

FROM THE EDITOR

# From Small to Large... a Culture of Character

Christopher D. Miller, *Executive Editor, JCLI*

Character development is both a series of individual actions and the influence of the culture that exists within a group, team, or organization. The thread that weaves the individuals into the organization and the organization to the individuals is the interpersonal relationships – whether a teacher, coach, or other person with influence. As the organization’s traditions, purpose, and leadership reflect in its members, so too does the members’ character reflect the organization. Looking through the kaleidoscope of character development, however, it remains unarguable that small actions taken for the right reasons, at the right times on the journey, are the genesis of what we can recognize as good character in an individual or a healthy culture in an organization.

This issue of the Journal of Character and Leadership Integration explores some of the building blocks of character development (defined broadly), in both individual and organizational settings. We look at one journalist and author’s deep

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examination of individual, lifelong character development in historical figures; and another’s analysis of the importance and nature of commitment. The application of ethics to in-flight decision-making is examined, as is the development of warrior cultures over the centuries. We survey the

relationship between power and status, and indirectly, the impact of a leader’s character on manipulation of those leadership levers. Finally, we consider conclusions drawn from large-scale survey, and their implications for organizational

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excellence; and present one author's recommendations for using the understanding of military genius to shape character and leadership development. The common thread to these articles is the importance of character, although its development and manifestation varies in each and every leadership or life setting.

### In this Issue

We interview David Brooks, of the New York Times, who is the author of the best-selling book *The Road to Character*. In spirited conversation with a cadet interviewer and the JCLI editor, he elaborates on the conclusions he reached in his book, which highlighted the importance of internal struggle and dedication to bigger causes than one's self in forming exemplary character. On reflection, he might now put more weight on the importance of emotion in shaping relationships, and the impact of relationships on character formation, beyond the cognitive aspects of character development he had emphasized in his book. He touches on the tendency of modern society to be socially isolating, and need for young people to overcome the forces which can compartmentalize and distract them. He highlights the value of perspective—"seeing things as they are"—to leading effectively. Finally, he stresses that people are driven by their loves—and finding that sense of purpose, the "ends" to which a person wants to dedicate themselves—is a very real part of character development.

Authors William Rhodes and Donna Neal combine professional ethics with aviation decision-making in a fascinating study of the positive impact of failure in an aviation decision-making scenario on subsequent performance in similar tests. Applying virtue theory, the authors conclude that professional performance does not simply follow from technical training or skills; rather, what a person cares about has a real impact. In professional ethics,

having and understanding values is important. In aviation, caring about safety matters. The research protocol pursued by the authors placed subjects in positions where values they held—caring about safety—were challenged when they experienced unsafe outcomes, thus producing introspection and reordering of behavior in a direction favoring safer outcomes. In short, as the title suggests—failure produces success, and a professional ethical decision-making model is relevant for diagnosing and improving pilot performance.

In a provocative article, Kevin McCaskey blends thinking on character development pedagogy with military theory to propose that a Clausewitzian understanding of military genius can aid in conducting character and leadership education. Beginning with a discussion of the difficulty of measuring character and leadership education outcomes, the author discusses the interplay of physical and moral courage, "inward eye," determination, and intellect as they shape a leader's defining moments. A character education strategy that intentionally creates defining moments with opportunities for failure (without permanent adverse consequences) can generate important learning outcomes that better prepare young leaders for an uncertain world.

Authors Born, Hendrix and Pate analyze a large dataset to understand the impact of character and job enrichment on organizational effectiveness. Their work encompasses five measures of organizational effectiveness: organizational commitment, job satisfaction, work group performance, organizational citizenship behavior, and intent to leave the organization. Investigating the extent to which measures

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of leadership, character and job enrichment are predictive of those five outcomes, the authors test four hypotheses and conclude that character and job enrichment add to

the prediction of desirable organizational outcomes above and beyond that of leadership. While their work does not establish causation, it bolsters the case that character itself is meaningfully related to organizational outcomes.

The relationship between power and status is explored by authors Kelley, Dobbs, Lucas and Lovaglia. In this clear explication, the definitions of power and status are delineated, and the argument made that both power and status are fundamental ways to change behavior, and understanding how to get and how to use them is fundamental for effective leadership. Power derives primarily from control of resources and can be increased

where warriors or groups “break” the code under which they live, they are at greater risk of moral injury and destruction of their individual and collective effectiveness. In essence, the warriors’ code is “the shield that guards their humanity.”

### What’s Ahead

With this issue of JCLI, we mark the beginning of a new phase of growth for both JCLI’s parent organization, the U.S. Air Force Academy, and the Journal itself. With the relocation of the Academy’s Center for Character and Leadership Development into a state-of-the-art facility and a reorganization intended to focus effort on research

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and collaboration across the character and leadership development community, we look forward to a regular rhythm of research and publication and continue to welcome contributions from those

through competition, or by creating a new and desirable resource. Status is positional, within a group, and based on respect. Status and power work conjointly in complex ways. Status is affected by the perception of competence and expectation of leader action to the benefit of the group. With a relevant historical example, they conclude that good leaders use power sparingly, and that effective leadership requires both power and status.

who wish to advance understanding of the integration of character and leadership development. We have temporarily put the planned book review section of the Journal on hold, reflecting pending editorial staffing decisions. Finally, in this issue’s call for papers, we note the upcoming 70th anniversary of the U.S. Air Force, and solicit ideas, articles, and essays that incorporate the idea of innovation, whether to address new opportunities or to propose new ways to solve on-going, even ancient, challenges.

In our concluding essay, Shannon French examines broad themes that constitute the “Code of the Warrior.” With observations important for the military service academies, and relevant to the society they serve, this lecture--originally delivered in 2004 and still powerfully relevant today--reminds the reader that warrior codes are powerful in determining the effectiveness of the warriors and shaping their lives. In cases

Today, it remains clear that the development of good character and effective leadership are as necessary as ever. We are grateful to our readers and contributors for their partnership and engagement in that noble endeavor.

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