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CHARACTER FORMATION

Introduction

Character is a physiological notion that refers to" all the habitual ways of feeling and reacting that distinguish one individual from another. It is the total quality of a person's behaviour as revealed in his habits of thoughts and expression, his attitude and interest, his actions and his personal philosophy of life. What we describe as our character is based on memory trace of our impression and moreover the impression which has had the greatest effect on us.

Aristotle posits that character develops over time as one acquires habit from parent and community; first through reward and punishment. .He goes on to state that one acquires a good character much as one may learn to play a musical instrument. Initially, one may be under some pressure to practice but eventually enjoys playing with skills and understanding. He also claims that one is partly responsible for one's character but thereby raises the question whether one freely chooses one's character or not.

A person of a good character does choose freely, however, and is able to frame complex situations accurately. Though, full development of character requires rational reflection.

Everyone has character. It is our character that defines who we are and what we will become. Some

people have more fully developed character, some qualities which set them apart from the rest. While character has much to do with the mental and ethical traits that make a person, it actually refers to the unique qualities that are built into an individual's life which establish his reaction despite his circumstances. Although, character might mean a lot of qualities, the fact is that all the qualities are inter-related. If you are honest, automatically, you are more dependable, and more conscientious. When our overall character improves, it translates into success in all the areas of our lives.

Stages **of Character Formation**

The first stage is the home, which is the veritable environment for instilling positive values. The behavioural expressions of parents will surely have the greatest impact on the children. Parents who exhibit qualities of good character powerfully transmit their values by modeling the choice that is essential to bring up a person of good character under normal situation. Children *ab initio* learn good character from their parents and also learn that when they violet the guiding ethics, parents will implement consequences with fairness and dignity. Parents should always tell their children when and where they go wrong in their conduct and correct them instantly. Character is formed through repeated actions, often beginning at a tender age until the behaviors become habits, and habits shape the very way in which we perceive ourselves and others. Character is not necessarily good. It consists of virtues which are positive traits and vice which are negative traits. Roots of character are formed early in our lives.

The next stage of characterfom1ation is school. Of this stage, the first is the nllrsely/primary school. At this point, the teachers continue from where the parents seem to have stopped. This is a crucial stage because the infant will learn to relate with children from other homes out of their parents and home environment. Here, the teachers, just like the parents use stolytelling and qualities of character from literature and life etcetera, in teaching the children how to co-habitat 8s some nursery schools have boarding facilities and they are aught some Sporting activities that are suitable for their age.

The penultimate level of character formation is the secondary school. A lot of seco~dary school students nowadays have abnormal characte. Some of them join cult groups while some take to drugland prostitution. The last stage of character fonnation is the tertiary institution. Regrettably most of te bad students from secondary schools get 'admitterl into the tertiary institutions. A good number of the students seeking admission into the tertiary instituties are teenagers while the remaining bas attended adulttood. Although, most tertiary institutions conduct 1igorO"..s screening exercises prior to students' admission, it woul~ not be easy to detect the bad ones on admission. l'he teniat}r institutions have code of conduct for student brut sotre of the students with reprehensible character violase thecode of conduct and even contaminate the weak cones r~sulting in their poor academic performance and in~onig~le behaviour.

Apart from the home rand th~school, the church is also an institution for character fCllnation. Conversely, television exerts immeasurablae infonce on the character of the young people. The sarme tlog goes for the other electronic media, Facebook, W¥hats,~p, et cetera.

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The Importance of Character Formation

It is the solid foundation on which a person's entire life is based. History has time and again thrown the statistics at us. Men of good character have been remarkably successful. Whether it was Thomas Edison whose invention changed the world, or it was Abraham Lincoln who was President of the United States of American, or Mahatma Gandhi, the lone crusader of non-violence, or Mother Theresa, who chose to do social work, they all had one thing in common - they were all people of good character. Rev. Father Prof. Dr. Christian Anieke, who pioneered Godfrey Okoye University, Enugu, from its inception in 2009 to its 10th Anniversary in 2019, is a person of excellent character in every respect.

What are the examples of good character? Let us look at some of the traits that impact our happiness:

a) Honesty - Always telling the truth; never stealing or cheating.
a) Integrity - This is character that has strong moral principles and core value and conducting your life with those as your guide.
a) Loyalty - Remaining faithful and supportive.
a) Respectfulness - Showing or feeling respect.
a) Responsibility - A duty to deal with or take responsibility.
a) Humility - The quality of not thinking that you are better than other people.
a) Compassion - A strong feeling of sympathy for people who are suffering and a desire to help them.
a) Fairness - The quality of treating people equally or in a way that is reasonable.
a) Truthfulness - The true facts about a matter rather than the things that have been intended or guessed.

j) Sincerity - In a way that shows what one really feel Ä or thinks about a thing or matter.
j) Trustworthy - You are reliable and have consistently lived up to expectations.
1) Happiness - When you are among the few ones who have good character, you will be filled with a sense of accomplishment that brings happiness.

Conclusion

The ultimate aim of human life and activity is development of character (Aristotle). The most important goal one could hope to accomplish in the course of one's life is to become an excellent person with a clear vision in every aspect. Your purpose should be to develop the kind of personality and character that earn you the respect, esteem and affection of the important people in your world.

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