

Meekness

Character... It starts with me!

MONTHLY EDUCATOR BULLETIN

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I WILL:

- be slow to get angry
- not boast
- not grumble or complain
- look for ways to help those in need
- be willing to go last

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Vs. Anger

Yielding my personal rights and expectations, with a desire to serve.

Meekness is often associated to weakness but after you study this character quality you will understand the depth of its understated power. The word meek means POWER UNDER CONTROL. Such a spirit may be observed in the image of a trained horse. The wild stallion is power out of control and of no use to its

owner. But once the power is harnessed, once the spirit is molded there is true power i.e. horsepower.

In the time of Christ, when someone would tame an animal, it was said that the animal was meek, that their strength was

under control.

When a horse or another animal is tamed, it won't spook when a human approaches. The same can be said of a person who is meek. When something is new or strange or if something is irritating, they won't spook either but be strong and maintain control.



Go to the Root

The Greek word for meek means strength under control.



Perhaps the Greeks knew Clark Kent Aka Superman ???

Meekness

Absolute power under perfect CONTROL

This is a vinyl wall sticker available at www.thoughtsthatstick.com

There is no I in TEAM.

Coach Joe Paterno, football coach at Penn State, once said of his defense that "it contains many great athletes - but they don't play well as a unit." He went on to say "Many of these great athletes don't play under control - they overrun or overpursue the play." Coach Paterno knows the value of placing even great talents under a controlling game plan - in order to secure a victory.



He is also quoted as saying, "It's the name on the front of the jersey that matters most, not the one on the back." Team sports is a great example of the definition of meekness. Individuals on a team must yield their personal goals in favor of the team goals.



Character Quotables

Mental toughness is many things. It is humility because it behooves all of us to remember that simplicity is the sign of greatness and meekness is the sign of true strength. Mental toughness is spartanism with qualities of sacrifice, self-denial, dedication. It is fearlessness, and it is love.
~Vince Lombardi

The salvation of this human world lies nowhere else than in the human heart, in the human power to reflect, in human meekness and human responsibility.
~Vaclav Havel

Be brave if you lose and meek if you win.
~Harvey Penick

Courage is always greatest when blended with meekness; intellectual ability is most admired when it sparkles in the setting of modest self-distrust; and never does the human soul appear so strong as when it foregoes revenge and dares to forgive any injury.
~Sean Green

Meekness is imperfect if it be not both active and passive, leading us to subdue our own passions and resentments, as well as to bear patiently the passions and resentments of others.
~John Foster

The meek are not those who are never at all angry, for such are insensible; but those who, feeling anger, control it, and are angry only when they ought to be. Meekness excludes revenge, irritability, morbid sensitiveness, but not self-defense, or a quiet and steady maintenance of right.
~Theophylact

Have more than thou showest;
Speak less than thou knowest.
~William Shakespeare.

Humility is not cowardice. Meekness is not weakness. Humility and meekness are indeed spiritual powers.
~Swami Sivananda

Behold affronts and indignities which the world thinks it right never to pardon, which the Son of God endures with a Divine meekness! Let us cast at the feet of Jesus that false honor, that quick sense of affronts, which exaggerates every thing, and pardons nothing, and, above all, that devilish determination in resenting injuries.
~Queen Elizabeth

Holding on to anger is like grasping a hot coal with the intent of throwing it at someone else; you are the one who gets burned.
~Buddha

To go fishing is the chance to wash one's soul with pure air, with the rush of the brook, or with the shimmer of sun on blue water. It brings meekness and inspiration from the decency of nature, charity toward tackle-makers, patience toward fish, a mockery of profits and egos, a quieting of hate, a rejoicing that you do not have to decide a darned thing until next week. And it is discipline in the equality of men - for all men are equal before fish.
~ Herbert Hoover

Someone has described meekness as gentleness by those who have the power to be otherwise—power under control. Meekness is the grace that brings strength and gentleness together.
~ David Jeremiah

Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth.
~MATTHEW 5:5

Curriculum Connection



History

Check out the story of General Phillip Schuyler. He was appointed to command the Northern Department of the Continental Army under Commander-in-Chief George Washington. He was relieved of that post under false accusations. He chose to assist the new General in transition of the command rather than focus on defending himself. He understood that his service to his country was more important than his own reputation. He was later exonerated by Congress.

Mahatma Gandhi - Hero of Meekness

The image of the skinny man in a loin cloth is hardly one of strength but Gandhi, as a both a political and spiritual leader, was instrumental in securing independence for India. His biggest weapon was *satyagraha*—resistance to tyranny through mass civil disobedience, a philosophy firmly founded upon *ahimsa* or total nonviolence—which not only helped India to

independence but inspired movements for civil rights and freedom across the world. His birthday is October 2 and is observed in India as *Gandhi Jayanti*, a national holiday, and worldwide as the International Day of Non-Violence.



"The weak can never forgive. Forgiveness is the attribute of the strong."

"Nonviolence is a weapon of the strong"

"An eye for an eye makes the whole world blind."

"Be the change that you want to see in the world. "

Steaming Mad

Prepare 3 funnels made of a clear plastic sheet taped to itself. The diameter of the small opening should be about the size of a pencil. The large opening should be no bigger than a coffee can. Overhead acetates (transparency film) work well for this. You will need 3 students to demonstrate this principle. Give each one of them a funnel. Place a ping pong ball in the first student's funnel. Keeping the funnel upright, direct the student to blow into the short end of the funnel and try to blow the ping pong ball out. Let each of the students try to blow it out with their funnels. The ball will move but fall back down. This demonstrates that getting mad and yelling or blowing off steam at someone that has made you angry doesn't solve the problem. An alternate activity would be to have each student make their own paper funnel and a paper ball that is large enough to not fit through the bottom of the funnel. Pair up the students and have them observe their partner trying to blow the paper wad up and out. Depending on the size of the paper wad and funnel, the paper wad will not move much at all. This exercise demonstrates that blowing off steam produces no results. Controlling anger and finding alternate means for blowing off steam rather than yelling is a better alternative.



The Un-Race

Most races involve being the first to cross the finish line. In an Un-Race, the goal is to be the last to cross the finish line. Racers must walk in a straight line and they must keep moving. The idea here is to walk as slow as you can without standing still or veering off. The exercise will demonstrate the strength required to control your reactions.

When life gives you lemons
- make lemonade!



Aim High

You will need 3 empty soft drink or vegetable cans and a small bean bag, hacky-sack or any other small soft item. Stack the 3 cans in a pyramid (2 on the bottom, one on the top). The object of the game is to knock off the top can without knocking down the 2 bottom cans. To speed up the game you can divide the class into 3 – 5 teams and provide a set of items to each team. This demonstrates the principle of anger management. When you get angry, it is okay to attack the problem (the can on top) but not the person (the cans on the bottom).

Once upon a time

Arrange your students in a circle. Instruct them that as a group you are going to tell a story. You will begin by telling a negative event followed by a positive event such as "Once upon a time on the day of the class picnic it rained all day but we played games inside and had fun anyway. The students then pick up the thread of the story and the first student will add a negative comment and the next student in the circle will add a positive comment. Go around the circle several times making sure to end on a positive.

Meekness on the Softball Field

Mallory Holtman epitomized meekness when she carried an injured college softball player, who had just hit her first homerun, around the bases allowing her to score and the homerun to count. So what. If I add that it was for the opposing team, and that a trip to the regional playoffs was on the line - the picture becomes clearer. Mallory's team ended up losing the game but losers they were NOT. The story has received national attention and Mallory and the injured player, Sara Tucholsky, have since formed a non-profit, The Mallory Holtman and Sara Tucholsky Sportsmanship Defined Foundation, with the aim of doling out scholarships and teaching kids the right way to play.



For more details and commentary on this story visit:

<http://sportsillustrated.cnn.com/vault/article/magazine/MAG1157051/12/index.htm>

Robin's Reading List



GRADES PRE – 3:

David's Drawings by Cathryn Falwell

One winter day David sees a beautiful bare tree. As soon as he gets to school, this shy young boy who loves to draw, begins a beautiful picture of the tree he has seen. One by one his classmates come by with suggestions for the drawing, but the fun really starts when they all join David to add grass, stickers, clouds, a rainbow, and other imaginative details to the picture. And as the drawing develops, David overcomes his shyness and finds a way to make new friends.

Are You Shy by Nuria Roka (Let's Talk About It Books)

Extreme shyness can become a problem that affects a child's social development. This book advises younger kids on ways to cope with shyness. This sensitively written book encourages preschool and early grades children to explore their feelings, and speak openly to a parent or other trusted adult about things that trouble them. Each title discusses a particular concern or anxiety that children often encounter in the course of growing up.

GRADES 1 – 3:

Buster The Very Shy Dog by Lisze Bechto

These three stories about a puppy searching for his strength will bring smiles of recognition to the beginning reader set. In the first, Buster is new to the household, trying to find his niche among bossy pets and intimidating guests during his owner's birthday party. Next, he tries to search and catch like fellow-canine Phoebe, but learns that his less flashy ability to listen is just as valued. It is this quality that enables to assist Phoebe in solving the mystery of the garbage bandits in the last piece.

I Don't Know Why...I Guess I'm Shy, A Story About Taming Imaginary Fears by Barbara Cain.

Having been worried about bothering his neighbors by talking to them, a shy boy searches the neighborhood for his lost dog and finds the courage to speak.

GRADES 3 – 6:

Anastasia At Your Service by Lois Lowry

Twelve-year-old Anastasia has a series of disastrous experiences when, expecting to get a job as a lady's companion, she is hired instead to be a maid. Sequel to "Anastasia again".

The Barn by Avi

After their father suffers a "fit of palsy," three motherless children try to keep their struggling farm going in 1855 Oregon. Although nine year old Benjamin is the youngest, he is the cleverest of the three, and also the one who truly believes that the man can recover. His sister, Nettie, wants to marry and start her own life, but agrees to help the family for as long as she can. Harrison is much bigger and stronger than his younger brother, but not quite as quick thinking. After Benjamin figures out a way to communicate with his father, he convinces the others that is they can build the barn that the man had been planning, he will somehow find a reason to live.

GRADES 4- 7:

Grant Hill: Humble Hotshot (Sports Achievers Series) by Jeff Savage

This book gives an overview of Grant Hill's life from his childhood through his 1995-96 basketball season as a member of the Detroit Pistons.. Plenty of photographs, mostly in full color, appear throughout the book, and the athlete's college and professional career statistics are appended. This text contains many quotes, documentation

consists merely of an alphabetical listing of sources, mostly newspapers and magazines, from which the information was drawn. Readers will obtain some interesting tidbits about Hill's upbringing including his regimented high school years void of parties, dances, or phone calls during the week, and limited TV viewing.

GRADES 6 – 9:

Mia The Meek: The Mia Fullerton Series by Eileen Boggess

Mia Fullerton has entered her freshman year at St. Hilary's with a twin goal: to lose her nickname "Mia the Meek," and soar into a confident high school career. Unfortunately, her transformation is made harder by her English-teacher mom, bratty little brother, already popular nemesis, and new neighbor. Although she's prepared herself for the battle by reading *Excruciatingly Shy: How to Defeat Public Fear and Become Popular*, her freshman year remains a series of uphill battles.

As the year goes on, Mia deals with all the things girls her age face. In the end, Mia emerges a far different person than when she set out, though it may not be the person she had imagined that first day at St. Hilary's. She's a Mia in progress, learning from her mistakes and welcoming her future.

More titles from Robin on the next page....



Robin's Reading List

The Haymeadow by Gary Paulsen

Put in charge when the regular farmhand takes ill, 14-year-old John is sent up into the mountains for the summer to tend the ranch's sheep flock. Unprepared, the boy has only the four sheep dogs, two horses, and his own common sense to see him through the experience. He also has his impressions of his great-grandfather, a man with whom he feels a strong identification although they'd never met, to carry him along. The drive up to the summer pasture is uneventful but filled with observations of the landscape and the instinctive interaction between the sheep and the dogs. But as John has been forewarned, things have a way of just happening with sheep--and they do. A lamb who dies from a snake bite, a skunk encounter, an injured dog, a sheep stampede, a flash flood, and a coyote attack all test John's stamina and intelligence--and that's just in the first 48 hours. Weeks are brushed aside, to be followed by more physical drama--a bear attack and a nearly fatal accident. Suddenly, John's reticent father appears and has found his voice, telling the boy the truth about the great-grandfather.

GRADES 9 AND UP:

I Never Had IT Made: An Autobiography of Jackie Robinson by Alfred Duckett

This autobiography, which was originally published in 1972, the year Robinson died, is not about baseball: it's about the deep commitment that Robinson made to achieve justice for himself and all Americans. He recalls his years at UCLA, where he became the school's first four-letter athlete and met his future wife, Rachel. With the advent of WWII he was drafted into the army, became a lieutenant and was court-martialed for refusing to move to the back of a bus. He was honorably discharged. He played for the Kansas City Monarchs of the Negro Leagues until he was recruited by Branch Rickey

of the Brooklyn Dodgers. In 1947 Robinson broke the color line in the major leagues and suffered terrible abuse for doing so. He discusses his relationships with the sports figures he admired, like Rickey and teammate Pee Wee Reese, and also recalls his run-ins with those he did not like, such as Dodger owner Walter O'Malley, who was "viciously antagonistic," and sportswriter Dick Young, a "racial bigot." Much of the book, written with freelancer Duckett, focuses on Robinson's political involvements after his career ended in 1956 and his friendships with such diverse characters as Martin Luther King, Malcolm X, William Buckley and Nelson Rockefeller.

Battle Dress by Amy Efaw

This book is an insider's account of a female cadet's first summer at West Point, readers are given a potent dose of military life. Andi Davis is eager to escape her unstable family when she enrolls at "Woo Poo U," but she is not prepared to be humiliated and bombarded with confusing commands during the first few days of "Beast," the six weeks of basic training. As she is alternately whipped into shape (Will she ever master regulation push-ups?) and methodically stripped of her civilian habits (not to mention her \$65 perm and her unauthorized deck shoes), she is plagued by self-doubt; the taunts of the upperclassmen echo the verbal abuse dished out by her mother. And as one of only two females in the platoon, Andi is determined not to be the "weak link."

Speak Softly...:What's Happened to American Humility by Ira L. Williams III

As Americans, we have a deeply rooted sense of individualism that is at the heart of our unprecedented rise to power in less than 250 years of existence. As a result, our perspective on the outside world, for better or worse, tends to be informed by its impact on us.

This is not to say that Americans are completely self-absorbed and blind to the needs of others. We send billions in aid to help those suffering around the world. The generosity of Americans is not in question. The humility of Americans is.

ANY GRADE:

The Proud Peacock by Dharma Publishing

A golden mallard, chosen by the birds to be their king, grants his daughter's wish to select her own mate. From all available candidates, the princess chooses an elegant peacock. Delighted, the peacock shows off his beauty. Realizing his prideful nature, the mallard princess rejects the peacock and chooses a more modest mate. Deeply ashamed, the peacock utters a hoarse cry of dismay. To this day, peacocks still make this same sound.

There are many other books about Jackie Robinson that are suitable for the character quality of meekness.

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Croskey's Corner

Have you ever seen the musical, *Little Shop of Horrors*? It is a take-off on an old horror movie which gave Jack Nicholson his start. In the musical, there is a song that involves a man-eating plant. Fame and fortune are promised to the show's main character. It's a kind of Faustian, deal-with-the devil, contract. The offer is made through a song, "The Meek Shall Inherit." Some of the lyrics from the song say,

"They say the meek shall inherit, you know the book doesn't lie
It's not a question of merit, it's not demand and supply
They say the meek gonna get it and you're a meek little guy
You know the meek are gonna get what's comin' to 'em, by and by."

The lyrics, of course, refer to the Biblical quote about the meek inheriting the Earth. As with all deals with the devil, this one backfires and the meek hero ends up getting eaten. So one can take the line, "the meek are gonna get what's comin' to 'em, by and by," in a vengeful rather than rewarding way.

Meekness doesn't rate a lot of respect in our world. But *Character First!* saw fit to make it the Character Quality of the Month for July. It is defined as "Yielding my personal rights and expectations with a desire to serve." The "I will..." statements are

Be slow to get angry
Not boast
Not grumble or complain
Look for ways to help those in need
Be willing to go last

These are interesting aspects of meekness. In one view, Anger is considered the opposite of Meekness while another view sees Meekness as being more about not boasting or bragging. Don't brag? What a rare idea in today's world! When athletes score goals in televised contests, they do chests bumps, or innovative dances, or even employ props to help act out their celebrations. If you watched any of the World Cup matches, you saw the rituals teams go through after scoring goals. (Many would say that goals are such rare occurrences that they demand elaborately choreographed responses!) In the same way, the interviewing of athletes who have been successful has become so stereotyped that Disney could suggest in an ad that, whenever an athlete wins a championship, his first thought is to go to Disney World. These demonstrations are anything but Meek.

Athletics are not the only environments in which boasting occurs. All areas of performance – music, the arts, acting, any creative endeavors – seem to be about expressing oneself artistically and then telling the world what a great artist one is. We excuse the flamboyant, egocentric, immediate gratification lifestyle of athletes and artists as the "price" they pay (or their public endures) for their talent. This is not new. Around 1930, Babe Ruth was supposedly asked why he made more money than President Hoover. He responded that he had a better year.

Boasting and bragging seem to have shifted from being considered boorish or crude to being a personal expression to be lauded. Even in school, boasting may have become commonplace. Once, parents quietly patted their "A" student's head with pride. Now they place a bumper sticker on their SUV for all to see. Schools are proud of their designation as "School of Excellence," "Blue Ribbon School," or "Excellent With Distinction." But does this ever sound a little boastful to you? Similarly, school rivalries can be fun and can increase ticket sales. But these friendly contests can degenerate into boast fests. Indeed, we describe the winner of such a contest as having earned "bragging rights."

I attended Miami University in Oxford, Ohio. The Latin motto for Miami is: *Prodesse Quam Conspici*. This means, To accomplish rather than to be conspicuous. Miami has been under a lot of criticism for the behavior of the fraternity and sorority members in the last few years. I doubt that those who picked the motto would have considered vomiting in a museum to be "Accomplishment without boasting." But I like to think that many who work or attend there still believe that bragging not only does not enhance one's accomplishments; it actually detracts from the work at hand.

One thing I learned at Miami was about academic progress. The boastful approach seems to focus on how many "A's" a child receives or his or her class rank. A "Meek" approach would, instead, assume that it makes more sense for a student to measure where he was and then to compare where he currently is. That emphasizes individual progress, rather than obsessing on instances of high or low accomplishment; further, it stresses comparing one to himself or herself, rather than the individual being compared to the group.

What can teachers do to stress Meekness? I think that asking students to compare themselves to a group standard encourages one to boast when they are above the norm and to feel shame if they are below it. Further, it encourages them to develop a fixed mind set about their capabilities. In that situation, students believe that they have gotten where they are through talent or inherited ability and not through hard work. Therefore, they are considered "good" at some things, poor at others, and they should give up on the latter. But helping someone compare what they used to be able to do with what they are currently doing forces them to see their progress. They can see that they are capable of growth, leading to the term "growth mind set." Such a mind set encourages one to believe that there is no upper limit to what they can accomplish. Teachers can help this by teaching students to monitor their own progress, through graphing, computer spread sheets, portfolios that include work samples, and individual conferencing. In these ways, educators may help their Meek students to inherit – if not the Earth – at least a positive self-image and a belief in their ability to grow toward success.

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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.