

# What Will Matter



*From our guest contributor, Michael Josephson.*

Ready or not, some day it will all come to an end.

There will be no more sunrises, no minutes, hours, or days.

All the things you collected, whether treasured or forgotten,  
will pass to someone else.

Your wealth, fame, and temporal power will shrivel to irrelevance.

It will not matter what you owned or what you were owed.

Your grudges, resentments, frustrations, and jealousies will finally disappear.

So, too, your hopes, ambitions, plans, and to-do lists will expire.

The wins and losses that once seemed so important will fade away.

It won't matter where you came from or what side of the tracks

you lived on at the end.

It won't matter whether you were beautiful or brilliant.

Even your gender and skin color will be irrelevant.

So what will matter? How will the value of your days be measured?

What will matter is not what you bought but what you built; not what you got but what you gave.

What will matter is not your success but your significance.

What will matter is not what you learned but what you taught.

What will matter is every act of integrity, compassion, courage, or sacrifice that enriched, empowered, or encouraged others to emulate your example.

What will matter is not your competence but your character.

What will matter is not how many people you knew but how many will feel a lasting loss when you're gone.

What will matter is not your memories but the memories of those who loved you.

What will matter is how long you will be remembered, by whom, and for what.

Living a life that matters doesn't happen by accident.

It's not a matter of circumstance but of choice.

Choose to live a life that matters.

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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.