

# CHARACTER



***Have you ever experienced*** someone who was great at what they did, but there's no way you would want to be on their team because their character was such that you didn't find them pleasant to be around? You might respect their abilities, but don't respect them. Their ability to influence you is limited. We are all familiar with the stories of high character people who have inspired us to achieve more, as well as those who have faltered and made newspaper headlines. Being a redemptive influence for Christ, and becoming a good leader, requires excellence in character. Without it, you won't garner much respect. We are told that King David of ancient Israel, "... shepherded them with integrity of heart; with skillful hands he led them." (Psalm 78:72)

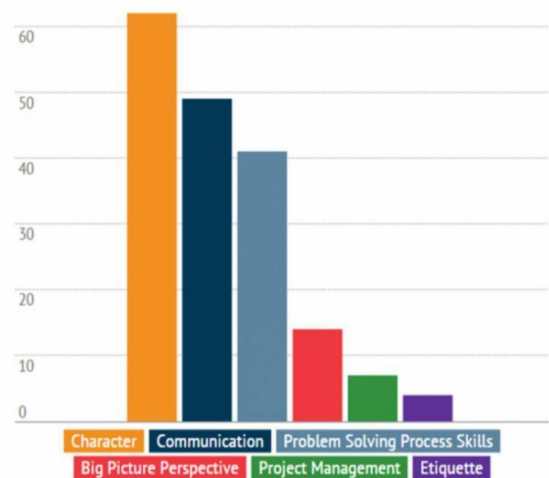
Character is who we are as demonstrated by how we act. What's in our hearts and "programming" will be evident as we go about life. Although high competency will contribute to success, a person can't have a positive influence and success in a company or culture if they lack certain essential character & leadership traits. Those who have high competency, but low character will undermine their ability to influence others and see their opportunities for success diminish. Solomon said, "A good name is to be chosen rather than great riches, and favor is better than silver or gold." (Proverbs 22:1)

20-Somethings bring valuable enthusiasm and new ideas to the workplace. But it's hard to be successful at work, relationships, or life in general without some other important core character qualities. 66% of

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## Young Professional Development Needs

Cited by HR professionals, small business owners, coaches, and corporate executives



the employers, leaders and young professionals we surveyed said that character development is the number one development need of young professionals (see graph.) Employees are typically hired for their technical skills but fired or passed over for promotion due to character issues.

In our own conversations with employers, similar character attributes have risen to the top of importance for development (and incidentally, promotability):

*Courage*- mental or moral strength to venture, persevere, and withstand danger, fear, or difficulty.

*Grit*-The quality of continuing to work towards a goal, even when things get difficult. It involves having the passion and perseverance to keep going, even when you experience setbacks.

*Resiliency*- The ability to adapt to and recover from difficult life experiences. It involves being able to bounce back from challenges and maintain a positive outlook.

*Diligence*- devoted and painstaking work and application to accomplish an undertaking.

*Productivity*- yielding results, benefits, or profits

*Dependability*- capable of being trusted or depended on: reliable

*Responsibility*- able to answer for one's conduct and obligations

*Humility*- not arrogant or assertive; reflecting, expressing, or offered in a spirit of deference or submission

*Redeemed Ambition*- harnessing a strong desire and determination to do or to achieve something for the glory of God and help of others.

(Definitions from Merriam-Webster dictionary)

As followers of Jesus, we are called to have the broken ways in which we think changed and our character reformed, remolded. We need God to reshape us in His hands, just as a potter shapes a vessel. "Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has gone, the new has come!" (2 Corinthians 5:17) Philippians 4:8 says, "Finally, brothers, whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is just, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is commendable, if there is any excellence, if there is anything worthy of praise, think about these things." (ESV) And "Applying all diligence, in your faith supply moral excellence, and in your moral excellence, knowledge, and in your knowledge, self-control, and in your self-control, perseverance, and in your perseverance, godliness, and in your godliness, brotherly kindness, and in your brotherly kindness, love." (2 Peter 1:5-7) Finally, "so that you may walk in a manner worthy of the Lord and may please Him in every way: bearing fruit in every good work, growing in the knowledge of God." (Colossians 1:10)

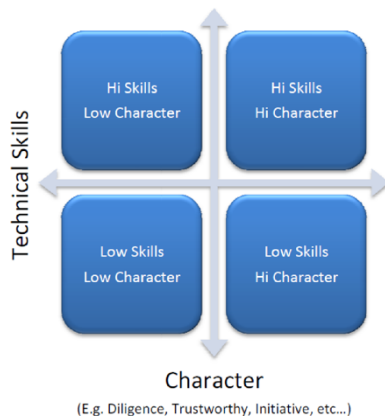
**Development needs of young professionals starting careers:**

- Willingness to start at the bottom
  - Patience and tenacity
  - Submission to authority
  - Sense of initiative
  - Work ethic
  - Responsibility
  - Conflict resolution skills
- The Freshman Year of Their Career*, Tim Elmore

## Relationship between Character and Competence

So what's the relationship between character and competency? The analogy of a tree's crown and root system has been used by many authors to describe the relationship. Trees need healthy root systems to bear fruit. We need sound character as our root system to support the capabilities and competencies and to achieve our full potential of good and bountiful fruit.

Matthew 7:17 says, "so every healthy tree bears good fruit, but the diseased tree bears bad fruit."



The Better Business Bureau's Center for Character Ethics uses a matrix to highlight the type of company and employee you should strive to be. Always be moving in the direction of being a high skills, high character person.

Remember, competence opens the doors for respect and influence, character keeps the door open. Without excellence in character, you can't maintain an influence for Christ in the workplace or culture.

### Ask Your Mentor

1. What is your reaction to the premise in this section that character is the number one development need of young professionals?
2. Can you share a brief story of an individual who was very good at their job, but lacked good character? How about of someone who claimed to be a Christian yet lacked good character?
3. How would you prioritize the character list? Is there any missing?
4. Is there any that you struggled with starting out in your career? If so, how did that change for the better?
5. What's the connection between excellence in character and competency, trust, and influence?

### Go Do

Rate yourself. On a scale of 1-to-10, with 10 being consistently demonstrates the character attribute, rate yourself. (Better yet, have someone who knows you well do the evaluation.)

\_\_ *Courage*- mental or moral strength to venture, persevere, and withstand danger, fear, or difficulty.

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\_\_\_ *Productivity*- yielding results, benefits, or profits

\_\_\_ *Dependability*- capable of being trusted or depended on, reliable.

\_\_\_ *Responsibility*- able to answer for one's conduct and obligations.

\_\_\_ *Humility*- not arrogant or assertive; reflecting, expressing, or offered in a spirit of deference or submission.

\_\_\_ *Initiative*- sees something that needs done and takes responsibility to follow through and get it done

\_\_\_ *Redeemed Ambition*- a strong desire and determination to do or to achieve something for the glory of God and the benefit of others.

Use the above self-rating to prioritize a character attribute to focus on developing over the few weeks. Brainstorm with your mentor a couple of things that you can practice to work develop the attribute. Google Bible verses related to the attribute and ask God to help you.

### **Go Deeper: Further Conversation & Study**

How can one cultivate these things?

Dig into the articles in this section to learn more about each of these character attributes.

(The articles on Diligence, Productivity, Dependability, Responsibility, and Humility used by permission of Global Priority. Scriptures, quotes, and Ask Your Mentor section inserted by John Scroggins, Baton Exchange.)

### **Sources & Resources**

One page character lessons, <https://lared.org/>

Video- What character traits do employers look for?, Tom Heffner,  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=84iC5H6NREg>

Video- What are the essential qualities you need to be successful at work?, Tim Kight,  
<https://vimeo.com/manage/videos/148005844/ea555cccbb>