

# Building CHARACTER

June 2003 Edition

## Making a Great Business Even Better

Character has been defined as who you are, even when no one else is watching. But what if, when no one else is watching, you are a relatively good person? What good would a character emphasis be then? Would a character emphasis make a difference in a company that is already profitable, or an organization that sustains good inter-company relationships?

Weaver Leather, producer of leather accessories for over thirty years, is dedicated to making their great business even better. To many of its employees, values and family are important. When asked about the Weaver workforce, Neena Dulaney, director of human resources, had nothing to say but praise. "We have a great culture and a tremendous workforce who are committed to the company, committed to the job, committed to quality."

Every worker and craftsman at Weaver Leather takes personal pride in the quality of the products he or she produces, carefully cutting, sewing, and finishing each piece. The people at Weaver like to call this attention to detail and commitment to customer satisfaction the "Weaver Leather difference."

With such excellent employees and work environment, one may wonder why a company like Weaver Leather was so eager to implement a character program. They recognized that character was an important part of

their past, and would continue to determine their success in the future.

Dulaney explains that Weaver Leather has been using *Character First!* for four years because of benefits to the employees, the company, and the community. They do not want to neglect the qualities and character that have made Weaver Leather a wonderful place to work. *Character First!* has become a common ground where employees can gather together and refocus on the company's goals and commitments.

Paul Weaver, President and CEO of Weaver Leather, says it best. "It has been amazing, the growth that we've seen in our business, not just on a financial basis, but in a personal way. What happens here at Weaver Leather throughout the employees doesn't just stay here at work. We take it home with us. It grows from just becoming a part of our work ethic here at our job to making a big difference in the quality of our lives at home. It has been a real joy to watch as our business has become a [great place to work], and our employees have in turn affected others outside of work." Emphasizing character is making a great company even better.



Weaver Leather was featured in Outlook 2003, a newspaper in Holmes County, Ohio that records progress for the year.

## Security vs. Anxiety

*Structuring my life around that which cannot be destroyed or taken away*

Five aspects of security:

- Do not worry or fret.
- Look to authorities for protection.
- Correct unsafe conditions.
- Find peace of mind in a clear conscience.
- Do not meddle in the concerns of others.

## Abounding Security



The kangaroo is truly an incredible animal. No larger than the size of a honeybee at birth, this native Australian marsupial is completely vulnerable to the dangers of the outside world. Once full-grown, however, the largest kangaroos can weigh 175 pounds, cover 30 feet in a single bounce, and travel at speeds up to 40 miles per hour!

This transformation of size and strength begins in the mother's pouch, where the tiny joey spends the first 33 weeks of its life maturing and developing. Even after growing large enough to get around on its own, the young joey will hop back into the security of its mother's pouch if it feels threatened. The joey is nearly 10 pounds when it finally leaves its mother's pouch for good.

Joey's know that they can find protection and comfort in their mother's pouch. Because of the security young kangaroos find there, they grow into large and powerful animals.

Likewise, secure individuals find protection and assurance in the truth. Even in the most difficult situations, they will rely only upon that which cannot be destroyed or taken away.

"What ifs" tend to surface when rumors circulate. These often produce real concerns that must be considered, but be sure to get the facts before jumping to conclusions or making rash decisions. Prepare to face whatever might come rather than wasting time and energy worrying about something that may not.

Take precautions, prepare carefully, and overcome worry and fear of the unknown, finding ways to advance with confidence. Security is learning to observe and trust what is true and dependable.

**“A leader knows the way, goes the way, and shows the way!”**

—John Maxwell

## Character Clubs

A new trend is spreading through schools across America. Student-led “Character Clubs” are being established to promote good character at both elementary and secondary school campuses.

Everyone knows the impact of negative peer pressure, but these clubs are creating opportunities to encourage students in the right direction through positive peer influence.

Madison Tomlinson, a school counselor in Muskogee, Oklahoma, started forming character clubs in his school district several years ago. Today you can find a club at every school building in the district.



**Over 160 students gathered from Muskogee Public Schools to determine how they could promote good character next school year.**

Each summer, Muskogee Public Schools sponsors a character leadership camp for students and teachers to plan their course of action for the upcoming school year. Representatives from *Character First!* were honored to speak to this year’s group of 160 students, ranging from fifth grade to high school seniors.

Students and sponsors from each school spent time planning how to promote character through school media, academic assignments, parent programs, as well as extra-curricular activities. This year’s theme, “Establishing a Climate of Mutual Respect,” focused primarily on character qualities such as discretion, tolerance, self-control, and deference.

Would your school or organization benefit from a character club or committee? Is there a time and place you can meet to plan your character program for the upcoming year? How can you involve students, teachers, administrators, and parents in promoting character at your school? You might be surprised how creative everyone can be in developing a culture of character.

## Ride Safely

The story is told of an ancient landmark perched high on a 3,000-foot cliff in the mountains of Portugal. This magnificent sight was only accessible by an intimidating ride up the side of the cliff in a old wicker basket. Several strong men using a single hemp rope pulled this basket all the way to the top.

One day a tourist, visiting the town at the bottom of the cliff, gathered up enough courage to take the basket ride up to the top. The first half of the journey went fine, but the lady became nervous halfway up the cliff when she noticed that the rope holding the basket was old and frayed. Hoping to relieve her fear she asked the man with her, “How often do you change this old rope?” The man replied, “Whenever it breaks!”

Is what you are putting your trust in about to let you down? You may find that in the middle of your most difficult times in life, the things that you trust the most are really unreliable and meaningless.

## Seeking to Build Public Awareness



Technology has transformed the way we communicate and conduct business. Now, over 13 Character Councils and 40 Character Cities are utilizing modern technology, especially the Internet, to creatively promote the character initiatives which their city is implementing.

One of the most important aspects of an effective character initiative is strong public awareness. Without it, even the most enthusiastic character council can have a hard time sustaining a character initiative and effecting lasting community change. What starts out with excitement and fanfare could, over time, slowly fade away as people lose interest and forget.

To combat this trend, many Character Councils around the world are turning to creative and effective solutions to keep positive character at the forefront of the public’s mind. Some of the ways this is being accomplished are through television spots highlighting positive character, public service announcements broadcasted on local radio, billboards around town displaying the monthly character quality, and character welcome signs hanging on street light poles.

Now, many Character Councils and Cities of Character have developed their own websites, creating yet another resource for citizens to learn about their city’s character initiative. At these sites one may also find information about the month’s quality, links to press releases, news articles, and public service announcements. Some even write their own newsletter.

For more information on broadening character awareness in your community, please call IACC at (405) 815-0001.

IACC would like to welcome these cities as the newest Character Cities.

- Lexington, Kentucky
- Hanahan, South Carolina
- Oton, Philippines
- Moncada, Philippines

### Upcoming Seminars

**Business Implementation Seminar:**  
August 26, 2003

**Character Council Conference:**  
September 23–24, 2003

**Corporate Retreat:**  
October 28–29, 2003

### 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.