

# Return to Learn: Citizenship

There is, perhaps, no more important time to be a good citizen than during a global pandemic. Through our citizenship, each of us plays a critical role in contributing to the health and well-being of others. Whether returning to the classroom or engaging in online learning, educators, administrators, students, and families have an important role to play in maintaining the health and safety of all parties and contributing to a positive educational environment.

The Leader-to-Detractor tool serves two important purposes. First, it defines what each role – detractor, participant, and leader – looks like in action. Good citizens are able to change detractor behaviors to participant behaviors, and participant behaviors to leader behaviors. Second, one can use the tool reflectively by asking, “were my actions that of a leader, detractor, or participant, and what do I need to do better or differently tomorrow to be a better citizen?”

# LEADER-TO-DETRACTOR SCALE



Adapted from Jeffrey Beedy.

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**Citizenship for Educators:** Educators can use the Leader-to-Detractor tool to define what each role looks like in their classroom (virtual or in-person). You may choose to include leader to detractor behaviors that are specific to following health guidelines as well. Share these definitions with parents so they know what your expectations are as well.

**Citizenship for Students:** Once students have worked with educators or parents on defining what leaders, participants, and detractors look like in action, they can engage in daily self-reflection to gauge their behaviors for the day. Students should note if there are instances in which they are more likely to be a detractor or participant and create and follow a plan to be a leader in every circumstance. Their reflection can be centered on school, home, following health guidelines, or a combination of all three.

**Citizenship for Families:** Families can use the Leader-to-

Detractor tool to identify leader, participant, and detractor behaviors they observe each day. These may be behaviors the student exhibits, or observations of others, whether at the grocery store, at work, or in the community. Ask your student what leader-to-detractor behaviors they notice in others each day, and what could be done better or differently to be a leader in each situation.

Download the Leader-To-Detractor tool.

Learn more about character education.

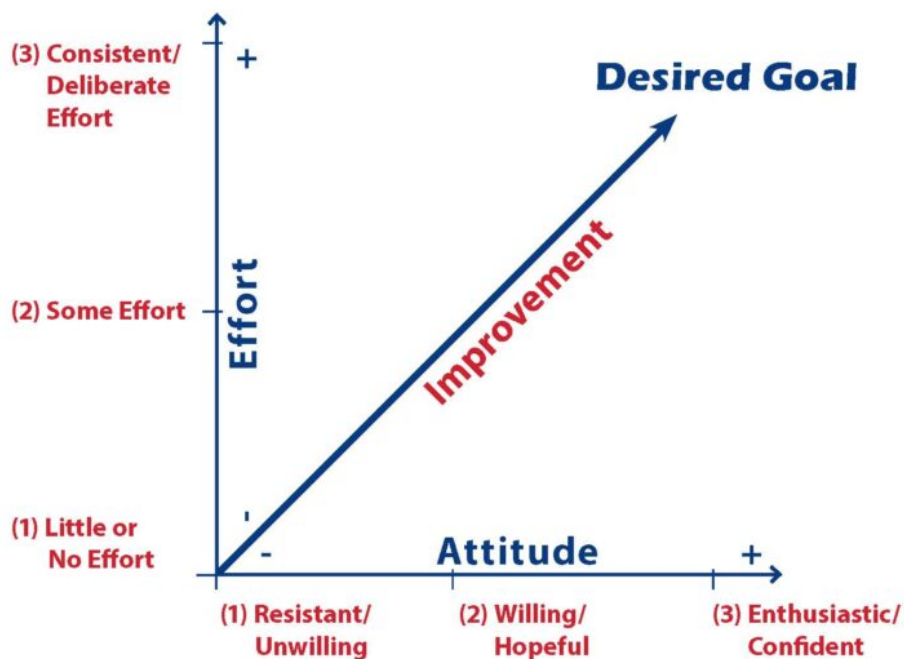
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## Return to Learn: Caring

Caring can be demonstrated in numerous ways. We can demonstrate caring by maintaining social connections, supporting friends and family who are struggling, completing random acts of kindness, or simply being available for a friend who needs a safe, compassionate listener.

The attitude and effort we choose to display is another way we show caring. Bringing a positive attitude each day, to every task, is a great way to show that you care. Likewise, the amount of effort we put forth is another indicator of how much we care about someone or something. The Attitude + Effort = Improvement (AEI) tool is a simple way to reflect on whether you brought a positive attitude and effort to a task, and by extension, how much you cared.

## **ATTITUDE + EFFORT = IMPROVEMENT RUBRIC**



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**Caring for Educators:** Use the AEI tool to define for your students what great, good, and poor attitude and effort looks like in action. Be sure to help students see the distinction between attitude and effort (you can have a positive attitude and put forth no effort, and vice versa). Ask students what they can do to demonstrate a great attitude and work ethic each day, whether remote or in-person. Then, have them reflect on their attitude and effort each day.

**Caring for Students:** Students can track their daily attitude and effort on a 1 (poor) through 3 (great) scale and see if they notice any trends. For example, their attitude and effort is great when working on math, but poor when working on Spanish. Students can then create a plan for what to do better or differently to improve their attitude and effort where needed.

**Caring for Families:** The AEI tool provides a simple way to

engage your student in self-reflection. Ask your student to rate himself or herself on their attitude and effort each day and ask them what they can do better the next day. The conversation is even more powerful you reflect on their own attitude and effort each day and try to improve with your student.

Download the Attitude + Effort = Improvement tool

Learn more about character education.

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## Return to Learn: Fairness

In a time of uncertainty, it can be difficult to find fairness in diverse groups of stakeholders. Is it fair to prohibit young people from participating in social activities when it appears the effects of COVID-19 aren't as severe for young and healthy people? On the other hand, is it fair to individuals in a demographic with more risk if young people increase their exposure to the virus and then spread it to others?

When clear solutions aren't available, it's up to individuals to negotiate win-win solutions that account for the needs and wants of all parties to reach a fair solution for the greater good. To do this, one must listen to understand what the other party wants by asking questions and restating what the other person says to ensure clarity. You must also clearly describe what it is you desire and why. Only when all parties understand that this is what you want and this is what I want, can you work together to find a "we could" win-win solution.

## WIN-WIN NEGOTIATION GUIDE

1. Communicate so **your needs** are understood.

**I want ...**

**You want ...**

2. Communicate so **you** understand the needs of others.

**We could ...**

3. Use creative problem-solving to come up with compromises that yield **win-win solutions**.



**Fairness for Educators:** Few things will be normal this school year. Educators will have to negotiate win-win solutions on everything from how students will pass each other in the hallways to how students will eat lunch. In every negotiation, commit to understanding the other person's perspective, clearly state your idea, and stay focused on your common ground – what you both want to achieve.

**Fairness for Students:** Students can use the Win-Win Negotiation tool to help them find a compromise with teachers or parents. For example, students using win-win negotiation when asking permission to attend a social event would clearly articulate what they want (to attend the event) and why they want it (to see their friends), and would listen to and understand what their parent wants (child to be safe and healthy). Then, both parties can focus on solutions that can meet this objective (you can attend the event if there are less than 10 people and you wear a mask).

**Fairness for Families:** Families can use the Win-Win Negotiation tool to help find a compromise over work time if students are working from home. Or, the tool could be used to reach an agreement on what social activities students can engage in. Families can even use it when finding solutions with schools on everything from behavior issues to virtual versus in-person attendance.

Download the Win-Win Negotiation tool

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## **Return to Learn: Responsibility**

When under stress, or outside of our comfort zone, it can be tempting to shy away from responsibility. However, it is critical as the school year progresses that each person take responsibility for their role in ensuring a safe and productive learning environment.

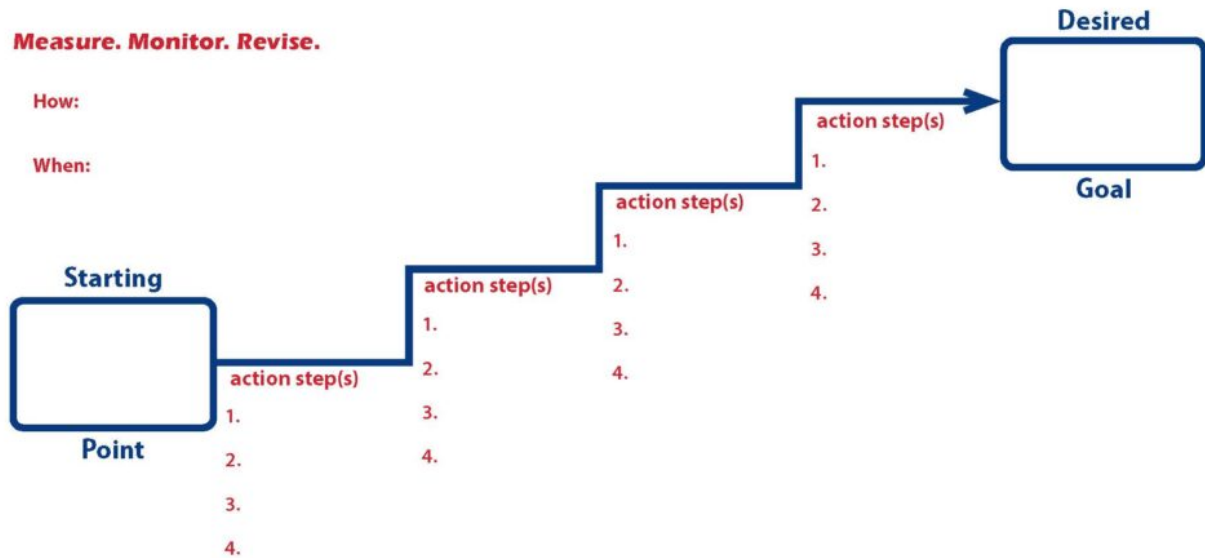
When norms and routines are disrupted, it can be easy to lose sight of our goals and the process we need to follow to achieve those goals. The Goal Map tool is an excellent resource to focus attention on the action steps needed to continue progressing towards our objectives, especially when we are outside of our comfort zone.

# GOAL MAP

**Measure. Monitor. Revise.**

How:

When:



## Checklist:

- ☐ Is the desired goal specific and can it be measured?
- ☐ Is there an honest/accurate assessment of the starting point?
- ☐ Have all of the major action steps been identified and broken down into smaller, doable steps?
- ☐ Have the roles, workflow, and timeline been worked out?

## Support & Challenge:

*Expertise, Encouragement, Accountability*

Who:

When:

**Responsibility for Educators:** The unique challenges of this school year likely feel overwhelming. How do you transition your entire curriculum to online delivery? How do you track student progress when you don't see your students each day? How do you create a productive classroom space while still following health guidelines? Use the Goal Map to break down what seem like insurmountable tasks into small, achievable action steps. Devote your time and energy solely to each step until you are ready to move on to the next action step.

**Responsibility for Students:** Students can use the Goal Map to craft a plan for achieving objectives each day, each week, each month, or even over an entire semester. Whether attending school online or in person, the Goal Map can help students identify what tasks need to be completed, in what order, and track their progress towards completion.

**Responsibility for Families:** The Goal Map is a great tool for



families to use to help their students create a learning plan, especially for students working online. Create a Goal Map each day, outlining the objective for the day, and the action steps needed to reach those objectives. Then, review the Goal Map at the end of the day to track progress and ensure students are taking the necessary steps to be successful each day.

**Download a Goal Map.**

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## **Return to Learn: Respect**

Every school stakeholder – students, parents, educators, and administrators – have a key role in the success of each school year. How well these stakeholders work together and treat each other with respect ultimately determines how successful the year will be.

A Compact for Excellence is a simple tool to help groups of people agree on what they need to do in order to do their best work and treat each other with care and respect. To use a Compact, create a list of expectations (see sample below) that outline what every stakeholder needs to do in order to ensure their best work can be done and everyone is treated well.

Then, ask all stakeholders the following questions:

1. Is there anything else that needs to be added to this list?
2. Is there anything that needs to be clarified?
3. Is there anything that you cannot or will not do?
4. Do we agree to work with these guidelines?

## COMPACT FOR EXCELLENCE

In order to do our **best work** and treat each other with **respect and care**,  
we each agree to/not to:

- » 1) Assume best intentions – everyone is doing their best to make the right decision in a constantly changing situation
- » 2) Focus on both academic growth and student mental health
- » 3) Maintain clear and open lines of communication
- » 4) Prioritize health and safety by following current guidelines
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Adapted from Lickona & Davidson (2005).

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**Respect for Educators:** At the beginning of each school year, educators set classroom rules and expectations. This year is no different, but due to the COVID-19 pandemic you may need to update these expectations to address online learning, following health guidelines at school, or even create a Compact with parents and families so all stakeholders have clear guidelines for how everyone can do their best work and treat each other with care and respect.

**Respect for Students:** Whether working at home, in school, or in a hybrid setting, think about what is needed for you to do your best work and treat others well (teachers, parents, siblings, other students, etc.). Create a Compact for Excellence that outlines what all parties agree to do in order to do your best work and treat each other well, no matter the environment. You can also create a Compact with your group before beginning a new group project.

**Respect for Families:** Create a Compact for Excellence with your children that outlines how you will work together to ensure that everyone can do their work effectively and treat each other well. Agreements could be: 15-minute active break for every 60 minutes of work, only engage on social media during breaks, negotiate who utilizes work spaces (at home), maintain social distance and wear a mask (if back at school), and so on.

### **Download a Compact for Excellence**

Learn more about character education.

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# **Return to learn: Trustworthiness**

This year, perhaps more than any other, parents, educators, and students are making incredibly challenging decisions. It's important in these moments to assume best intentions, and trust that everyone is trying to do what they think is right and necessary to ensure a safe and impactful education experience.

In situations where there isn't a clear and obvious answer, it's useful to have a tool, like the Integrity-in Action Checklist, to help check our decision-making. Not every decision will pass each test below. Sometimes, the right decision isn't fair to everyone, for example. However, checking your actions against the Integrity-in-Action Checklist can help ensure that you make good choices and maintain trust.

## INTEGRITY-IN-ACTION CHECKLIST

| Would my decisions pass each of these tests?  | Yes                      | No                       |
|---|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| <b>Golden Rule Test:</b> If the situation was reversed, is this how I would want to be treated?   | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| <b>Fairness Test:</b> Is this fair to everybody involved in and affected by my actions?   | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| <b>Truth Test:</b> Does this represent the whole truth — no distortions, omissions, or spin?  | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| <b>Conscience Test:</b> Would I feel good about this afterward — no regrets, no guilt?  | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| <b>Role Model/Mentor Test:</b> Would the people whose integrity I respect most be proud of this?  | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| <b>Front-Page Test:</b> Would I want this reported on the front page of the newspaper?  | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| <b>Consequences Test:</b> Would this lead to positive consequences and avoid negative consequences now and in the future?                       | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| <b>What-If-Everybody-Did-This Test:</b> Would I want to live in a world where everybody did this?   | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| <b>Guiding Beliefs Test:</b> Would this be supported by the philosophical, religious, political, and/or ideological worldviews guiding my life? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |

**What if it's still not clear what to do?**

1. Stop!
2. Think it over some more.
3. Seek additional insight from individuals whose integrity you respect.



Adapted from Lickona & Davidson (2005).

**Trustworthiness for Educators:** Even people with the best of intentions can sometimes make the wrong decision, especially when navigating the countless changes created by a global pandemic. As you work to bring students back to the classroom safely, or migrate your lessons to online delivery, use the Integrity-in-Action Checklist to make sure the choices you make are thoughtful and build trust with students, parents, and your colleagues.

**Trustworthiness for Students:** Students can use the Integrity-in-Action Checklist to help them make choices that could impact the health and safety of others. ("Is it fair to my classmates if I don't follow guidelines to help stop the spread of COVID-19?") Likewise, students working remotely can use the checklist to help make good decisions about how they engage with school. ("Do I want others to know that I was watching TV rather than paying attention to this online lesson?")

**Trustworthiness for Parents:** The decisions parents make in the best interest of their child also impact the health, safety, and learning experiences of everyone else at school. Use the Integrity-in-Action Checklist to make sure the decisions you make are not only good for your children, but the teachers and other students with whom they interact. In addition, families can use the checklist to help guide the decisions their students make. “I know it’s uncomfortable to wear a mask, but let’s look at the truth test. While the mask is uncomfortable, the truth is I can wear it, get used to it, and keep myself and others safe.”

Download an Integrity-In-Action Checklist

Learn more about character education.

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## **Seven Practices That Nurture Respect in Children**



*From guest contributor Dr. Michele Borba*

Though most teachers admit that there are some students they never forget, the same is true about parents.

I vividly remember a mother of one of my students all because of the way she conveyed respect to her child. She did so beautifully in how she listened. I watched her several times throughout the year on our field trips and in our class parties or just those times she'd wait at the door to pick him up. Each time Ricky would talk, she'd stop what she'd do, get down to eye level, look into her son's eyes, and listen with genuine interest. She had this wonderful ability to block out everything—or at least make her child feel she was—and give her child her full presence. The time was brief – just a minute or so.

The mom's words usually were nothing more than repeating back small tidbits of what he just said just to let him know she was hearing him. Occasionally she'd add, "Uh-huh," or "Really?" She acknowledged him simply by saying how she

thought he was feeling: “You seem so happy” or “Wow, you look proud.”

The effect on her son was dramatic: Ricky’s whole demeanor brightened when he realized his mom really heard what he had to say. I always wished I could have videotaped her listening skills to play back to other parents. The mom’s behaviors were so simple, *but always conveyed respect to her child*. That mom exemplified one of the most powerful, tried-and-true character-building practices there is: “The best way to ensure that our kids are respectful is to treat them respectfully.”

It should come as no surprise that her child turned out to be one of my most respectful students. He also grew to become a respectful adult.

That’s because of this important principle: children learn respect best from witnessing and experiencing respect.

So Mom and Dad: Tune up respect in your own behavior. After all, it’s a racy, raunchy world out there. I fear what our kids are witnessing and experiencing disrespect.

## **Seven Simple Respect-Building Parenting Practices**

Here are seven simple parenting practices that help children see themselves as valuable human beings. The practices work to instill respect in your child all because your actions let them know you love, respect, and value them. Your child is also witnessing and experiencing respect with these practices so he is more likely to adopt and use the virtue.

### **1. Treat your child as the most important person in the world.**

Here is a simple question to ask yourself: “*If I treated my friends the way I treat my child, how would my friends respond?*” (Or would you have any friends left? Hmmm) Beware: very often we say and do things to our children that our friends would never tolerate.



If you want your children to feel valued, treat them as though they are the most important people in the world. One mom told me she asked herself the question so often it became a nighttime habit. It also helped her remember throughout the day to treat her children respectfully.

## **2. Give love with no strings attached.**

No child should have to earn our respect and love; it should be guaranteed with birth. Unconditional love is about loving your kids with no strings attached. It is the kind of love that says: "I'll never stop loving you no matter what you do." Of course, that doesn't mean we're going to necessarily approve all of our children's behaviors.

In some cases when our kids' actions are inappropriate we may need to respond with clear and often passionate correction. But our kids know we'll always be there for them-no matter what-and that's the kind of love our kids need if they are to feel they are genuinely respected and valued. Make sure you give your child love that is unconditional and guaranteed, so no matter what he knows you love him.

## **3. Listen attentively and respectfully.**

If there is one common finding from countless different studies it is that kids say they wish their parents would listen-*really* listen-to them. Attentive listening is a wonderful way to convey respect.

When your child talks, stop everything and focus completely so that she feels you really value her opinions and want to hear her thoughts. Stop what you're doing and give your child your full presence for the brief time.

Hint: Adolescent boys are often threatened by eye contact, so try sitting side to side.

## **4. Communicate respect with your whole body, not just with**



## **your words.**

Most of the time our kids aren't listening to our words nearly as much as they are watching our posture, gestures, and facial expressions and hearing the tone of our voice. So make sure your whole body is communicating respect when you talk to your child. You may say, "I want to hear your ideas," but if your child sees you shrug your shoulders, raise your eye brows, smirk your mouth, or roll your eyes, he is likely to pick up a whole different meaning.

I've yet to meet parents who want their kids to think they aren't interested in their ideas or don't respect their kids' feelings. Yet those are the messages children pick up, all because of how parents react when their children talk.

## **5. Build positive self-concepts.**

Labeling children with such terms as shy, stubborn, hyper, or clumsy can diminish self-esteem and become daily reminders of unworthiness. They can also become self-fulfilling prophecies.

Regardless of whether the labels are true or not, when children hear them they believe them. So only use labels that build positive self-concepts. *One good rule to remember about labeling is this: "If the nickname is not respectful, it's best not to use it."*

## **6. Tell them often why you love and cherish them.**

The more you show your child you love her, the more your child learns to value and love herself. So tell your child often that you love her, but also tell her what you love about her and express your gratitude that she is your child.

"I love that you are so kind." "I'm so glad I have the fortune of being your mom." "I love you just the way you are." "I

respect the way you never give up.”

*Never assume that your child knows what feelings you hold in your heart about her. Tell her.*

## **7. Enjoy being together.**

One of the best ways to help a child feel respected is to let her know how much you enjoy being with her. Put your child at the top of your schedule and set aside relaxed times together during which you can really get to know who your child is. Only then will you be able to let her know why you value, love, and respect her so.

A quick quiz is to ask yourself which traits you respect in your child. Would your child be able to name those traits as well?

So now the real parenting test: Think back over the last few days. What have you done that helps your children see themselves as valuable human beings because your actions let them know you love, respect, and value them? Don't forget that our simple day-to-day actions are often the most powerful ways to nurture respect in our children.

*Michele Borba, Ed.D. is an internationally renowned consultant, educational psychologist and recipient of the National Educator Award who has presented workshops to over a million participants worldwide. She is a recognized expert in parenting, bullying, youth violence, and character development and author of 22 books including UnSelfie: Why Empathetic Kids Succeed in Our All-About Me World, The 6Rs of Bullying Prevention: Best Proven Practices to Combat Cruelty and Build Respect, The Big Book of Parenting Solutions, and Building Moral Intelligence. She has appeared over 130 times on the TODAY show and is a frequent expert on national media including Dateline, The View, Dr. Oz, Anderson Cooper, CNN, Dr. Drew, and Dr. Phil. To book her for speaking or media even refer to her website: [www.micheleborba.com](http://www.micheleborba.com). Follow her on*

*twitter @MicheleBorba.*

Learn more about character education.

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## **How Not to Raise a Quitter**

Teach your children to hang in there when the going gets tough, but know when to let them throw in the towel.

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## **Seven Ways to Nurture Tolerance and Acceptance in Kids**

One thing is certain, kids aren't born hateful. Prejudices are learned. Hatred and intolerance can also be learned, but so too can sensitivity, understanding, empathy, and tolerance. If today's children are to have any chance of living harmoniously in our multiethnic world, it is critical that parents nurture it.

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# A Dave Kinnoin concert

Chances are if you've enjoyed songs by Mickey Mouse, Kermit the Frog, Winnie the Pooh, Big Bird, Ariel, Jasmine, Belle, Sebastian the Crab, and Larry the Cucumber, you know Dave Kinnoin. Dave has written songs for some of the most beloved characters in movies and on television.

In addition to writing for his character friends, Dave has released eight solo albums. He is half of the acclaimed songwriting/recording duo Randy & Dave, who have won numerous awards and landed on many Top 10 lists. He is also the brains behind the group Grin Brigade.

Dave is well-known for his acts of kindness and generosity. As a volunteer, he builds structures in Mexico, Haiti, and elsewhere for struggling families and communities with OneSmallHouse.org and writes songs for sick children with SongsOfLove.org.

Enjoy this special concert from Dave.

Dave has been involved with CHARACTER COUNTS! for 10 years. He performs assemblies, wrote the CHARACTER COUNTS! Week theme song and jingles, and produced the CD *CHARACTER COUNTS! Strikes a Chord*.