

The trust of our children



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AND DISTRUST AN
ENORMOUS LIABILITY.”**

– MICHAEL JOSEPHSON

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#CHARACTERCOUNTS

From our guest contributor, Michael Josephson.

There's no doubt about it: Trust is an asset to any relationship and distrust an enormous liability. But thinking of trust in terms of its practical value can demean and distort its true significance as an endorsement of our character and as a sign of our worthiness. I get my clearest vote of trust when I stop to appreciate the ways my young daughters trust their daddy. Knowing that they have unquestioned confidence that I will always do the right thing is a source of pleasure and pride.

It is also a source of duty. The trust of our children is a gift we must never take for granted. Trust is fragile. Children trust us completely, until we prove ourselves unworthy. It's a heavy responsibility to protect our kids from our own moral frailties, but I think I'm a better person because I treasure their trust so much. The glow of their faith in me lights the way and helps me to see traps and hazards that could embarrass them or damage their image of me – and frankly I can't think of any gain worth that price.

In the play *All My Sons* by Arthur Miller, the father adores his son and the son idolizes his father, until he decides that the father did some shabby things in the past. As the son's esteem is slipping away, the father says in a desperate plea, "Son, I'm no worse than anyone else."

The son, with teary eyes, replies, "I know, Dad. But I thought you were better."

There are other reasons to be ethical, but for those of us with children, there's none stronger than the honor of earning their admiration.

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.

Learn more about character education.