**2016 Motivational Minutes on Character**

**(Also see Adversity, Building Up Others, Forgiveness and Relationships.)**

1. **Courage**

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**Quote of the day:**

“Courage to stand alone on an issue. Courage to give, especially when one doesn’t have much. Courage to say no to indifference. Courage to act according to what one knows is right—especially when the right choice seems so obvious that surely someone else with more time and resources will notice and do something about it.” – Author Unknown

**Reflection:**

I often write about character. Courage, honesty and kindness are all parts of character as is illustrated in the above quote as well as the story below.

*One sunny afternoon roughly seventy years ago, a young girl and her friends were watching through the mesh of a barbed wire fence as a group of men played football [soccer], enjoying the excitement of the game and the skill of the players. Suddenly, a kick sent the ball in an arc over the fence, and it landed near the children. “It’d be great to have a ball to play with,” one of the boys remarked. “Let’s keep it.” But a girl disagreed. “It’s not right for us to keep it,” she insisted, throwing the ball back over the fence. This simple gesture of kindness and integrity took place in the heart of Germany in the early 1940s, during World War II. The players were British prisoners of war, interned in a camp on the outskirts of town. Some of the girl’s friends grumbled. After all, the players were prisoners—why should they have a ball when the children didn’t?*

*There is strength of character in honesty and kindness—the moral and mental strength to step out, to give, to believe, to persevere, to be true to one’s convictions, even when it means enduring challenges or paying a price. These are the kindnesses that leave a lasting impression. It’s been nearly three quarters of a century, but there may yet be survivors of that summer scene—and if so, I imagine they might remember my grandmother, the village girl who returned a football. By Olivia Bauer.*

Do you have the moral courage and character to do the right thing?

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1. **Live As if Everything is a Miracle**

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**Quote of the day:**

“There are two ways to live: you can live as if nothing is a miracle; you can live as if everything is a miracle.” — Albert Einstein

**Reflection:**

I’ve always liked this quote. I think the following story is a good illustration:

*Many years ago Sir Isaac Newton had an exact replica of our solar system made in miniature. At its center was a large golden ball representing the sun, and revolving around it were smaller spheres attached at the ends of rods of varying lengths. They represented Mercury, Venus, Earth, Mars and the other planets. These were all geared together by cogs and belts to make them move around the “sun” in perfect harmony. One day as Newton was studying the model, a friend who did not believe in the biblical account of creation stopped by for a visit.*

*Marveling at the device and watching as the scientist made the heavenly bodies move in their orbits, the man exclaimed, “My, Newton, what an exquisite thing! Who made it for you?” Without looking up, Sir Isaac replied, “Nobody.” “Nobody?” his friend asked. “That’s right! I said nobody! All of these cogs and belts and gears just happened to come together, and wonder of wonders, by chance they began revolving in their set orbits and with perfect timing.”*

The unbeliever got the message! It was foolish to suppose that the model merely *happened*. But it was even more senseless to accept the theory that the Earth and the vast Universe came into being by chance.

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1. **Help Others Run Their Race**

 

**Quote of the day:**

“After the verb “to love”, the verb “to help” is the most beautiful verb in the world.” —Bertha von Suttner

**Reflection*:***

I read this story in the *Motivated* magazine. It is a touching story with a wonderful lesson for us all.

*A few years ago at the Seattle Special Olympics, nine contestants, all physically or intellectually challenged, assembled at the starting line for the 100-yard dash. At the sound of the gun, they all started out—not exactly in a dash, but with a relish to run the race to the finish and win.*

*All, that is, except one boy who stumbled on the asphalt, tumbled over a couple of times, and began to cry. The other eight heard the boy cry. They slowed down and looked back. When they saw what had happened, they all turned around and went back—every one of them. One girl with Down’s syndrome, upon reaching him bent down, kissed him, and said, “This will make it better.” Then all nine linked arms and walked across the finish line together.*

*Everyone in the stadium stood, and the cheering went on for several minutes. People who were there are still telling the story. Why? Because deep down we know this one thing: What matters in life is more than winning for ourselves. What truly matters is helping others in their race, even if it means slowing down and changing our course.*

Are you helping others run their race?

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1. **The Beautifier**

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**Quote of the day:**

“The soul is dyed by the color of its thoughts. Think only on those things that are in line with your principles and can bear the light of day. The content of your character is your choice. Day by day, what you do is who you become.” — Heraclitus

**Reflection:**

*There is an interesting story of one who became a writer of worldwide influence, who in her youth was said to be the homeliest girl in the town where she lived. There was not an attractive line in her face. The girl herself recognized the fact that she had no beauty, nothing in her features to win others to her, and with charming good sense and in an admirable spirit she resolved to overcome the physical disadvantage by making her life and her personality so beautiful that people would love her and be attracted to her in spite of her homeliness. So she began to cultivate the graces of kindliness, gentleness, and friendliness. She yielded her heart to the full sway of love. She became a minister of help, of cheer, of comfort, of joy, to all within her reach. Wherever there was sickness, care, trouble, need, or sorrow — she found her way, carrying the blessing of her kindly presence and the ministry of her gentle hands. She became known everywhere as a messenger of love. People forgot her homeliness, in the congenial warmth of her spirit. She was spoken of now, not as the homely girl, but as an angel of love in the community. Her face never grew beautiful and attractive in its physical features, but there was a light in it in later years which adorned its homeliness. Love is a wondrous beautifier.*

No matter what you look like, beautiful or unattractive, we can all take to heart the message in this story.

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