

June 5, 1996

MEMORANDUM FOR HILLARY RODHAM CLINTON

FROM: Brenda Costello
SUBJECT: Briefing for Thursday, June 6

Conference on Character Education

- Briefing
- Bio
- Conference Program
- "Bill Clinton May Launch 1,000 Chips," The Montgomery Advertiser, 3/ 8/ 96
- President Clinton's remarks at Character Education Conference, May 1995
- Communitarian Network Platform on Character and Values Education
- "Teaching Johnny to Be Good," New York Times Magazine, 4/ 30/ 95
- Article by Amitai Etzioni, Atlantic Monthly, 7/ 94
- "A Comprehensive Approach to Character Education," by Thomas Lickona, Chapter 9, The Quest for America's Character

Remarks

- Conference on Character Education

Conference
Address

June 5, 1996

REMARKS TO THE CONFERENCE ON CHARACTER BUILDING

DATE:	June 6, 1996
LOCATION:	Marvin Center George Washington University
TIME:	5:00-5:30 pm
FROM:	Katy Button

I. PURPOSE

To speak at the Conference on Character Building to an audience of more than 350 leaders in education.

II. BACKGROUND

The Communitarian Network

Founded in 1993 by Amitai Etzioni, the Communitarian Network is a non-partisan coalition of organizations and individuals committed to shoring up the moral infrastructure of society. The Communitarian Network is hosting a Conference on Character Building to examine ways to introduce character-education programs into schools. The organization believes that schools -- in addition to families, neighborhoods, and the nation as a whole -- are the key foundations of a civil society, and that it is through these institutions that we gain a sense of our shared personal and civic responsibilities.

As you know, Dr. Amitai Etzioni is a sociology professor at the George Washington University and formerly taught ethics at Harvard Business School. His 1993 book, The Spirit of Community: Rights, Responsibilities and the Communitarian Agenda outlined the basic principles of communitarianism; he also writes occasionally for the *New York Times*, the *Washington Post* and the *Wall Street Journal*.

NOTE: Dr. Etzioni recently came out against the v-chip, saying that it "is like putting an important part of parenting on automatic pilot." The article, "Bill Clinton May Launch 1,000 Chips," by William Raspberry, is attached.

Conference on Character Building

This week's Conference on Character Building is co-hosted by the Communitarian Network, the White House and Senators Kassebaum and Bradley. The three-day conference includes a town hall meeting hosted by Secretary Riley, speeches by

Newton Minow, Milton Chen and Zoe Baird, and task force meetings on sports, interpersonal relations, self-discipline and empathy, family involvement, civic education and community schools. (Complete program is attached)

The Conference begins Thursday afternoon at George Washington University, continues on Friday at the Russell Senate Office Building, and ends on Saturday with an all-day session at the Old Executive Office Building. Last year, as you know, the President spoke at the White House portion of the conference. His remarks are attached.

III. PARTICIPANTS

Stage:

- HRC (HRC will be seated next to Michael Bocian)
- Michael Bocian, Conference Coordinator, Communitarian Network
- Dr. Amitai Etzioni
- Esther Schaeffer, Director of Education Programs, Communitarian Network

Audience:

- Approximately 380 leaders in the education field.

IV. SEQUENCE OF EVENTS

- Amitai Etzioni, President and Founder of the Communitarian Network, to deliver welcoming remarks and introduce HRC
- HRC to deliver remarks
- Exit stage right, work ropeline from left to right
- HRC proceeds to motorcade escorted by Dr. Amitai Etzioni

V. PRESS PLAN

Open Press

VI. REMARKS

Provided by Lissa Muscatine

AMITAI ETZIONI

Dr. Amitai Etzioni is the first University Professor of The George Washington University. He is the 1995 past-president of the American Sociological Association. In 1987-1989, he served as the Thomas Henry Carroll Ford Foundation Professor at the Harvard Business School. He served as Senior Adviser in the White House from 1979-1980. He was guest scholar at the Brookings Institution in 1978-1979. For 20 years (1958-1978), he served as Professor of Sociology at Columbia University; part of the time, as Chairman of the department.

He founded and was the first president ('89-'90) of the international Society for the Advancement of Socio-Economics and is now an Honorary Fellow. He is the editor of The Responsive Community: Rights and Responsibilities, a communitarian quarterly. In 1991 the press started referring to Dr. Etzioni as the "guru" of the communitarian movement.

He is the author of fourteen books, including A Comparative Analysis of Complex Organizations, Modern Organizations, Political Unification, The Active Society, Genetic Fix, Social Problems, An Immodest Agenda, and Capital Corruption, The Moral Dimension: Toward a New Economics, and most recently, The Spirit of Community: Rights, Responsibilities and the Communitarian Agenda (Crown Books, 1993).

Dr. Etzioni's achievements in the social sciences have been acknowledged by several fellowships, including those given by the Social Science Research Council (1960-61), The Center for Advanced Study in the Behavioral Sciences (1965-1966), and The Guggenheim Foundation (1968-69).

Outside of academia, Dr. Etzioni's voice is frequently heard in the leading news media, in articles in publications such as The New York Times, The Washington Post and The Wall Street Journal and in appearances on network television.

He founded the Center for Policy Research, a not-for-profit corporation dedicated to public policy, in 1968, and has been its director since its inception.

In 1976, the American Revolution Bicentennial Administration accorded Dr. Etzioni a certificate of appreciation for his outstanding contribution to our nation's bicentennial commemoration.

A 1982 study ranked Dr. Etzioni as the leading expert of 30 who made "major contributions to public policy in the preceding decade." He was awarded an honorary degree by The University of Utah in 1991 and by Colorado College and Connecticut College in 1994.

CONFERENCE ON CHARACTER BUILDING

Organized by The Communitarian Network, and Hosted by the White House & Congress

Thursday, June 6, 1996

(Marvin Center, The George Washington University, 800 21st Street, NW)

11:45 am, 12:30 pm, and 1:15 pm

Buses depart the Holiday Inn on the Hill for the Marvin Center. Please register early.
Restaurants are in and near the Marvin Center.

Noon-2:00 pm Registration (Marvin Center, 1st Floor lobby).

2:00-2:30 pm *Welcome* (Dorothy Betts Theater, Marvin Center, 1st Floor)
Esther F. Schaeffer, Director, Education Programs, The Communitarian Network

2:30-3:00 pm *Television and Character Education: Friend or Foe?* (Dorothy Betts Theater)
Newton Minow, Former Chairman, Federal Communications Commission

3:00-3:30 pm *Television and Character Education: The Key Role of Parents* (Dorothy Betts Theater)
Milton Chen, Director, KQED Center for Education and Lifelong Learning

3:30-6:30 pm *Open Hearings of Task Forces.* All attendees are invited to participate.
Identification of:

- Priorities for coming year
- Additional organizations and individuals to be involved
- Topics requiring future research by task forces or The Communitarian Network

Methods for Building Self-Discipline and Empathy
CHAIRS: Sheldon Berman, Hudson Public Schools; and Diane Berreth, Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development
(Marvin Center, Room 403)

The Role of Civic Education
CHAIR: Charles Quigley,
Center for Civic Education
(Marvin Center, Room 405)

The Role of Family Involvement
CHAIR: Roberta Doering,
National School Boards Association
(Marvin Center, Room 413/414)

Education for Interpersonal Relations, Family Life, and Intimacy
CHAIR: Amitai Etzioni,
The Communitarian Network
(Marvin Center, Room 406)

Building Character through Sports
CHAIR: Russell Gough,
Pepperdine University
(Marvin Center, Room 402)

Community Schools
CHAIR: Mary Brabeck,
Boston College
(Marvin Center, Room 404)

6:30 pm Buses depart the Marvin Center for the Holiday Inn on the Hill (415 New Jersey Avenue, NW).

Evening Dinner on own.

*This conference is cosponsored by The Communitarian Network
and The George Washington University Center for Communitarian Policy Studies.*

We gratefully acknowledge the contributions of the Charles Stewart Mott Foundation, the John Templeton Foundation, Dr. John M. Templeton, Jr., the David and Carol Myers Foundation, and the U.S. Department of Education. Together with registration fees, these contributions are helping to cover the costs of the conference, the work of the task forces, and fellowships.

Friday, June 7, 1996

(Morning—Russell Senate Office Building; Afternoon—Holiday Inn on the Hill)

- 00-8:45 am Breakfast on own.
- 9:00-9:30 am Capitol Hill. Coffee served.
(Russell Senate Office Building, Constitution and Delaware Avenues, NE, Caucus Room 325)
- 9:30-10:30 am *The Charge from Political Leadership—
Views on Character Building and the Role of Federal Leadership* (Caucus Room)
Co-host, Senator Nancy Landon Kassebaum (R-KS)
Co-host, Senator Bill Bradley (D-NJ)
- 10:30-11:15 am *What Ever Happened to Civic Virtue?* (Caucus Room)
Michael J. Sandel, Professor of Government, Harvard University
- 11:15-Noon *Exploring the Possibilities: Dialogue with Members of Congress* (Caucus Room)
Senator Alan Simpson (R-WY)
Senator Dan Coats (R-IN)
Senator Paul Simon (D-IL)
- Noon-12:30 pm Return to the Holiday Inn on the Hill (415 New Jersey Avenue, NW).
- 12:30-1:30 pm Luncheon (Federal Ballroom, Holiday Inn on the Hill).
- 1:30-2:00 pm *How Can Business Help?* (Federal Ballroom)
Zoë Baird, Senior Vice President and General Counsel, Aetna Life and Casualty Company
- 2:30-5:00 pm *Task Forces Meet in Closed Sessions*
Refinement of priorities and recommendations for Saturday discussion.

Methods for Building Self-Discipline and Empathy
CHAIRS: Sheldon Berman, Hudson Public
Schools; and Diane Berreth, Association for
Supervision and Curriculum Development
(Federal Ballroom South, 1st Floor)

The Role of Civic Education
CHAIR: Charley Quigley
Center for Civic Education
(Congressional Room, 1st Floor)

The Role of Family Involvement
CHAIR: Roberta Doering
National School Boards Association
(Judicial Room, 1st Floor)

*Education for Interpersonal Relations,
Family Life, and Intimacy*
CHAIR: William D'Antonio,
Catholic University
(Cabinet Suite, 2nd Floor)

Building Character through Sports
CHAIR: Russell Gough
Pepperdine University
(Council Suite, 2nd Floor)

Community Schools
CHAIR: Mary Brabeck
Boston College
(Executive Room, 1st Floor)

- 2:30-5:00 pm *Meeting the Challenges*. Concurrent session, town-meeting style. (Federal Ballroom North)
Facilitator: Amitai Etzioni, The Communitarian Network
- 6:30-7:00 pm Reception (Federal Ballroom, Holiday Inn on the Hill).
- 7:00 pm Dinner (Federal Ballroom).

United We Sing. A character-education program in Connecticut.
Joint Chorus of the Norwalk Kendall Elementary School, and the Washington Primary School

Preventing Teen Pregnancy: Is There Common Ground?
Sarah S. Brown, Director, National Campaign to Prevent Teen Pregnancy

Saturday, June 8, 1996

(The White House, Old Executive Office Building, 17th Street Entrance)

- 45 am Buses leave promptly for the White House, Old Executive Office Building.
- 15-9:00 am Security clearance. Photo identification required. Please allow 45 minutes for security clearance.
- 9:00-9:30 am William A. Galston, Professor of Public Affairs, University of Maryland
- 9:30-10:00 am Amitai Etzioni, The Communitarian Network
- 10:00-11:00 am *Reports by Chairs of Task Forces*
- 11:15-Noon *Response from Panel of Education Experts*
 Paul Houston, Executive Director, American Association of School Administrators
 Stinson Stroup, Executive Director, Pennsylvania Association of School Administrators
 Gene Carter, Executive Director, Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development
 Victoria Baldwin, Principal in Residence, U.S. Department of Education
- Noon-12:45 pm *Response from Panel of Government/Community Experts*
 John Barth, Director, Education Policy Studies, National Governors' Association
 Ramon Cortines, Advisor, U.S. Department of Education
 William H. Morin, Former Chairman and CEO, Drake Beam Morin, Inc.
 William M. Bloomfield, Executive Director, School & Main
- 12:45-1:45 pm Luncheon.
- 2:00-3:00 pm The Honorable President Bill Clinton and First Lady Hillary Rodham Clinton (invited).
- 3:00-3:30 pm *Town Hall Meeting. Secretary Richard Riley, U.S. Department of Education*
- 45 pm Bus departs Old Executive Office Building for the Holiday Inn on the Hill.

The Communitarian Network

What is The Communitarian Network?

The Communitarian Network is a coalition of individuals and organizations who have come together to shore up the moral, social, and political environment. We are a nonsectarian, nonpartisan, nationwide association.

What is the communitarian perspective?

We believe that individual liberties depend upon the bolstering of the foundations of civil society: our families, schools, and neighborhoods. It is through these institutions that we acquire a sense of our personal and civic responsibilities, an appreciation of our rights and the rights of others, and a commitment to the welfare of the community and its members.

Our vision of the future is that:

- *All members of society will embrace communitarian values, civil order will prevail, and commitments to morality will be enhanced.* Families, schools, and neighborhoods will serve as institutions that foster communities whose members care about one another and encourage each other to be as ethical and socially responsible as the communitarian values require.
- *A community of communities will arise.* Instead of an homogenizing melting pot or divisive separatism, we support pluralism within unity. The society is richer the more we learn about one another's subcultures and are proud of our respective heritages, as long as we all commit to a set of core shared values.
- *Individual rights presume personal and social responsibilities.* Many Americans demand numerous rights but neglect their responsibilities. We must defend our rights vigorously but also live up to our responsibilities.

For information on communitarian publications, please contact The Communitarian Network, 2130 H Street, NW, Suite 714J, Washington DC 20052, (202) 994-7997, or outside DC call toll free, 1-800-245-7460.

You may also visit us on the web—<http://www.gwu.edu/~ccps>.

CHANGES TO THE PROGRAM

CONFERENCE ON CHARACTER BUILDING

Organized by The Communitarian Network and the White House & Congress

Thursday, June 6, 1996

- 3:30-4:30 pm *Open Hearings of Task Forces* (time change).
- 5:00-6:00 pm **First Lady Hillary Rodham Clinton** (Dorothy Belts Theater).
- 6:00 pm Buses depart the Marvin Center for the Holiday Inn (time change).

Friday, June 7, 1996

- 9:30-10:30 am *The Charge from Political Leadership—
Views on Character Building and the Role of Federal Leadership* (Caucus Room)
Co-host, **Senator Bill Bradley** (D-NJ) unable to attend.
- 11:15-noon *Exploring the Possibilities: Dialogue with Members of Congress* (Caucus Room)
Senator Joseph Lieberman (D-CT) (replaces Senator Dan Coats).
- 1:30-2:00 pm *Schools, Character, and Citizen Service* (Federal Ballroom)
Harris Wofford, President, Corporation for National Service
(Zoë Baird will be speaking on Saturday).

Saturday, June 8, 1996

The White House, Old Executive Office Building:

Pennsylvania Ave. Entrance before 9:00 am; 17th St. Entrance 9-10:00 am; no entrance after 10:00 am
(entrance and time changes)

- 11:15-11:45 am *Town Hall Meeting. Secretary Richard Riley, U.S. Department of Education*
(time change).
- 11:45-12:30 pm *Response from Panel of Education Experts* (time change).
- 12:30-1:30 pm Luncheon (time change).
- 1:30-2:15 pm *Response from Panel of Government/Community Experts* (time change)
Alan H. Fleischmann, Chief of Staff, Lt. Governor's Office, Maryland
(addition to panel).
- 2:15-2:45 pm *How Can Business Help?*
Zoë Baird, Senior Vice President and General Counsel,
Aetna Life and Casualty Company (moved from Friday).
- 3:45-3:30 pm **The Honorable President Bill Clinton** (invited)

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March 08, 1996, Friday

SECTION: Editorial; Pg. 10A

LENGTH: 684 words

HEADLINE: BILL CLINTON MAY LAUNCH 1,000 CHIPS

BYLINE: William Raspberry

BODY:

WASHINGTON -- President Clinton has appropriated a major conservative issue with his campaign to require manufacturers to install the so-called "V-chip" in all new TV sets. The chip, as everyone knows by now, would -- in conjunction with an industry agreement to encode its programming with movie-like content ratings -- allow parents to block reception of programs that are too violent or too sexy for the health of their children.

Naysayers will complain that the whole idea chips away at parental authority -- handing control over to faceless rating panels. But Clinton, having grabbed himself a doozy of an issue, isn't about to yield to such nit-picking. He spent last week coddling electronics manufacturers, participating in focus groups and soberly predicting that his purloined initiative "might actually change the content of programming."

Actually, I'm starting to like the idea that technology can extricate us from our moral difficulties.

Amitai Etzioni, the George Washington University savant, says Clinton may be going for the wrong technology -- or, more to the point, that he shouldn't specify the technology at all. Etzioni's notion is that the government should be content to identify the social need to be met and then leave it to the private sector to figure out how to meet it.

He notes that environmentalists, who once demanded smokestack "scrubbers" as a way of reducing harmful factory emissions, now simply demand that the harmful emissions be reduced. This frees inventors to try new approaches and new technologies that just might give us cleaner air. In the same way, he argues, mandating the V-chip may have the perverse effect of discouraging the development of cheaper, more effective and easier-to-use methods of cleaning up the TV airwaves.

The GWU professor's own favorite is a category he describes as "parental filters." You know those numbers listed on the TV schedule that allow you to program your videocassette recorder to tape them with no further attention from you. Well "parental filters" would let you use those same codes to block the programs from reaching your TV screen.

THE POINT, which Etzioni implicitly accepts, is that technology can

facilitate choices that parents are too busy to make. It is like putting an important part of parenting on automatic pilot.

What's not to love about that?

The president's thinking is too limited. TV sex and violence are bad for children, and the V-chip might reduce their exposure. But the absence of gunplay and smut isn't enough to turn out kids who are academically turned on. Why can't some genius come up with an electronic device -- an "R-chip" -- to flash a subliminal "read a book" message across the screen?

Of course, we might also need an "L-chip" to make sure the kids don't check anything out of the library that they shouldn't read.

As bad as TV is, it isn't the only medium that threatens the morals (and the eardrums) of our children. What parent wouldn't love a "CD-chip" that would cause the automatic ejection of any compact disc whose lyrics are too sexist, too racist or too vulgar?

Clinton, reacting to the fact that Bob Dole and Bill Bennett and other conservatives have zeroed in on TV and records, has too limited an idea of the technological possibilities.

Do you think he's even thought about a "G-chip" that could be programmed at the manufacturing plant to block the firing mechanisms of guns whose owners attempt to use them for lawless purposes?

Or an urgently needed "S-chip" to disable the sexual mechanisms of people too young (or insufficiently committed) to indulge in that ancient pleasure?

Clinton, if he'd open up, could go down in history as the president that launched a thousand chips. With enough chips, we could pack our churches, restore our families and (as Clinton likes to say) "grow our economy." We could rebuild our cities block by block off the old chip. And the chips, it goes without saying, could give us truly wonderful children.

The only problem I foresee is that we'd have to get our kids to program the darn things.

LOAD-DATE: March 08, 1996

The negative conception of liberty, which is very much the modern idea and the American idea, has always had to face the challenge of Berlin's second concept, "positive" liberty, which he describes as freedom to. Believers in positive liberty think freedom comes from directing one's actions toward some articulated conception of the good life. A certain, preferably benign, degree of coercion is therefore appropriate, since people need to know the right values from the wrong ones, and to be guided in their social doings toward those behaviors that will lead to self-realization and self-fulfillment. Schoolchildren will be better off praying; women will be better off without pornography.

In the mid-1990s United States, philosophies of positive liberty are in bloom all across the ideological spectrum. There have been challenges to liberalism before, but there has probably never been such a varied bouquet. Hillary Clinton's "politics of meaning," for example, a phrase she borrowed from Tikkun editor Michael Lerner, is a positive liberty philosophy. It seeks to infuse choices about values into the policy-making process in a manner alarming to classic liberalism. So does the communitarianism promoted by the sociologist Amitai Etzioni. Christopher Lasch's neopopulism, Allan Bloom's Straussianism, Catharine MacKinnon's "feminism unmodified," Patrick Buchanan's new nationalism, Dan Quayle's family values platform, Pat Robertson's Christian Coalition, Charles Murray's "clanism" (his solution to the problem of racial differences in IQ that he and Richard Herrnstein claim to have established in "The Bell Curve"): All base their appeal on the perception that liberalism's agnosticism about the nature of the good life has led to cultural breakdown.

If liberalism is now reduced by these competing moral doctrines to the position of an out-of-work gunfighter, hoping that things will get bad enough for its services to be in demand again, it has only itself to blame. For we are having these cultural brawls not because we fragmented, but because we integrated, and integration was a liberal accomplishment.

In 1964, Congress passed the civil Rights Act. (It is profoundly symptomatic of the irrelevance of liberalism to the culture wars that the act's 30-year anniversary has gone by virtually without notice.) The act is the monument to the great equity movements of the 1960s, which began with the civil rights movement for African-Americans and led to the women's movement and, after 1969, to the gay liberation movement. The act mandated nondiscrimination by race, creed, and sex, and it has been the foundation of all civil rights progress - from the enforcement of voting rights to the equal funding of collegiate athletics for women - ever since.

The key to the act is neutrality: It doesn't propose that women or nonwhites are better than white men, worse than white men, or even different from white men; it and its subsequent interpretations and emendations say only that whatever difference sex and race may make, that difference shall be ignored when counting votes, serving customers at lunch counters, admitting applicants to educational institutions' interviewing candidates for jobs, selling houses, and generally passing around social resources.

Among its many consequences, the act enabled the realization of the meritocratic system of education. The symbol of this system is the Scholastic Aptitude Test, which represents the commitment made in postwar education, at

PLATFORM ON CHARACTER AND VALUES EDUCATION

The Communitarian Network

America faces a moral, social, and political crisis. Too often we demand rights without accepting responsibilities, pursue entitlements while shying away from obligations. More broadly, as the increase in anti-social behavior over the last decades indicates, we have lost commitment to values we all share and the values we all share have been diminished.

Communitarians maintain that there can be no rights without responsibilities. We hold that the key to repairing our civic and moral culture is in strengthening the basic social institutions of family, school, community, and society (as the community of communities).

At the core of our approach is a concept that has fallen out of favor in the modern world: character. The kind of people that we are and the values that we hold shape the world around us. The first responsibility for building character lies with the family, but schools play a cardinal role in shaping the characters of their students.

Therefore, communitarians resolve that all schools should make the development of good character one of their primary responsibilities. To live up to this commitment schools must teach those values that our society shares and work to develop personality capabilities that enable individuals to act on the values they hold dear. We offer this platform as a guideline for remaking America's schools.

PRINCIPLES OF CHARACTER EDUCATION

- 1. Values education is a crucial part of public education.** It should be fostered in schools. There cannot be a value-free or value-neutral education. Schools must supplement the moral education provided at home—especially when homes are not intact.
- 2. Schools should teach those values shared by the community,** virtues such as veracity and treating others with dignity. The teaching of values particularly dear to the heart of sub-groups should be reserved for religious and other private schools.
- 3. Character building is at the root of upholding values.** Without character, merely knowing what is right is no assurance that we will do what is right, incorporate these values

into our lives. Critical to developing character are two capabilities: self-discipline and empathy. Self-discipline is required because without it individuals cannot control their impulses and will grow up to be uncivil, unethical, and ineffectual. (The emphasis is on developing self-discipline. External controls are needed up to a point but if extended beyond that point, they undermine the cultivation of self-discipline.) Empathy, the capacity to walk in the other person's shoes, is essential. It is at the foundation of many values and without it those who are self-disciplined might commit themselves to nefarious purposes.

4. While a variety of factors cause our social maladies, they all reflect a lack of character development. We should not treat violence, drug abuse, illegitimacy, promiscuity, abusive attitudes towards people of different backgrounds, alcoholism, poor academic performance, and other social maladies as isolated phenomena. There can exist neither ordered liberties—nor a society whose members act responsibly and cope with their problems on their own or by caring for one another—unless each generation acquires the necessary character.

5. Character education should imbue the full range of school experiences—the human curriculum as well as the academic curriculum. It should not be limited to classes on civics, nor is it only a matter of curriculum content. The way sports are conducted, grades are allotted, teachers behave, and corridors and parking lots are monitored all impart moral messages and significantly affect character development.

The preceding deliberations inform the following specific comments:

THE CHARACTER CURRICULUM: specific points.

6. Extracurricular activities, and especially sports, should not be considered "extra," but a vital part of education. We must strive to develop stronger ties between these activities and character development. Sport is important not merely for a healthy body and as a substitute for street activities, but also as a place to learn to play by the rules, bond, develop camaraderie, and much more.

7. A public school should teach about the social role and historical significance of religion but not advocate a particular religion. We support efforts, such as those of the Williamsburg Charter, to find common ground on religious issues that divide us and to find space in schools to discuss these issues.

8. "Value free" sex education is unacceptable. At the same time, teaching family values without information about ways to prevent transmission of disease and unwanted pregnancies is dangerous. We need education for interpersonal relations, family life, and intimacy that provides a normative context for sex education as well as sharing age-appropriate specific information on the subject. Students should learn about the value of delaying sexual involvement, the merits of abstinence, while receiving contraception information to protect them and others if they do become sexually active. Properly combined the second message

need not cancel out the first one.

SCHOOLS WITHIN COMMUNITIES

9. Parents should be deeply involved in all aspects of formulating and implementing school policies, curricula, discipline, community service, and, above all, values issues. While teachers' and other educators' professional knowledge should be heeded, on matters of character the voice of parents and communities should take precedence, within constitutional limits and as long as the policies favored do not pose a danger to life and limb. (For example, a school may well favor turning the school into a gun free zone and oppose a community that favors allowing students to carry concealed weapons to the school.)

10. We favor community schools and schools that also serve as community centers. Schools should gradually shift to remain open more months a year, longer hours, and even during weekends. This cannot be done overnight, but the time has come to outgrow the farmers' calendar.

11. Community service, when properly conducted, can be an effective means of developing civic commitments and skills by doing rather than by merely studying. Community service should be the practicum for civics, but imposing it on students defeats the purpose of developing the taste for volunteerism.

12. Greater integration must be achieved between work and schooling. Educators need to search for ways to connect schooling with activities that make sense to young people; and the many businesses who employ high school students part-time ought to recognize that they are educators as well. These early work experiences will either reinforce responsible habits and attitudes, or will serve as lessons in poor civics and deficient work ethics. Corporations and small businesses should work with schools to better structure employment opportunities for adolescents so that they build character and prepare them for their futures.

SCHOOLS AS COMMUNITIES

13. Peer mentoring of students, guided by professionals, is a promising way to enhance education and to counter drugs, alcoholism, and premature sex.

14. Schools should be viewed as nascent communities. Students and teachers should have the same basic goals; they should be discouraged from approaching one another in an adversarial or legalistic fashion. While the basic rights of students must be respected fully, maintaining civility in schools should not require full court hearings and the cross-examination of witnesses when disciplining students. Simplified hearings, limited appeals, mediating, and similar measures are more appropriate for a school setting. We prefer that disruptive students receive more education rather than banishment. However, when these measures fail, schools should not be unduly hampered in removing those who destroy the learning environment.

DIVERSITY WITHIN UNITY

15. Enhanced diversity in the curricula and in the composition of the school enriches us, but also exposes us to the dangers of tribalism. Diversity should be advanced, but within the context of unity. We are richer if we learn about other cultures and traditions and develop more respect for others. But we must share certain basics, and above all, the superior value of the democratic form of government, the importance of the Constitution and its Bill of Rights, and the tolerance of one another. Educators should be mindful of the theme implied in the saying, "We all came on different ships but now we ride in the same boat."

16. No class should teach hate against any other group, including white males. We all have troubling parts in our respective histories. We need to learn reconciliation without forgetting the lessons of the past, lest we shall repeat them.

17. Teaching new immigrant children in their native languages for a limited time may ease their transition. But we should avoid prolonged separation of education along ethnic or racial lines.

We, the undersigned, are of one mind on the broad thrust of this platform and the necessity of this intervention into the current dialogue, without necessarily agreeing to every single, specific statement.

TEACHING JOHNNY TO BE GOOD

'A whole generation has grown up in a moral vacuum,' a teacher says. The character education movement is working to fill the gap.

BY ROGER ROSENBLATT

WENTY-TWO WHEATIES-BOX SIXTH GRADERS SIT IN a circle in the Lansing Middle School in Lansing, a white-bread town of 10,000 in the center of New York State. Its sights are silos, old barns, cow-crossing signs, paint-peeling houses with collapsing porches and neat, new frame houses, mostly one story, strung out on the black roads that run among the hills. A 20-minute commute from Ithaca, Lansing is home to professors' kids as well as those of merchants and farmers. The 11-year-olds look scrubbed and alert on this recent Monday morning. All wear jeans and the elaborate sneakers of the times. All are intent on the teacher, Phyllis Smith-Hansen, who is

46 years old, has a broad Scandinavian face, wheat-blond hair and blue slits for eyes and whose chair in the circle is closest to the blackboard. She has posted a quotation of H. Jackson Brown Jr., the inspirational-book author, "Let people know what you stand for — and what you won't stand for," along with a slightly amended quotation from Edmund Burke, "The only thing necessary for the triumph of evil is for good men (and women) to do nothing."

Smith-Hansen is about to teach a class in character education, a subject unheard of a generation ago, but today taught to millions of American children in the nation's public schools. She is a devoted student, if not a disciple, of Thomas Lickona, a developmental psychologist and a professor of education at the State University of New York at nearby Cortland. Lickona is an acknowledged leader of the burgeoning character education movement. He has recently established the Center for the 4th and 5th R's (Respect and Responsibility) at SUNY-Cortland, which is becoming something of a national center for the study and development of character education curricula.

Character education represents an effort to teach moral behavior to primary- and secondary-school students in a time perceived to be morally rudderless and to be without such teaching in local communities or in the

home. Across the country, teachers are confronting children with moral dilemmas and asking them to think and talk. The felt need for this kind of education is so deep and widespread that it has spurred a movement that has attracted as many former activists of the 1960's — Lickona is one — as it has conservative thinkers and politicians of the 1980's. (Supporters include Barbara Jordan, Barbara Bush, Marian Wright Edelman, Jesse Jackson, Tom Selleck and Nathan Glazer.)

It is a quiet movement, and a rather disparate one, encompassing not only Lickona's methods but also other approaches to the teaching of basic values and moral reasoning. Its goal is simple and vast: to fix a broken America, an America whose children no longer seem to know right from wrong. Last year, the Mississippi Board of Education voted unanimously to develop a plan for "the teaching of values." The New Hampshire Department of Education recently announced that a like-minded program would be set up in that state. The New Jersey Department of Education has endorsed a set of "core values" for school education and set up a council to define commonly accepted values. Similar efforts are in progress at the local level — in big cities like St. Louis, Seattle, Chicago and San Antonio and in smaller places like Frankfort, Ky. Classes in character education are held in rural and suburban schools, like those around Lansing, and in inner-city schools, like Theodore Roosevelt High School in the Bronx.

Roger Rosenblatt is a contributing writer for the Magazine.



"Loyalty to your friend is a good thing, right?" Jill asked.

"Right," Nancy said.

"And you help your friends."

"Who else're you going to help?"

"And so if my friend doesn't know the answer to a question on the math quiz, it's not really so bad to give it to her?"

There already has been one White House Conference on Character Building for a Democratic, Civil Society and a second conference is in the planning. President Clinton and Congress have declared Oct. 16-22 as National Character Counts Week. That one could devise such a name without embarrassment suggests how seriously people take the movement.

Beside Lickona's center at Cortland, there is the Josephson Institute of Ethics in Los Angeles, which supports a Character Counts Coalition. Amitai Etzioni, a leader of the Communitarian movement, has devoted the energy of his Communitarian Network to advance the cause. Boston University has established the Center for the Advancement of Ethics and Character specifically to develop character education. All this is in addition to the work of individual schoolteachers and educators at the university level who are turning the idea that values can be formally taught into a field of study — Kevin Ryan at Boston University; Kevin Walsh at the University of Alabama; William Damon at Brown University, and others. Kevin Ryan says: "We've had 10 years of talking about school reform. This issue is at the heart of school

reform." For Kevin Walsh, the ultimate purpose of character education is nothing less than "to prepare the next generation to inherit society."

Phyllis Smith-Hansen has just finished showing some members of the next generation a film on the Nazi persecution of the Jews. She now writes the following words in a vertical row on the board behind her: "stereotype, prejudice, cliques, Holocaust." Beside that row, she writes "conscience." She asks the class: "Can you relate any of the first row of words?"

A girl in a Notre Dame sweatshirt: "The Nazis didn't like the Jews because they thought only *they* were the best. They had their own special group."

Smith-Hansen: "So a clique is an excluding group of people. How would stereotypes fit into what a clique is?"

A boy in a backward baseball cap: "Well, like the rumor was that if you had dark hair and dark eyes, then you're automatically a Jew and you're not a perfect Christian, so you're evil or bad or something and you should be put to death."

Smith-Hansen: "So you're saying that a stereotype is a belief about a group



THE TEACHER

"My job," says Phyllis Smith-Hansen, "is to continually define moral issues — naming, naming, naming."

of people based on some outside part of them. Is that what you're saying?" The boy says "Yeah." Smith-Hansen looks about the room. "Any other ideas about cliques, and how these words go together?"

A girl: "If you believe the prejudices, you try to exterminate the Jews."

A boy: "And they think they're purifying the country."

A boy named Nate: "But where does originality fit in? If they were born as Jews, what does that have to do with who they are as people? Like big deal if I had brown hair and brown eyes. Like if you had blond hair and blue eyes, would that mean you'd do nothing wrong?"

Smith-Hansen shows a smile. "But looks were not the most important part of it, were they?" she asks. "Wasn't it religion itself?" The heads nod solemnly. "It was being Jewish that the Germans said was not O.K., right?"

Boy: "Wasn't Hitler partly Jewish?" Five or six kids chip in at once and make a confused noise.

Smith-Hansen: "I heard one of you say something about Hitler being a leader. Tell me about cliques in terms of leaders. How did Hitler lead his clique? Nate?"

Nate: "He started out as one person. And then he convinced his friends that Jews were bad, for whatever reason. Then his friends convinced other people. And like, before you knew it, it spread around."

The talk about Hitler and the Jews continues for a while longer among the students. Then Smith-Hansen shifts things a bit: "O.K. Now I want you to put this together — what we've said so far. Remember, I talked a couple of weeks ago about how a seed exists in all of us. Even in Lansing, N.Y., in the sixth grade, there's a seed. Can you explain that seed and its growth, using some of today's words?"

Nate: "Well, I was wondering why didn't someone just say: 'Hey, who does this guy Hitler think he is? Why is he killing off our population? Does he think that if I don't like Jacob [he indicates the boy sitting to his right], I'm going to kill him?'" Jacob looks a bit concerned. Many voices overlap.

Smith-Hansen reads aloud the Burke quotation about evil's triumph and then says: "Nate, you're absolutely on track."

Girl: "Yeah! Why didn't somebody stop him?"

Smith-Hansen: "I'm going to ask *you* that."

Nate begins slowly: "Because if you're, like, prejudiced, you start a gang, which would be other people who are prejudiced, too. Then you get a clique." He pauses. "And the Holocaust."

Smith-Hansen: "And the Holocaust, then, is the fruit of the seed that can be born inside us. So what's the job of people, even people in the Lansing sixth grade? If that seed of prejudice is part of us as human beings, what do we have to do about it?"

Boy: "Don't let it grow."

Girl: "Don't water it."

Boy: "Don't give it Miracle-Gro." Laughter.

Smith-Hansen: "Good. But how would we water that seed?"

A girl with braids: "You start by joining people you like. Now they tell you that some people aren't as good as you, which is prejudice. And then they think that they are better and that others are worse — which is stereotypes. Like I don't get a good grade in math. And the math teacher wears glasses. And I say that all teachers who wear glasses are bad. And I make a clique against teachers who wear glasses."

Smith-Hansen: "Good. Good thinking, Susie."

Another girl starts to raise her hand, then lowers it. She hasn't spoken: till now and Smith-Hansen encourages her to join in. The girl finally says: "What about your own family?"

Smith-Hansen: "What do you mean?"

Girl: "Like last night, we were watching TV and there were some African-American men in the show and I heard my grandfather say something about 'the niggers.' And I told him to use the term 'African-American.' And he looked at me like I was crazy. And so did my dad."

SMITH-HANSEN'S CLASS HAS ARRIVED AT A POINT THAT SUGGESTS how complicated character education can be. One would assume that the girl was emboldened to speak up at home by previous classroom discussions and, further, that Smith-Hansen supports her in her expression of dismay at her family's use of racial epithets. But character education also teaches that respect for one's parents is an important value. What happens when two moral rights collide? A teacher might well begin complicating things, talking of exceptions and degrees, but a teacher also wants to avoid sliding into moral relativism, since one of the tenets of the character education movement is that moral relativism created the mess that character educators are trying to fix. The two new R's, respect and responsibility, are not the stuff of multiplication tables, however basic the values that are trying to be taught.

It was thus with a good deal of care that Lickona, back in the early 1970's, began developing a course of study at Cortland that eventually attracted people like Smith-Hansen. Little by little, his students have brought the program into the classrooms. The movement progressed, as it does today, from a teacher of teachers, to a teacher of children, to the children themselves.

The process begins with Lickona, whose life seems to have followed the dual paths of 1960's activism and his traditional Catholic faith until they converged in a passion for moral education. After growing up in Poughkeepsie, N.Y., he got his undergraduate degree at Siena College, a small Franciscan school outside Albany. He earned a master's in English at Ohio University, then switched disciplines to psychology and received his doctorate at the SUNY-Albany.

Deciding to do his dissertation on children's moral thinking, he was drawn to Jean Piaget, the influential Swiss child psychologist, and to Lawrence Kohlberg of Harvard, a major figure in the late 1960's on the subject of moral reasoning. Kohlberg argued with the anthropologists and sociologists who claimed that morality was a function of class or culture. It was his contention that social science cannot instill moral philosophy; its methods are too empirical and descriptive. One has to read Plato and Aristotle, Kohlberg maintained, to be able to answer moral questions. He developed his "stages of moral reasoning" from Plato's concept of ideal justice.



Harold said, "If somebody wears really uncool clothes because they're poor, it's different than if they wear uncool clothes because they're uncool."

"But some poor people have cool clothes," Bob said.

"A lot of poor people don't get the choice," Harold said.

Then Nick joined in: "So you're saying, don't judge people by what they wear. I guess. But I still don't know if I want to hang out with somebody who doesn't dress cool."

Lickona is all for having students read and reflect on literature, history and philosophy, but he believes that character education must involve more than books if students are to get a grounding in basic values. He instructs teachers to use all aspects of school life: "the teacher's moral example; building a caring classroom community; handling discipline so as to develop self-discipline; having high academic standards; conflict resolution; the schoolwide ethos; school and community service, and parent and community support."

This is the program carried into the schools by teachers like Smith-Hansen. Typically, an individual teacher will bring aspects of character education into a regular class, like English or history. Sometimes, as in Smith-Hansen's case, a teacher interested in character education will get a school board to release her from regular classroom teaching to teach a separate course in the subject.

"Ten years ago, I asked them to consider the possibility of making character education a special class like art, music and gym," Smith-Hansen recalls. She had been teaching language arts and using selections from literary works to engage her classes in moral reasoning of the sort Lickona encourages, but she didn't think this was enough. "I believed that the students would take it more seriously, that the district would be making a statement of the importance of learning life skills and that it was more educationally sound than taking time from an academic strand. The board agreed."

In general, people in the Cortland area have been receptive, even enthusiastic, about Lickona's center and about the kind of teaching that Smith-Hansen and other students of Lickona are bringing to the area's schools. Jeffrey Holden, the father of Nate in Smith-Hansen's sixth-grade class, who is the



"I love Cindy," Judy said.

"Me too," Suzie agreed.

"And one of the reasons," Judy said, "is that she cares — like when she lectured me how Scott was wrong for me, and she was right."

"Totally."

"But I also don't want to hurt her. You don't do that to somebody you care about."

"Uh-huh."

"So what about the way her boyfriend keeps hitting on me?"

supervisor of a local electric power plant, talked over the subject matter with Smith-Hansen before Nate took the course. He walked away, he said, with "no reservations at all." He calls character education "a great hope for our future."

The reason Smith-Hansen's class is especially valuable, he says, "is that it encourages kids to discuss the issues with their parents at home."

I asked him: "But what if home doesn't want to hear such talk?"

"Then," Holden replied, "those are the kids who need the class most."

Over the years, Smith-Hansen has been challenged by parents who were afraid that her course would contradict their religious beliefs. "I respect the religious traditions of any family," she says, "and I know that what I teach would survive inspection by any religion." Yet she has been willing to

compromise. One of her students this year is a Christian Scientist. By agreement with the parents, that student will be absent when Smith-Hansen teaches about AIDS prevention, since such a discussion involves viruses as a cause of illness and death.

The reality is that Smith-Hansen will not know where parental opposition lies, because it's usually hidden. "I encourage understanding that precludes racism, hatred, violence in personal conflicts, stereotyping and other such attitudes. Of course, this teaching will clash with the attitudes of some parents. It's far more likely that they will trash me at the dinner table." A child once reported that father ran an illegal cockfight in their basement. "We had to confront that."

She has "lost" only one student. The mother used drugs, Smith-Hansen

says, and "she believed that using drugs was a personal right. She told me she didn't want her child to develop negative attitudes toward her or her friends. I was pretty speechless." The child, Smith-Hansen added, developed a drug problem of her own.

THE CORTLAND-LANSING-ITHACA AREA IS BY AND LARGE LIBERAL politically and culturally, and it is not surprising that Lickona's teaching has taken hold. I did speak with one local skeptic. Richard Baer Jr., a professor of natural resources in the school of agriculture at Cornell, has found fault with the content of some courses ("bland pabulum") and he complained to me that there is no empirical evidence that character education actually improves character. But Baer's main concern is that the public schools will become centers of a cultural war between those on the right who believe that character education must incorporate religion and those on the left who do not want religious teaching included at all.

Educators and parents around the country share this concern of Baer's about the intrusion of religion. The American Civil Liberties Union is leery of character education, on the grounds that it will provide opportunities for people to impose religious views. Nadine Strossen, the A.C.L.U.'s president, argues that "it's very hard to sort out subtle indoctrination or abuse. The students may not realize what's going on." On the right, meanwhile, organizations like Concerned Women of America and Citizens for Excellence in Education are hostile to character education because they believe that public education cannot be trusted with moral issues — that in its insistent secularity it will wind up being antichurch.

Charles Haynes of the Freedom Forum First Amendment Center at Vanderbilt University says that the now widely used "outcomes based" curriculum, which requires a demonstration that an education show concrete results, has scared some conservatives off character education. "They're asking: 'Will students have to prove themselves tolerant? If that's the outcome, will our religion be labeled intolerant?'" Thus, while few religious organizations have a formal stand on character education, most are opposed in general to the notion of schools getting involved in what has traditionally been the province of church and family. As the character education movement grows, religious leaders are likely to become more vocal in opposition to it.

Still, when asked for any examples of abuses in character education classes, neither religious groups nor liberal watchdog organizations like the A.C.L.U. can cite them. Maybe this is because the movement is so young. Or maybe it has to do with the fact that, as Derek Bok, the former president of Harvard, puts it, "There are certain fundamental principles that are not a matter of debate." Or as Charles Haynes, who himself approves of a modest approach to character education, sees it: "We need a civic framework. This country was founded on an understanding that one has to be a good citizen. About character education most people are not asking 'if' but 'how.'"

THE "HOW" QUESTION IS KEY, AND IT BRINGS ONE BACK TO LICKONA, the teacher of those who teach. The question involves not only the personality and methods of the teacher but the values and how they are expressed. The old "whose values" problem remains and, in a way, Lickona both settles the problem and exacerbates it. He is a former antiwar protester and Eugene McCarthy campaigner, and a conservative Catholic as well. Possessed of a self-scrutinizing mind, he is willing to reconsider ideas that he also holds as tenets of faith. In this complicated combination of explorative and authoritarian thinking, he embodies the full range of his movement's possibilities, which may be why he is best qualified to lead it. Yet, intellectual fair play aside, if a teacher of character education truly believes in definite rights and wrongs, especially if they are spiritually or dogmatically based, why would he or she wish to refrain from promoting his or her absolute values?

I put this question to Lickona on a visit to his home in Cortland — a small frame house a short walk to the campus, where he and his wife, Judy, have



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"One of the virtues one teaches," says Thomas Lickona, "is the virtue of striving toward virtue."

reared their two boys. Its atmosphere speaks both for Lickona's scholarship and for his faith. The few places where there are no piles of books and papers, there are religious icons. In the living room, a painting of Jesus hangs above a large plaster statue of the Virgin.

Facing me, he takes the easy chair with the broken cushion springs. We talk in a small wing at the far end of the house. A picture window displays the backyard. The ground is covered with snow from which rises a grotto to the Virgin and a statue of St. Francis — "to protect the birds from the cat," he says. "I have no statue to protect the cat from the dog." His voice, a soothing rumble, sounds a bit like Tom Brokaw's. He is 52 and his face is young, but he surrounds it with an Amish-like beard that gives him a look of the ancients.

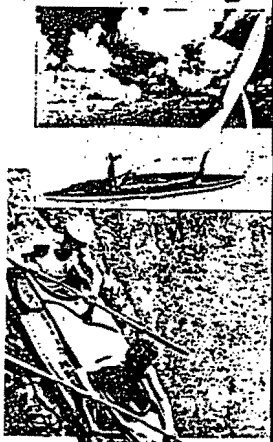
I ask him: "How do you discuss the touchier items of moral inquiry and debate without on the one hand asserting a value and on the other stating that all values are equal?"

"Students must be challenged to investigate the best arguments and evidence on both sides of the question," he says. "I think students have more intellectual freedom if the teacher doesn't tip his or her hand on the issue at the outset. But even if the teacher does disclose a personal position on the controversial issue, the teacher must scrupulously refrain from using the classroom as a platform for advocating a personal ideology on a given issue. In dealing with an issue like abortion, the teacher's first job is to make it clear that this is a highly controversial issue and to make available the full range of opinion. The whole debate. To challenge students to read and reflect on opposing views. One should also encourage students to interview their family members about the controversial issue at hand, which tends to build trust between the school and the family.

"But I also think that we should avoid tackling the controversial issues until the character program is firmly established. And then save more difficult inquiry for the secondary level. A lot of people, when they

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think values, they immediately think value conflict. And they know that society is deeply divided on issues of gay rights, euthanasia and capital punishment and they assume that values education is going to mean bringing all these controversies that are tearing our country apart into the schools. Which will, you know, then simply tear our schools apart. So I think it makes a good case that the proper emphasis at the outset is to teach the basics. Teach the basic qualities of honesty and hard work and decency, justice, caring, loyalty, friendship and so on. And to save other issues for later on down the road."

I ask him: "But if one believes, as you do, that abortion is wrong, why not teach that abortion is wrong?"

"Well, the distinction would have to be made between virtues that everyone agrees on and the application of the virtues to a particular problem. Abortion becomes a difficult case because values are in conflict. Life on the one hand and liberty on the other. One can get students to press beyond simply recognizing that there's a conflict to examining the reasons that would underlie one or another position. It's not an easy road for a teacher to take, obviously, because the teacher's own bias will always be a factor. Some people split on this issue and think that the educator, in assuming a neutral position in the classroom, teaches a bad moral lesson — that the hottest fires of hell are reserved for those who seek to preserve moral neutrality in the face of a crisis. And yet there's an issue of accountability. The teacher has to avoid using the classroom to influence either side of the controversial question because there are parents out there and constituencies out there who do not want the classroom used to promote one or another position on certain issues."

"What about sex education?" I ask.

"Sex education sort of

provides a middle case," he says, "because, on the one hand, there is controversy about whether it's right to have sex without marriage. Or whether you're being a responsible person if you use, quotes, 'protection.' On the other hand, there is an increasingly compelling case that teen-age sexual intercourse is harmful to teenagers, harmful to their partners and harmful to the society at large; that sex is not for kids. There is a less widely accepted argument that sex should be reserved for marriage, and marriage only."

"Do you believe that?" I ask.

"Yes."

"So we come to this same question of whether to teach what one believes to be right."

"When I speak to young people, I reason in the following way: I say, when you are engaged in this physical act, you are as physically close to another human being as you can be. You can't get any closer than that. When this is part of marriage, the sexual union is an expression of a larger union. The sexual love is a symbol or a sign of a marriage love. So you're joining your bodies because you've joined your lives. You're giving yourself completely, in the physical sense, because you've given yourself completely in the marriage commitment. So that the sexual union has a meaning of representing something that is much deeper, larger. Is this something that you could as readily do on the first date or after you get to know the person a little bit better? Well, you really should know them a bit better. Would it be as fitting with somebody that you didn't really care about? Well, caring can certainly make it better. And so on."

I ask him: "So, the idea, as in the other examples that you talked about, is that while you can't really say, 'How do you do, I'm Professor Chastity,' you can build the education up to the point where sexual activity, before marriage, is less attractive and less compelling. Is that what you mean?"

"Educating for chastity would stop short of trying to

get kids to that goal, because that turns kids off," he says.

"But you know where you want them to be?" I suggest.

"You know where you want them to go," he says. "And would we have ever reached a point where the institution of marriage, commitment to marriage, the institution of the family as an extension of marriage, was sufficiently re-established in society that educators could educate as forthrightly for chastity as they now do against racism and for honesty and for respect and responsibility? I hope so."

"As long as we're on the thorny subjects," I ask him, "what about prayer in the schools? You firmly believe in God as moral authority. Shouldn't God be part of character education?"

"I believe in a moment of silence," he says. "That's as far as I'll go."

"Yet you would say that moral conscience comes from God?"

"It does," he says. "But God creates us free. And we are free to acknowledge Him or not to acknowledge Him. And, in a way, he sets the educational standard in this regard."

I ask him: "In sum, is it fair to say that the more problematic and complex the moral question, the harder character education is to teach?"

"I think it's misleading to characterize these kinds of problems as lying at the heart of the movement. They do provide challenges at the higher end, but that's all. This is a very difficult enterprise. One of the virtues one teaches, and I hope practices, is the virtue of surviving toward virtue. Tennyson said that humility is the mother of the other virtues because it acknowledges the struggle of leading a moral life. We have to recognize that we're often blind to our own moral shortcomings. And that we might be wrong."

OTHER QUESTIONS probably ought to be asked about the movement: What is the quality of the books used or recommended as texts? Should character education be incorporated into ex-

isting curriculums, as Lickona believes, or should it be taught in independent courses like Smith-Hansen's? How effective can it be if the society a child enters appears to offer no disincentives for antisocial behavior? And a question somewhat different from, yet at least as important as, who's values: who should be doing the teaching?

Concerning the issue of books, it is astonishing how much literature is being produced on this subject. Included among the most recent titles are: "Why Johnny Can't Tell Right from Wrong"; "Character Building: A Guide for Parents and Teachers"; "Developing Character in Students"; "Moral Classrooms, Moral Children"; "Knowledge Without Goodness Is Dangerous," and "Hooray for Heroes." Few of these works are especially learned or revealing, except about the troubled public feeling they tap, and almost all raise as many educational problems as they purport to solve.

In "Why Johnny Can't Tell Right from Wrong," William Kilpatrick suggests that the emulation of heroes is a valuable tool for character building, but his "guide to great books for children and teachers" is frequently superficial and misleading. Captain Ahab is characterized as "a good man destroyed by pride." Joseph Conrad's Captain MacWhirr, the "hero" of "Typhoon," is commended for his "bravery and moral responsibility," when he is seen by most readers as pigheaded. An interesting omission from the list is "The Great Gatsby," since Gatsby got to his weird place on earth by strictly following a prescription for character education.

However nuanced Lickona is in his thinking and teaching, in his own popular and influential book, "Educating for Character: How Our Schools Can Teach," he is prone to lapses and offers some skewed interpretations as well. The book names Darwin and Einstein as figures who contributed to a disintegrated view of experience — rather than having expanded knowledge. A

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recommended school curriculum includes Charles Lindbergh as an exemplar of courage without mentioning Lindbergh's pro-German activities in the early years of the Second World War.

Sometimes it appears that any book with words like "morality" or "virtue" in the title is automatically welcomed into the approved canon. A serious study like "The Moral Sense" by James Q. Wilson is placed on the same shelf of authority with William J. Bennett's commercial anthology, "The Book of Virtues," a collection of stories, essays and poems often explained in a simplifying and distorting way. The famous fence-whitewashing passage from "The Adventures of Tom Sawyer" is included in Bennett's book to illustrate the virtue of work rather than the cleverness of a con game — which is the lesson Twain explicitly gave it. "The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn," generally

thought to be the most morally useful novel in American literature, is omitted except for a note that it "deserve[s] to be read."

The matter of where character education is most effectively located gets more problematical the higher one goes in school. Karyn Freshwater, 29, is a former student of Lickona's who teaches kindergarten in Homer, a town near Cortland. Directing 5-year-olds, she needs to make no distinction between an intellectual and a moral curriculum because the requirements of the children are basic.

"I try to teach the whole person," she says. "The little ones come to me with so few social skills. They don't even know how to ask a friend, 'Can I play?' A whole generation has grown up in a vacuum, a valueless kind of teaching that says whatever you think is right. There is so little moral education given in the home — where it rightly should be — that I feel I have to provide a foundation. One of the simplest things I do is just to teach the children to greet each other in the morn-

ing. Just say 'Hello.' Recognizing each other as people.

"I use Tom Lickona's words, 'respect' and 'responsibility,' right from the beginning of the year. Even 5-year-olds can come up with definitions of respect. I ask them, 'What is a friend?' They answer, 'A friend plays with me.' I connect that answer to the idea of respect, but I try not to ask yes or no questions. I ask, 'What does respect look like?' We make books of drawings — what a friend looks like, what a friend does."

Smith-Hansen says: "The age hardly matters. I do the same sort of thing with my sixth graders. We start on a very basic level. Read biographies. Use characters from history. Discuss current events. I feel that my job is to continually define moral issues — naming, naming, naming. A girl had her broken arm in a sling. She wanted to go to a dance, but her parents, fearing she'd be injured, said no. Then they relented, but they told her to keep the sling on during the dance. She brought the problem to the class and

the kids chipped in with everything from 'Obey your parents' to 'Take off the sling; they'll never know.' At each point, I'd stop and say: 'Now, is this honesty? Is this subterfuge? Is this personal strength?' If they give names to the associations they make, they'll know better what they're thinking."

"What did the girl finally do?" I asked.

"She said she'd go back to her parents and try to work out a compromise. Keep the sling on most of the time, but take it off for the slow dances."

But Smith-Hansen has deliberately separated her discussions of moral issues from the other subjects taught in her school. Other former Lickona students — like Ron Schuck, 34, who teaches seventh-grade science at the DeWitt Middle School in Ithaca — have not made that separation.

I VISITED SCHUCK'S SEVENTH-GRADE science class. The students had recently viewed a fictional video about a Neanderthal named Charlie the

Iceman who had lain frozen for 5,000 years and was unearthed alive. The class debate was whether Charlie should be treated like a lab animal so that scientists could study his cell structure for medical research or whether, because of his uniqueness and humanity, he ought to be allowed to remain living. Unlike Smith-Hansen's class in Lansing, Schuck's is a mixture of races and ethnic backgrounds; a variety of points of view was brought to the question. He, too, is a devoted, thoughtful teacher. But in the end, one was still left wondering whether the students would be better off learning more science and less ethics.

The problem of the extent to which character education can be divorced from social sanctions is both real and impossible to assess. This problem has been raised indirectly by Senator Daniel Patrick Moynihan in a noted essay in *The American Scholar* called "Defining Deviancy Down." Moynihan's point is that deviant behavior that used to be stigmatized by society is now

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tolerated or readily accepted. Teen-age pregnancy has not increased since the 1950's, but 40 years ago a pregnant teenager, reacting to social disapproval, would simply get married to adhere to social norms. If society believes that any behavior goes, what chance does character education have? As soon as character-educated children emerge from their classes, they may be confronted by a wider world that contradicts their learning.

As is true of much in education, eventually everything comes down to the quality of the individual teacher. One can imagine the character education movement in the hands of someone less moderate and self-inspecting than Lickona. Talking with several of Lickona's students, all good and dedicated people, one is reminded of how fragile education is. If this movement is going to make educational sense, much less to have any larger social benefits, it most

likely will depend on people like Smith-Hansen who know what they are doing, teach values at the right age for the students and address the subject in separate contexts of study and not as riders to existing curriculums.

There was a time when it could be assumed that the teaching of values was contained in regular subject matter, but that time may be irretrievable. The advantage of Smith-Hansen's approach is that it teaches character straight-on to a group ready and eager to apprehend it. After a certain age, character education rises into the realm of ethics debates and rational discourse, and except for the character-building that may result from an atmosphere of open inquiry, little seems to be tapped that is applicable to personal behavior.

In Smith-Hansen's class, the kids seem to be learning processes of mind that have a chance of sticking with them, though it would be a mistake to conclude that because these students are young, they are not cognizant of the more

ambiguous problems that await them. And nobody really knows how to teach virtue. In "Language and Silence," George Steiner lamented that teaching the great moral examples of human endeavor can lead anywhere, including to the Holocaust. For the moment, people like Smith-Hansen do what they can.

SMITH-HANSEN ADDRESSES the girl who reported on her grandfather using the word "nigger" and urged on him the use of "African-American": "How did it work out?"

Girl: "Well, my grandfather was angry at me, I think. But my dad said he was sorry and that he'd try not to do that when I'm around."

Boy: "I think — going back to where prejudice comes from — it might be from experience. Like if you were mugged by an Hispanic, you might be bitter to Hispanics your whole life."

Smith-Hansen: "A person could have one negative experience and then generalize about a whole people."

The girl with the braids: "I

think it starts with stereotypes. Like last week we were talking about the words 'nerd' and 'hicks.' Everybody speaks at once again."

Smith-Hansen: "O.K. We began with one of today's quotes. Let's look at the other: 'Let people know what you stand for — and what you won't stand for.' Was that being done in Germany, do you think?"

Boy: "Not by enough people."

A boy with a choppy haircut: "People didn't want to feel left out."

Smith-Hansen: "You're saying that Hitler's power grew because people were embarrassed to say that they didn't like what he was doing?"

Girl: "Not exactly embarrassed, but..."

Boy: "Scared."

Girl with the University of Hawaii sweatshirt: "Maybe they started disbelieving themselves."

Smith-Hansen: "Let's look at this other word on the board. 'Conscience.' What do you know about conscience?"

Boy: "It's like something that tells you something's bad or something's good."

Smith-Hansen: "Are you born with it?"

Girl: "Yeah."

Boy: "No. You develop it."

Smith-Hansen: "Where is it located?"

Girl in the Notre Dame sweatshirt: "In your brain."

Smith-Hansen: "So it has something to do with thought. It's not an organ."

Boy: "But it looks like people can have different kinds of consciences. What explains that? I mean, Hitler must have had a conscience. Only it was a bad conscience."

Smith-Hansen: "How do you develop a conscience?"

Boy: "Parents."

Boy: "TV. Friends."

Boy: "School."

Girl: "But I've seen other teachers in this school who are prejudiced."

Smith-Hansen: "I'm sorry to say that's true. But not most of them. You just have to follow the consequences of your conscience's thinking."

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ing. Isn't that so? Imagine yourself in a situation, Lindsay, where you're with kids at a basketball game and they start using racist words. And you're the only one who feels differently. What do you do?"

Lindsay: "I think I'd tell them that I don't like that. And I'd probably go and sit elsewhere." She hesitates. "And I think I'd also go up to the people they were saying things about and tell them I was sorry for what my friends were saying."

Smith-Hansen: "Would it be easy to do that, to be the only one?"

Lindsay: "No. I mean, you want to be with your friends. But I'd still sit somewhere else."

Boy: "I thought everybody had the same conscience."

Girl: "We do, but we don't all listen to it."

Smith-Hansen: "Any other ideas about conscience?"

Boy: "Well, someone might have a more developed conscience than someone else."

Boy: "Yeah."

Boy: "There you go."

Girl with the braids: "Don't you find your conscience in church?"

Smith-Hansen: "Yes, you can find it in church."

Same girl: "Last Sunday, my priest said that all gays are bad people and that they're going to hell."

Smith-Hansen: "Let's talk about that." ■

Incorrigible

Bringing social hope and political rhetoric into instructive contact with what it means to be human

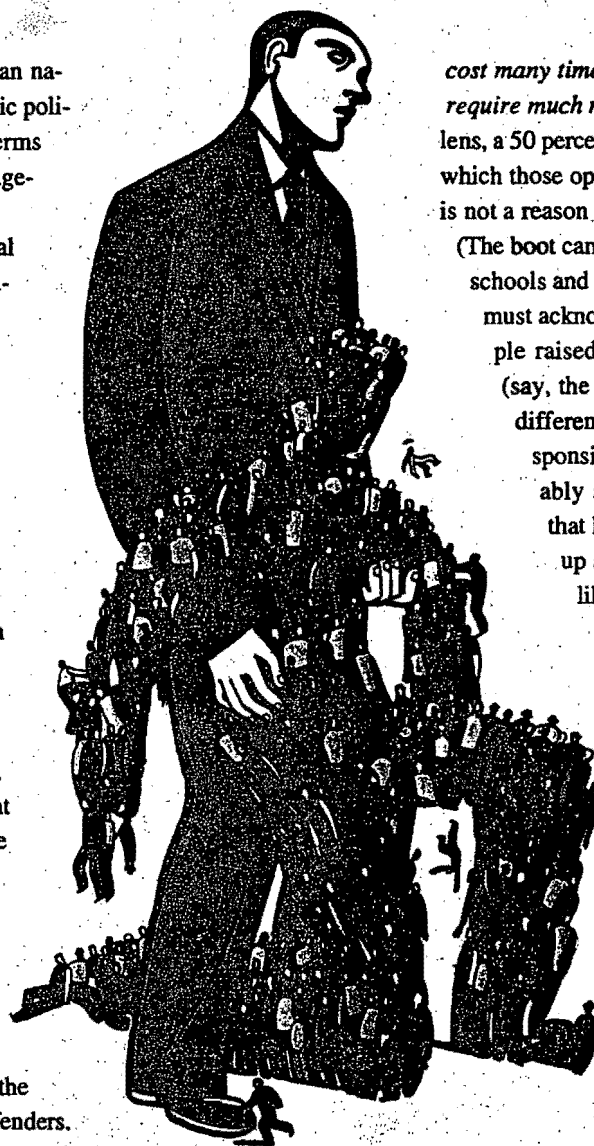
JUST how incorrigible is human nature, and what lessons on public policy follow once we come to terms with the sobering answer to this age-old question?

On one level, both from personal experience and from numerous studies, we know that it is extraordinarily difficult to change habits, personality traits, culture, and social institutions. Take weight control. Ninety-five percent of the many millions of Americans who diet each year in pursuit of a more attractive and healthier figure regain within one to three years almost all of the pounds they previously shed. Even when faced with certain death our bodies often seem unable to follow our minds. Many men who have had heart attacks continue to smoke, though they have been warned that they are significantly increasing the likelihood of a second (and most likely fatal) attack.

Studies demonstrate that numerous drug-rehabilitation, crime-prevention, and job-training programs for welfare clients yield results no better than the new boot camps yield for young offenders. But just as dieters disregard their own and others' experiences, the very strong propensity of all these programs to fail has not stopped Congress from making them a cornerstone of its anti-crime policy.

We all know how difficult changing human behavior is, but this knowledge has not changed our basic optimistic predisposition. Once we truly accept that human nature is surprisingly resistant to improvement, however, some rather positive, constructive lessons follow.

Lower your expectations. When seeking change, expect it to



cost many times as much as you first imagined and require much more time. When viewed through this lens, a 50 percent graduation rate from boot camps—which those opposed to the camps see as a failure—is not a reason to close them but a stunning success.

(The boot camps are doing better than many public schools and almost as well as some colleges.) We must acknowledge that hoping to assimilate people raised for twenty years in one subculture (say, the inner city, as a gang member) into a different subculture (of work and social responsibility) in only a few months is laughably ambitious. And we must not expect that helping disadvantaged children catch up academically by means of a program like Head Start will keep them on the straight and narrow when they graduate from the program. This expectation is especially absurd if we return them to a world—rife with prejudice and economic and social disadvantages—that agitates against hard work and progress by legitimate means. Growing evidence shows that kids may need long-term and costly “maintenance” programs. A Loyola University study, for instance, found that children who participated in a special program run by the Chicago public schools from age

three until the end of third grade tested at or above national averages on completion but that a decade later many of these gains had melted away. The researcher, J. S. Fuerst, now believes that disadvantaged youngsters may need up to *nine years* of supplemented education. He may well be underestimating what they actually require.

A firm grasp of our stubborn, improvement-resistant nature will keep our future policymakers—one hopes against hope—from being swayed by social-policy entrepreneurs. Take the reports on America Works, a for-profit

by Amitai Etzioni

corporation that trains welfare clients for *one week* and then finds them steady jobs. The company has recently become the darling of New York Mayor Rudolph Giuliani's administration, because it fits the new mayor's ideology (greater reliance on the private sector) and because the city hopes it can place many of its 1.1 million welfare clients in jobs this way and slash welfare expenditures. In New York, America Works has so far placed only about 1,100 people; the initial reports of its incredible successes were based on 290 cases. You can bet your next year's salary (I herewith offer mine) that most welfare clients will not be put to work after one week of training. Only blurry-eyed optimists will believe that such a program can work on a large scale.

Creaming is okay. America Works does provide a valuable lesson: because it is paid much of its fee only after a welfare client has been on the job for four months, it prefers to work with clients who are easy to place—those most disposed to work and most able to do so—and drops from its program those who show signs of presenting a difficulty. Anyone who shows up five minutes late for a training session is out, for example. Critics call such an approach “creaming,” and consider it a serious defect.

This criticism presupposes that there are other methods of converting an entire barrel of milk into cheese—or, to put it less metaphorically, that an organization can help all or most welfare clients to find jobs without making an immense per-client effort.

But if we start with a more realistic notion of human transformation—which acknowledges that it is typically very costly and challenging, and that the deeper we reach into the barrel, the greater the difficulties we'll have—creaming suddenly stops being a mark of defective policymaking and becomes a wise policy to try to implement. Taking on the relatively easy cases first gives us much more bang for whatever bucks we can spend on a given endeavor than taking a random sample of all potential clients. The resources saved this way can then be applied to some of the more difficult cases. Policymakers should, though, recognize the fact that the going will get tougher and tougher.

Don't expect to scrape the bottom of the barrel. More difficult to come to terms with is that even if we dedicate considerable resources and persevere for years, we will still have at least some nontrivial “residue”: people who cannot be reached. Just as there are some patients too ill to cure, there are some welfare clients who cannot be weaned and some criminals who cannot be rehabilitated. How to deal with them is a major civil-rights issue. For example, the State of Washington has passed a law that requires prisons to release violent sex offenders not immediately after they have completed their sentence but only after a judge or a jury has determined that they no longer pose a danger. Such indeterminate sentences don't become defensible until we accept that not only are most people rather difficult to change but some people are incorrigible—at least given the current state of medical and social-science knowledge.

Don't allow the best to defeat the good. Both the social-sci-

ence literature and the daily press are full of reports about this or that government program that turned out to be a disaster. The common practice is to compare the program as it has turned out with what it was originally envisioned as. Instead we should take it for granted that, given our nature, very few if any programs will work out swimmingly. The best basis for comparison is not the dreams of the founder, or even the blueprint, but something else that works. It will not do merely to establish that phonics does not work when it comes to teaching kids to read—tell me what works better. It will not do simply to criticize training programs for welfare mothers—show me something else that helps them find jobs. As long as the social goal at hand must be served, we must settle for the comparative best (which is often not so hot), rather than chase elusive perfection.

Be multi-faceted but not holistic. An official at the U.S. Department of Education has reported that the department is considering running an experimental program based on the hypothesis that whatever role modeling, encouragement, and assistance young students obtain in school is negated by life in drug-infested and poverty-stricken areas, by broken homes, by an environment of unemployment and asocial behavior. The goal is to discover whether granting these youngsters “everything”—providing their parents with jobs and housing, trying to change the neighborhood's culture, arranging for after-school tutoring, and so forth—will help them catch up with students from privileged areas and stay caught up.

On the one hand, the logic of such an approach is inescapable. The social world is one messy ball of wax; we can hardly hope to intervene in one strand of a person's life (say, schoolwork) and ignore all the others. This logic has led James Q. Wilson and other scholars to suggest that inner-city children should be taken from their troubled parents and put into kibbutzlike boarding schools.

On the other hand, the costs of such a holistic approach are so overwhelming that even if it works, it is impractical for the large number of people who need help. We must therefore search for approaches that acknowledge the ball-of-wax nature of many of our problems but are less exacting than the holistic approaches. This is the reason that prenatal care and vaccinations are so attractive as programs. These services can be provided if some attention is paid to other factors (treatment may need to be brought to mothers rather than requiring mothers to come to clinics), but it's not necessary to provide housing, full employment, and years of supplemented education just so that the programs will work (although these may be desirable in their own right).

It's no use pretending that poverty or welfare will be abolished, AIDS or cancer cured in this century, drug abuse or teen pregnancy sharply reduced. Let's instead dedicate our efforts to effective but clearly delineated projects in each of these areas. This humbler approach is likely to have a very attractive side effect: it may enhance public willingness to pay for such projects and may also restore public trust in our leaders and institutions. ●



Chapter 9

A Comprehensive Approach to Character Education

Thomas Lickona

To educate a person in mind and not in morals is to educate a menace to society.

Theodore Roosevelt

INTRODUCTION

Moral or character education is a universal and age-old concern. In the United States, as in countries around the world, education was from the outset seen as having two great goals: helping people become smart and helping them become good.

In the United States, the 1990s are witnessing renewed attention to character education in the schools. One cause of this is the widespread breakdown of the family. Another is problems in youth character as indicated by these troubling trends:

1. Rising youth violence
2. Increasing dishonesty (lying, cheating, and stealing)
3. Growing disrespect for parents, teachers, and other legitimate authority figures
4. Peer cruelty
5. A rise in bigotry and hate crimes

6. The deterioration of language
7. A decline in the work ethic
8. Declining personal and civic responsibility
9. A rise in self-destructive behaviors such as premature sexual activity, drug and alcohol abuse, and suicide
10. Ethical illiteracy, including ignorance of moral knowledge as basic as the Golden Rule and the tendency to engage in behaviors harmful to self or others without thinking it wrong.

A COMPREHENSIVE APPROACH TO CHARACTER EDUCATION

This chapter describes a comprehensive approach to character education. This approach seeks to teach moral values directly and indirectly and to develop the kind of character that puts those values into practice. The following are the "big ideas" that define this approach:

1. "Good" can be defined in terms of moral values that have objective worth--values that affirm our human dignity and promote the good of the individual and society.
2. Two universal values form the core of a public, teachable morality: respect and responsibility.
3. *Respect* means showing regard for the worth of someone or something. It includes respect for self, respect for the rights and dignity of all persons, and respect for the environment that sustains all life. Respect is the restraining side of morality; it keeps us from hurting what we ought to value.

Responsibility is the active side of our morality. It includes taking care of self and others, fulfilling our obligations, working to improve the human condition, and taking responsibility for our actions.

Other moral values can be derived from respect and responsibility. Honesty, civility, and fairness, for example, can be seen as forms of respect. Similarly, caring, cooperation, fulfilling obligations, and moral courage are forms of responsibility.

4. If schools wish to make respect and responsibility operative values in the lives of students, they must educate for *character*.

Good character can be defined as having three interrelated parts: moral knowing, moral feeling, and moral action. Good character consists of knowing the good, desiring the good, and doing the good.

Moral knowing, or cognitive side of character, includes at least six specific moral qualities: *awareness of the moral dimensions of a situation, knowing moral values and what they require of us in concrete cases, perspective-taking, moral reasoning, thoughtful decision-making, and moral self-knowledge.*

The emotional side of character includes at least the following six moral qualities: *conscience* (the felt obligation to do what one judges to be right), *self-respect, empathy, loving the good, self-control, and humility* (a willingness to both recognize and correct our moral failings).

There are times when we know what we should do, feel strongly that we should do it, yet still fail to translate moral judgment and feeling into effective moral behavior. Moral action, the third part of character, draws upon three additional moral qualities: *competence* (moral skills such as being able to solve conflicts), *will* (which mobilizes our moral judgment and feeling), and *moral habit* (which exists when a value becomes a virtue, a reliable inner disposition to respond to situations in a morally good way).

5. If schools wish to maximize their positive impact in the face of powerful negative influences outside the school, and if they wish to develop all three parts of character, they must take a comprehensive approach—one that uses all phases of school life as deliberate opportunities for character development.

My work with teachers and schools over the past 25 years has helped me to develop a model of comprehensive character education that includes 12 strategies, nine for the classroom and three schoolwide strategies. Let me define and briefly illustrate each of these.

CLASSROOM STRATEGIES

The Teacher as Caregiver, Moral Model, and Moral Mentor

Students of all ages need to form caring attachments to adults that will motivate them to learn and to want to be good persons. This first strategy calls upon the teacher to foster such attachments by treating students with love and respect. It also calls up the teacher to set a good example, directly teach and encourage moral behavior, and correct disrespectful or irresponsible actions through individual guidance and group discussion.

For example, teacher Molly Angelini makes courtesy an important value in her fifth-grade classroom. She models courtesy in how she speaks to

her students. She requires students to apologize in writing if they call a classmate a name. She teaches them to say, "Pardon me?" instead of "What?" when they wish something repeated. When they go to lunch, she teaches them to greet the cafeteria workers by name and thank them when they put the food on their tray. And she teaches her children that all these behaviors are not mechanical gestures but meaningful ways of respecting other people.

Creating a Moral Community

Students need caring relationships with adults, but they also need caring relationships with each other. When they are part of a caring classroom community, they feel valued as persons. When they are challenged to practice respect and care in their everyday peer relations, these values begin to become part of their characters.

For example, Hal Urban, who teaches history and psychology at Woodside High School, California, does three simple things at the start of each class that take only five minutes but go a long way toward developing a sense of community. First, he asks, "Who has good news?" After the sharing of good news, he asks, "Would anyone like to affirm anyone else?" Students gradually become comfortable doing that. Finally, he asks students to take a seat different from the one they had in the previous class and take a minute to get to know their new neighbor. At the end of the semester, on course evaluations, students say that one thing they will remember about the course ten years from now is the way Mr. Urban began each class.

Moral Discipline

Moral discipline means using the creation and enforcement of rules as opportunities to foster moral reasoning, self-control, voluntary compliance with rules, and a generalized respect for others.

For example, Kim McConnel, on the first day of school, puts her sixth-graders in groups of four. She asks each group to write down, on a large sheet of paper, classroom rules that will help them: get our work done; feel safe; and be glad we're here.

When they are finished, the small groups tape their lists of suggested rules on the blackboard. Drawing from all the lists, the teacher helps the class come up a list that will serve as "our class rules."

Regardless of whether students help to create the rules, the teacher using

moral discipline ensures that students understand the moral basis of the classroom rules. A high school mathematics teacher explains his approach:

I tell my students that I have only two rules: 1) Everybody respects each other; and 2) Come prepared for class every day--which is a form of respect for me, your classmates, and yourself. If you violate one of these rules, I will stop and point out the rule. If you have been disrespectful toward someone, I'll wait for you to apologize.

With moral discipline, consequences for rule-breaking seek to teach a moral lesson (for example, why the offense was wrong;) require the student, whenever possible, to make reparation; and develop the student's self-control and willingness to follow the rule in the future.

Creating a Democratic Classroom Environment

This means involving students, on a regular basis, in shared decision-making that increases their responsibility for making the class a good place to be and to learn. The chief means of creating a democratic classroom is the class meeting. This is a meeting of the whole class emphasizing interactive discussion and problem-solving. The class meeting contributes to character development by providing a forum where students' thoughts are heard and valued and by providing a support structure for understanding, internalizing, and practicing respect and responsibility.

For example, Carl Fospero, a 20-year-old graduate student in education, was called to take over an unruly class (Introductory Spanish) of high school students whose regular teacher had suddenly died. In the month that followed the teacher's death, the students--a low-achieving group with a history of behavior problems--had become uncontrollable. They went through four substitute teachers in four weeks.

When Carl Fospero came into the class, the first thing he did was to ask every student to take out a sheet of paper and write him a letter, responding to two questions: "What are your feelings about the class? How can we make it better?"

Students complained that other substitute teachers had been "throwing worksheets at them"; they could not keep up with the material; they did not understand Spanish; they often felt embarrassed when they did not know an answer, and so on.

Carl Fospero read portions of the students' letters aloud, using them as a springboard for a discussion of how to improve the course. They

decided to slow down the pace of instruction to make sure no one got lost. They decided to make time during each class for cooperative learning--such as conversational Spanish between partners--which students found less threatening. Teacher Fospero said he also wanted to try some new things they had not done before, such as writing a play in Spanish and performing and videotaping it. The class also started to write and publish a class newspaper--in Spanish. They used their class meetings to plan these new projects, assign responsibilities, and monitor progress and problems.

Students' behavior and learning improved dramatically. Teacher Fospero had achieved this by applying a widely known but much-neglected educational principle: Involve students in making decisions about--and sharing responsibility for--the life of the classroom.

Teaching Values Through the Curriculum

There are countless opportunities for teachers to use the ethically rich content of academic subjects--such as literature, history, and science--as a vehicle for teaching values and examining moral questions. Here the teacher's question is, what are the natural intersections between the curriculum I wish to cover and the values I wish to teach?

There are outstanding published programs that illustrate how to do this. One is the Heartwood Ethics Curriculum for Children.¹ This award-winning program uses multicultural children's literature to foster seven character attributes affirmed by cultures around the world: courage, loyalty, justice, respect, hope, honesty, and love.

For each of these seven attributes, the Heartwood program provides six children's books (folk tales, hero stories, legends, and modern classics from different cultures) along with interdisciplinary activities that develop children's understanding of the particular value and how to apply it.

When the class finishes studying a particular character attribute, all the children, at a moment of their own choosing, look in the classroom mirror and ask themselves if they have shown that attribute (for example, "How have I shown courage?"; "How have I been a respectful person?"). Then the child goes to his or her Heartwood Journal and writes a personal answer to that question. This encourages children to act upon the ethical insights emerging from their reading and discussion of the value-laden literature. *Facing History and Ourselves*² is another much-acclaimed curriculum, initially developed for eighth-graders and later adapted to high school and college levels as well. This eight-week social studies

curriculum uses history, films, and guest lectures (including talks by death camp survivors) to investigate the Nazi and Armenian Holocausts. Along the way, it has students look within themselves to examine the universal human tendency toward prejudice and scapegoating.

An experimental study of this curriculum found that *Facing History* students were significantly superior in their understanding of how individuals' decisions are affected by their society and in the complexity of their reasoning about issues such as leadership, exclusion, and conflict resolution.

Cooperative Learning

Whereas curriculum-based values education teaches values and develops character through the subject matter content, cooperative learning does this through the *instructional process*. It says to the teacher: "Take what you would normally teach, teach it through cooperative learning for at least part of every day, and you will be teaching values and academics at the same time."

Cooperative learning, which can be done in pairs or small groups, contributes to character in many ways. It teaches students the value of cooperation; builds community in the classroom (reducing conflict, the research shows, and fostering friendships across racial and ethnic lines); and teaches basic life skills such as communicating and working together.

For example, in a sixth-grade classroom in Montreal, Quebec, a teacher faced the most divisive group she had ever taught. The class was torn apart by racial conflict; blacks and whites exchanged insults and physically assaulted each other during recess and after school.

The school psychologist observed the class and recommended that the teacher set up structured cooperative learning groups. Put together children who have trouble getting along, he said. Give them joint assignments and projects with roles for all members. Monitor them closely. Most important, stick with the groups even if they do not seem to be working in the beginning.

The teacher started having students work together--usually in threes or fours--in all subjects for part of each day. They worked on math problems in groups, researched social studies questions in groups, practiced reading to each other in groups, and so on.

"It took them two months to really make this work," the teacher said, "but they finally got it together. Moreover, their test scores went up." Mastering the skills of cooperative learning is a gradual, developmental

process for both teacher and students, but the academic and character development benefits--documented at all grade levels--justify the effort.

Develop the "Conscience of Craft"

The literature on moral and character education often treats moral learning and academic learning as separate spheres. But academic work and learning have moral meaning for at least three reasons:

1. Learning increases, and ignorance reduces, our ability to make informed moral judgments and participate as citizens in a complex world.
2. Work is one of the most basic ways we affect the lives of others and contribute to the human community.
3. It is a mark of people's character when they take care to perform their jobs and other tasks well. Syracuse University professor Tom Green calls this a "conscience of craft"--the capacity to feel satisfaction at a job well done and to be ashamed of slovenly work. If people lack this kind of conscience, and do not feel obligated to do good work, something basic is missing in their moral make-up.

Specific character development objectives in realm of work include: self-discipline; the ability to delay gratification; persistence in the face of discouragement; a public sense of work as affecting the lives of others; and Green's conscience of craft.

Teachers who develop these character qualities typically combine high expectations and high support. For example, Anne Ritter is the kind of teacher who believes that every child can learn. As a new teacher in her school, she taught a class of first-graders, 85 percent of whom came from families below the poverty line. She astonished fellow teachers by getting 90 percent of her class up to grade level in reading and math. Her comment: "It's the job."

When I visited her classroom, a list of classroom rules was written large and posted in the front. The first rule was: "Always do your best in everything." On the wall was a sign: A PERSON WILL SELF-DESTRUCT WITHOUT A GOAL. The "value of the month," featured on the class bulletin board, was AMBITION, defined as "hard work directed toward a worthwhile goal."

Encouraging Moral Reflection

This strategy focuses on developing the several qualities that make up the cognitive side of character: being morally aware; understanding objectively worthwhile moral values; being able to take the perspective of others; being able to reason morally; being able to make thoughtful moral decisions; and having moral self-knowledge, including the capacity for self-criticism.

Bringing this knowing side of character to maturity is one of the most difficult challenges of character education. It requires clear ethical thinking by the teacher as well as a sophisticated set of teaching skills.

Teachers can foster moral reflection through reading, research, essay writing, journal-keeping, discussion, and debate. At the secondary level, a promising approach to developing moral reflection through controversial issues is called "structured academic controversy." Developed by cooperative learning experts David and Roger Johnson, this approach defines controversies as "problems to be solved rather than win-lose situations."

The teacher assigns students to groups of four, composed of two, two-person "advocacy teams." Within each group, one team is assigned the responsibility of advocating one position (for example, that there should be more government regulation of hazardous waste disposal), the other team the task of arguing the opposite position (that there should be less regulation), both teams using background information supplied by the teacher.

In the course of the week, each team must do a position-switch and argue *for* the position it originally opposed. Finally, the four group members synthesize what they see as the best information and reasoning from both sides into a consensus solution and write and submit a group report. Following that, each student takes an individual test, which holds everyone accountable for learning the information and arguments on both sides of the issue.

Ten years of research on the academic controversy process finds that students:

1. Gain in their perspective-taking abilities;
2. Demonstrate greater mastery of the subject matter than is true with either debate or individualistic learning formats;
3. Show greater liking of other student participants and higher academic self-esteem.¹

Some controversial issues--abortion, for example--may not lend themselves to a discussion format which has the goal of arriving at a "consensual solution." In such cases, the more conventional debate format, ensuring full and balanced presentation of both sides, may be preferable.

At my state university, for example, the Collegians for Life group for which I serve as advisor wanted to have the student body and the community consider the claims of what is called the "consistent life ethic" (sometimes known as the "seamless garment ethic"). The consistent life ethic argues that abortion, like economic injustice and unjust war, violates social justice and respect for the value and dignity of every individual life at every stage of development. Groups such as Feminists for Life promote a consistent life ethic.

To present this under-represented perspective on the abortion controversy, we sponsored a two-hour public debate between two women, one a pro-choice feminist, the other a pro-life feminist. The pro-choice feminist argued that a woman has a right of self-determination to control her own body and therefore to abort an unwanted baby. The pro-life feminist argued that the most basic human right--more basic than privacy--is the right not to be killed; that the pregnant woman alone has the power to sustain the life in her womb; and that she therefore has a corresponding moral obligation to protect and nurture it--as well as a claim to far more societal support than women currently receive for childrearing. We sought to enhance the moral education value of this debate format by having the two speakers, after their initial presentations, engage in direct, face-to-face dialogue as well as respond to audience questions.

Teaching Conflict Resolution

Teaching students how to resolve conflicts without force or intimidation is a vitally important part of character education for two reasons: 1) conflicts not settled fairly will prevent or erode a moral community in the classroom; and 2) without conflict resolution skills, students will be morally handicapped in their interpersonal relationships now and later in life, and may end up contributing to violence in school and society.

Growing numbers of schools are training students to serve as official "conflict mediators." For example, in one elementary school a student from each fourth-, fifth-, and sixth-grade homeroom is chosen to be the conflict mediator for that day. Chosen students wear a hat, a vest, a T-shirt, or a button to identify themselves as official mediators.

If there is a conflict--in a classroom or on the playground--the student

mediator is trained to step between the disputants. (All students, of course, must be coached in advance to prepare them to accept this kind of peer intervention.) The dialogue then unfolds as follows:

Mediator: My name is Sara. I'm a conflict mediator today. Would you like me to help you solve this problem?

Disputants: Okay.

Sara: There are four rules you must agree to: No blaming, no name-calling, no interrupting, and you must agree to try to solve the problem so you both feel okay. Do you agree to these rules?

Disputants: Yes.

Mediator: Okay, each tell your side of the story. Who wants to go first? Remember, no interrupting.

After each person tells his or her side of the story, the mediator paraphrases the account back to that person. She then asks, "Okay, how can you solve this problem in a way that's fair to both of you?" When a solution is arrived at, the mediator concludes, "Congratulations, you've solved your problem!" and asks them to "shake on it."

These behavior patterns have the best chance of becoming part of a child's character when they are learned early and practiced often. But effective training is still possible at the adolescent level, where the stakes are even higher because conflicts more easily explode into deadly violence.

Dr. Deborah Prothrow-Smith, a Harvard professor and physician, has developed a 10-week mini-course that teaches teenagers what causes violent conflict and how to avoid it. Says one 18-year-old who took the course at a Boston high school: "I had my share of fights, and I learned how to avoid them by talking things out. Otherwise I could lose my life over something really stupid like stepping on someone's shoe and not wanting to say, 'Excuse me.'"

SCHOOLWIDE STRATEGIES FOR CHARACTER EDUCATION

The preceding examples demonstrate that it is clearly possible for the individual teacher, acting within the classroom, to contribute to the moral growth of students. But teachers feel more secure, and their efforts are greatly enhanced, if the whole school--and ideally the community as well -

-is working to promulgate, model, teach, celebrate, and enforce high standards of respect and responsibility.

A comprehensive approach therefore calls upon schools to implement three schoolwide strategies. These strategies are:

1. Creating a positive moral culture in the school--developing a total moral environment or schoolwide ethos (through the leadership of the principal, schoolwide discipline, a schoolwide sense of community, meaningful student government, a respectful and cooperative moral community among adults, and making time at all levels to discuss moral concerns) that supports the values taught in classrooms;
2. Fostering caring beyond the classroom--including using positive role models to inspire altruistic behavior and providing opportunities at every grade level to perform acts of school and community service; and
3. Recruiting parents and the community as partners in character education--letting parents know that the school considers them their child's first and most important moral teacher; giving parents specific ways they can support the values the school is trying to teach; and seeking the help of the community (including churches, businesses, local government, and the media) in promoting respect and responsibility.

Let me offer several examples of schoolwide approaches to character education that contain one or more of these three strategies.

"Let's Be Courteous, Let's Be Caring"

Several years ago, Winkelman Elementary School, which serves a diverse community north of Chicago (some children are from welfare families, others come to school in limos), found itself increasingly unhappy with student attitudes and behavior. Fights and put-downs among children were common. Students would frequently "smart-off" ("I don't have to listen to you!") to teachers and other adults in the building.

To address this problem effectively, Winkelman's principal and faculty decided they needed a schoolwide approach. They launched a project called Let's Be Courteous, Let's Be Caring. The project emphasized the values of courtesy and caring at every opportunity: through photo displays in the corridors, discussions in classrooms, one-to-one conversations between teachers and children, school assemblies, citizenship awards, parent-teacher conferences, and service projects in the community.

A giant display inside the school entrance defined "courtesy" as: saying

please, thank you, you're welcome, and excuse me; being a good listener; waiting your turn; acting politely everywhere; and discussing problems.

"Caring" was defined as: sharing; respecting others' feelings; following rules; working cooperatively; and being a good friend.

The moral environment at Winkelman steadily improved. When I visited the school, parents said fights are now very rare; children said that if you forgot your lunch, you could always count on somebody to give you some of theirs; and a veteran teacher who had taught in several other schools said that Winkelman students showed an unusually high level of respect for adults and each other. Three years after beginning its character education project, Winkelman was recognized in a Chicago-area competition for excellence in both academic achievement and character development.

Value of the Month

Carl Campbell is principal at Dry Creek Elementary School in Clovis, California. He explains that the school's mission is to help students develop their potential in five areas: academics, athletics, performing arts, citizenship in the school, and citizenship in the community. And that commitment, he says, goes for every student:

Our philosophy is that we do everything we can do while we've got a kid. When he walks through that door, we're responsible for the quality of his experience. We may not be able to control his environment elsewhere, but we can control the environment here.

Dry Creek has a Value of the Month program. For an entire month, the whole school--every teacher at every grade level--focuses on the same value (e.g., honesty, cooperation, self-control, ambition). Teachers talk to their students about the value of the month--making connections, for example, with classroom incidents that arise. They work it into the writing assignments. They do special projects and displays related to the value. Students also bring in books or articles that tell about a person or incident that exemplifies the value.

Teachers take heart from the fact that they are all working together on the same value, something that is becoming part of the shared moral vocabulary that defines the common moral culture of their school.

Principal Campbell spoke about the impact this Value of the Month program had in a previous district where he worked:

Before coming to Clovis, I was principal in a school where stealing was an everyday occurrence when I first arrived. The attitude among students was that it was okay to steal as long as you did not get caught. There was also a problem of kids being intimidated for their lunch money.

I said to the faculty, "How can we change this?" We selected basic values to teach, one each month. We started with honesty. As time went on, kids started turning in money they found on the playground. Intimidation became less and less of a problem. By the end of our second year with the program, stealing was a very rare event at this school.

The lesson here: Even when there is not a positive moral culture outside the school, it is still possible to create one within the school. If teachers at every grade level are simultaneously teaching the same moral value, doing so in different and creative ways, and doing so all school year long, year after year, the school has a cumulative effect with the power to change students' moral behavior.

A Five-Year Plan: A Middle-School Success Story

Vera White is an African-American principal working with an African-American, inner-city community. Principal White came to Washington, D.C.'s Jefferson Junior High School nine years ago. She comments:

Ninety percent of our students come from single-parent homes. When I arrived, parents and the community felt they were losing the children.

We met--administration, faculty, and parents--for a full year to prioritize our goals. We decided we needed a five-year plan. Each year would have a special theme.

Year one of the new effort focused on planning the objectives and strategies of the new character education program. Year two had the theme "Attitude Counts." Principal White explains: "We wanted students to have the idea that wherever you are--in school, at home, at the mall--your attitude makes a difference."

Year three focused on conflict resolution training. Year four's theme was community service. "Our kids had been destroying the high-rise projects," Principal White says. "Now every student does community service."

Our overall theme has been 'how to be responsible.' We stress and teach

responsibility throughout the day. For example, our students have to have assignment notebooks and use them in *every* class.

We also set high expectations for our parents. Our parents *must* come to school for Back to School Night and for teacher-parent conferences during the year.

Jefferson Junior High School now has a waiting list of 400 to 500 students. It has won two U.S. Department of Education awards. In the city of Washington, D.C., it has been recognized for having the highest student academic achievement, the greatest academic improvement, and the highest attendance rate (its attendance rate used to be one of the worst). There have been no student pregnancies during the past five years.

The No Putdowns Project

The No Putdowns Project, based in Syracuse, New York, is a response to rising school violence and racial and ethnic intolerance. It has three goals: to create a school and home environment that recognizes the destructive effects of putdowns; to reject the use of putdowns in all interpersonal interactions; and to replace putdowns with healthy communication skills.

A five-week curriculum, developed by classroom teachers, uses videos, posters, contests, role-playing, and other activities to achieve these goals. The curriculum is reinforced throughout the school year.

One participating parent commented: "I see a noticeable difference in how much my child enjoys school." Other parents report that family members now catch each other ("Hey, Mom, that's a putdown!") when they slip.

Twenty-five elementary and middle schools in central New York are now implementing the No Putdowns Project. Several have already reported that discipline referrals and student fights are down for the first time in many years.

Participatory School Democracy

Another schoolwide character development strategy, greatly under-used, challenges students to help govern the life of their school.

One of my favorite examples of this strategy comes from a school action project carried out by teacher Mary Ann Taylor when she took my graduate course, Teaching Moral Values. With some trepidation, she

tackled the problem of her school cafeteria. She described it as "a war zone" where teacher aides yelled at children, students yelled at each other, food fights were common, and the place was a mess when students left.

Teacher Taylor set up a Cafeteria Council with elected student delegates from each classroom. Being an elected delegate meant you had to *represent* your constituency's ideas, as expressed in class meetings.

At every grade level, classes held discussions: What are the characteristics of an ideal cafeteria? What should be rules for cafeteria manners? Delegates carried their classrooms' views into the Cafeteria Council's weekly meetings, where they discussed these ideas with teacher Taylor and the school's principal and shaped them into action proposals.

The Council also conducted a survey of all students, staff, and parents on how to improve the cafeteria. It solicited everyone's ideas through a suggestion box. It published a monthly newsletter reporting progress.

The positive outcomes of all this effort were many: student cafeteria behavior improved greatly; students were enthusiastic about improvements in the cafeteria; parent feedback was positive; a recycling project was begun; and, most important, the school decided to keep its new delegate system of democratic student government as a way to deal with other problems in the school environment.

Similar student government efforts have been carried out at the high school level to bring students into a larger role of responsibility for solving school problems. In the process, students are provided with the kind of opportunities for real-life moral action that develop the action side of character. The just-published book, *Preparing for Citizenship: Teaching Youth to Live Democratically* by Ralph Mosher, Robert Kenney, and Andrew Garrod, tells the story of several high schools that have effectively used participatory school democracy to foster their students' political and moral development.⁴

A High School That Turned Around

St. Benedict's is a Catholic urban school, located in downtown Newark, New Jersey, that serves poor black and Hispanic teenage boys. It produces exceptional results, breaking for many of its students the vicious cycle of poverty into which they were born. It has a waiting list, with many students from the affluent suburbs seeking admission.

It was not always so. Twenty years ago St. Benedict's was on the verge of closing. Enrollment was steadily declining, student achievement discouragingly low.

St. Benedict's achieved this turn-around through high moral and academic expectations. The school insists on good manners and restrained behavior. Noise, bad language, and rowdiness are not tolerated. The halls are safe and free of graffiti. Strict standards of discipline and responsibility are reinforced in the classroom. Students are taught how to take notes and use their notebooks in all classes.

Strenuous athletic and extracurricular activity is also encouraged. A high level of peer support is encouraged in all areas of school life. During the early and continuing initiation into the school's curriculum and code of conduct, each student is assisted by fellow students who have mastered the school's standards and who help younger boys succeed.

A CHARACTER-BASED APPROACH TO SEX EDUCATION

No discussion of moral and character education can exclude sex education. More young people, I believe, are at risk from the destructive consequences of premature, uncommitted sex than from any other single threat to their healthy physical, emotional, and moral development.

To consider just one dimension of the physical dangers: In the United States, according to the Medical Institute for Sexual Health, about a third of sexually active teenage girls are now infected with human papilloma virus (the leading cause of cervical cancer) and/or chlamydia (the leading cause of infertility).⁵ Recent medical studies show that condoms provide virtually no protection against either human papilloma virus or chlamydia, both of which can be transmitted by skin-to-skin contact in the entire genital region, only a small part of which is covered by the condom.

Unfortunately, young persons are growing up in what Boston University's Kevin Ryan calls a "sexually toxic" environment. This environment trivializes and debases sex and leads them into a pattern of short-lived sexual relationships that undermine self-respect and corrupt character.

There is fortunately now a growing effort to bring sex education into line with the principles of good character education.⁶ That means adopting an approach to sex education that develops character traits of good judgment and self-control, and guides young people toward morally sound conclusions about how to apply the values of respect and responsibility to sexual behavior. And this means helping students understand all the reasons why sexual abstinence is the *only* medically safe and morally responsible choice for an unmarried teenager.

An exemplary character-based program in sex education is *Decision-*

Making: Keys to Total Success, developed by the San Marcos, California school district. San Marcos faced a serious teen pregnancy problem--147 high school girls known to be pregnant during the 1984-85 school year. Its program included the following elements: daily ten minute lessons for junior high school students on "how to be successful" (using materials from the Jefferson Center for Character Education⁷); a six-week course for seventh graders on self-esteem and positive moral values; and a six-week pro-abstinence course for eighth graders, "Sexuality, Commitment, and the Family."

The "Sexuality, Commitment, and the Family" course, created by Teen Aid, conveys the message that the only truly safe sex is having sex *only* with your marriage partner who is having sex *only* with you. Teen Aid's program also sends summaries of all lessons to parents and holds a workshop for parents on how to talk to teens about sex.

San Marcos reports that two years after implementing its Keys To Total Success program, known pregnancies in the school dropped from 147 to only 20--and have continued to remain far lower than they were before the program. There were other positive outcomes as well: drug referrals, grade point averages, standardized test scores, and attendance rates also showed marked improvement. The San Marcos character-building program won a California state award for excellence in education.

THE EVALUATION OF CHARACTER EDUCATION PROGRAMS

As the character education movement gains momentum, questions of evaluation loom larger. In thinking about evaluation, it is helpful to identify three kinds of results schools hope for when they undertake character education.

Documented Improvements Within the School Environment

Schools often begin character education programs because they hope to make the school a better place by effecting a positive change in student attitudes and behavior. Evaluation in this area asks questions such as: Has student attendance gone up? Fights and suspensions gone down? Vandalism declined? Drug incidents diminished? Attitudes toward cheating, and self-reported frequency of cheating, improved? One can assess such before-and-after-the-program differences by keeping records of observable behavior and by anonymous questionnaires that measure student moral judgment (for example, "Is cheating on a test wrong?"),

moral commitment ("Would you cheat if you were sure you would not get caught?") and self-reported moral behavior ("How many times have you cheated on a test in the past year?").

Character Effects Beyond the School Environment

This is a measure of generalization. Here evaluation asks, to what extent do students, when they are outside the school, engage in prosocial behaviors such as helping others in need? Stand up for a moral value they believe in? Refrain from antisocial behaviors such as shoplifting? Refrain from high-risk behaviors such as drinking and driving and sexual intercourse? These behaviors outside the school environment, like in-school behaviors, can be assessed through anonymous self-report surveys. (The California-based Josephson Institute for Ethics has developed one such survey for use at the high school level.⁶)

Life Outcomes After Graduation

This is a measure of the school's enduring effects on character. To what extent do graduates become faithful spouses and responsible parents? Law-abiding citizens? Productive and contributing members of their communities? This third area—which reflects what Henry Huffman calls character education's "future orientation"—can be assessed only through longitudinal research typically beyond the capacity of schools themselves. Other agencies can and must undertake such evaluations.

What does the available research tell us about the effectiveness of character education? The best of the evaluation research has sought to measure all three facets of character—cognitive, attitudinal, and behavioral outcomes.

For example, The Child Development Project in California has conducted a longitudinal experimental study of a character program that combines cooperative learning, teaching empathy through literature, positive role models, developmental discipline, involving students in helping relationships, and parent involvement. By the end of elementary school, students who experienced the program, compared to those who did not:

1. Showed more spontaneous acts of helping and encouraging their classmates (a measure of the behavioral side of character);
2. Were better at thinking of prosocial solutions to hypothetical social conflicts (a measure of the cognitive side of character);

3. Were more committed to democratic values such as the belief that all members of a group have a right to participate in decisions affecting the group (a measure of the affective or attitudinal side of character.⁹)

Recent research also supports the effectiveness of school, family, and community partnerships—as opposed to only school-based efforts—in one of the most challenging areas: changing student attitudes toward and use of drugs and alcohol. In June, 1989, for example, the *Journal of the American Medical Association* reported a major intervention study of 20,000 sixth-and seventh-graders. The study compared a well-regarded school-based drug education curriculum with a program that combined the school curriculum with family involvement (students interviewed their parents and role-played refusal skills at home) and community involvement (extensive media support). The more comprehensive approach was significantly superior in slowing adolescent use of marijuana, cigarettes, and alcohol.

The greatest danger facing character education, as educational researchers David and Cheryl Aspy observe, is that severe social problems will be met with only weak educational efforts. When weak efforts fail to ameliorate the problems significantly, people will say, "We tried character education, and it failed." The scale of our character education efforts must therefore be commensurate with the seriousness of the moral problems that confront us. In the long run, this means that all groups—schools, families, communities, churches, youth organizations, government, and the media—that touch the values and character of the young must come together in common cause. As we seek to secure a future for our children in the next century, educating for character is a moral imperative for us all.

ENDNOTES

1. For information, write: Heartwood Institute, 12300 Perry Highway, Wexford, PA 15090.
2. For information write: Facing History and Ourselves National Foundation, 25 Kennard Rd., Brookline, MA 02146.
3. David W. and Roger T. Johnson, "Critical Thinking Through Structured Controversy," *Educational Leadership*, May 1988.

4. R. Mosher, R. Kenny, and A. Garrod, *Preparing for Citizenship: Teaching Youth to Live Democratically* (Westport, CT: Praeger, 1994).
5. For medical studies on these and other STDs, write for Sexual Health Update, published by the Medical Institute for Sexual Health, P.O. Box 4919, Austin, TX 78765.
6. Write the Medical Institute for Sexual Health for the forthcoming National Guidelines for Comprehensive Sexuality and Character Education.
7. For more information contact the Jefferson Center for Character Education, Suite 240, 202 South Lake Avenue, Pasadena, CA 91101.
8. For a copy of the High School Values Survey, write: The Josephson Institute of Ethics, 310 Washington Boulevard, Suite 104, Marina del Rey, CA, 90292.
9. For a research report on the Child Development Project, write: The Child Development Project, 200 Embarcadero, Suite 305, Oakland, CA 94606-5300.

Remarks

draft #1

Melanne just told me abt the
new message stuff.... I'll
give you a new draft when
I've incorporated it.

FIRST LADY HILLARY RODHAM CLINTON
REMARKS FOR THE COMMUNITARIAN NETWORK
WASHINGTON, DC
JUNE 6, 1996

[Acknowledgements]

Thank you for inviting me to join in your discussion.

Dr. Etzioni [Et-zee-yo-nee] and The Communitarian Network have been great sources of inspiration to me and my husband -- and to many members of his Administration. In the months and years ahead, we will continue to look to you for ideas and insights as we work to promote character education as part of a larger communitarian vision for our country.

This is a subject near and dear to me. Last year, I wrote a book last year about society's obligations to its children. In it, I talked about what we can do to create conditions that allow all children in America to fulfill their God-given potential. And one of the most important things we can do is to teach our children to recognize their responsibilities and to help them develop a sense of community.

Obviously, values and character are taught principally in the family. Family is our first community. But from a very young age, children also enter into communities outside the family -- communities that have great power to shape the way children relate to the world.

We know that school often provides a child's first sustained exposure to peers and adults to whom he is not related. We also know that the school community becomes an incubator for many of the attitudes, tastes, opinions and ideas that children will carry with them through life. And yet too often, we demand very little of schools when it comes to reinforcing the common values that most Americans subscribe to: the importance of treating others with respect and dignity; honesty; integrity; civility and so on. We seem to forget that a good education is not just knowing what is right, but doing what is right.

So I applaud your efforts to promote a character curriculum as part of our children's educations -- not just in their classrooms, but in their extracurricular activities, their social interactions, and in their communities.

Not long ago I had the opportunity to visit a charter school

in one of the poorest neighborhoods of the San Fernando Valley in California. The school was called the Vaughn Learning Center. The principal was Asian-American. The vice-principal was Cuban-American. About 90 percent of the students were of Hispanic origin. About 10 percent were African-American. The school was located in an area of high unemployment, crime, and poverty.

When I arrived there I saw children in uniforms -- five- and six-year-olds -- busily working away on computers. I talked to parents who volunteer as tutors at the school. I talked to mothers and fathers who attend special classes at the school to learn parenting skills. I even talked to an older lady who had lived in the community for 30 years. Her own children had graduated from there. And now she volunteers as a tutor because she believes that the community's survival depends on the strength of the school.

The school has become an anchor of the whole community. Not an embarrassment. Not an albatross. But a source of pride and commitment. Parents, teachers, businesses, politicians have rallied around it. They have raised their expectations of themselves, of their school, and of their children. And the result is that everybody is doing better.

I think of this school whenever I hear people insist that only government, or only the family, is responsible for the well-being of our children.

In fact, children are influenced every day by people and forces beyond their parents' control -- by the police officer in the neighborhood; the minister at their church; the politician who makes laws; the government worker who enforces regulations; the business owner whose decisions affect family wages, vacation and leave time; the entertainment executive who decides what kinds of programming should go on television and the big screen.

We all have responsibility for America's children, directly or indirectly. It's just that we don't always own up to it.

The school I visited is a wonderful example of the communitarian vision at work. The people of that community recognize that everybody has a role to play when it comes to ensuring the well-being of our children.

Why is this communitarian vision more important now than ever before?

Because we live in a time of momentous change. A time that holds great promise for the next generation, but also fear, anxiety, and uncertainty about what such rapid social and economic transformation portends for the future.

With parents under great strain to provide for their families, with children barraged by external influences that undermine the values their parents are trying to instill, we have to be able to fall back on the fundamental values that have kept our country strong.

De Tocqueville said America is great because America is good. We have survived wars, a Depression, and major social dislocations because as a society we have placed a premium on character, integrity, civility, and our responsibility to the larger community.

These are bedrock American values. Time-honored American values.

Now I don't mean to romanticize the past. Even if we wanted to, we couldn't turn the clock back now on change and progress. And besides, the Norman Rockwell-vision of America that holds such allure today never really existed for millions of our people anyway. But even as we move forward into a brave new world of high-technology and global competition, we can demand that society conduct itself in a way that reflects a concern for the common good; a belief in the dignity of every person; an appreciation of the diversity and pluralism of our culture; and a sense of civic responsibility that begins in childhood and lasts throughout life.

We are not going to progress as a people unless our children become good and productive citizens. And we are not going to progress unless we teach them, and show them, what it means to be responsible members of society.

That means parents must work harder to fulfill their obligations to their children, whether it means spending more time reading and talking to them or going on excursions together.

That means schools must do more to re-inforce the basic values that children learn at home. And they must do more to support families by involving parents in their children's educations and engaging members of the community in children's mentoring and other activities.

That means churches, synagogues, mosques and other religious institutions must do more to give children something to say yes to -- safe havens from the destructive and distracting forces around them.

That means businesses must do more to adopt family friendly policies that enable workers to be good parents and good employees.

That means the media must do more to give children positive

images of themselves; and entertainment executives who decide what programming to put on television must do more to put taste questions of taste and civility above profit motives.

And it means that politicians and elected officials must think of every child in America as their own child when they make decisions about cutting nutrition, health and education programs.

Lady Bird Johnson once said that "children are likely to live up to what you believe of them." Well, we have to believe the best of our children. And of ourselves. If we do, we will continue to build on all that is good in America, and all that is good within the character of our people.

Thank you for doing your part.

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THE WHITE HOUSE
Office of the Press Secretary

For Immediate Release

May 20, 1995

REMARKS BY THE PRESIDENT
AT CHARACTER EDUCATION CONFERENCE

The Old Executive Office Building

10:30 A.M. EDT

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you very much.

Thank you very much, Dr. Etzioni. Thank you for that introduction and for the inspiration that your work has given to me and to so many others, for your wonderful book, "The Spirit of Community" and for working on this as hard as you have.

I'd like to say a special word of thanks to one of the co-founders of this network, he's been a member of the White House staff since I became President, Bill Galston, for his constant inspiration and prodding to me. I'd like to thank the Secretary of Education, and Tom Payzant, the Assistant Secretary for Elementary and Secondary Education, for what they have done to try to promote character education as a part of the larger strategy toward a new communitarian vision for our country.

You know, from the time I began thinking about how we would get into the 21st century, and long before I even thought of running for President, it seemed to me that the -- there were three words which were inextricably linked -- as if you think about America moving into the future -- opportunity, responsibility and community. Those were the three words that basically were at the heart of my campaign for President and have been at the heart of what I have tried to do as President. I also believe that government cannot do these things for America. I believe that we have to have, in a complicated, open, pluralistic society like this one, a great network of people working together in every major important center of our society. And that's what I want to talk to you about today.

I'd like to begin with a few comments about the most obvious recent event that, in terms of your government's action, that you must have noticed when you came in today, which is that I have approved of the Secretary of the Treasury's decision to close the two blocks of Pennsylvania Avenue just here in front of the White House to vehicular traffic. I did this reluctantly.

Pennsylvania Avenue has been open to ordinary traffic since

the beginning of our Republic. I did it after an extensive review by the Secret Service, the Treasury Department officials and a distinguished independent panel of American experts who have served in administrations of both the Democratic and Republican Presidents, all recommending that this be done. They believe it is necessary to protect the President and his family, the structure of the White House, the hundreds of people who work there, and the people who come and visit there, both on official business and as ordinary citizens. They believe it is necessary to protect the White House against the kind of attacks that were sustained in Oklahoma City.

Now, I want to emphasize a couple of things about this. First of all, access to the White House itself will not be limited. The area will be converted into a pedestrian mall and people will be able to visit as they always have. They'll be able to have their picture taken out front with cardboard figures as they always have. (Laughter.) They'll be able to go to Lafayette Park and protest against the President as they always have. And indeed, they will be able to do that more protected themselves from becoming innocent victims of those who would seek to destroy the symbols of our freedom.

We also will be working with the local officials here to make every effort to reroute the traffic in a way that minimizes inconvenience and disruption to the lives of those who live in, or work in, Washington, D.C.

Our society, as an open society, is as we saw with Japan and the terrible incident in the Japanese subway, vulnerable to the forces of organized destruction, from within and beyond our borders. And we must take reasonable precautions against them, not to restrict our freedom, but to secure it. And as technology changes the opportunity for organized destruction, we have to respond to that.

I think the American people should see this in the same context that they viewed metal detectors in airports. Do you remember when they started, there were those who say, oh, this is a big infringement on our freedom. But most of us now are only too happy to go through those metal detectors because we see that there are a lot fewer highjackings. And so it is a way of preserving our freedom -- by changing to meet the changing realities that technology and time give for the expression of organized destruction. And we should view it in that way.

But we should also recognize that our job is to minimize the fear that can seep into a society. That's one of the reasons that Hillary and I wanted to have the program we had with the children after Oklahoma City; because we were worried about children all across America, and especially, of course, children in Oklahoma, being literally fixated on these events and their

vulnerability to such things.

So, it's important to put them in a larger context. And in that sense it's also important to prevent such things from happening whenever we can. This is a preventive action we're taking today.

I have asked Congress to pass this anti-terrorism legislation to give me both people and technological tools -- not to me, but to me being the United States, to us, to deal with the technological and organizational realities of the modern terrorist threat so that we can prevent these things from happening more and more and more. And the leaders of Congress have pledged to pass that legislation by Memorial Day. It is a commitment I hope they will keep because we need the legislation in preventive ways.

Now, what's that got to do with what we're doing here today? The strength of our society is far more than our ability to stop bad things from happening and to punish wrongdoers when they do such things. This country is still around today after more than 200 years as the most successful vibrant Democracy in all of human history, not because we could stop bad things from happening, although that was important. If the Civil War had turned out differently we wouldn't be here today as a country. If Hitler had been allowed to prevail in Europe it would be a very different world today. So stopping bad things from happening is quite important, it shouldn't be minimized.

But the fundamental strength of America, and the real reason we're here more than 200 years is not our capacity to stop bad things from happening, but our ability to do good. And indeed, our ability to be good; deToqueville said, "America is great because America is good."

So, the truly great things about our country involve the literally billions of actions that are now taken by our 250 plus million citizens every day of the world. They get up, they go about their business, and most of them do the very best they can to be responsible, first of all, as individuals, and then to be responsible for their families, to be responsible at work, to be successful members of their community, to be good citizens.

Most of our fellow citizens do everything they're supposed to do pretty much when they're supposed to do it; even things they find most distasteful, like paying their taxes. It has long been observed by -- I know that when I was a young law student taking tax law, and it gave me a headache, I just couldn't stand it. I hated the course; all those rules and regulations. When it was all said and done -- the professor said at the beginning, in the middle and at the end of the course, "Now, remember, in spite of all these rules and regulations that no one can keep up

with, and hardly anyone understands, the real thing that makes this work is that you live in a good country where most people just get up and on their own, do the right thing because they think this is part of the obligation of citizenship." It made a deep impression on me.

So, I think that when we view the problems of America today, and there are plenty of them; the intolerance, the increasing divisiveness of political forces, the seeming two-edged sword of the information revolution where more and more information seems to be organized to harm instead of to enlighten, to divide instead of unit. When we look at all of this we have to see it against the background of the fundamental fact that this is a very great country full of very good people, and almost all of us get up every day and do what we're supposed to do, as best we can; that there are new and different challenges we face today that put extreme pressure on us in trying to do good and be good; pressure in the family, pressure in the workplace, pressure in the community, and in the larger society; that we are trying to cope with economic and social stresses, and with the exposure to all kinds of forces in a complex modern world that we often were not exposed to in the past, and that none of --some of us had never been exposed to before.

And I think that the real trick is how we can keep the basic values that have made our country great, and take advantage of the modern world with all the things that are different. That has always been the genius of America -- to preserve what is right there in the Constitution, and to take it throughout history. We know that we are capable of doing it unanimously. What we're really all afraid of is that somehow we'll be undone either by some small minority of us who do wrong and force all the rest of us into a way of living that is so radically different from what's been before that we don't preserve what's uniquely American, or we're afraid that all these forces will upset the internal balance in so many of us that we will lose our way.

And yet, we know that, fundamentally, we shouldn't be pessimistic about it, and we're reminded of it every time something bad happens in America. When we had a 500 year flood in the middle west, or that massive earthquake in California, or the World Trade Center bombing, or the horrible, horrible tragedy of Oklahoma City, you see not only the loss and the evil and the darkness, you also see the fundamental goodness of the American people. There's people everywhere -- just stop what their doing and show up to help.

I remember when they had that awful hurricane in Florida and I went down there. The first guy I met was an independent trucker from Michigan, who literally cancelled all of his runs, stopped all of his business and filled his one big semi truck and

brought it all the way to Florida -- stopped his whole life. And he was just a single business person who was not like me, an employee of the federal government, who could maybe get time off. He risked everything just because -- (laughter) -- he risked everything just because it was the right thing to do. Here was this guy showing up, and happy as a clam, didn't have any idea what was going to happen when he went back to Michigan, how he was going to put it back together. He was happy doing something for other people, consistent with his personal values and what he had learned in his family and church, and what he had imparted to his children.

Now, the question is, how can we preserve the traditional values and how can we find at least a measure of the fulfillment in doing right and good things in ordinary life that we find when disaster strikes. Is there something endemic to the modern world or human nature that says that we can't do that? I don't think so. But we plainly live in a world that is changing so fast where people are exposed to so many forces that the ties that bind us are stretched more than there were in the world in which I grew up. I don't think there's any question about that.

The opportunities for individuals to have their internal equilibrium upset are far greater today than they were a generation ago. It's important not to romanticize the past, however. Remember what Will Rogers said about that? "Don't tell me about the good ole' days, they never was." It's important not to romanticize the past. While I grew up in a society which was much more stable, and where I didn't have anything like the kind of forces bearing down on me that teenagers do today. When I was child I also lived in a segregated society, in which a huge number of people my age were never going to be given any opportunities that I took for granted. So it is important for us not to overly romanticize the past, but also to recognize that the present is changing so fast and people are exposed to so many different things that it is very, very difficult to build the kind of coherent, character-based society that builds both individual and social responsibility, and gives people the necessary balance between stability and change that allows you to live the fullest possible, most rewarding life, and to have a society that is both growing and vibrant and stable. I think we all recognize that as a sort of central challenge of this time.

And I think what happens when a big disaster occurs, everybody throws off all the things that are bothering them and gets back to basics. People stop looking at each other as a -- people of different races or religions or philosophical positions or political parties, and realize that there is a common humanity there after all. The trick will be to manage our differences on a daily basis in a way that recognizes our common humanity and to find organized ways to stamp out the social evils that are consuming us, without doing away with our personal freedoms. And

I believe that we can do these things.

I believe that sometimes we throw up our hands too much in the face of all the difficulties that we have. But we have to identify what the problems are and move on them.

I also believe that the central insight of what Dr. Etzioni has done is important to emphasize here. Everyone has a role to play. And we can solve this in a free and open society, not by any governmental policy, but by government, like every other part of society, playing its own role.

If we could start with some of the problems that are disintegrating forces in our society. I would like to focus on some that we don't often focus on, and those are the economic ones. We all know we have too much crime and violence and drugs and family breakdown. And I don't mean to minimize those things, they are profoundly important. But we are aware and sensitive to those things.

I want you also to think about things that may be more pedestrian, but also are reinforcing the problem that we come here to talk about.

The average American today is working a longer work week and spending fewer hours with his or her children than they were 25 years ago, for the same or lower wages they were making 15 years ago. Literally, 60 percent of the American work force is making the same or less when you adjust for inflation, than they were making 15 years ago, and working harder and spending less time with their children than they were 25 years ago. Family income has gone up in many places only because there are now two workers in the family.

There is also in our country a feeling that there is much less security because more and more people are changing their jobs. The census tells us that there's been about a 14 percent decline in earnings for men between the ages of 55 and 65 -- excuse me, 45 and 55. It could have something to do with the so-called angry white male phenomenon. So that when people reach the peak of what they thought was going to be there, not only their earning capacity, but their ability to have a profound and positive impact on their families and on their society, their communities, many of them now are at a vulnerable period when they're having to deal with changes that they took for granted when they were in their 20s, but never expected to have to face all over again in their 40s or early 50s. This is a profound thing.

So that we at least thought when we started out in life we have different kinds of things to feel anxieties about as we got older. I mean, just getting older is bad enough. (Laughter.)

And now, we're having to feel anxieties about things that we thought would be behind us as a people into our 40s and 50s. This is a profound thing. No one has really studied the implications this has for citizenship, and why more and more people may be vulnerable to siren songs of resentment that divide us instead of unite us.

I'm telling you, there are millions of people that go home every night and sit down at the dinner table and look across the table at their families and wonder whether they have failed them, when all they ever did was show up for work, because of the way the global economy has impacted on them in this society. This is a significant thing.

And when you combine that with the fact that there is so much mobility in this society, much more than ever before. It is more difficult for many of these people to get the kind of support networks they need in their communities because a lot of folks live in communities where neighbors don't know their neighbors anymore. And if there's a high crime rate in the community, they don't have any way to get to know them.

So that all these things need to be seen in that context. There is a great deal of uncertainty out there, which makes people yearn for certainty, but also makes them vulnerable to the wrong kind of certainty; certainty that pits people against one another instead of gives them a way to say, here are my problems, what are your problems, let's get together and figure out how to solve them.

So I think that the sense of, literally, physical instability, so many adults feel, make it more difficult to hold our society together and make it more difficult to impart the fundamental character strengths and traits and the accompanying security of knowing that you're in the right place in your life, that are essential to a strong society -- not an excuse for not doing it, but it's important to understand the context in which we operate here.

Now one of the things that we have thought about in our administration is that in this environment, when so many of our children are in families that are, at least not traditional families, when their parents are working -- working harder and maybe spending less time with them, and when their neighborhoods may be less settled and in many cases, less safe, it is more important than it has been, perhaps, in immediately previous years, to reemphasize the role of character education in our schools. Something which once was taken for granted as a part of education, sort of faded away, and we believe, should be brought back. We know it has to be a supplement for the work that families and communities do, not a replacement. We know there's no substitute for the character lessons that are imparted to

people by their parents and grandparents, or for the guidance that a father or mother can bring, or maybe even more importantly, for the sense of security and rootedness that the right kind of relationships within families give us all. But still, I think it's important to recognize that all of our children show up for school sooner or later and character education can be a vital part of building the kind of society that recognizes responsibilities and has a sense of community.

This is an issue I've been involved with for years. Several years ago in the mid-80s, I served on the Carnegie Commission for middle school education. There were two governors on that commission, I had the privilege of being one. The other was the distinguished Republican Governor of New Jersey, Tom Kane. And one of the recommendations we made was that we should teach our children in middle school, with specific objectives, to "behave ethically and assume the responsibilities of citizenship in a pluralistic society", and that we had to connect our schools to our communities, which together share responsibility for each student's success.

When I became President, we started to work on this through the Department of Education. Secretary Riley has helped us to go a good ways toward the right kind of introduction of values into our schools.

Everybody knows that education is about more than intellect. Everybody knows, as my mother used to say, there's a lot of smart fools running around in this old world. (Laughter.) And what we want to do is to build good citizens as well as intelligent people.

We need to learn what it takes to build up and not tear down a society over the long run. So we've worked hard on that. Most of you know that the Elementary and Secondary Education Act contained new authority for programs that foster character education for us to support them. And in partnership with local communities, we are now making states eligible to compete for grants to help to support the institution of character education programs in local school districts all across the country. I personally long for the day when this is, once again, a regular part of the curriculum of every school district in the United States. I think it is very, very important.

The Safe and Drug Free Schools program, which is one of the things I've been fighting for in this little rescission battle we've got going on here in Washington today, also has specific, explicit efforts in it to create an environment in which children are able to learn and in which we not only make drugs -- schools safe and drug-free by negative actions like security device, but in which we change the attitudes of children about what is acceptable within the schools; what is acceptable conduct within

the schools.

All of you know that there is some evidence out there already that these character education programs really work to lower the drop out rate, to increase educational performance, and to increase good citizenship. It is elementary. It is simple. But I think it is profoundly important that young people be taught that it's important to tell the truth, that's it's important to be trustworthy and for people to be able to rely on you, that's it's important not to abuse the freedom you have by undermining other people's ability to exercise their freedom. They need to be taught certain basic things in the context of the school environment, which is after all, for many of them, the first diverse community they will ever be a part of. So I feel very strongly that this is part of what we ought to be doing, but not all.

I think that, as I said, the fundamental insight that I have gotten about how to do this from Dr. Etzioni, is that we have to build networks. And this, as you know, is the second conference on character building we've had where we've welcomed people to the White House. I would very much like to see this institutionalized as an annual event that goes way beyond my administration; that encompasses Republicans and Democrats and that has nothing to do with politics. (Applause.)

Indeed, I think we should view this effort in our country not as bipartisan but as non-partisan. And we need to think about ways that we can continue to build networks that work together for a generation. Because a lot of our problems were a generation in coming and they're going to be a generation in going. And because there is nothing we can do that will stop the world from changing as quickly as it is; so we're going to have to work harder and harder to think of ways that keep the ties that bind. Therefore, I believe this should become a permanent fixture of our national dialogue.

I would like to also, from my point of view, take this up a notch in the present time because of the dimensions of our challenges. On June the 21st, I'm going to invite leaders to come here from all around the country to listen to each other, to open a dialogue, to try to find common ground on our great social challenges of the day; and to talk about what it would take to build not only good character but good citizenship from people individually and in groups. And to see whether or not we can accelerate this dialogue throughout the country.

I am going to ask academic and business leaders, religious leaders, media people, people from the sports community, people from other aspects of the private sector, and of course, government folks, to try to build the kind of partnership that I think is necessary.

James Madison once said that all governments required virtue of their citizens but democracies needed it more than other kinds of government. And I believe that. Some of you may know that Hillary is now working on a book about the responsibilities we owe to our children. The title will come from that old African proverb, it takes a whole village to raise a child.

Now, I ask you to think about this -- and I would like to make some closing remarks about where I'm going with this June 21st conference and invite you to give me your ideas about it. I think that in the world we are living in, it will take a lot of people, and not just government programs, to keep our children off the streets and in school. It will take every parent, teacher, friend and loved one we can find to teach children, given all their different circumstances in American today, the differences between right and wrong, and to give them the kind of self-esteem they need to do well in a troubled world. To say no to the right things but also to figure out what to say yes to, which in the end, is the basis of the quality of life we all live.

And I am absolutely convinced, as I have watched the patterns of life in our society, that as people go through different stages in their lives, or their in different places in society, most of them are not most influenced by government; there are other forces which are influencing them, and that we all have to pull together if we're going to have any hope of succeeding in this enterprise.

If you look at business, for example -- I mentioned the economic changes -- I had to fight like crazy for the Family and Medical Leave law. It had already been passed by Congress twice and vetoed twice by well-meaning people who thought that -- business people said, "Oh, the world will come to an end if the Family Medical Leave law passes."

But it cannot be, if you think about it, first and foremost -- it cannot be that a society where the economic forces require most adults to work, women and men, even parents of very young children -- it cannot be that a good society can be built unless people can succeed as both workers and parents.

If we cannot succeed as workers, then our standard of living will fall and everything that we think about America will begin to be eroded. But if don't succeed as parents, then we'll have a lot of people will money and miserable lives. And we have too many people in this country today, not only poor people, but people who aren't poor, who have miserable lives.

So, the first and most fundamental thing we have to say is, how are people going to succeed as workers and as parents? The

government can do the Family and Medical Leave law but that's just the first step. How can you justify the fact that most people are working harder for less money when business profits are up and corporations are up. We had record numbers of new millionaires last year. I like that, by the way. I don't think wealth formation is bad. I think it's good.

But the thing that holds a democratic society together is that everybody gets their fair share. In the 12 years before I became President -- this has nothing to do with government policies nearly as I can determine -- executive salaries went up four times as much as workers salaries went up in major American corporations and three times as much as corporate profits went up.

And you can say, well, labor's not worth as much as it used to be because technology means fewer people can do more with less. That may be, but all those people are still people. They have children to raise. They have mortgages to pay. They have problems to confront.

One of the companies that I really admire in this country today has set up a system in which both the workers and the executives get paid based on the performance of the company. So that when the company does well, the workers have just a big a gain as the executives. And if the company has a bad turn the executives have to take an even bigger hit percentage wise than the workers. Now, that the kind -- they also have as part of their bonus program a \$2,000 a year grant to every child of every employee in the company that goes to college. They have one person that sent 11 kids to college working for that company. (Laughter.) The only reason I'm not telling you who the company is, is I don't every person with six or more children in America to go apply for work there. (Laughter.)

But don't you see, here is a company that says, okay, we want to make money, we want to do well, we think we can do right and do well. We want a -- we believe we'll make more money if the people working for us know they can make more money if the company does well.

This is part of citizenship. I'm not suggesting the government should mandate this. I'm talking about partnerships, networking, community, open and honest discussion. But first and foremost, most of the work of building character in America is going to be done in the family and you must make it possible for people to succeed as parents and workers. So, that should be a part of this debate. (Applause.)

Now, the media has a responsibility here. We have tough choices to make as a country. People need to know the facts that will shape their future -- important for adults, important for

children. Let me give you an example: A weekly reader is launching a new project to teach the value of citizenship to young children through stories. That's a good thing. That's the sort of thing the media can do. I'm not suggesting the government should mandate it, but we should talk about it. Nobody should feel threatened or feel like we're trying encroach on the First Amendment by discussing the power on social behavior that the media has. We should be able to discuss it without anybody being defensive about it.

Here in Washington we are facing difficult but important issues of public policy. We have two huge deficits from a public policy point of view. We've got a government budget deficit, which is much lower than it was when I became President, but it's too big. And we do need, in a global economy, a balanced budget because we don't want to be more dependant than we have to be on outside forces. And we want to be able to invest in our future.

But we also have a big education deficit and training deficit compared to many other countries, and compared to what we need for America to be the strongest and greatest economy in the world in the 21st century.

So, we've got a big, tough decision here. How are we going to solve one without undermining the other? Can we do both at the same time? If so, how? Now, this can immediately dissolve into a huge political screaming match in which one party sticks up for one, the other sticks up for the other, everybody gets reelected at election time and nobody gets anything done. That would not be good.

What we need to do is to figure out how we can reach across the divides to a common consensus that will permit us to pursue both these objectives at the same time.

The American people are ready for some tough decisions and difficult medicine but they want to know that it's fair and sensible and what's down there at the end of the road. And to do it, we need to get information in a way that is not designed to divide us, but is designed to shed more light than heat. And it is a very difficult thing, but very important.

Religious and community institutions have an important role to play. You know, if every church in America -- every church in America -- had not only a vigorous program for it's own members and the people it's recruiting, but also an outreach to a fixed number of families and children to fight the problems of out-of-wedlock birth, teen pregnancy, drug addiction, school dropout -- if every single church had just a fixed and reasonable number of kids it was targeting, it might have more impact than all the government programs we could ever devise. (Applause.)

This is the most religious country in the world. We have

the largest number of churches, the most diverse group of people worshiping in different kinds of religions. And, again, it's not for the government to require this, but it's worth talking about. Because there is a great debate today in the religious community about whether the best thing you can do for society to make it better is go out and try to actually work with people who are in trouble and make them better individually or to simply make political prescriptions that everyone else should follow; and if they do, fine, and if they don't, we'll wait for the next election.

So, I think this is a debate we ought to have. Because -- I have no objection, by the way, to the political debate, and I have encouraged the people of faith who come to different political conclusions than I have to be a part of the debate. I don't think that's bad. But I think we are not purely either political animals, people who go to work, or churchgoers. We also have community responsibilities and opportunities. And the organized churches of this country can have a big impact on changing the lives of people and improving the character of people, and the prospects of people today in the country. And many do. Many do. If all did it would make a big difference in our ability to move forward on common ground.

If you think about -- let me mention the entertainment industry, there's been a lot said about that and I got a big standing ovation at the State of the Union from both Republican and Democratic members of Congress when I talked about the damage that comes to our society from incessant, repetitive, mindless violence coming through entertainment. There are lots of studies showing that young people tend to get numbed to violence, and to the consequences of it, from constant overexposure to it.

And I say this, not to point the finger at anybody. I have enjoyed more than my fair share of what I would call cheap thrills movies in my time. So, I am not being sanctimonious about this. I'm just saying it is an established fact that if children from very early ages are exposed to huge volumes of a certain kind of entertainment, it desensitizes them to the same sort of conduct in the real world. There's lots of evidence about that.

And that's why, frankly, I welcome the networks' recent efforts to reduce prime-time violence, and why I would applaud the decision that Time-Warner announced this week to set standards for controversial music and to balance creative expression with corporate responsibility. And I applaud the efforts of Bill Bennett, who was here yesterday, to get that done. The country owes him a debt of gratitude and we should applaud Time-Warner, as well. (Applause.)

The Children's Educational Television Act -- Television

Education Act was passed back in 1990. I think there is more to do here. We need -- the broadcasters need to read that Act again and adhere to its spirit, as well as to its letters. We should be thinking twice before movies and rap music that celebrate violence against women or law enforcement officers are put out there in huge volume, in piling one on top of one another.

There is a connection, in this sense, between words and deeds. We do get dulled of that to which we are overexposed in a banalizing way.

Let me finally say that I think politicians have a responsibility here. And instead of criticizing others, let me start with myself. If you want to be an elected official in a Democracy you must, first of all, get people to identify with you more than your opponent. And you must say, here are the differences between us, and here's what I stand for; here are the choices we face and here are the decisions I would make. And here is why I would make those decisions. So in that sense, conflict and difference and dividing up the electorate are the essence of politics.

But there is a big difference between division, and difference of opinion, and destruction and demonization. And there is a big difference between difference and dehumanization. Let me just begin -- let me just -- I'll start with me, because this is something I've been through in last few weeks.

I know that I -- I don't know of a politician that hasn't done this that's been around very long, but I'll tell you, I don't know how many times that I have made references to government bureaucrats, right? Because when a politician stands up and says something about government bureaucrats, 99 times out of 100, the words is used in a pejorative sense, right? And it's used to remind you of the fact that the person you've elected is not really a part of the government, he's a part of you. That he's more like a tax payer than a tax consumer. And we know you resent paying your taxes, and we know you think a lot of it is wasted and so, if we who are elected talk about government bureaucrats, you'll know we're still on your side even though we're living over here on the other side.

That's the deal, right. You hear it all the time. (Laughter.) You know what I'm talking about. Now, almost -- first of all, there is some individual truth to all this. That is, there is hardly an American living who hasn't had some encounter with the government that was distasteful, right? (Laughter.) Because as long as people are running the government, they will be like people running churches, people running businesses, people running whatever it is you do, people are imperfect. And they'll mess up. And when they do they drive other people up the wall.

But the government has a special relationship to people because it has the power of law behind it. So, almost everybody can remember someone who was at least rude, or perhaps a law enforcement official that abused authority on occasion, or a tax person who was really unfair, or a regulator who was overbearing. Almost everybody has had some experience because we live in a society of human beings where people mess up. So, there is some truth to that.

It is also true that at this time, the government tends to lag the private sector in changes. Sometimes that's good. Sometimes that's bad. But it does because the environment in which the government operates is not as competitive. But that is, we normally have -- we have more of a monopoly on income and customers, so it lags.

On the other hand, that's not all bad because it helps to be a force of stability too, sometimes, in times of great change. But the government, in the end, must follow the great trends of the day. So, must the government become less bureaucratic, more flexible, more open? Will it be smaller? Will fewer people do more with less? Absolutely. All that will happen.

We had to take the size of the government down. It's already over 100,000 smaller than it was when I became President. We had to get rid of hundreds of programs that just didn't make any sense any more. We have to do these things. And we have to take it down more. We have to continue to reduce unnecessary spending. And we'll have to have more people take these early retirement packages and all that. That's all true.

But that's different from saying government bureaucrats in a demeaning way. Let me tell you something -- you think about this. The children who died in that child care center in Oklahoma City were the children of government bureaucrats. The people who were carried out of that building from the Agriculture Department; from the Veterans Affairs Administration; from the Housing and Urban Development Department; and from all of our law enforcement agencies, the Secret Service, the ATF, all of them. They were all government bureaucrats. And I will never, knowingly, use that term again. (Applause.)

So we've all got to start with each other here. I don't know that that's a very good character example. I don't know that that does much to build good character, when you identify a group as a group and pretend that as a group, there's something wrong with them.

So I would say to you -- to all of you, I am basically very optimistic about the future of this country. I know we're more violent than we need to be, but we always have been. We always

have been and we need -- we've got to get a hold of it. And I know we have to many out-of-wedlock births, but it's a trend that is gripping an awful lot of western countries. And people have forgotten, in my judgment, the profound emotional consequences to the children who grow up in unstable and inadequately supported environments. So we're not alone in that. We have way too much drug addition and we are, really, almost alone in that. Hardly any other advanced country has anything approaching the levels of violence and drug addition we do. So we do have profound problems.

Our political debate is too polarized. And we have a lot of people who talk a lot about what's wrong with everybody else and don't do very much to change it. There are all kinds of problems. But look, this is not the Great Depression, this is not World War II, this is not the Civil War, we are not starting from scratch like the Founders did.

We know what to do. We know the difference between right and wrong. We know how to do this. And we can do what we have to do. We can do this. This is not a cause for wringing of hands. It is difficult. It is a new challenge to figure out how we all work together and still leave room for our differences, how we identify the specific roles of the various influence centers in our society to re-instill character and give a good life to our people.

But the fundamental fact is that this is a very great country, and nearly everybody is still getting up every day and doing the very best they can to do what is right. Nearly everybody desperately wants to have children who have good character, and who do good, and who are good -- nearly everybody.

So I think what you are here about is profoundly important. But what I want to say to you is, do not be discouraged. In the light of the whole history of our Republic, this is our job at this time. It is not an un-doable job. It is profoundly important. It will be difficult because of all the forces working on people's state of mind that undermine what we have to do. Because it's so much easier in the world today to identify what we're against instead of what we're for. It's so much easier in the world today not to look at the problems within our own hearts and minds because we can always find somebody we think is worse. So it is so much easier to put this off and delay it. And there are no institutions really for bringing us all together, across all the lines that divide us, in our common cause of building what is good about America and building up what is good within the character of our people. But we can do it. And I believe we will.

Thank you very much. (Applause.)