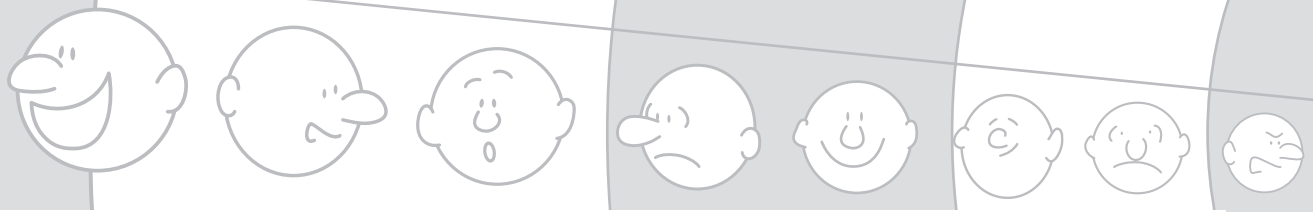


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Chapter 10: Deal with dating 86

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Chapter 11: Have fun! 90

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Chapter 12: Serve others. 97

Realise that you have a purpose in this world. Learn the Who, What and How of service to others.

Chapter 13: Go to work. 104

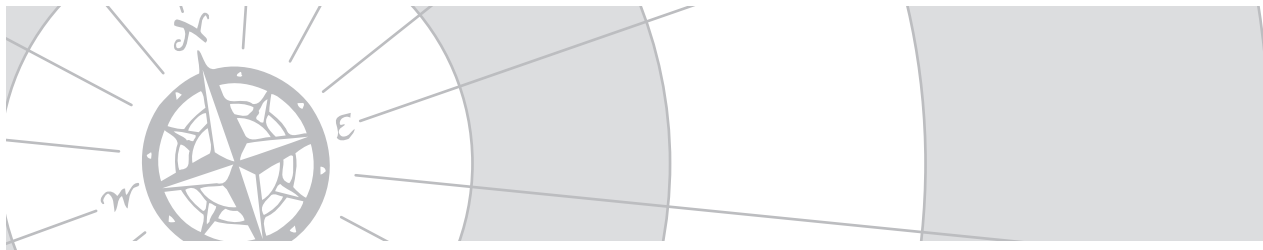
Enlarge your personal database (information, experience and skills for the future) with every job, chore and work experience. Develop your work ethic and give a star performance.

Chapter 14: Take the lead 113

Get the feel of leadership. Learn the skills of working together, taking charge and helping other people achieve great things.

Chapter 15: Maximise your character 122

Evaluate yourself according to the benchmarks for success. You are solely responsible for your success in life – and IT TAKES CHARACTER!



INTRODUCTION

So, you are thinking about reading this book? Let's check your readiness level.

Are you interested in:

- making and keeping great friendships?
- contributing to your school and achieving good marks?
- succeeding in sports and activities that you enjoy?
- solving problems and resolving conflicts successfully?
- having just about as much fun in life as you possibly can – without getting in trouble or harming yourself or others while doing it?

If the answer is yes to most of the above questions, then you are ready to read on! Wouldn't you agree that the above abilities are important components of your life? And don't you want to know how to be successful in pursuing them?

The great philosopher Aristotle said: 'By its very nature all humankind desires to know.' The thirst for knowledge is natural – we all want to know what will make us successful. You are under a great deal of pressure to be successful in school, athletics, activities and relationships, right? You want to learn and grow and be successful. You also want to do the right thing. *It Takes Character!* will help you in that quest. I bet you are an independent thinker, open-minded and want the personal power of building your own character. Character is who you are. It is you. It is now. It is connected to all the important things in life.

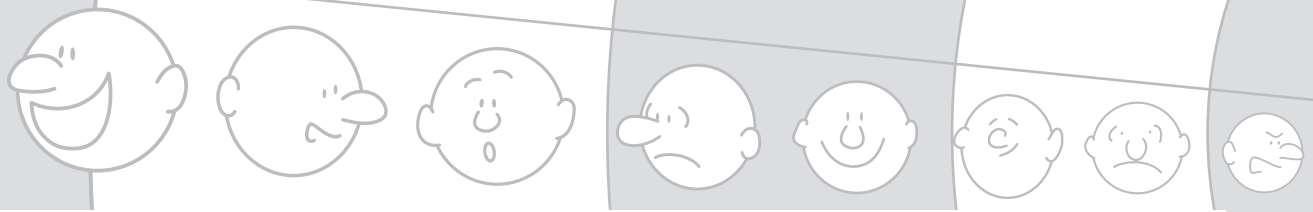
Each section of this book has two things in common:

1. EXERCISES

You will be given questions to contemplate and answer. This will make you think critically and reflect on what is important to you. Hopefully, the questions will help guide you in examining, discovering and formulating your own definitions and action plans to develop your character.

2. CREATIVE CHALLENGES

You will be challenged with creative and artistic pursuits that are designed to help you discover character from different perspectives and in various ways. It might take some extra thought and imagination, but you must be willing to put effort into better understanding how to build your character and how to drive your own success.



At a time when society seems saturated with negative role models, destructive behaviour and temptation at every turn, you need guidance in your journey toward character building. *It Takes Character!* is a field guide for middle school youth to help anchor your understanding of character and behaviour in all the important aspects of your life – like relationships, school success, performance in sports/activities, having fun and more.

This book will help you build character and become:

- better prepared to impact your own success
- open to discovering your talents and abilities
- more resilient and equipped to deal with the tough issues.

My hope is that this guide will help bring more satisfaction, delight and success into your life during the sometimes difficult middle school years and that it will be the basis for your continued success throughout life. Good luck!



Chapter 1

TALK ABOUT YOU

First, let's talk about you. Wonderful, amazing, unique you. Who are you? Is there a story behind your name? Were you named after someone special? If you don't know, ask your parents why they chose your first and middle names. Do you have a nickname? How did you get it? What do you like to do? What are you interested in? Make some quick decisions about you.

EXERCISE 1

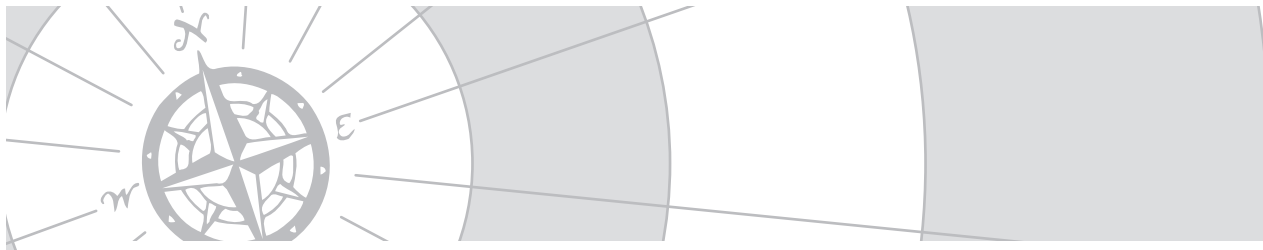
What do you like? Place a tick next to the things that apply.

- | | |
|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> City living | <input type="checkbox"/> Country living |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Daytime | <input type="checkbox"/> Nighttime |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Sunny days | <input type="checkbox"/> Rainy days |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Playing/working inside | <input type="checkbox"/> Playing/working outside |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Housework | <input type="checkbox"/> Yard work |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Listening to music | <input type="checkbox"/> Playing/singing music |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Watching sports | <input type="checkbox"/> Participating in sports |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Reading stories | <input type="checkbox"/> Writing stories |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Exploring museums | <input type="checkbox"/> Exploring the great outdoors |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Board games | <input type="checkbox"/> Computer games |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Dressing 'up' | <input type="checkbox"/> Dressing 'down' |
| <input type="checkbox"/> First day of school | <input type="checkbox"/> Last day of school |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Staying up late | <input type="checkbox"/> Getting up early |

Add things not on the list above:

- | | |
|--------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> _____ | <input type="checkbox"/> _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> _____ | <input type="checkbox"/> _____ |

Did you know that there are 300,000 varieties of beetles, flowers exist in every shape, colour, size and smell imaginable and every human being has a different and distinctive fingerprint? Differences are okay. They are what make up the rich tapestry of life on Earth.



EXERCISE 3

Write down the answers to the following questions.

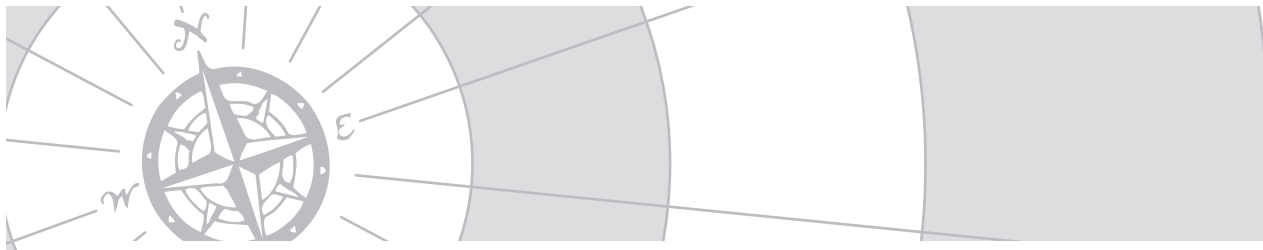
1. What do you like to do for fun?

2. Picture a beautiful, long-stemmed, red rose. What is the first thing that pops into your head when you think of this particular flower?

3. Pretend that you have just won an all-expenses paid holiday for you and your family to anywhere in the world ... Paris, Disney World, Fiji, Mexico ... anywhere you choose! Where in the world would you want to go? Why?

4. There are so many cases in the news of child abuse, kidnapping and missing children. What do you think should be done to better protect children?

5. Think about putting on a pair of pants. Do you put your right leg in first, left leg first, or do you sit down and put both legs in at the same time?



Definition: CHARACTER

The combination of qualities, traits or attributes that distinguishes an individual.

Understanding what character is and learning how to develop it is just as important as understanding your uniqueness in talents, preferences and abilities. Character is an essential part of your power. You are a powerful individual! How does that make you feel? Do you embrace it or push it away? Do you even think about power? Power can be a good thing if you view it as the ability to affect positive action – to do, act, produce, or influence others in positive ways.

You have the power to:

- learn new things and improve yourself
- be responsible for your obligations
- be a good role model for younger children
- make and keep friends.

The scope of your power and how you effectively use that power to make a difference in your life and in the world, depends on your character.