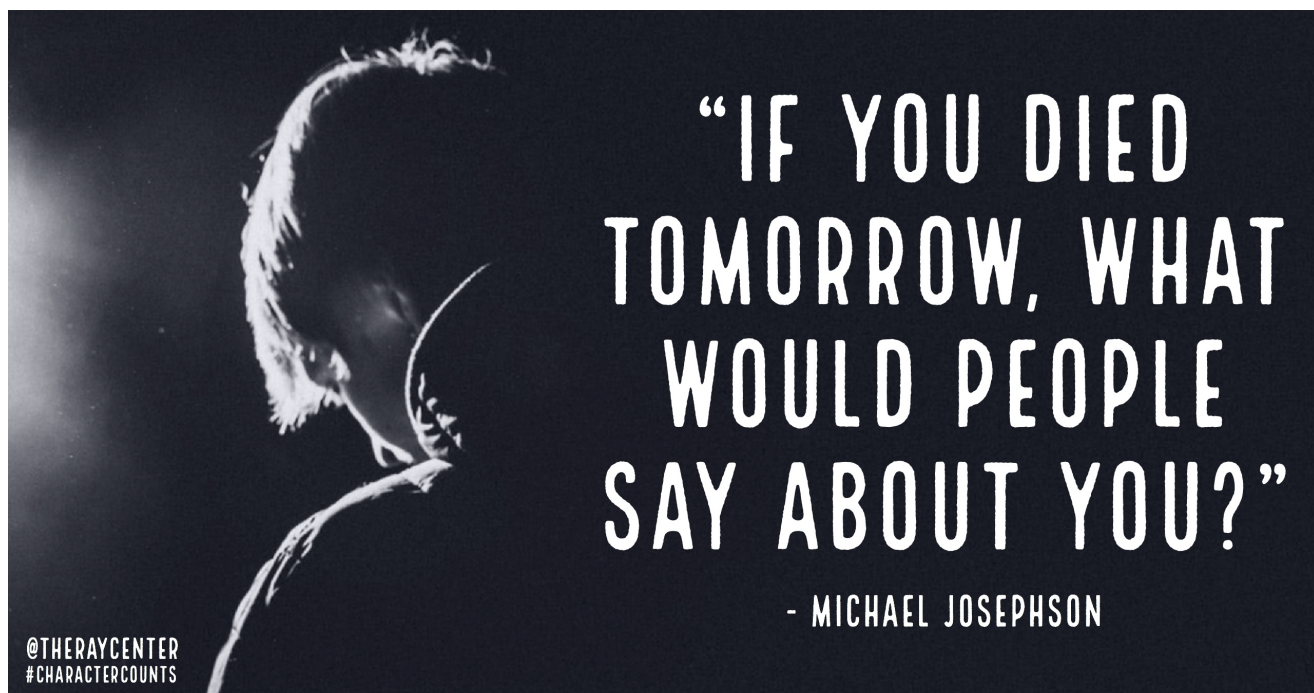


Live backwards



From our guest contributor Michael Josephson.

Ben just came to town as a new rabbi. Unfortunately, his first official duty was to conduct a funeral service for Albert, a man who died in his eighties with no relatives. Since Ben didn't know the deceased personally, he paused from his sermon to ask if anyone in the congregation would say something good about Albert. There was no response. Ben asked again: "Many of you knew Albert for years, surely someone can say something nice." After an uncomfortable pause, a voice from the back of the room said, "Well, his brother was worse."

If you died tomorrow, what would people say about you? Would it make you proud of the way you lived and the choices you made? Thinking about the legacy we leave can help us keep our priorities straight. Few people would be satisfied with an epitaph like: "She always got what she wanted." Or "He never missed a deadline."

There's an old saying, "If you want to know how to live your life, think about what you'd like people to say about you

after you die . . . and live backwards.” The idea is that we earn our eulogy by our everyday choices.

In his book, *When Everything You Ever Wanted Isn't Enough*, Harold Kushner writes: “Our souls are not hungry for fame, comfort, wealth, or power. Our souls are hungry for meaning, for the sense that we have figured out how to live so that our lives matter, so that the world will be at least a little bit different for our having passed through it.”



Michael Josephson is an influential and internationally renowned champion of character education for youth and ethical conduct in business, government, policing, journalism, sports, healthcare and law. He is credited by many as the person most responsible for reviving and professionalizing the character education in school and youth-serving organizations. In 1992, under the auspices of the Josephson Institute he created CHARACTER COUNTS!, the world's most widely implemented character development initiative based on a common language of shared values – the Six Pillars of Character) and Pursuing Victory With Honor (1996), a companion program promoting ethics in sports.

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