known as a "good floor-mopper" or as a "thorough person"? Develop the habit of praising others for good character.

Building character is not like building a machine. It cannot be finished in a day, a week, or even a year. Although tremendous progress is possible in a short time, building character requires a lifetime of commitment, awareness, and effort. Are you ready?

Character: The qualities built into an individual's life that determine his or her response, regardless of circumstances



### Character on the Job and at Home

*Character First! Bulletins* provide insights and applications for all aspects of life. They are dynamic tools that you can use to develop and refine a specific character quality in your life every month.

Visit [store.characterfirst.com](http://store.characterfirst.com) to find other resources designed for families, schools, law enforcement, prisons, businesses, and government agencies.

## An effective *Character Community* in a nutshell:



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