

# Security

## Vs. Anxiety

### I WILL:

- not worry or fret
- look to my authorities for protection
- correct unsafe conditions
- find peace of mind in a clear conscience rather than personal comfort
- not meddle in the concerns of others

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## Structuring my life around that which cannot be destroyed or taken away .

Toddlers are often seen tightly hugging their favorite blanket. It gives them a feeling of security. As students, it would be silly to carry around a blanket but we still need that same sense of protection. Focusing on what cannot be taken away or destroyed provides greater insight and a secure vision of the

future.

In the classroom , it is important to create a secure learning environment. Students are more likely to internalize the values and

expectations of groups that meet their need to feel safe and cared for. This issue contains many ideas for creating that type of environment in your classroom.

Some districts, schools or classrooms invest several days in the beginning of the year to creating a community in their classroom. The payoff can be awesome!



### Go to the Root

The word "Security" comes from Latin *securus*, from *se-* 'without' + *cura* 'care'



## Links for Creating Community in Your Classroom

<http://www.coe.wayne.edu/wholeschooling/WS/WSPress/CommBldgMH.pdf>

<http://www2.scholastic.com/browse/article.jsp?id=3749832>

[http://www.inspiringteachers.com/classroom\\_resources/articles/beginning\\_of\\_the\\_school\\_year/classroom\\_community.html](http://www.inspiringteachers.com/classroom_resources/articles/beginning_of_the_school_year/classroom_community.html)

**How to Choose Ice Breaker Activities** Start with activities that are simple, non-threatening ways to learn names. Follow with activities that are just plain fun and age appropriate. This will help the students to feel comfortable with one another. At this point you can start to introduce activities that reveal personalities, likes, dislikes, family, etc. Now that the students know each other better you can begin the trust and team-building type of activities.



## Character Quotables

Security isn't something that you buy, it's something you do.

~Mark Mellis

There is no security on this earth; there is only opportunity.

~Douglas MacArthur

The only real security that a man can have in this world is a reserve of knowledge, experience and ability.

~Henry Ford

I've come to the frightening conclusion that I am the decisive element in the classroom. My personal approach creates the climate. My daily mood makes the weather. As a teacher I possess a tremendous power to make a child's life miserable or joyous. I can be a tool of torture or an instrument of inspiration. I can humiliate or humor, hurt or heal.

~Hiam Ginot

People want something against which they can lean back and know that it will never give.

Robert J. McCracken

"... even when the universe made it quite clear to me that I was mistaken in my certainties, in my definitions, I did not break. The shattering of my sureties did not shatter me. Stability comes from inside, not outside...."

~Lucille Clifton

"The way I treat each child is how they treat each other."

"Let no child pass by unseen, unheard, untouched."

*From Building Community in the Classroom  
by Jan Randolph and Pansy Gee*

### Games to Play with Quotes

- Write the quotes on index cards and make two copies of each quote. Hand them out to students and let them circulate to find the matching quote. You can also divide the quote into two parts and write half on each index card.
- Write each word of a quote on an index card and let the students unscramble the quote.
- Write out the quote with some of the words blanked out. Let the students guess the correct words.
- Find posters with quotes and blank out the quotes. Provide a list of the quotes and let the students match the picture to the quotes.

### Curriculum Connection



### Biology

The safest place for a newborn kangaroo is in its mother's pouch. There it finds warmth, protection and the food it needs without fear. Even after they grow old enough to venture outside, young "joeys" as they are called, always have a secure place of retreat.



## Big Rocks - Part 1

The following story has surfaced on the email joke chain for many years in various forms. You can demonstrate this story to the class or simply read it to them and have several of the items on hand for visual effect without actually filling a jar.

"A professor stood before his class and had some items in front of him. When the class began, he wordlessly picked up a very large and empty jar and proceeded to fill it with large rocks. He then asked the students if the jar was full. They agreed that it was. The professor then picked up a box of pebbles and poured them into the jar. He shook the jar lightly. The pebbles

rolled into the open areas between the rocks. He then asked the students again if the jar was full. They agreed that it was. The professor next picked up a box of sand and poured it into the jar. Of course, the sand filled up everything else. He asked once more if the jar was full. The students responded with a unanimous "yes." The professor then proceeded to pour water into the jar effectively filling the empty space between the sand. The students laughed. "Now," said the professor as the laughter subsided, "I want you to recognize that this jar represents your life. The large rocks are the important things--your family, your education,

your health, your friends and your favorite passions--and if everything else was lost and only they remained, your life would still be full. The pebbles are the other things that matter like your sports, your toys and your bike. The sand is everything else--the small stuff." "If you put the sand into the jar first," he continued, "there is no room for the pebbles or the rocks. The same goes for life. If you spend all your time and energy on the small stuff you will never have room for the things that are important to you. "Pay attention to the things that are critical to your happiness. Take care of the big rocks first--the things that really matter. Set your priorities. The rest is just sand."



## Big Rocks- Part 2

This activity must be used after telling or demonstrating the previous story. Have each student fold a sheet of paper into fourths. Label each section, Big Rocks, Pebbles, Sand, and Water. The students can work alone in or in groups to identify items in their life that belong in each category. For younger students, you may wish to fold the paper in half and just do Big Stuff and Small Stuff. Working as a class is also an option. You can also create a list of items that are age appropriate and instruct the students to place each item into a proper category.

## TEAMBUILDING ACTIVITIES FOR THE CLASSROOM

**Zoom:** Standing in a circle, students orally pass the word "zoom" around from one person to another. The activity moves rapidly to build and sustain community involvement. Variations include switching directions, multiple zooms at one time, students leading zoom, standing in shapes other than a circle and using other words to build vocabulary. The first time, have students sit in a circle with their legs crossed, sitting up straight with their hands in their laps. Model this posture, and ask the students to have their knees touch their neighbors' knees to form a tight circle.

**Fetch:** You will need to conduct this exercise outside or in a large empty space. Scatter several large objects around the area. Pair up the students and using toilet paper blindfold one of the students. The students should be standing around the perimeter of the area where the items have been scattered. The sighted partner will give directions to the blindfolded partner how to locate a particular item. They must navigate around the items and the other blindfolded students. Only have 3 -5 students blindfolded at a time. Note: Do not re-use the toilet paper for the next blindfold as this can transmit eye diseases.

**Group Art:** Divide the group into smaller groups of 4 -6 students. Give each student in the group a different colored marker, crayon or pencil. Each group gets one sheet of paper. Instruct the group to draw a picture together with each person using only the color they are given.

**Pass the Sign:** If your classroom is set up in tables or rows you can have each grouping create their own sign for this activity or you can choose a single sign for the whole group to use. Once all students know a common sign ("secret handshake", salute or hand sign, etc) or the sign their group has chosen, you can call out, "Pass the sign!". If you have a common sign for the whole class, you start the sign with one student and that student passes it to the next and so on. If each group has their own sign, a leader of each table/row is chosen and they start the sign and pass it to each other. You can use this activity at any point in the school year. Some teachers like to start everyday with this exercise.

**Pass the Hula Hoop:** Have the students form two lines, holding hands. Start a hula hoop at the end of each line. The hoop needs to pass over the entire line without letting go of the hands. The first team to get their hoop to the end of the line wins!

**Twin Race:** Divide students into pairs. Each pair appoints a secretary, who needs a sheet of paper and pencil. Their challenge is to come up with a list of items that the two of them have in common. The team with the longest list wins. Items that virtually every student has in common (wears clothes, eats food, has a navel, etc.) won't count. Items that count include common interests (for example, enjoying the same style of music, likes to swim) family (for example, both have a brother, both used to live in Tennessee, both wear glasses, etc.). Give them only about three minutes, so that they have to work quickly. Giving a one minute warning and thirty second warning will add to the excitement.

**Alternate:** Make 2 circles of the group one inside the other with the members facing each other. Each student will have 1 minute with the student in the opposite circle to discover common traits. Each student records their own list marking the traits with the name or initials of the matching student.

**Class Collage:** Give each student a sheet or a half-sheet of paper. Provide old magazines, scissors and glue. Each student is to make a collage of pictures/words that describe them. When the pictures are done, have each child explain the pictures on their collage. These can be posted on their desks or arranged like a quilt into one large collage of the class.

# Croskey's Corner

"If you think of yourself as the woman in the Cartier watch and the Hermes scarf, a house fire will destroy not only your possessions but your self."

--Linda Henley, American consultant and motivational speaker

Security is the Character Quality for this month. It is defined as structuring my life around that which cannot be taken away.

I started "riffing" on Security.

Homeland Security...Call Security!...Identity Theft Security...Facebook Security...

Securities and Exchange Commission...UN Security Council...Computer Security...Transportation

Security Administration...Airport Security (Don't make any jokes about carrying bombs!)...Global

Security...Social Security...Security cameras...Security guards...Campus Security (We called them Seekies when I was

at Miami!)...Government Security...Government Securities...Security fix...National Security Advisor...National

Security Agency...Security Deposit Box...Financial Security... Security Lock Box.

Gee, I hope you feel safe after all this "securing" that is going on. Seems like each of these Security references is aimed at helping us feel safer in our homes, in our communities, with our technology, in our travels, as a nation, as a planet. As always, the Character Quality is discussed in contrast to its opposite, anxiety. The "I will" or action statements which we are encouraged to take are:

Not worry or fret

Look to my authorities for protection

Correct unsafe conditions

Find peace of mind in a clear conscience rather than personal comfort

Not meddle in the concerns of others

These recommendations trouble me somewhat. How can we not worry when so many Security Threats are raised by these efforts? How can we trust authorities to protect us when we are, in part, seeking to feel secure from government intrusion in our lives? How can we correct unsafe conditions without the help of higher (potentially threatening) powers? How can we feel safer just by minding our own business, when it may be the meddling of others which cause us to feel insecure? The "I wills" don't help me feel more secure. Rather than seeking a clear conscience, I would prefer to seek a clear consciousness – of who I am. As the quote from Linda Henley suggests, I can only feel safe from LOSS (of possessions or loved ones) if I have a clearer self concept. Maybe this is what we need to teach our students: Help them to clarify who they are growing to become and then help them separate that concept from their possessions or their accomplishments.

Yet, it is a world of possessions in which we live. Our students can not easily separate themselves from what they own, for we as adults cannot. Advertising insists that we are our cars, our shaving tools, our expensive vacations, our prestigious clothing. No doubt schools try to fight this battle through requiring uniforms, with community service to remind students of their good fortune, and via fundraisers which contribute to worthy causes. These help. Inhabitants of our culture, further, would accept neither a communist approach, with no private ownership, nor a Native American-style rejection of private property. Possessions will continue to be important in our lives.

Perhaps a school's best bet is to try to create a culture where individuals are tolerated, celebrated, and encouraged to express their differences. For it strikes me that possessions are acquired, at least in part, to grant access to the peer group. Not necessarily to buy friends, but to gain attention in order to get people to notice us. If our students' differences are valued and their efforts are appreciated, then they will have less need to fall back on what (possessions) they are. We, as educators, can model that attitude towards them, reinforce it in our students, and provide them opportunities to express WHO they are, not what they are. To paraphrase the Declaration of Independence, let us throw off the obsession with possession, and provide new Guards for our students' future Security.

Bill Croskey is a retired school psychologist from the Loveland City Schools

Have a great start to your school year!



**The Character Council of Greater  
Cincinnati and Northern Kentucky**

P.O. Box 33144  
Cincinnati, Ohio 45233

Mary Andres Russell, Executive Director

Phone: 513.467.0170

Fax 513.941.2755

E-mail: [mrussell@charactercincinnati.org](mailto:mrussell@charactercincinnati.org)

[www.charactercincinnati.org](http://www.charactercincinnati.org)

Written by Jacqueline Tomey and Jill Tomey,  
Education Committee Co-Chairs

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**Character...It Starts With Me!**

## Character in the Classroom *Continuously*

There are many ways that you can teach the Character Quality of Month. Here are just a few suggestions:

- Ask students to make posters to hang in the classroom or around the school.
- Challenge students to find quotes, news stories, current (or classic) songs or movies that portray the character quality of the month. Be sure to share these with the class and “archive” these to use in future years.
- Add the character trait of the month to the spelling word list. (Even if it is posted in the classroom to copy!)
- Offer for students to make a video or write a rap that demonstrates the Character Quality of the Month.
- If you teach younger students, see if you can “borrow” some older students to lead your students in an activity or switch the roles and have the younger students “teach” a rhyme to the older students.
- If you teach older students, you can be the initiator in the previous activities.
- Invite local business leaders or small business owners to talk about the importance of a character trait. If you teach older students, aim to get a representative from a business that typically hires teens so that they can relate the importance of good character when applying for and *keeping* a job.
- Men and women in uniform usually make impressive guest speakers. Police departments, fire departments and military recruiting offices are usually willing to come into a classroom. Do not be afraid to give them specific requests or guidelines for speaking so that it is pertinent to the lessons of the month.
- Always have a generic character activity planned and ready to go that you can use as filler when you have time to kill or that a substitute teacher can use in your absence.