

# Persuasiveness

Character... It starts with me!

MONTHLY EDUCATOR BULLETIN

## Vs. Contentiousness

### I WILL:

- point others in the right direction
- not stretch the truth to make it more attractive
- appeal to a person's conscience in terms of character
- wait for the best time
- not argue

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### Guiding vital truths around another's mental roadblocks

Persuasiveness sounds like a character trait for used car salesman rather than students but when you examine the definition and the "I will" statements you'll see lots of areas on which students can work. Another way to look at the definition is Understanding others so that I can better communicate

with them. This can be likened to Steven Covey's 5th Habit - Seek First to Understand, then to be Understood. Understanding others requires empathetic listening skills. When you look at the opposite this month, Contentiousness or being argumentative, you can teach about peaceful

conflict resolution. The "I Will" of pointing others in the right direction is a good example of positive peer pressure. This month, what can you do to be more understanding?



### Persuasión vs. Contención

Introducir verdades vitales a pesar de los obstáculos en la mente del otro



↻↻ Go to the Root ↻↻

From Old.French. persuasion in the late 14th century meaning "action of inducing (someone) to believe (something)".

(for more visit [www.dictionary.com](http://www.dictionary.com))

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*"People will accept your idea much more readily if you tell them Benjamin Franklin said it first." -David H. Comins*

## Character Quotables

"To effectively communicate, we must realize that we are all different in the way we perceive the world and use this understanding as a guide to our communication with others."

~Anthony Robbins

"If you would win the world, melt it; do not hammer it."

~Alexander Maclaren

"One of the best ways to persuade others is with your ears ~ by listening to them."

~Dean Rusk

"We are not won by arguments that we can analyze but by tone and temper, by the manner which is the man himself."

~Samuel Butler

"Politeness and consideration for others is like investing pennies and getting dollars back."

~Thomas Sowell

"There are two things that cannot be attacked in front: ignorance and narrow-mindedness. They can only be shaken

by the simple development of the contrary qualities.

~Lord Acton

"The pen is mightier than the sword."

~Edward George Mulwer-Lytton

"There are three sides to every argument: your side, my side, and the truth."

~Unknown

"The end of argument or discussion should be, not victory, but enlightenment."

~Joseph Joubert

He who wants to persuade should put his trust not in the right argument, but in the right word. The power of sound has always been

greater than the power of sense.

~Joseph Conrad

Laughter and tears may not persuade, but they cannot be refuted. .

~Mason Cooley

Speech is power: speech is to persuade, to convert, to compel. It is to bring another out of his bad sense into your good sense.

~Ralph Waldo Emerson

Persuade him with kindly gifts and gentle words.

Homer



### Curriculum Connection Language Arts

**Conflict Transformation:** The link at the bottom of this article contains some wonderful exercises aimed at middle school students. It is a twelve-unit, course designed to teach basic conflict transformation skills for various situations. The short stories, current events, class discussions, guided reading activities, and guided writing assignments make this course ideal both for social studies and language arts classes. Many of the activities can be adapted for use by younger students.

<http://msct.beyondintractability.org/gateways/msct/index.jsp>

# Oogway, Hero of Persuasiveness

In the movie, *Kung Fu Panda*, Grand Master Oogway is a turtle, and the Kung Fu master of the Jade Palace in the Valley of Peace. Oogway is considered to be the wisest being alive, and the creator of the art of Kung Fu.

Oogway selects a noodle-soup peddling panda named Po to become the Dragon Warrior, the hero that would save the Valley of Peace from the evil Tai Lung. Shifu, (once Oogway's student and now his friend and fellow Kung Fu master), has trouble believing that Po will be able to become the Dragon Warrior. Master Oogway urged Master Shifu to believe, among other things, in the anointed role of Po as the Dragon Warrior, and to

therefore help Po grow so that the latter may fulfill his mission.

The scene was at the top of the hill where the Peach Tree of Wisdom stood, and where the patriarch Master Oogway often meditated. Master Oogway knew that in order to persuade Master Shifu of the proper thing to do, he must first understand Shifu and convince him to believe in Po. He knew arguing would not be successful.

Then Oogway uses his understanding of Shifu's need for control and chooses the metaphor of trying to control a peach tree's growth to convince Shifu to believe in Po. Oogway ascends after eliciting Shifu's promise that he will try to believe.



When Po attempts to leave the Jade Palace out of fear and his own disbelief in his destiny Shifu stops him. Shifu convinces him to stay and believe in his destiny, as he has come to believe in it, by trusting in his Master. So in the end, Oogway was successful in guiding Shifu to the vital truth of Po's destiny.

## Team~Building Activity

Building a culture of good character requires building the class into a community. Here is this month's teambuilding activity:

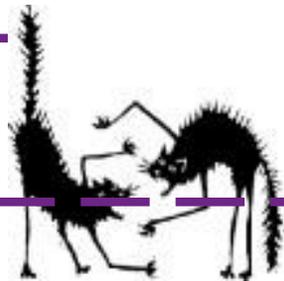


**Interview Time** Pair up the students and instruct them to interview each other. You can give them questions to ask or come up with the questions together. Try to get beyond "What's your favorite color?" to questions that shed light on the interests and personality of each student. Once the interviews are complete, have each student introduce their partner to the class. You can have each student describe the other student or you can have them conduct the interview again but this time they are in front of the class and you can even have them use a real (or fake) microphone. When all of the interviews are complete, comment on the similarities and differences the interviews uncovered. Point out how important both similarities and differences are. How boring would that have been if they all would have had the same answers?

# The Cats from Kilkenny

There once were two cats from Kilkenny.  
Each thought there was one cat too  
many.

So they fought and they fit,  
And they scratched and they bit,  
Until, except for their nails  
And the tips of their tails,  
Instead of two cats, there weren't any.



**Lead a discussion about what this nursery rhyme tells us about the opposite of persuasion - contentiousness or being argumentative**

What did the cats disagree about? (Each wanted to be the only cat in Kilkenny)

What did they do about their conflict? (Fought each other)

Did that solve the conflict and make them happy? (No – both lost and made it worse.)

Is it okay to feel angry about a situation? (Yes, feelings are neither good or bad)

Is it okay to take your anger out on someone else? (No, need to find ways to effectively deal with anger so that communication can be effective.)

## Listen to ME!



You will need three volunteers, a deck of cards and a roll of toilet paper to perform this activity. Blindfold the first volunteer by wrapping toilet paper around their eyes several times until they can no longer see through it. Select the 10 – Ace of a single suit out of the deck of cards and place these face up in random order in front of the blindfolded student. (For younger students, you may want to use just a few of the single digit cards) Position each of the other two volunteers on either side of the blindfolded student. These students are to give directions to the blindfolded student on how to order the cards from smallest to largest. The trick is that one student is to give wrong directions and the other student is to give correct directions. At first, do not tell the blindfolded student that he/she will be given conflicting directions but he/she will have determine which one to listen to. Let the activity go on until the cards are ordered or the blindfolded student becomes frustrated. To process this activity once it is over, ask the students if the conflicting directions reminded them of cartoons where a devil is on one shoulder and an angel is on the other. Ask the blindfolded student what clues they used to determine who to listen to. Did the class give it away by laughing when the person giving wrong directions spoke? Liken this to using peers or parents to help in making judgments.



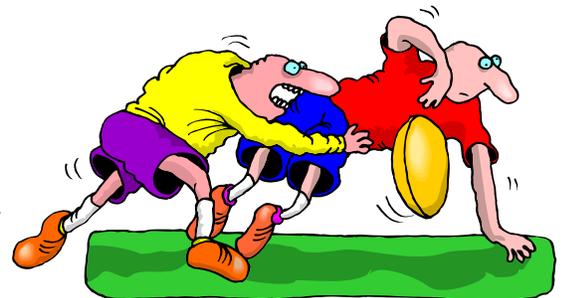
## Sign Language

Check out the following website for the American Sign Language interpretation of the word Persuade and Argue for visual ways to describe persuasiveness and contention:

[www.aslpro.com/cgi-bin/aslpro/aslpro.cgi](http://www.aslpro.com/cgi-bin/aslpro/aslpro.cgi)

## Tackle This...

If your students are older and there is a football player (preferably a tackle) have him discuss how a tackle needs to read an offense and be prepared to react to whatever the other team does. If your class is younger or does not have a football player, you may want to invite an older student, coach or even a Dad from the classroom to come in and talk about the strategy of being prepared on the football field. Once the presentation is over, explain that students are going to be exposed to negative peer pressure and that they need to be able to recognize it and have strategies for responding. Have the class brainstorm age appropriate suggestions of negative peer pressure such as cheating on a test, skipping school, doing drugs, etc. Divide the class into groups and have them role-play some of the situations. Each group should come up with a “plot” of the negative peer pressure and then create several different endings of suggestions of how not to be influenced by it.



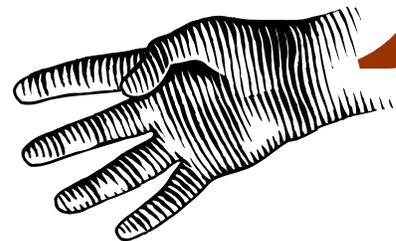
## Go Along or Be Strong

Start with a discussion of what it means to Go Along with something or Be Strong and resist. Use volunteers for a role play where one classmate enlists the help of another classmate to hide another someone's lunch. Don't give them a requirement that the second classmate needs to go along or be strong - just see which way it plays out. Stop the role play at various points to point out the options. Ask for suggestions for alternate endings and let that play out with the same students. When it comes to the dialogue of refusing to participate in hurting someone else, have the students list all the ways that particular dialogue can be said. Write these on the board. Be mindful of using their language and not restated in "adultese" even if the grammar is wrong. (You can always go back at the end of the lesson and offer "brownie points" to the student that can find the grammar error. Doing it later does not embarrass the student who said it.) The more concrete examples they have for being strong, the more likely they are to use them.



## Make Lemonade

Ask the class to finish the statement "When life gives you lemons...". Then ask them what it means. This exercise will help the students understand the different responses one can have to problems and how thinking positively can make a big difference in their reaction. Ask the following questions: Does anyone have an example of when life gave you lemons and you made lemonade? Does anyone have a time to share when something went wrong and at the time you were terribly upset but now that you look back you are able to see that it wasn't so bad? Does anyone have an example of an event that didn't go as planned but that it has become a good memory? Divide the class into groups of 4 or 5. Have each group come up with a situation that doesn't go as planned and then write a way to turn it around and "make lemonade". Have them write their situation on a piece of paper and tape it to a cup. Write the solution on another slip of paper (yellow paper would be ideal) and put it inside. Pass all of the cups to all of the groups and let them each group write a solution without looking at the others in the cup. When all groups have finished, read all of the solutions. Serving lemonade while reading the solutions is optional.



## Finger Throw

Pair up your students. For this game they will throw fingers like you throw "Rock, Paper, Scissors" only they will throw a random choice of fingers on one hand. The object of the game is for each pair to see how many times the fingers add up to 7. They may not discuss ahead of time how to do this. Time them for 30 - 60 seconds and see how many times it happens. Now change them to groups of three with a target number of 11 and record those results. It should be harder. Now let the group communicate and create a plan. Add the rule that they may not throw the same number twice in a row. Time them again and see if the numbers improve. When the activity is over, compare the game to starting an activity without properly communicating goals and roles to all those involved. No one can read your mind so it is important to communicate what you are thinking so that misunderstandings can be avoided.

## Do You See What I See?



The Rubin vase, as pictured above, demonstrates the importance of understanding that we all view things differently. The picture is both of a vase and two faces looking at each other. Each person will see one or the other image first. Some will only see the second image with prompting. Both views of this picture are equally valid. Before two people can communicate effectively, they need to establish that they are both operating under the same perceptions. Use this picture in your classroom to determine the different perceptions. Show the picture to the class and ask them to quietly write down a description of the picture. By show of hands, find out how many saw the vase first and how many saw the profiles. Ask each group if they can see the opposite image. Assist those students who may not see both images. Discuss how viewing things differently can cause a conversation to be confusing.

After looking at the picture, use the old Abbott and Costello routine of "Who's on First" to further demonstrate how confusing a conversation can be when you aren't understanding the other person first. The link below has a copy of the script. You can have two students perform the routine or find a YouTube version of it and show them the original (or both!) To demonstrate how one would solve this misunderstanding of each other you can reference the 1999 episode of The Simpsons, "Marge Simpson in: 'Screaming Yellow Honkers'", where two school administrators attempt the skit but one makes the mistake by saying, "Not the pronoun but a player with the unlikely name of Who, is on first." It ruins the skit but offers a good way to solve the dilemma.

<http://lib.store.yahoo.net/lib/yhst-57190479284260/WhosonFirst.pdf>

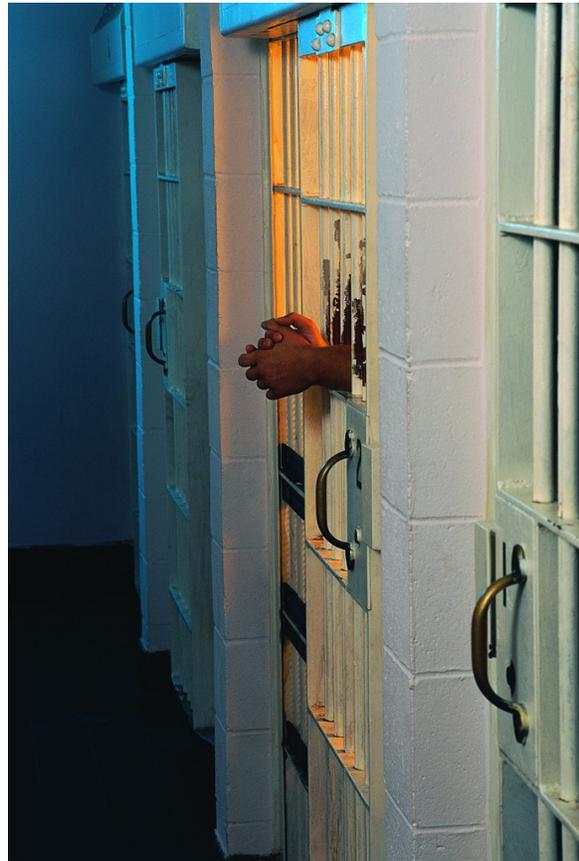


## All Locked Up

For this activity you will need to arrange the students in a circle standing up. Ask the students for some examples of when peers put pressure on you to do the wrong thing. You are looking for answers like Cheat, Steal, etc. Choose one student to be in the middle and have the rest of the students turn around to face out from the center of the circle. They should stand with their feet wider than their shoulders, so that their feet are touching, side-by-side with the person next to them. They should bend their arms so that their elbows are touching. This effect is that the person in the middle is locked in.

Give the outside group a phrase from the list as if the group is asking the person in the middle to participate. For example, "Cheat with us". Give a phrase to the student in the middle to combat the invitation. It can be the same for all rounds, such as "No I won't" or specific to the invitation such as "I won't cheat!". Have the outside group close their eyes and say their phrase, then the middle student responds.

Now the student in the middle must try to break out of the circle between two students. The students in the circle can not move their feet or their arms but they can move their bodies to block. You may want to set a time limit on how long they have to break out. You can repeat this for each of the ideas generated in the beginning or once for each student. If the class is large you may want to consider breaking it into two circles, such as the girls' circle and the boys' circle. If each group comes up with their own list, it would be interesting to compare the differences and similarities in the lists.



Once the activity is completed, compare being locked in the middle of the group to being pressured to do something you know is wrong. Sometimes you feel trapped and there isn't a way out. Ask them how it felt to be in the middle and what it felt like when they got out. Encourage them to remember that it also feels good to do the right thing.

"There's one advantage to being 102. There's no peer pressure." DENNIS WOLFBERG

# Robin's Reading List

## Grades Pre K – Gr. 2

**They Didn't Use Their Heads** by Jo Ann Stover

This rhyming tale centers on the misadventures of certain whimsical characters and at the same time makes an unforgettable case for good behavior.

**Luka's Quilt** by Georgia Guback

Tutu ("That's Hawaiian for grandmother") decides to make her granddaughter, Luka, a special flower-garden quilt. Luka had imagined a quilt much different than the traditional two-color Island quilt Tutu crafted.

Luka complains and "Tutu's eyes got watery, and she quietly turned and went to her room and shut the door." They didn't speak for days. Tutu thinks of a compromise: a rainbow fabric lei to place on top of the green and white quilt. Together they sew it, mending their wounds, too. Luka never apologizes, and Tutu has to go the extra mile; however, like real-life relationships, theirs is a work-in-progress, and worth the extra effort.

**The New Dog** by Barbara Shook Hazen

Tootsie, Miss Pettibone's pampered pooch, joins Danny's Dogwalking Group. His timidity and inexperience make him a victim of the other rough-and-tumble dogs, as well as the object of Danny's exasperation. Teased and harassed, Tootsie becomes an unlikely hero when he stops a robber while the other dogs cower and shake! Acceptance comes only from achieving a great feat. The theme of bullies versus the underdogs is a familiar theme for discussion.

## Grades K – 3

**Nobody Knew What to Do: A Story about Bullying** by Becky Ray McCain

This story tells how one child found the courage to tell a teacher about Ray, who was being picked on and bullied by other kids in school. The children were faced with the fact that "nobody knows what to do" while Ray is being bullied!!! They are

sympathetic to him, and feel fear and confusion, hoping that Ray will "fit in some day." Finally, after Ray misses a day of school and the bullies plot mean acts for his return; our narrator goes to a teacher. The children then invite Ray to play with them, and with adult help, together they stand up to the bullies.

**Enemy Pie** by Derek Munson

What started out as a perfect summer for one young boy was ruined when Jeremy Ross moves in and becomes number one on the narrator's enemy list. His father has an idea for getting rid of enemies. Dad works on mixing the ingredients and baking the secret recipe pie, he explains his son's role in the plan: "you need to spend a day with your enemy. Even worse, you have to be nice to him." The boy decides to give it a try. Predictably, between throwing water balloons at the girls, playing basketball, and hiding out in the tree house, he decides that Jeremy is not so bad after all. There's still the problem of the pie!!! When his father serves the dessert, the young protagonist decides to warn Jeremy that it is "poisonous or something." Well, the pie was delicious, and all are just fine!

**My Brother Dan's Delicious** by Steven L. Layne

When a bright eight-and-a-half-year-old boy finds that he is home alone for the first time, he informs any monsters that might be lurking in the house that his brother, Dan, is worth the wait!!! This book is a great launch to persuasive writing as the little boy tries to persuade waiting monsters that his brother would be a better meal!!

**How Do I Stand in Your Shoes** by Susan DeBell

Miranda Peabody had no patience for other students in class, and didn't understand why they couldn't be as talented and smart as she was. Mrs. Klemp, her teacher, suggest that she try to understand people by "standing in their shoes." After much searching, she learns that true meaning of "standing in some else's shoes", and having empathy for others.

**Say Something** by Peggy Moss

This book focuses more on the role of the bystander, a girl who sees the sadness of the victim, but does nothing ("I walk on the other side of the hall. I don't say those things"). She's referring to the children who are picked on and called names for being slow or different. One day, when her friends are absent, she must sit alone in the cafeteria, and several students make jokes at her expense and make her cry. She feels angry and frustrated with the other kids who look on sympathetically, but say nothing. She understands that being a silent bystander only makes this problem worse, and is then able to empathize with the other victims. This girl reaches out to a child who always sits alone on the bus, and the children have fun together.

## Grades 1 - 4

**Simon's Hook: a Story about Teases and Put-downs** by Karen Burnett

Simon has a "bad hair day" after his sister cuts out portions of his hair to remove some chewing gum. His friends tease him, and he rushes home in tears. His Grandmother Rose consoles him with "a fish story" that tells the pitfalls of providing an easy target for teasing by "biting the hook." He rejoins his friends, his self-esteem in tact, and withstands their comments by following his grandmother's advice.

## Grades 2 – 5

**Sorry** by Trudy Ludwig

Jack's friend, Charlie, behaves badly all the time and gets away with it by saying he's sorry, even though he clearly isn't. Jack doesn't like this about Charlie, but he does like how being the boy's friend makes him a somebody!

Charlie damages Leena's science-fair project, and she tells him that "Sorry" doesn't cut it!!! A teacher helps him understand that he has to make amends for the hurt and damage he has caused. With Jack's help, he fixes the project. In the end, Jack chooses Leena's company over Charlie's.

*Robin Castetter is a Retired Elementary Teacher Loveland City Schools*

# Robin's Reading List

## Grades 3 – 6

### The Whipping Boy by Sid Fleischman

This plot involves the orphan, Jemmy, who is kept in the king's palace and must take the whippings for the royal heir, Prince Brat. It is forbidden to punish Brat, whose tricks multiply until Jemmy plans to escape the daily round of flogging. But the prince takes off and forces Jemmy to go with him. They get in and out of trouble on the outside; Jemmy hears that he's been charged with the Prince's abduction!!

### Attack of the Killer Fishsticks by Paul Zindel

Five fifth grade friends, who call themselves the WACKY FACTS LUNCH BUNCH (because they eat lunch together and share jokes and trivia), invite the new kid, Max, to join their group. They nominate Max to run for Student Council Rep. against one of the Nasty Blobs (the class bullies). The group supports Max in this venture, also helping him to heal his grief at his mother's recent death. The understanding and support of his peers is essential.

### The Night the Bells Rang by Natalie Kinsey-Warnock

Mason lives on a farm with his younger brother and parents in northern Vermont during the First World War. Mason is bullied by Aden Cutler, a school bully. However, in anger at his helplessness, he bullies his own brother!! He frequently wishes Aden dead! Mason is the sole witness to and recipient of an act of bravery and kindness on the part of Aden. When every bell in town rings out for the end of the war, Mason approaches Aden's mother who stands alone grieving for Aden, killed in battle, knowing that no one else thought kindly of her son. "He did something for me once, and I never thanked him. I wish he were coming back...I'm sorry." says Mason and leaves to take his turn to ring the peace bell.

## Grades 6 - 9

### Angel on the Square by Gloria Whelan

This novel begins in 1913, just before Katya goes to live with Tsar Nikolai II,

when her widowed mother becomes lady-in-waiting to the Empress. The royal couple and their children are like a second family to Katya. However, the heroine cannot completely support the tsar's treatment of his people. Initially, life is lavish and amusing for this young aristocrat, although her friend Misha's revolutionary ideas often battle in her mind with her own loyalty to the tsar. Gradually the world outside begins to enter the palace walls, and Katya's life--along with that of all nobility--changes forever.

### Criss Cross by Lynne Rae Perkins

This story focuses on 14-year-old Debbie and her friends as they leave childhood behind. Hector, who feels he is unfinished, and Debbie, who wishes something would happen so she'll be a different person, narrate most of the novel. It involves those moments that occur in everyone's life...moments when a decision is made that sends a person along one path instead of another. There's a great deal of humor in this gentle story about a group of friends facing the crossroads of life, and how they wish to live it.

### Stepping on the Cracks by Mary Downing Hahn

This story takes place in a small town in Maryland in 1944 during World War II. Margaret and Elizabeth are next door neighbors and best friends with very different personalities. Both have brothers who are fighting in the war and they, like the rest of their families, are worried about them. Margaret gets a new view on the school bully, Gordy, when she finds him hiding his own brother, Stuart, an army deserter, and decides to help him. When Margaret's own brother is killed in the war, her feelings toward Stuart become more complicated.

## Grades 7 – 12

### How to Say No and Keep Your Friends: Peer Pressure Reversal for Teens and Preteens by Sharon Scott

"Don't just fit in, stand out!" empowers these kids to be independent thinkers! In this book are 13 hard-hitting, true stories of teens who failed to manage negative peer pressure which resulted

in loss of privileges, jail and even death. All kids face difficult decisions somewhere along the way like cheating, fighting, skipping school, stealing, drugs, lying to parents, etc. It's extremely difficult to just say "no" when their friends are saying "Everybody does it. We won't get caught." A special chapter offers ways to say "no" and save face to serious peer pressure problems like tobacco, alcohol, other drugs, sexuality, and violence.

### In the Middle of the Night by Robert Cormier

Denny's father is being harassed by letters and late night phone calls which he seems to strangely accept passively. He was an usher at a theater at age 16 where twenty-two children were killed and, although he was absolved of all blame, some think he was at fault. Now Denny is sixteen and he is harassed by a mysterious telephone voice. He needs to understand his father who is a good man, but uncommunicative. Denny needs to face himself before he faces others. Denny resents his father's passivity and states, "The opposite of peace is war". He resolves to fight against the forces destroying/controlling his father.

### Binge by Charles Ferry

Weldon Yeager, 18, wakes up in a hospital room with a very understanding nurse, and we soon learn there's been a car accident and Weldon's foot has been amputated. He ran over four teenagers in the accident; two are dead and two are clinging to life. Weldon is addicted to alcohol, alienated from his parents, and failed to graduate from high school. The book is brutal and spares the reader nothing...vomiting, diarrhea, the false courage alcohol gives him to steal and lie along the way. At the time of the accident Weldon was trying to get back to the place and girl, Livvy, of his pre-alcoholic days. At the end of the book we learn that Livvy was one of the victims of his drunk driving and died. However, Weldon's mind cannot deal with the fact. Teenagers all think they are immortal and can handle it... so did Weldon!

# Croskey's Corner

I grew up before the Disney Channel. Instead, I watched Walt Disney's programs, such as the Mickey Mouse Club, on broadcast TV. Before I ever saw the film version of Pinocchio, I heard Jiminy Cricket as a host for various Disney programs. He was one of my favorites because, in addition to being the co-star of a ground-breaking animated film, he was a great host and he sang, too! On these TV shows, he often sang "educational songs." I learned to spell "encyclopedia" from his song lyric, "Get your encyclopedia, e-n-c-y-c-l-o-p-e-d-i-a." Anyone who ever watched Pinocchio knows he sang "When You Wish Upon a Star." Great ballad! But, the song that said the most about Character to me came earlier in the film, when the Blue Fairy told Pinocchio that, along with his chance to be a real boy, he was getting a conscience. Of course, Jiminy is that conscience. He has a heart-to-heart talk with Pinocchio about how to follow the straight and narrow, but it doesn't sink in to the puppet's wooden head. So, Jiminy sings, "When you get in trouble and you don't know right from wrong, give a little whistle! ...And Always let your conscience be your guide." So, my childhood brain figured it was simple: Whistle, yell for Jiminy Cricket if you got in trouble, and "just" listen to your conscience.

The February Character Quality of the Month is Persuasiveness. It is defined as "Guiding vital truths around another's mental roadblocks." The "I will" statements include "Appealing to a person's conscience in terms of character." My grown-up brain (at least a little more grown up than when the original Mickey Mouse Club was on) says that appealing to a person's conscience is a little more difficult than just whistling, yelling, or singing. The Latin derivation of "conscience" suggests that a person becomes conscious of guilt and that that consciousness is the voice we call conscience. So Character First! is encouraging us to Persuade others to see things our way by calling on their consciences to lead them.

I am wondering if conscience tugging is the best way to Persuade kids in school to do what we want them to do. One great definition of Character is that it is what you do when no one is looking. I like that idea because it means that the person acts in a way they truly believe in, not in a way that will please others. From a moral reasoning (development) point of view, we know that doing something which obeys one's inner beliefs has more force and momentum behind it than reacting to the punishment or the praise of others. So, I am more likely to believe in helping kids CHOOSE to change their consciences; their beliefs are going to be more permanent than if their consciences get shamed or goaded into temporarily changing.

If true, then the Character Question is HOW to Persuade people to make permanent changes in their consciences. Let's look at what Robert Cialdini says about Persuasion. In his book, *Influence: The Psychology of Persuasion* Cialdini defines six tools of influence in Persuasion. They are

Reciprocity - People tend to return a favor done for them. When a charity sends you "free" return address labels, they want you to reciprocate by sending them money. No doubt you often do that.

Commitment and Consistency - If people commit, orally or in writing, to an idea or goal, they are more likely to honor that commitment because they want the idea or act to be consistent with what they have said or have done in the past. If you agree to buy something, and jump on the bandwagon of really believing you have made a good decision, then if the seller raises the price at the last minute (think undercoating a car!) you are likely to go along with the higher price in order to look consistent.

Social Proof - People will do things that they see other people are doing. The obvious example is when your neighbors buy new siding and the company gets them to put a sign in their yard. Then, when the company calls on you, they try to prove their siding is good by using your neighbor as a reference.

Authority - People will tend to obey authority/celebrity figures, even if they are asked by the famous person to perform objectionable acts. This carries over to athletes' endorsements, has-been movie stars' recommendations on insurance, and Tim Allen or James Earl Jones' voice-over endorsements.

Liking - People are easily Persuaded by other people that they like. When beautiful young women encourage middle aged men to donate blood or sign up for dance lessons, the men "like" what they see and buy what they're sold.

Scarcity - Perceived scarcity will generate demand. When a chicken tender restaurant opens a new store, they give chicken away to a few people to give the impression that many want to buy at the new store but few will get in. Or, think toy stores running out of the most sought-after Christmas present in early December but giving you a rain check for January and asking you to buy something else for your kid to open on Christmas morning.

So, Cialdini says that we are heavily influenced by our peers and the social forces in our culture. And so are kids. His theories strongly encourage educators to Persuade kids to change by utilizing these same social forces. Here are some examples:

Reciprocity - When teachers provide treats for their classes, they create an atmosphere of Reciprocity, where students are more likely to "give back." Call it making them feel obligated, but it encourages a feeling of "pay back," or better still, a feeling of Paying It Forward to peers.

Commitment/Consistency - When teachers have students set goals, and commit to them publicly (in front of peers, or even just in a meeting with their teachers,) students are more likely to stick to them, so as to look consistent. It's where integrity (being internally consistent and integrated) gets built.

Social Proof - If schools create a culture (through Positive Behavioral Support systems, or Fish Philosophies, or other positively reinforcing school-wide programs,) of treating each other kindly, it becomes the norm - a social rule! - to act that way and the negative behaviors are thrown on the "We Don't Do That Around Here" pile.

Authority - I know that many staff members like to take pies in the face or sit on the roof to be playful and to influence kids' behavior. But, what we know about Character is that students follow the Model of their authority figures, both parents and teachers. So, act with Good Character, teachers! Character begins with you and spills over to your students by your example.

Liking - When kids Like their teachers, they are more Likely to follow their lead. OK, you can't be their friend, you shouldn't smile 'til Christmas, you can loosen up but not tighten up. I know... But this is not about acting like a child. It is about building a mutual affection, a family feeling, in your classroom, where adults and kids start by Liking and Respecting each other. To encourage this Liking and respect, find out what Sparks their enthusiasm and passion; then take an interest in it.

Scarcity - Best example I ever heard was Wally's Donuts. A teacher created a class reinforcement activity where students worked as a group to follow the rules and could earn the greatest donuts in the world - Wally's! Turns out that Wally's Donuts were day-old bakery products which Wally threw out. The teacher built them up as rare and wonderful - scarce if you will. The kids were motivated to earn (and EAT) them! You can adapt this to your throw-aways as well. My teacher-wife cleaned out her closet by having Girls' Closet Pick Day and Boys' Closet Pick Day. One man's trash...

So, appeal to a kid's conscience, if you can, and hope it will change. Or, use Cialdini's Persuasion strategies to use Social Power to direct conscience building. Your children will appreciate it and your school will be a better culture to live in. I guess it won't hurt, though, to also give a little whistle!

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



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

P.O. Box 33144  
Cincinnati, Ohio 45233

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 Jill Tomey,  
Character Education Consultant

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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.