

# CHARACTER COUNTS!<sup>SM</sup> – Caring

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## How Caring Are You?\*

Place an X beside the things you have done in the last 30 days. Place a ✓ beside the things you will do in the next month.

- Listened compassionately to someone.
- Sent a thank-you note.
- Stayed in the hospital with a nonfamily member.
- Helped persons who are homeless.
- Donated blood.
- Complimented someone.
- Read to a child or a person with failing eyesight.
- Gave money to charity.
- Anonymously did something helpful for someone.
- Organized a fund-raiser for a good cause or person in need.
- Did not repeat gossip or unkind words about someone.
- Spent “quality” time with children not related to me.
- Gained in-depth knowledge about six children other than my family.
- Thanked a military person, firefighter, police officer, librarian, or other person for being there when I needed their help.

Discuss ways to work on some of these ideas together as a group. What can you and your family work on together that demonstrates caring for other people?

## Caring

Caring includes such human virtues as compassion, kindness, benevolence, altruism, charity, generosity, and sharing, all of which are at the heart of ethics.

\*This material was adapted from a handout developed by Mary Morris of the CHARACTER COUNTS! National Faculty, and the Caring Treasure Hunt created by Lou Biggers, Associate Agent, University Tennessee Agriculture Extension Service.



### A caring person is:

- Compassionate and empathetic
- Kind, loving, and considerate
- Thankful, expressing gratitude
- Forgiving of others

*“Do all the good you can,  
By all the means you can,  
In all the ways you can,  
In all the places you can,  
As long as ever you can.”*

– John Wesley

### A caring person is not:

- Mean, cruel, or insensitive
- Selfish or self-centered
- Too busy to lend a helping hand

*“People without a caring attitude tend to treat others as instruments of their will, a means towards some end. They rarely feel an obligation to be honest, loyal, fair or respectful. They do so, if at all, simply because it is prudent.”* – Michael Josephson



**To be caring is to show** concern, empathy, kindness, charity, and love.

## Concern

Concern for others' well-being is the willingness to be there for them. This is shown when we become so involved with the well-being of others, that it seems as if our happiness depends on theirs.

*"If you think about what you ought to do for other people, your character will take care of itself."*

– Woodrow Wilson

## Empathy

Empathy is sharing another person's feelings and emotions. Empathy involves feeling an emotional response to the pain and pleasure of others.

*"Sympathy is two hearts tugging at one load."*

– Charles H. Parkhurst

## Kindness

A person shows kindness by being sympathetic, generous, or charitable and by generally doing good.

*"It is nice to be important but it is more important to be nice."*

– Sir John Marks Templeton

*"We are made kind by being kind."*

– Eric Hoffer

*"I expect to pass through the world but once.*

*Any good therefore that I can do, or any kindness I can show to any fellow creature, let me do it now.*

*Let me not defer it or neglect it, for I shall not pass this way again."*

– Attributed to Stephen Grellet

## Charity

Charity is the voluntary giving of comfort, time, support, money, or other help to people in need. To be truly charitable, a person gives for the sake of making someone else's life better and not for praise or gratitude. The highest form of caring comes from within; it is a true and honest expression of benevolence, also referred to as altruism.

*"When faith and hope fail, as they do sometimes, we must try charity, which is love in action."*

– Dinah Maria Mulock

*"You must give something to your fellow men.*

*Even if it's a little thing, do something for others – something for which you will get no pay but the privilege of doing it."*

– Albert Schweitzer

## Love

Love is the tender feelings of attachment or affection we have for other persons.

*"That best portion of a good man's life / His little nameless, unremembered acts / of kindness and love."*

– William Wordsworth ("Tintern Abbey")

*"All children need love, especially those who do not deserve it."*

– Evan Esar

*"We can do no great things – only small things with great love."*

– Mother Teresa

*"Service is what life is all about."*

– Margaret Anderson

**A Personal Activity:** Make a list of three personal caring things you will strive to do or begin within the next 30 days. Put this list in your change purse, on your bathroom mirror, or in another place where you will see it often. Enjoy the good feelings when you have accomplished your "caring acts."

**CHARACTER COUNTS!** uses the following six pillars to describe how a person of character thinks and behaves.

- Trustworthiness
- Respect
- Responsibility
- Fairness
- Caring
- Citizenship

Effective character education encourages individuals to do the right thing by incorporating these six core ethical values into their daily lives.

Our children will never learn to be persons of character if we as adults do not model good character.

Character education works when it is community-wide.

It works best when ethical values are consistently taught, enforced, advocated, and modeled (T.E.A.M.) throughout all facets of our communities, including schools, organizations, law enforcement agencies, businesses, and other groups.

## What Can Be Done . . .

**Individuals:** Consciously incorporate the teaching and modeling of the Six Pillars of Character into everything you do in all areas of your life.

**Social and Service Organizations:** Get all the organizations to which you belong to take an active role in supporting character-building activities and incorporate them into your group's plans and actions.

**Communities and schools:** Be active in bringing character education to your community and schools. Support community efforts.

## Resources

**CHARACTER COUNTS!** National Office, Josephson Institute of Ethics, 9841 Airport Blvd., Suite 300, Los Angeles, CA 90045, Tel: (310) 846-4800, Fax: (310) 846-4858.

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Copies of this printed material can be found on the Web ([www.wvu.edu/~exten/infores/pubs/ceospub.htm](http://www.wvu.edu/~exten/infores/pubs/ceospub.htm)).

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2004: 10M

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