

The following list is in addition to Dr. Lickona's. This was created in response to the pressure teachers and schools face daily. (Adapted from *Developing Character for Classroom Success*. Abourjilie)

**1. Purpose.** Why did you become a teacher or get into education in the first place? Your answer is your purpose. We all got into education for essentially the same reason—to touch the lives of children. To positively impact the life of a child. We all wanted to, and still want to, make a difference.

**2. Focus.** The demands and scrutiny on teachers and public education today are higher than ever before. It's quite easy for teachers to become buried in societal and institutional demands. And yet, we must not lose focus of why we are there in that classroom—for children. We must place our focus on the needs and possibilities of our children. They are our future.

**3. Safe Schools.** In the wake of recent school tragedies, all too often people were left asking, “What went wrong with “those” kids? Where were the parents? Why didn't the school know this was going to happen? Who else is to blame? Safe schools aren't about blame and scorn, fancy programs, more money or even improved self-defense. They are about the people inside those buildings and the environment they create. The same can be said of character education. It's not about pretty posters and motivational quotes. It is about people caring about others.

**4. Achievement.** When teachers have more time to teach in a civil, respectful environment, and children feel safe, appreciated and respected—then real achievement and learning can take place. It's called a quality learning environment, and the research shows that how students feel about their learning environment and their opportunity for success are crucial factors in student achievement. The evidence is clear, from New Mexico, to Ohio, to North Carolina and hundreds of places in between, academic achievement can be a powerful byproduct of successful character education efforts.

**5. Diversity.** Reverend Martin Luther King Jr. had a dream that one day his children would be judged, “not by the color of their skin, but by the content of their character.” That dream becomes a real possibility when we realize that nearly all cultures, world religions and schools of thought have their most basic tenet in common—TREAT OTHERS THE WAY THAT YOU WANT TO BE TREATED. Many refer to this as the “Golden Rule.” Words and language may change, in Judaism it is stated as “What you hate, do not do to anyone” and in Hindu as “Do nothing to thy neighbors which thou wouldst not have them do to thee,” but they all yield the most common character trait of RESPECT. Appreciating diversity begins with knowing and understanding those things we have most in common.

**6. Not the “Flavor of the Month.”** Character education” is nothing new. Discipline, civility, respect for self, others and society, teachers as role models—these things have been a part of education for as long as people have been learning. Character education is simply true, quality teaching. It's not a program to implement and then set on a shelf until you go on to something else. It's a process of caring and determination. Strength lies in comprehensive processes, not in new, short lived programs.

**7. “At-Risk” Students.** All children are “at-risk” at some point in their life. And all children, whether they are labeled “at-risk” or not, need mentors, role models and caring adults in their lives. They crave nurturing, caring, positive relationships—the essence of character education. All children, labeled or not, want to be successful, appreciated and feel a sense of belonging. There may be no truer statement than the words of James F. Hind, “You've got to REACH them before you can teach them.”

**8. Transition.** Educators around the world spend countless hours and dollars trying to come up with a solution to making the transition from elementary to middle and middle to high school easier for children, both socially and academically. The process of character education is a pre-K through 12 process that ideally utilizes the same language, high expectations and high regard for relationships, throughout the school life of a child. Common language, similar rules and procedures, and common expectations make for a smoother transition.

**9. Work Force Readiness.** One major goal of schools in all communities is to prepare our children for the world of work. Much of this preparation focuses on vocational and technical skill and knowledge, as it should. But we can't forget what employers crave most—quality people with a strong sense of respect for themselves and others and high levels of responsibility, determination and selfdiscipline. Any and all businesses are going to train new employees to do “their way,” but they first need and want quality people of character to employ.

**10. Teachers and Students.** The results of well implemented character education practices is a gift for both teachers and students. Teachers want to teach. They want to make a positive difference by touching lives. Students want to feel accepted and they want to learn. They want limits, structure and guidance. Character education can be those things for both teachers and students. For the teacher, improved classroom climate and student motivation make our jobs much easier. All students will tell you that the teachers who mean the most are the ones who care. Character education is a win-win situation for all involved!

Adapted from *Developing Character for Classroom Success*.