

CHARACTER: *A LEADER'S GREATEST ASSET* **THOUGHT:** *WHERE CHARACTER COMES FROM*



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Character: A Leader's Greatest Asset. Thought: Where Character Comes From.

As an avid reader of success literature and the personal development field, especially as it applies to leadership characteristics, I found one attribute continuously repeated. That is that our character, to a large degree, is formed by our circumstance. What that means is what we think is based on our environment, how we grew up, and, oh dear, I'm sounding so Freudian, our formative years.

For example, think about two individuals growing up in the same environment, one of abysmal poverty. One individual turns into a criminal, the other individual turns into a political luminary or an intellectual or religious leader. If questioned, both of them might say that it was their background, in other words, it was their environment that made them who they were! The criminal might say, "I grew up with nothing and learned that if I wanted anything I needed to take it!" And the luminary might say, "I was tested by circumstance and fought against the negative tide that rose around me!"

So, the exact same stimuli could have created two very different results. And, in both cases the respondents attributed their environment to their outcome.

As such, we as individuals consider our character to be formed by our circumstances, that which we were born into. But I'd like to extend that a little bit and I'd like you to think about how does character (who

we are) create our circumstance (where we are)? And that is the key question here.

Up to a certain age we are controlled by our environment, and as we live within that environment our mommy and daddy and preacher and teacher create our living space, but, don't they also create our "thinking space"?

Further, after that certain age, wouldn't you say that what occurs in our environment can be created by our character? We attract what we think.

In other words, it's not just: "how we think is a condition of where we are," but, rather: "where we are, could actually be a condition of how we think!" Yeah, some real crunchy granola here, huh?

The one thing over which I know we have complete control over is our thoughts. Nobody can force us to think something that we don't want to think. Ultimately, the notion of freedom extends far beyond political and religious frameworks. It, freedom, extends to mental freedom and that is one inalienable right that we as human beings have and will always have. Nobody can tell us what to think! It's always a personal choice.

So, if we follow this logical chain: our circumstance, that is our environment, can be controlled by what we think and we have complete control over our thought process, then, it follows that we can change our environment by changing our thoughts! This means that

we are in control of our destiny because we have control of our thinking!

Nature is constantly working around us; our environment is working around us, in effect, character and destiny are really the handiwork of our interaction with thought, personal choice (behavior), and the environment.

If you think about our environment, it gives us a choice, nature gives us a choice. We have before us the ability to love or hate; outcome is our choice. We can be jealousy or show reverence. Outcome, again, is our choice.

And, if we continue to look at mental choices as being a way of altering our character then it does, in fact, it should, give us a level of motivation because it puts us in control of not only who we are, but who we want to become, and more importantly, what we want to become! (Thought becomes action. Action becomes destiny.)

Consequently, the decision to change our life, that is, our environment can occur at any particular moment. It doesn't require years of therapy, it doesn't require gigantic amounts of reading, and it doesn't require tremendous amounts of reflective insight.

What it requires is for us as an individual to sit down at one point and admit to ourselves that we are not content with where we are, we need to change, we are willing to change, and we are going to change in the direction we choose.

And, change means we start by changing our thoughts! No one can take away our thought process, consequently we can think what we

want to and we can become who we want to become, if in fact we exercise the power of mental control and the power of mental discipline. In other words, our greatest power is our own personal power to choose what we think!

Accountability Questions:

1. What closely held belief or thought do I hold that is not working for me anymore? Do I have a management or leadership belief that I need to change?
2. Am I willing to "slay my darling;" rid myself of that belief or thought?
3. What belief or thought will I replace it with?

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