

CHARACTER



Self Control

April 2006

Self Control:

“He who conquers himself is greater than he that conquers an army.”

–Oriental Proverb

Self control: The ability to exercise the will so as to prevent oneself from expressing strong emotion or acting impulsively -- Webster's Encyclopedic Dictionary. For purposes of this article "strong emotion" is defined as losing control of one's temper and expressing oneself in inappropriate language. In the context of this article I will also apply "acting impulsively" specifically to habits such as alcohol, excessive debt and gambling, punctuality and loose talk.

Strong Emotion

The foolish and wicked practice of profane cursing and swearing is a vice so mean and low that every person of sense and character detests and despises it. -- Washington.

This statement by the first president of our country certainly defines a farmer I once knew. As a young lad growing up in a farming community in Millard County I witnessed the results of a well-respected farmer who had little control over his language or temper. His tractor had stalled in the hayfield and after several attempts to start it, the battery went dead. He "blessed" it with a few choice words as he attempted to start it with a hand crank. After countless attempts of turning the engine over with the hand crank, he once more "blessed" the tractor with a collection of new words and began to beat it to death with the crank. Finally he surrendered to the tractor and called upon my dad to fix it. As I watched my dad repair the damaged tractor, he turned to me and exclaimed "this is what happens when you can't control your emotions." A previously well-respected farmer was henceforth known as the "tractor beater" because he lost control of his emotions.

Acting Impulsively

Losing control of our emotions can sometimes cause us to act impulsively in our use of alcohol, gambling and debt, punctuality and loose talk.

Alcohol

"Drinking water neither makes a man sick, nor in debt, nor his wife a widow." John Neale.

The excessive use of alcohol could make Neale's statement true if the alcohol controls the man rather than the man controlling the alcohol.

Gambling and Debt

"There is but one good throw of the dice, which is to throw them away." Chatfield.

Gambling comes in many forms and does not always involve dice, a deck of cards, lottery or betting on horses. Perhaps the biggest gamble facing most of us is betting our future on a belief that a foolish decision we make today can be erased by a miracle that might occur in our lives tomorrow that will in turn forgive the debt.

Punctuality

"Unfaithfulness in keeping of an appointment is an act of clear dishonesty. You may as well borrow a person's money as his time." Horace Mann

All of us have been late because of circumstances beyond our control. Some of us have made being late a matter of habit which can be solved through self control.

Loose Talk

"I was never hurt by what I didn't say." Calvin Coolidge.

Idle gossip destroys character. Weigh it before you say it and you should enhance your relationship with others.

In conclusion I would say that unless we can embrace self control in every aspect of our lives, we could earn a title far worse than "tractor beater."

Richard Payne
Lindon Resident

“Self-control is the ability to count down, before blasting off.”

*Jo Petty,
Pathways*

“Win without boasting-Lose without excuse.”

*Jo Petty,
Pathways*

“I may not be able to change my circumstances, but I can change my attitude toward them.”

*Jo Petty,
Pathways*

“Patience is active. It is concentrated strength. To learn to wait is a great secret of success.”

*Jo Petty,
Pathways*

Book List

More Spaghetti I Say

by Rita Golden Gelman

The Berenstain Bears Get the Gimmies

by Stan and Jan Berenstain

Babushka's Doll

by Patricia Polacco



Family Activities

-John James Audubon was born April 26, 1785. He was famous for his paintings of birds in their natural surroundings." *Take a nature walk in the mountains and listen for birds. Talk about the self control that Audubon must have used as he sat quietly studying the detail of the birds so that he could paint them.*

-At mealtime place a small marshmallow or raisin at the child's plate. Tell the child that if this small treat remains uneaten, at the end of a meal he/she may have a bigger reward. Later, as the reward is given, talk about the rewards of controlling immediate desires in other areas of life.

-Make a goal-start a savings account, learn a new habit, improve a skill, etc. Plot successes on a graph or pie chart and enjoy the benefits of self control as progress toward the goal is made.

-Play "Simon Says" or the "Mother May I" game. Following directions is an important part of self control in life as well as in games.

Kid's Corner

Self-Control means controlling yourself from the inside. It means not always getting your way or having your ideas be accepted. Sometimes you have to control yourself to allow others to take turns doing things their way.

Self-control means that you try not to hurt someone else with your words or actions when you are not in a good mood or they have hurt you.

When you control yourself, you have to work with yourself & make yourself want to do something hard that you don't want to do; like getting up in time for school, going to bed, not eating too many snacks, or doing school work or chores when you don't feel like it.

It feels better to be in control of yourself rather than a parent or teacher making you behave or get your work done. It is a nice feeling inside to give your best effort and do well on your own.

Sydney Owens, Oak Canyon Jr. High
Oak Canyon Jr. High

We, at Character Connection would like to focus on helping parents access character materials by using the web site located at www.lindoncharacterconnection.com. If you are interested in receiving a monthly reminder of the character traits and access to resource materials, please e-mail your address to arlainea@isquaredinc.com

Character Connection is a not-for-profit organization encouraging the enhancement of character development in our community. We are accepting financial support. If you can help please send contributions to:

Lindon Character Connection
c/o Alpine Foundation
575 N 100 E

American Fork, UT 84003

(You may also give your donation to any executive board member.)

Character Connection Board:

President.....Kathy Allred
Treasurer..... Lisa Tanner
Life Skills..... Lisa Tanner
Teacher Curriculum..... Arlaine Austin
Publicity..... Jeff Acerson
Curriculum Resource.....Laura Clement
Website..... Julia Schwerdt
Newsletter.....John and Charlotte Elsey



**Lindon
Character
Connection**

www.lindoncharacterconnection.com