

The butterfly parable

**“ADVERSITY
IS NOT ALWAYS
AN ENEMY.”**

– MICHAEL JOSEPHSON

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From our guest contributor, Michael Josephson.

There's a parable about a new mother who discovered a butterfly struggling to escape its cocoon through a tiny opening at the top. She became concerned when the creature seemed to give up after making no progress. Certain that the butterfly just wouldn't make it out without help, she enlarged the hole slightly.

On its next try, the butterfly wriggled out easily. But the young woman's joy turned to horror as she saw its wings were shriveled and useless. Her well-intentioned intervention turned out badly because it interrupted a natural process. You see, forcing the butterfly to squeeze through a small opening is nature's way of assuring that blood from the creature's body is pushed into the wings. By making it easier, she deprived the butterfly of strong wings.

Childhood, too, is a sort of cocoon. If a healthy adult is to emerge, parents must allow, even encourage, their children to struggle, to make mistakes and learn from them, and to pay a

price for their own bad judgments and conduct.

Of course, good parents should be ready to protect their children from serious harm. But being overprotective can itself cause serious harm. Adversity is not always an enemy. It's often a teacher that helps young people develop wings strengthened by self-confidence and self-reliance.

Helen Keller once said, "Character cannot be developed in ease and quiet. Only through experience of trial and suffering can the soul be strengthened, vision cleared, ambition inspired, and success achieved."

This is Michael Josephson reminding you that character counts!



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.