

Character in thoughts, words, and deeds

Does character matter in all of our interactions? In today's guest blog, Deb Chiodo, principal at Moulton Elementary, shows us how to take simple steps toward excellence by focusing on our thoughts, words, and deeds.

When I first began my career at Moulton Elementary, I realized I wanted to instill a framework of intelligence, courage and honor in the students I taught. I carried that throughout my educational and teaching career. As my career continued I became principal of Cornell Elementary and through an invitation from Scott Raecker I became involved in Character Counts In Iowa.

CHARACTER COUNTS! is the perfect framework to promote the principles that we should all be governed by. It was the perfect catalyst for the ethics and ideals I wanted to instill in both my school and community as principal. With that in mind, there are three ideas I want to share about why character must matter in everyday interactions.

First, character is present in everyday **thoughts**. Whether we realize it or not, what we think influences who we are. One of the ways character can be instilled is through focusing on our inner thoughts. It is easy to become negative about ourselves, others and the world around us, but the more we instill our thoughts to be open-minded and tolerant, the easier it becomes to put them into action.

Second, deeds become the sum of our character practiced. Because of this, character must guide our actions towards others. While our thoughts shape our actions, our **words** towards others shape our reputations. When speaking to others our words have to be honest and forgiving.

Finally, the **deeds** and actions character pushes us to pursue citizenship and responsibility. Citizenship takes both our thoughts and words to ensure that we are good stewards to our environment and others. When you combine that with responsibility, it gives us the drive to pursue excellence. We must use these two Pillars to drive our actions, to persevere and always do what is right.

In today's hectic world it becomes easy to lose sight of the simple humanity within each of us; the Six Pillars of Character are a small yet tangible reminder of the characteristics that reside in all. It is imperative we not lose sight of these basic rights that must be given and received no matter our perceived differences. While I certainly do enjoy being in charge, I love the drive for excellence in education and the mission to impart strong values in our next generation even more.