

Building CHARACTER

February 2004 Edition

Character Made Practical

Character First! begins its next series of business bulletins in March. The new bulletins will have a greater focus on practical ways to develop character at work and at home.

Next month's special edition bulletin, *Character*, reintroduces employees and managers to the impact that both good and bad character have in personal and professional life everyday. The April bulletin, *Culture*, will focus on the impact of individual character on an organization's culture, and the May bulletin, *Attentiveness*, begins CTI's next 49-character-quality series.

The bulletins take a two-fold approach to character development, emphasizing practical applications and illustrating each quality with examples from history, nature, and the workplace. Every bulletin also includes a tear-out pocket card for use as an instant reminder of the character quality.

"I believe the new bulletins are very professional looking," said Steve Stedje, a Duke Energy PSM coordinator. "The numbers and bullet points look like they will help our people focus on how to apply character in their lives," he said, adding that he



Character First! will launch the all new business bulletin series in March.

particularly liked the new reference card reminder of the character quality and key concepts.

Most *Character First!* bulletin subscribers are business, civic, and professional organizations who receive a bulletin for each employee. Since launching the *Character First! Series 2 Bulletins* four years ago, nearly three million bulletins have been distributed to employees across the country.

These organizations use the bulletin in connection with a broader emphasis, including an effort to hire people based on character, recognize outstanding demonstrations of individual character, and hold employee meetings to introduce and discuss each month's character quality.

Wisdom vs. Foolishness

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

Aspects of Wisdom:

- Listen to older and more experienced people.
- Learn from correction.
- Choose friends carefully.
- Remember, all actions have consequences.
- Ask, "What is the right thing to do?"

Live a Life that Matters

Ready or not, some day it will all come to an end. There will be no more sunrises, no minutes, hours or days. All the things you collected, whether treasured or forgotten, will pass to someone else.

Your wealth, fame, and temporal power will shrivel to irrelevance. It will not matter what you owned or what you were owed. Your grudges, resentments, frustrations, and jealousies will finally disappear. So too, your hopes, ambitions, plans, and to-do lists will expire. The wins and losses that once seemed so important will fade away.

At the end, it won't matter where you came from or on what side of the tracks you lived. It won't matter whether you were beautiful or brilliant. Even your gender and skin color will be irrelevant.

What will matter is not what you bought, but what you built, not what you got, but

what you gave. What will matter is not your success, but your significance. What will matter is not what you learned, but what you taught.

What will matter is every act of integrity, compassion, courage, or sacrifice that enriched, empowered, or encouraged others to emulate your example. What will matter is not your competence, but your character. What will matter is not how many people you knew, but how many will feel a lasting loss when you're gone.

What will matter is not your memories, but the memories that live in those who loved you. What will matter is not how long you will be remembered, but by whom and for what you will be remembered.

Living a life that matters doesn't happen by accident. It's not a matter of circumstance but choice. Choose to live a life that matters.

Author Unknown

Power of a Name

Do you know the meaning of your name? What about the meaning of your children's names? Looking up the meaning of your child's name can inspire further character development.

Most books or online searches say "David" means "Beloved." The next question is, what character qualities relate to that name or would help your child attain its meaning? For David, you might select Benevolence, Loyalty, Virtue, or Sincerity. Write the meaning of his name on a special certificate along with the character quality and its definition. Use this to challenge him to "live up to" his name.

Sometimes, it is difficult to find the meaning of a name. Look for the meaning of a name that sounds similar or base your search on the first part or the last part of the person's name.

Other times, you might find a meaning that seems negative. Encourage a person whose name means



You can give children a new sense of purpose by teaching them the meaning of their name.

"bitter" or "deceiver," to develop forgiveness and truthfulness, so they can be extra sensitive and helpful to those who struggle in these areas.

Don't underestimate the significance of this exercise. Try it on someone this week. You can include it in your normal character recognitions, use it as a special way to say, "I love you," or make it part of a birthday or holiday gift.

"Is that what it means? I can do that!"

—a child after learning the meaning of his name

Tree Gone Bad

A customer service representative was working through another day of "Grandma gave me *this* for my birthday", and "This brush attachment was broken." About noon, a slender gentleman came to the counter dragging a small tree.

"I need a refund," he said, sweat glistening on his high forehead as he held his specimen to one side.

The tree's faded branches bent sadly in one direction as if remembering hurricanes past. "I bought this tree last March," the man said, impatiently straightening his thick glasses. "Here is the receipt. I broke up the root ball at planting as the garden manual says, but this tree doesn't seem to absorb water."

"Sir," the clerk said, "that's a silk tree from the office furniture department!"

The most educated among us can overlook important details or miss the bigger picture. Do you have people who can give you another perspective on your challenges?

What's for Lunch?

The Character Council of Northwest Florida found a way to generate new ideas and broaden interest in their character initiative by holding a luncheon for people from all sectors of the community.

These luncheons allow the character council to get feedback on specific needs and opportunities. Through discussion and brainstorming sessions, the participants share their ideas and perspectives so all sectors can more effectively encourage character throughout the community.

CCNF's administrative services director Lisa Hamilton stressed the need to bring in people from every sector of the community. Whether they are interested or already involved in the character initiative, community members can learn more about the character council's activities, catch a vision for community' character development opportunities, and see areas where they can make a positive difference.

"The response of the people who attend the lunches has always been positive," Hamilton said, "It allows for everyone to see how this truly is a community wide effort and that it takes all parts to succeed."

Sometimes the council holds the luncheon at a buffet, where attendees can purchase their own lunches. At other times, they have had sandwiches, drinks, and desserts catered at a convenient meeting place.

Because these luncheons focus on networking and community feedback or involvement, they differ from the monthly "Character Breakfast" meetings, which focus on helping attendees integrate the month's character quality into their lives and jobs.

Upcoming Seminars

[Implementation Seminar](#)

February 24, 2004

[Effective Leadership Seminar](#)

February 25, 2004

[Implementation Seminar](#)

May 25, 2004

(405) 815-0001 for more information.

About CTI

The Character Training Institute (CTI) was established to encourage true success in businesses, organizations, schools, communities, and families by encouraging character growth and development. With forty-nine qualities at its center, *Character First!* offers a variety of training and resources to stimulate character growth in individuals from all walks of life.

The Character Training Institute is a non-profit 501(c)(3) organization based in Oklahoma City, Oklahoma.