

# From CHARACTER QUOTATIONS: Activities That Build Character and Community

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Kagan, 2004

## Week 1

**Effort: The deliberate exertion of mental or physical power.**

1. Character is not inherited. One builds it daily by the way one thinks and acts, thought by thought, action by action.

—Helen Gahagn Douglas

- Are you born with good character, or is it something you have to work on?
- What are two steps you could take to improve your character?

2. A teacher opens the door, but you must enter yourself.

—Chinese proverb

- What does this mean? (Put it in your own words.)

3. There's no easy way to learn difficult things.

—Joseph de Maistre

- What is something that was hard for you to learn?
- How did you learn it?

4. You may be disappointed if you fail, but you are doomed if you don't try.

—Beverly Sills

- What keeps you from trying something you're not good at?

5. The journey of a thousand miles begins with a single step.

—Lao-tzu

- What is a personal journey that you have begun?

**Action Assignments:**

- List 3 of your positive character traits.
- Make a plan to improve one character trait that you need to work on.
- At the end of each day, reflect on how well you followed your plan for improvement (e.g., keep a journal).

**Week 2****Attitude: A disposition or orientation of the mind.**

1. Sow a thought and you reap an act. Sow an act and you reap a habit. Sow a habit and you reap a character.

—Anonymous

- **What does it mean to sow and reap?**
- **What does it mean to say, "Our habits become our character"?**

2. Your attitude determines your altitude.

—Jesse Jackson

- **How does having a positive attitude help you to do your best?**
- **How does having a bad attitude keep you from doing your best?**

3. Each new hour holds chances for new beginnings.

—Maya Angelou

- **When something goes wrong, why is it important for you to make a new start?**
- **What happens if you let one mistake or bad experience get you down?**

4. I am convinced that life is 10% what happens to me and 90% how I react to it. And so it is with you...we are in charge of our attitudes.

—Charles Swindoll

- **What is a time when keeping a positive attitude helped you overcome a difficult situation?**
- **What can you do to keep a positive attitude when things become difficult?**

5. Hold fast to dreams, for if dreams die, life is a broken-winged bird that cannot fly.

—Langston Hughes

- **What is something you dream of doing or becoming?**
- **How does having a goal or dream give us energy, purpose, and direction?**

### **Action Assignments:**

- Find and interview a person who shows a positive attitude. Ask the person two questions: "How do you keep a positive attitude, even when things go wrong?" "How does a positive attitude help you?"
- Each day, keep count of the number of times you complain (about anything). Each day, try to reduce the number of your complaints. (Continue to keep count.)

## **Week 3**

**Kindness: The quality of being benevolent, considerate, or helpful.**

1. No one who desires to become good will become good without doing good things.

—Aristotle

- **How do athletes, musicians, artists, or people in other professions become good at what they do?**
- **What can you do to become a good person?**

2. I can live for two months on one good compliment.

—Mark Twain

- **Why do compliments make us feel so good?**
- **If compliments make everyone feel so good, why don't we give them more often?**

3. Sticks and stones may break our bones, but words will break our hearts.

—Robert Fulghum

- **Why do words often hurt more than a physical injury?**
- **What can you do if you hear someone saying hurtful words to another person?**

4. Kindness gives birth to kindness.

—Sophocles

- **How might one act of kindness lead to more kindness from others?**

5. You cannot do a kindness too soon, for you never know how soon it will be too late.

—Ralph Waldo Emerson

- **What does this mean?**

### **Action Assignments:**

- Interview an adult; ask "What can you do to become a good person?"
- Set a goal to compliment at least five people today.
- During this week, do a kind deed each day for someone in your classroom, school, family, or neighborhood.

## Week 4

### **Diligence: The habit of trying to do all tasks well.**

1. Excellence is not an act but a habit.

—Aristotle

➤ **What does quote mean? (Put it on your own words.)**

2. Learning is not attained by chance. It must be sought for with ardor and attended to with diligence.

—Abigail Adams

➤ **Why is it easier to learn something if you have an enthusiastic attitude?**

3. Any job worth doing is worth doing well.

—Proverb

➤ **Why is it important to try your hardest to do a job well?**

4. The secret joy in work is excellence. To know how to do something well is to enjoy it.

—Pearl Buck

➤ **When was a time that you felt good because you did a job well?**

5. The best preparation for tomorrow is to do today's work superbly well.

—William Osler

➤ **How does what we do today prepare us for tomorrow?**

### **Action Assignments:**

- What is at least one thing you could do to improve your work in school? Ask a teacher and an adult in your home for additional suggestions.
  
- Interview a person who is really good at something. Ask, "How did you become good at this?"