

CHARACTER *defining character*

C H A R A C T E R

What's **CHARACTER** all about?

"Character is power." – BOOKER T. WASHINGTON

*"What lies behind us and what lies before us
are small matters compared to what lies
within us."* – RALPH WALDO EMERSON

As you wind your way through this world, you inevitably come to a fork in the road: You can either be noted *for* your character – or be known *as* a character, to paraphrase a high school principal's advice to his graduating class.

Your character is what your friends, classmates and family members see you as. It's how you as a role model and citizen help their interactions with you help them become better people.

But what values and personal attributes comprise character? To name just a few, character is defined by:

School Datebooks

C CARING Caring and concern for others are at the root of the Golden Rule – "Treat others as you want them to treat you."

H HONESTY Be honest with yourself and with others in every interaction. Honesty and integrity are the core values that make respect, courage and trustworthiness possible.

A ACTIONS Your actions – not your intentions or words – are what define your character. Often, the badmouthing comes with taking stand against racism, prejudice, and other harmful behaviors.

R RESPONSIBILITY Personal responsibility is what comes with doing the right thing, following through on your promises and be accountable for your actions. Personal rights are only possible if they're accompanied by responsibility.

A ACCEPTANCE Character demands that we accept others' differences and appreciate how diversity strengthens our society.

C CITIZENSHIP People of strong moral character don't sit on the sidelines. Contribute your "fair share" – participate fully as a concerned student, volunteer and voter.

T TRUSTWORTHINESS Trust can't be granted; it can only be earned. Deliver on your promises. Act honestly at every turn.

E EMPATHY When you empathize with others, you go beyond kindness and caring; you truly begin to see the world from someone else's perspective.

R RESPECT Respect for yourself and for others is an integral component of character. Without respect, caring and empathy are empty expressions. Respect is what enables us to accept and appreciate others' differences.

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