

Character Strong

"Culture goes much deeper than a mission statement...culture is how group members actually behave, repeatedly and habitually." -James Hunter

- What is Missing?

- Clarity: Why do we do what we do?
 - Your One Word:

 - Your 3 Non-Academic Positive Expectations:

- Competence: What do staff and our students know how to do?

- Consistency: What do we give value to by repeatedly giving it our time?



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OVERALL	SCHOOL	HOME

The CharacterCard Process:

- Every staff (or student) is paired with an accountability partner for the year.
- Each week, you make time to connect and debrief your previous week's experience and recommit to your character.
- The "Overall" goal doesn't change throughout the year. It's the thing you are committed to getting behind for an entire year - something you do daily or weekly. Each week, rewrite it as a reminder.
- The "School" goal changes each week. It is something you want to specifically focus on that week. Maybe it is a relationship with a particular student. Maybe it is making 3 positive calls home. Maybe it is writing a note of appreciation to another educator in your building.
- The "Home" goal changes each week. It allows you to focus on the relationships that exist outside of school. Maybe it is a few hours set aside for self-care. Maybe it is planning a board game night with your family. Maybe it is making a phone call to a relative out-of-state.
- If you don't meet your weekly goals, you can choose to rewrite them for another week.



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A Letter to My Students:

I do what I do because...

One word I promise to try daily to make you feel is...

because...

The things I will hold myself and you accountable to in this class are...

Your Teacher,



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3 Practical Strategies I learned...

2 Ideas I don't want to forget...

1 Thing I am excited for is...



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3

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The Research

It's All About Relationships

A study done by Dr. Ruth Feldman discovered that premature babies that were held skin-to-skin had lasting positive developmental impacts 10 years later.¹ We were born to be relational and we crave human interaction. Great education must be relationship-focused.

Importance of Character Education

Author David Halberstam says the decision that caused the major crises of the past few decades were made by "the best and the brightest," the individuals who received the highest grades, attended the most elite schools, and received high honors.²

A 2006 study by Katherine Mangan showed that among all graduate students in major universities, MBA students cheat more often than any other graduate students in non-business programs. The business "leaders" are entering our firms "believing that high levels of cheating are commonplace and acceptable," according to Mangan.³

Dr. James Davison Hunter argues that, mid-twentieth century, the notion of personality began to replace character. He argues in the early twentieth-century there was an emphasis on achieving and sacrificing personally on behalf of a larger good. He argues structural changes in the economy led to a focus on self-expression, self-fulfilment and personal gratification.⁴

Habit Development

Researchers Neal & Wood (2006) at Duke University found that 45% of our day is driven by our habits.⁵ We must be conscious of this as teachers in our classrooms. Our curricula and trainings focus on teaching effective, positive habit development.

Student Stress

In 2014, Dr. Stuart Slavin from the Saint Louis University reported that 54% of students showed symptoms of moderate to severe depression and 80% had moderate to severe anxiety.⁶ Anxiety levels are associated with low social connectedness and high environmental threat. That is why our curricula and trainings focus on community building, interpersonal relationships, and empathy.

1 Ruth Feldman, Zehava Rosenthal, and Arthur I. Eidelman, Maternal-Preterm Skin-to-Skin Contact Enhances Child Physiologic Organization and Cognitive Control Across the First 10 Years of Life (2014). *Biological Psychiatry*, 75(1).

2 David Halberstam, *The Best and the Brightest* (New York: Random House, 1972).

3 Mangan, Katherine. "Survey Finds Widespread Cheating in M.B.A. Programs." *The Chronicle of Higher Education*, 19 Sept. 2006. www.chronicle.com/article/Survey-Finds-Widespread/118013

4 Hunter, James Davison. *The Death of Character: Moral Education in an Age Without Good or Evil*. Basic Books, 2000

5 David T. Neal, Wendy Wood, and Jeffrey M. Quinn (2006). "Habits-A Repeat Performance". *Current Directions in Psychological Science*, 15(4), 198-202.

6 Abeles, Vicki. "Is the Drive for Success Making Our Children Sick?" *The New York Times*, The New York Times, 2 Jan. 2016. www.nytimes.com/2016/01/03/opinion/sunday/is-the-drive-for-success-making-our-children-sick.html.



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The Research

Teaching to the Test versus Teaching the Whole Child

if schools only focus on end of the year test scores, science is suggesting that we are only giving kids 30-50% of what they need to be successful and have life satisfaction.⁷

A 2015 study conducted by the Council of the Great City Schools found that students will take on average 112 tests by the time they graduate.⁸

A 2015 survey of 63,924 managers by PayScale found that 56% of managers said recent grads do not pay attention to detail and 44% of managers reported a lack of leadership qualities and 36% reported lower-than-needed interpersonal and teamwork skills.⁹ Our lessons and trainings focus on developing every student as a leader by teaching interpersonal skills, character development, and working effectively on a team.

Indicators of Success

In 2007, researcher Angela Duckworth discovered that grit and self-control are better indicators of success than IQ.¹⁰ This is also backed up by Stanford researcher Dr. Mischel's famous Marshmallow Study conducted in the late 1960's that showed children with greater self-control had greater academic success later on in life.¹¹ That is our curricula and trainings help create systems of accountability for students to consistently practice character and develop grit.

Power of Purpose

In a study by William Damon and Anne Colby found that people who pursue noble purposes are filled with joy, despite the constant sacrifices that they feel called upon to make.¹²

In 2015, Imperative, a purpose consulting agency, worked with New York University to conduct research on purpose-oriented talent in the U.S. They defined purpose-oriented employees as people who see work as about personal fulfillment and helping other people. They compared this group to non purpose-oriented people, who see work as solely a source of income or status. They found that purpose-oriented employees scored higher than the non purpose-oriented employees on every measure. 64% had higher levels of fulfillment in their work, 50% more likely to be in leadership positions and 47% more likely to be promoters of their employers.¹³ That is why our curricula and trainings focus heavily on the "Why."

7 Gilman, R. & Huebner, E. S. (2006). Characteristics of adolescents who report very high life satisfaction. *Journal of Youth and Adolescence*, 35(3), 311-319.

8 Hart, Ray. (2015). Student Testing in America's Great City Schools. Retrieved from <https://www.cgcs.org/cms/lib/DC00001581/Centricity/.../87/Testing%20Report.pdf>

9 Strauss, Karsten. "These Are The Skills Bosses Say New College Grads Do Not Have." *Forbes*, 20 May 2016. www.forbes.com/sites/karstenstrauss/2016/05/17/these-are-the-skills-bosses-say-new-college-grads-do-not-have/#3e6a28d75491.

10 Duckworth, A. L., Peterson, C., Matthews, M. D., & Kelly, D. R. (2007). Grit: Perseverance and passion for long-term goals. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 92(6), 1087-1101.

11 Mischel, W., Ebbsen, E. B., & Raskoff Zeiss, A. (1972). Cognitive and attentional mechanisms in delay of gratification. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 21(2), 204-218.

12 Anne Colby and William Damon, *Some Do Care: Contemporary Lives of Moral Commitment* (New York: Free Press, 1992).

13 Imperative. (2016). *Purpose at Work: The Largest Global Study on the Role of Purpose in the Workforce*. Retrieved from https://cdn.imperative.com/media/public/Globa_Purpose_Index_2016.pdf



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The Research

Personality vs. Character

In 2014, researchers out of University of California Riverside discovered personality traits that will define that individual throughout their life can be clearly identified when they are as little as 7 years old. By the time they start going to school, children already exhibit the personality traits that will remain with them throughout their lives.¹⁴

Expectations

In 1963, research psychologist Robert Rosenthal used rats to discover what is now known as the "Pygmalion Effect." Our subconscious expectations affect how we consciously treat others.¹⁵ That is why our CharacterDare process is critical - to create consistent, positive expectations.

In John Hattie's famous meta-analysis of classroom effectiveness, teacher expectations clock in as number one in his list of 195 possible influences. In fact teachers are the single most important in-school factor that affects student achievement. What the teacher expects from their individual students is the greatest indicator of that child's success.¹⁶

Intentional Focus on Helping Others

Researchers Darley and Batson found that whether or not someone learns about the importance of helping others isn't the key to actually helping. Hurriedness was the key factor in their research - how much of in a rush participants felt determined whether or not they stopped to help someone in need.¹⁷ We must show students how to make time for practicing compassion by making time for it during the school day.

Positive Greetings at the Door

Researcher from the University of Washington, Dr. Clayton Cook, discovered that if teachers positively greeted their students at the door each day before class and had something to do when they sat down, there was a 20% increase in classroom engagement and a reduction of off-task behavior.¹⁸

¹⁴ Nave, S., Christopher. (2010). Situational similarity and personality predict behavioral consistency. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 99(2), 330.

¹⁵ Rosenthal, R., & Jacobson, L. (1963). Teachers' expectancies: Determinants of pupils' IQ gains. *Psychological Reports*, 19, 115-118.

¹⁶ Hattie, J. (2012). *Visible learning for teachers: Maximizing impact on learning*. London: Routledge.

¹⁷ Darley, J. M., and Batson, C.D., "From Jerusalem to Jericho": A study of Situational and Dispositional Variables in Helping Behavior". *JSPS*, 1973, 27, 100-108.

¹⁸ Cook, C.R., Daikos, C., Slemrod, T. Prentis, K., Decano, P., & Daikos, C. (in preparation). Positive greetings at the door as a proactive classroom management strategy for secondary students. *Journal of Teacher Education*.

