

Building CHARACTER

June 2002 Edition

Building on Promises

“The first thing that happened was a lot of people left! That is, the ones with poor character.” According to Todd Anderson, Vice President of Housing for CP Morgan Company, it was a good thing. “Two or three years later, turnover was between 5 and 10 percent, which is low for the industry.” And now? “In the long term, we have become more attractive to people of higher caliber. We have to do less recruiting, because they’re coming to us.”

CP Morgan is in the business of building homes. “More square feet for less money” is their motto. Their business associates respond, “CP Morgan tells us what they’re going to do, and they do it.”

“We keep our word,” Anderson declares. “We tell our contractors at the beginning of the year how many we’re going to order, and then we order that many.”

This commitment is just one aspect that has helped CP Morgan grow into the biggest homebuilder in Indianapolis, Indiana, finishing 10 homes a day, more than 2000 a year.

Just how do you build a company that values character from the president to the janitor? You start with the president. “The top team has to be modeling it, and they have to be vulnerable to accountability discussions” says Anderson. He relates an instance at the beginning of CP Morgan’s character emphasis, when an employee came to him and asked “Is this another motivational program, or is this the real deal?” Anderson’s response was simple. “I think it’s the real deal, but you’re going to have to wait and see. Six years later, we’re still doing [*Character First!*] and he’s still here.”

With a 98% customer satisfaction rate, C. P. Morgan Company has apparently found the “real deal.”



CP Morgan is building their company on the firm foundation of character development.

Meekness vs. Anger

Yielding my personal rights and expectations with a desire to serve

Five aspects of meekness:

- Be slow to get angry.
- Do not boast.
- Do not grumble or complain.
- Look for ways to help those in need.
- Be willing to go last.



Meek Strength

The plains shook under the thunder of hooves as the herd galloped by. Leading the group was a majestic stallion, his body covered with battle scars that proved his seniority. Each scar had a story, beginning with the fight to overthrow the former leader of the herd.

No one disputes the beauty of wild horses. Their strength and spirit are unarguable. As beautiful as those awe-inspiring horses are, however, their strength and beauty are much more pronounced once they have been trained for service. Some old-timers would “break” young horses by treating them cruelly until the spirit of the horse was broken and that horse

would docilely submit to any order. There is no beauty or honor in that process! The most useful horses are those that choose to yield control of their great strength to the one who holds the reins.

Many people think of meekness as similar to “breaking” a horse—being forced to yield to the will of another. That is not meekness at all! Meekness is demonstrated by the strong person who chooses—when they have the ability, the opportunity, and the right to get even—to humbly esteem others above themselves.

Just as a strong but gentle horse is loved more than a beautiful, untamed stallion, so the greatest respect is given to those who have chosen to control their strength for the good of others.

“Those who do not learn the lessons of history are destined to repeat them.”

—George Santayana

Vacation Lessons

Are you getting ready for a family vacation? When planning your trip, don't forget to learn any interesting facts about where you are going.

Many vacation spots are rich in history and can serve as great character lessons for children. As you tour, be alert to famous people or events that illustrate good character. Here are some examples from America's popular locations.

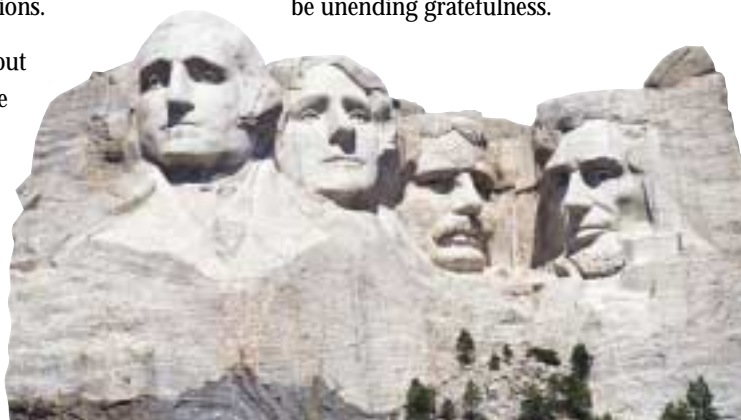
New England is full of colonial history. Learn about the early patriots who founded America and the endurance, determination, and boldness they demonstrated.

National parks contain many of the animals studied in *Character First!* Bring a pocket guide so you can relate various character qualities to different animals you encounter.

What character qualities were demonstrated by these former Presidents of the United States?

Government buildings can prompt discussions of honor, responsibility, and discernment. Look for portraits, statues, or memorials for notable men and women who showed good character.

Battlefields are solemn reminders of those who gave their lives for the freedom we enjoy today. Our response should be unending gratefulness.



Wrong Parachute

A doctor, a little boy, a priest, and the smartest man in the world were flying on a small private plane. Suddenly, the plane developed engine trouble and began to plummet, out of control.

Unfortunately there were only three parachutes. The doctor grabbed one saying, "I'm a doctor, I save lives, so I must live," and jumped out. The smart man then said, "I'm the smartest man in the world, I deserve to live!" He grabbed a parachute and jumped. The priest looked at the little boy and said, "Son, I've lived a long and full life. You are young and have your whole life ahead of you. Take the last parachute and live in peace." The little boy gave the parachute back to the priest and said, "Don't worry, Father. The smartest man in the world just took off with my backpack."

How often do you think so highly of yourself that you ignore the needs of others, only to painfully discover later that you are not so important?

Power for Effective Law Enforcement

Parents at a county fair frantically search for their missing daughter. A vacationer parks his car on the side of the road after seeing flashing lights in his rearview mirror. An irate citizen informs the police that a neighbor has been blaring obnoxious music for hours.

Any of the above scenarios may result in an encounter with the police. These officers in blue fulfill many duties—searching for missing persons, monitoring vehicle speed, responding to citizen complaints, and more—all in the name of fulfilling their goal to serve and protect.

To experience true success, a City of Character requires officers of character. For the couple with a missing child, an officer has the duty to both calm fears and lead the search for the girl. For the speeding vacationer, the officer that pulled him over may be the only impression of that city that he will ever receive. For the angry citizen, the dispatcher she speaks to will have a profound impact on her future attitude toward both her neighbors and the police department.



Officers with good character are vital for building community trust. That is why *Character First!*, in cooperation with *Police Dynamics*, is now offering a seven-hour seminar on July 25 designed to help you learn to deal effectively with the challenges facing today's law enforcement agencies.

Sheriff Ray Nash, with over 20 years of experience in law enforcement, will present concepts that play a large role in determining the success of law enforcement officers. For additional information, call (405) 815-0001.

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.

CTI is a non-profit 501(c)3 organization based in Oklahoma City, Oklahoma.