

# What's the main thing?

*How does our character play a role in the challenges our world faces? In today's guest blog, Paul Smith of Des Moines gives us his thoughts on how the Six Pillars of Character can change the important issues in our lives.*



Recently I came across the Stephen Covey quote: "The main thing is to keep the main thing the main thing." I was struck by how simple and yet profound this statement is. I cannot help but observe that this small bit of simple wisdom could revolutionize our world if we actually took it to heart.

At times, it seems like those who point to the problems our world faces are outnumbered by those who claim to have the answer for the latest identified crisis. It's not that the newer things identified are not important; clearly they are very important to someone. But are we guilty of swatting at flies rather than simply removing whatever is drawing them in? One reason that 24-hour cable news networks remain in business is that that new problems and new crises are continually being identified. Does the fact that a problem is 'new' mean it is more crucial than something else?

If the solution isn't constantly shifting resources to the next problem, and then the next, and then the next, what is? Perhaps we should consider that question in the context of Covey's quote and instead ask ourselves "Is this problem truly "the main thing"? If not, what is?"

Consider for a moment what our world would look like if every person observed the basic, fundamental principles of the Six Pillars of Character.

- Would we have experienced the financial meltdown of the

past decade if those in business and finance had been more **TRUSTWORTHY**?

- Would our differences still divide and define us if we all practiced **RESPECT** for one another?
- Would our court system be filled with lawsuits and counter-suits if we all had demonstrated greater **RESPONSIBILITY** for our actions?
- Would our law books be so full if we were less me-focused and instead showed more **FAIRNESS** toward others?
- Would those in need be overwhelmed help agencies and government programs if each of us were more actively **CARING**?
- Would our government be the subject of scorn, distrust, and ridicule if each of us were fully engaged in **CITIZENSHIP**?

CHARACTER COUNTS! is not just a program with a few catchy phrases and cool t-shirts, it's about building foundations in our schools, workplaces, athletics, and communities upon which all of the other issues are resolved because it addresses "the main thing."