

# Character / Ethics

## Objectives

- ✓ To define character
- ✓ To list examples of characteristics of good character
- ✓ To define the six pillars of character
- ✓ To write personal goal statements

## Advance Preparation

- ✓ Review the provided materials (typically one hour of preparation)

## Materials needed

- ✓ Projection Device
- ✓ The enclosed Power Point Presentation
- ✓ Writing Instruments
- ✓ Copies of Character / Ethics Worksheet (Attachment 1)

## Time needed

- ✓ 30 minutes

## BACKGROUND

Abraham Lincoln once said, “*Character* is like a tree and *reputation* like its shadow. The shadow is what we think of it and the tree is the real thing.” How true is that statement? Stop and think about that quote for a minute. Then ask yourself, how do people view your shadow? If it is not in as positive light as you would like, then it is probably time to look at the tree. The tree doesn’t lie. It is the real thing.

Today, we hear and see the word *character* everywhere. What exactly does it mean and how does it relate to leadership?

*Character* is the inherent complex of attributes that determine a person’s moral and ethical actions and reactions. There are all types of words that provide examples of good character. These include, but are not limited to such terms as: honest, inspiring, courageous, unselfish, competent, tact, loyal, integrity, loyal, trustworthiness, respect, responsibility, fairness, caring, and citizenship.

Bennis (1989) said that after vision and passion, integrity (character) is the most basic fundamental competency to be leader. Character, proper ethics, and integrity are based on the foundation of *trust*. Do the people you lead trust you in your leadership role? This is certainly something everyone must ask themselves as leaders. If the answer is no or not completely, then what can we do as leaders to develop that trust?

## INTEREST APPROACH

Attachment 1 (Character / Ethics Worksheet) is provided to brainstorm with participants the importance of character / ethics in leadership. Slides 3-5 outline the individual brainstorming participants should address before moving on through the presentation.

## LESSON

1. Start with slide 1 by introducing the topic.
2. Read a quote from Abraham Lincoln (Slide 2)

3. Slides 3-5 outline the individual brainstorming participants should address before moving on through the presentation.
4. Slide 6 discusses character as it relates to leadership.
5. Slide 7 reveals who is concerned about character related to leadership.
6. Slides 8-14 talk about the six pillars of character developed by the Josephson Institute of Ethics (1996).
7. Slide 15 discusses the Four Way Test from Lussier and Achua (2001).
8. Slide 16 is a summary.

### **APPLICATION**

If we set the appropriate example, then others will build trust in us and we can continue to lead effectively. It is important that we take our leadership role seriously and always remember that our character goes along way to describing who we are.

### **REFERENCES**

Bennis, W. (1989). *On becoming a leader*. Wilmington, MA: Trump Mediaeval by C&C Associates.

Josephson Institute of Ethics (1996). Michael S. Josephson.

Kidder, R. M. (1994). *Shared values; troubled times: Global ethics for the twenty-first century*. E. N. Thompson Forum on World Issues, University of Nebraska-Lincoln, NE: Cooper Foundation and University of Nebraska-Lincoln.

Lussier, R. N. and Achua, C. F. (2001). *Leadership: Theory, Application, Skill Development*. Cincinnati, OH: South-Western College Publishing.