

The importance of the company you keep

Among the friends we made at the 200

9 Pursuing Victory With Honor Summit in Sioux City is Jim Braunschweig, who works in admissions and electronic communications at Morningside. Here's Jim's take on role models....and kids movies.

Everyone has a role model or someone they look up to; someone who has a positive attitude in almost any given situation, makes good decisions, is respectful, polite, and caring, but most importantly can always be counted on when you need them. Simply put, this person possesses and demonstrates good “character”. According to the dictionary, a person with “character” has qualities of honesty, courage, or the like; integrity.

To be honest, I don't have just any one person I look up to; I'm lucky to have many. Thanks to my parents, I learned at a very early age how to recognize these kinds of people when they come along, and surround myself with them in nearly every aspect of my everyday life.

I've learned many things from these special people, but the most important thing I've discovered is that they all live by one simple yet powerful principle (whether they know it or not) – that life is bigger than him/herself. Some of these people recognize this through their religious beliefs, others by the love they share for their family and friends, and the ones who impress me the most, by the way they care for just about everyone including complete strangers.

By focusing their attention outwardly on others rather than inwardly on themselves, it seems as if many of the little day-to-day things that easily distract, upset, and sometimes ruin

the average person's day don't even phase them. They see past these minor inconveniences and understand the big picture, which allows them to always appear happier and more optimistic than those who don't. I believe the way a person with "good character" views the world can be summed up by the following two sayings. The first, "The Serenity Prayer", is quite popular and you've probably heard it before. It begins "God grant me the serenity to accept the things I cannot change; courage to change the things I can; and wisdom to know the difference." The second, I heard in the movie *Kung Fu Panda*. Master Oogway (the tortoise) said, "Yesterday is history, tomorrow a mystery, but today is a gift; that's why they call it the present." By the way, that movie is one of my favorites, and in case you're judging my taste in movies, you have to admit "little kid" movies have come a long way in entertaining adult audiences as well.

There's a reason my parents told me to seek out these kinds of people; so I could become more like them. I'll be sure to have similar advice about the importance of finding and surrounding yourself with people who possess and demonstrate "good character" with my own son when he's old enough. For now I'd like to share a saying I recently discovered that speaks to this idea of becoming more like the company you keep, and I hope you're reminded of it as you meet new people and build relationships with them. "Those with whom we assemble, we soon resemble."

You can find Jim as @msideadmguy on Twitter or check out his blog.

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