

WORD OF THE WEEK

Responsibility

QUOTE OF THE WEEK

People need responsibility. They resist assuming it, but they cannot get along without it.

~ John Steinbeck

POINTS OF EMPHASIS

- Discuss the factors that contribute to a person getting hired, promoted and fired.
- Help students understand the basic and simple factors that make such a huge difference in their work careers.
- Challenge students to internalize the different character traits studied throughout this curriculum as a means to advancing their careers.

ETHICAL MONDAY

- Present an overview of the week by showing the Week 15 Power Point presentation.
- Direct students to fill out quote exercise and follow with a discussion.
- The ethical dilemma is about handling difficult work scenarios.
- Lecture on the reasons people get hired, promoted and fired in the work force, with a specific focus on personal attributes and/or character.

CHARACTER MOVIE TUESDAY

The Pursuit of Happyness

ROLE MODEL WEDNESDAY

Quiz and discussion on **Chapter 15 – Cal Ripken, Jr.** Be sure to emphasize the importance of responsibility during the discussion, particularly the responsibility he felt to the fans, to baseball, to his teammates and to his family.

LEADERSHIP THURSDAY

WEEK 15 SKILL – *Interview Skills*

WEEK 15 SPEAKER – *It is highly recommended to get a business owner.*

WEEK 15 LEADERSHIP PRINCIPLE – *Servant Leadership*

This lecture is located at characterandleadership.com. Click on the Leadership Principles Button.

ASSIGNMENT FRIDAY – THE CHARACTER REFERENCE

Your assignment is to write down three names that you would list as character references during an interview. Remember that a character reference cannot be a family member and ideally should be someone who has seen you at work or at school. Next, you are going to write a letter of reference about yourself from the point of view of one of the three individuals on your list. In this letter you are to talk about your character and distinguish yourself from other candidates, but you can only do it from this person's point of view.

ATTENTION

Be sure to check www.characterandleadership.com and click on the blog button to view the weekly post. Dr. Hoedel puts links to current events, provides commentary and asks discussion questions. To receive notifications about blog posts, instruct students to "follow" us on Twitter @ CDandLeadership and use #CDandL or "like" our page on Facebook at Character Development & Leadership. Students are encouraged to provide respectful comments in and outside of class.

RESPONSIBILITY

How would you define this trait? _____

Definition provided by teacher: _____

*“People need responsibility.
They resist assuming it, but they
cannot get along without it.*

~ John Steinbeck

What does this quote mean to you? _____

Handling Difficult Workplace Scenarios

1. You work full-time, 40 hours a week, Monday - Friday. Over the years, you have built up 10 sick days. It's a beautiful day outside and you would like to take advantage of the day. *Would you call in sick to go enjoy the day?*
 - 1A. *If you were an employer, how would you respond if you found out an employee faked an illness to skip work in order to enjoy a beautiful day?*

2. Imagine that you are a mechanic at a small garage. The owner calls you into his office and tells you that he is upset because you are too concerned about the wallet of the customer and not enough about the bottom line of the garage. In no uncertain terms, he tells you that you need to start finding “more severe problems” with the cars you fix or start finding another job. *Specifically, how would you handle this?*

3. A high-paying dream job is listed in the paper. Unfortunately, it requires a degree that you don't have, but you feel like you have the skills to do the job well. *Would you ever falsify a resume to get your foot in the door? What do you think would happen if the employer found out? Is it worth the risk?*

Employability & Workplace Skills

AUTHOR'S NOTE

To obtain and keep a job in today's economy, employers are looking for three main components. (It is recommended that the teacher bring in newspaper or go to on-line job sites like www.monster.com, allowing students to read the language in actual job advertisements in your area).

1) KNOWLEDGE

When looking at an ad in a newspaper or on-line, employers first list the knowledge and skills necessary for the job. Often times, it will specify a particular degree and/or skills needed to be considered as a viable applicant. It might read:

- *“Looking for someone with a bachelor's degree in chemical engineering.”*
- *“An associate's degree in drafting or architecture is essential.”*
- *“Applicant must possess excellent computer skills & understanding of SPSS.”*

Usually the more specialized and higher paying jobs require more education, greater knowledge and advanced skills.

2) EXPERIENCE

Many positions are considered to be “entry-level” jobs, which means that almost anyone can apply and be considered. These employers believe that they can teach you what you need to know to be successful on the job. Other jobs require candidates to possess a certain number of years of experience in a specified field. The ad might read:

- *“Minimum of three years of office management experience required.”*
- *“2 years in health care industry is preferred.”*
- *“Looking for someone with 3+ years of supervisory experience.”*

Usually the more specialized/higher paying jobs require more experience for the applicant to be considered.

3) PERSONAL ATTRIBUTES

Regardless of the type of job, employers are looking to hire individuals with strong character and excellent personal attributes. Employers want to know that a person has a good work ethic, is motivated and is a “go-getter.” They also want to know that an employee is honest, trustworthy and dedicated. One just has to look at the ads to understand how important this is:

- *“Seeking someone who is a fast-learner and can take direction well.”*
- *“Needing someone who is a motivated team player.”*
- *“Wanted – a goal-oriented person who is highly organized.”*
- *“This job requires an outgoing personality and quick decision-making skills.”*
- *“Only hard-working, motivated and ethical people need apply.”*

WHICH COMPONENT IS MORE IMPORTANT?

All three components are necessary to find and keep most jobs, but is one component more important than the others? To be honest, for highly-specialized jobs and jobs that require advanced degrees, knowledge is the key component that will get an individual in the door for an interview. With that being said, many argue that when it comes to employability and being successful in the workplace, “soft skills,” personal qualities and a person's character are just as important as the technical “hard” skills.

In fact, Dr. Jacquelyn Robinson, a work force development specialist says, “Having desirable personal qualities is more important than having a good basic educational foundation and critical thinking skills.”

4-H COUNCIL STUDY ON EMPLOYABILITY SKILLS

One study conducted by the National 4-H Council found that the overwhelming majority of employers are looking for workers with average intelligence and good social skills. Among these social skills are:

Put up Overhead, *What Employers Are Looking For:*

- Strong Work Ethic
- Positive Attitude
- Good Communication Skills
- Time Management Abilities
- Team Player
- Self-confidence
- Positive Response to Criticism
- Flexibility/Adaptability

National 4-H Council, 2007

NEWSWEEK & FORBES CONCLUSIONS

It seems like many young people don't understand the importance of these personal characteristics in the job market because *Newsweek* recently reported that 56% of employers were unhappy with a high school graduates level of motivation and responsibility and 35% were dissatisfied with their ability to work with others.

Other research reports suggest that employers want to know that a candidate is honest and ethical, that he/she can get along with others, show respect for authority, be counted on to arrive on time, work hard and meet deadlines (*Forbes*, 2007).

WHY PEOPLE GET FIRED

Conversely, the top reasons that an employee gets fired or fails to be promoted are also indelibly linked to a person's character. Indeed, most jobs are not lost because an employee can't do the job or doesn't have a certain level of intelligence. Rather, people get fired because they lack personal traits. For instance, co-workers do not want to work with someone with a bad attitude or who can't get along with others. Likewise, employers do not want someone who is disrespectful or isn't responsible enough to meet deadlines.

Put Up Overhead – *Top 10 Reasons Employees Get Fired:*

- Proved to be dishonest
- Could not get along with other workers
- Did not have acceptable appearance
- Was unreliable or was absent/late too often
- Used work time for personal business
- Could not do the work
- Worked too slowly or made too many mistakes
- Refused to follow orders
- Repeatedly missing deadlines
- Misrepresented self or lied on application
- Caused too much drama at work

Fortune Magazine, 2009

TEACHER TIP

It would probably be helpful if the teacher could think of personal stories related to individuals you have worked with who got “passed over” or fired as a direct result of one of the bullet points on the following overhead.

THE LINK WITH CHARACTER

I argue that each of the bullet points in the above lists correspond with the character traits, covered in this curriculum (and a few traits that are not covered in this curriculum). *Ask students to put a trait next to each of the bullet points to make sure they understand the connection.*

CONCLUSION

The marriage between hard technical skills and soft character related skills is what makes a person marketable, employable and successful on the job. It seems clear that one without the other only gets you halfway. Therefore, I argue that if you embrace and internalize the traits focused on in this class you will, 1) have an advantage over other applicants and be more employable, 2) these traits will make you stand out and get noticed in a positive way, thereby increasing the likelihood of promotions throughout your career and 3) decrease the odds of you being fired. *Ask students if they agree with the three points in the previous statement.*

OVERVIEW

This is the true story of Chris Gardner (played by Will Smith), who is struggling to make it financially in this world. When things get tough, his girlfriend leaves him to move across the country. Chris insists on keeping his son and assumes custody of him. When Chris takes an unpaid internship, he and his son soon get evicted from their apartment and end up living on the streets. Through hard work, determination and a bond of love, they eventually make it.

MORAL OF THE STORY

True happiness is not found in money. Rather, it is found in the satisfaction of achieving something positive in this world and loving our families.

SELECTED SCENES

Special Features - The Man Behind the Movie Scenes 11-15 (41:20 – 57:28)	12 minutes 16 minutes
Scene 17	3 minutes
Scene 22-end (1:21:05 – 1:53:18)	<u>32 minutes</u>
Total	63 minutes

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- 1) In the conversation with Chris Gardner, he tells us the real meaning of this movie. He says that it is not a rags to riches story. He says the theme of this movie is his commitment to his son and his commitment to break the cycle of men who abandon their children. Why do you think it was so important for Chris to take on his responsibility when so many dads avoid their responsibilities? Do you think he should have taken a job that paid money to keep his son from living on the streets? Should he have just given up custody of his son?
- 2) One of the themes of this movie is that happiness is not found in wealth. It seems the director is telling us that happiness is found in the satisfaction of accomplishing something positive in this world and sharing that joy with those you love. Do you agree or disagree with this perspective?
- 3) While money doesn't equal happiness, poverty puts a huge strain on an individual and a family. Talk about the sequence of events that put Chris and his son on the streets.
- 4) This movie highlights the difficulties of living paycheck to paycheck, and the fact that many families are just a few bad breaks away from living on the streets. List the top five things you can do in the next 10 years to diminish the likelihood of this happening to you?
- 5) At the end of the movie, Chris experiences that one moment of happiness after all those tough times. Do you think it was worth it? Would you enter an internship without pay, and compete against 30 other people for one spot in a company? Why or why not?

BASIC SKILL

Interview Skills

RATIONALE

In a way, this is the culmination of many basic skills learned throughout the semester. For example, shaking hands, making eye contact and opening doors for others goes a long way to create a good first impression. Reflective listening skills and note taking skills can build rapport during the interview. It is important to have a resume prepared before the interview and equally important to write a thank you note afterwards.

EXERCISE

Set up mock interviews for the students. Have them dress up, bring their resumes and interview for a job. It is best to videotape these interviews to allow playback and critique. When I taught this course, the director of the city parks actually interviewed students for a real job. Afterward, he told the class who he would like to hire and explained his rationale. Several of these students worked for him during the summer.

BEFORE THE INTERVIEW

- Do as much research as you can on the company prior to the interview. Prepare intelligent questions you can ask during the interview to show you've done your homework.
- Practice your responses to common interview questions. Learning to sell yourself is a new skill.
- Always bring a pad of paper, extra copies of your resume, a planner and a pen to the interview, preferably in a professional portfolio (this is an excellent graduation gift).

DURING THE INTERVIEW

- Remember it's the little things that make a big difference.

- Arrive early and be extremely polite to the receptionist – he/she can sometimes make recommendations, especially when two applicants are equal.
- Do not wear perfume or excessive jewelry. Tattoos should be covered up and visible piercings should be removed. Don't give an employer a reason to not hire you.
- Dress professionally – it is always better to be overdressed than under-dressed.
- Make a good first impression by using a firm handshake, introducing yourself and making eye contact. Remember, most employers make a decision about a candidate in the first five minutes of an interview.
- Employers are looking for someone who is motivated and has a positive attitude – be sure to exemplify this with your verbal and nonverbal communication.
- Be confident and poised. A big turnoff is a candidate who is either too timid or too arrogant.
- Maintain eye contact throughout the interview. Use reflective-listening skills. Key into what employers are looking for and try to frame your answers to meet their needs.
- Every candidate has strengths and weaknesses. Be honest about your weaknesses, but try to frame them in a positive manner. Overcoming objections is a key to getting hired.
- At the end of the interview, be prepared to provide a summary statement. Say something like, "In summary, I feel that I am the best candidate for the job because..."

AFTER THE INTERVIEW

- Within 48 hours, write a thank you letter and mail it to the person who interviewed you. Be sure to emphasize your desire for the job and summarize your strengths.
- Sometimes it takes a long time for companies to get back to you. Don't become a pest by calling too soon or too often.

Sample Interview Questions to be Used During the Mock Interview

GENERAL QUESTIONS

- What are your three greatest strengths?
- What are your three worst weaknesses?
- How would you describe yourself?
- How would your best friend describe you?
- Tell me about yourself.
- What kind of student were you in school?

LIFE QUESTIONS

- Where do you see yourself in five years?
- What are your long-term career goals?
- What kind of personal goals have you set for yourself?
- Who has had the greatest influence on you? Why?
- What celebrity do you most admire and why?

PERSONAL QUESTIONS

- What was the last movie you saw and how did it affect you?
- What types of books and magazines do you read?
- What are your hobbies?
- How do you handle people that you really don't get along with?
- What have you done that shows initiative?

WORK RELATED QUESTIONS

- Can you work well under stress?
- Why did you decide to apply for this job in this company?
- Describe your perfect job.
- How important do you think character and integrity are to succeeding at this job?
- What kind of recommendations would I get from previous employers or teachers?
- Can you supervise people? What is your leadership philosophy?
- What kinds of grades did you get in school? Were you capable of doing better?

CURVE-BALL QUESTIONS

- If you were a car, what kind of car would you be and why?
- If you were an animal, which animal would you like to be? Why?
- Sell me the pen that I am holding.
- If you won the lottery and became a millionaire today, what would you be doing a year from now?
- If you could go back in time to any era, what era would you pick and why?
- What is your most vivid memory as a child?

Character Reference

After speaking with many individuals, almost all of them tell me that an employer has never asked for their GPA from school, but all of them were asked for character references, and in most cases the references were called. A character reference is someone who can vouch for your character – what kind of person you are – can you be trusted, do you work hard, how you handle anger, can you work well with others...

Your assignment this week is to write down three names that you would list as character references during an interview. Remember that a character reference cannot be a family member and ideally should be someone who has seen you at work or at school.

List References

1. Name: _____ Relationship: _____

Why did you choose this person?

2. Name: _____ Relationship: _____

Why did you choose this person?

3. Name: _____ Relationship: _____

Why did you choose this person?

Next, write a letter of reference about yourself from the point of view one of the three individuals on your list. In this letter you are to talk about your character and distinguish yourself from other candidates, but you can only do it from this person's point of view.