

8 HABITS FOR DEVELOPING EXTRAORDINARY CHARACTER

BY NELLIE FELIPE

Last month, we published an article entitled [“Ordinary People with Extraordinary Abilities”](#). This month we want to continue with the theme of developing an extraordinary self. Dictionary.com defines “*extraordinary*” as “¹*beyond what is usual, ordinary, regular, or established.* ²*exceptional character, noteworthy; remarkable.*”

Let me begin by sharing with you that I am not some wisdom guru with special vision. I have failed many times over and have the healed scars to show for them. Nothing in life comes free, though much claims to be. We are paying for the choices we make, whether we choose to do the right thing or not. We sometimes do not realize it until the price paid is so high, that we wish we could turn back the hand of time.

Let us explore the eight habits for developing extraordinary character. It is my hope that we will consciously practice them daily until they become such a part of us that we do it naturally.

1. Take the high road in all circumstances. People who accomplish extraordinary feats, those who determine within themselves to go the extra two miles, intrigue us. You will never find a traffic jam in this place. Actually, it is a rather lonely and unpopular place as not many take the extended route. Deep down we all want to live extraordinary lives, yet many of us are not willing to invest the discipline and sacrifice. We too often succumb to the excuses that justify our decisions. The reality is that being extraordinary is available to us all. We must control our emotional reactions. More often than not emotional perceptions are deceiving. Emotions will amplify the

ACTION * RESULTS * INTEGRITY * ZEAL * ENCOURAGEMENT

© COPYRIGHT 2009 ARIZE COACHING & CONSULTING™. ALL RIGHTS RESERVED. PRIVACY POLICY.
WWW.ARIZECC.COM OFFICE: (866) 874-9925 FAX: (866) 379-0819

situation. We must consciously choose to live by our moral compass in integrity and truth.

The high road is one where we will likely not be the most popular or liked person. It is a place where humility, strength, character, and a quiet confidence are necessary in order to stay on the path. It means standing for something even though no one else sees it our way.

When you read the biographies of many of our greatest leaders (past and present), such as Abraham Lincoln, Harriett Tubman, George Washington Carver, Helen Keller, Martin Luther King, Jr., Tony Dungy, Tony Blair, Amelia Earhart, and so many more, you will find that in the height of their greatest moments or decisions they experienced some of the loneliest times and/or greatest adversities.

2. If offended by someone forgive him or her without expecting an apology. So often we are offended (hurt, insulted, slighted, etc) by someone and feel we need to approach them to let them know that we were offended. The challenge with this is that we feel we need an apology in order to release the offense and offender. The person may not be aware of any wrongdoing on their part and most likely did not intend to offend you. We are solely responsible for our responses... feeling offended is OUR RESPONSE. We must take a closer look at what offended us --- check it, examine it, correct it and give it up. There is an ancient saying, by Rumi, that says, *"If you are irritated by every rub, how will you be polished?"*

In order to mature in attitude we cannot hold on to a *"right to feel offended"*. The highest level of maturity and humility is forgiving others when they did not know they needed forgiving.

This one act alone will help us live a fuller, happier, and freer life than any other single act. When we forgive freely, we begin to love freely.

(Note: This is not to say that a serious crime against you or a loved one should not offend you. Though holding on to anger, hatred, offense will hardened our hearts and embitter us. Yet, I am strictly addressing our everyday relationships and interactions with each other.)

ACTION * RESULTS * INTEGRITY * ZEAL * ENCOURAGEMENT

© COPYRIGHT 2009 ARIZE COACHING & CONSULTING™. ALL RIGHTS RESERVED. PRIVACY POLICY.

WWW.ARIZECC.COM OFFICE: (866) 874-9925 FAX: (866) 379-0819

3. When we are aware that we have offended someone – apologize quickly. To many of us, apologizing is like giving up a body part without anesthesia... *painful*. As humans, we are imperfect and make mistakes. We will be shocked to find out how easy and freeing it is to say the words “I’m sorry”. When apologizing to someone, simply state your apology then let the offended person speak --- do not get defensive, simply listen. After the person has finished speaking, apologize again recognizing how “they stated” the offense made them feel. This lets them know we heard them and our apology is heartfelt.

There is no greater opportunity for personal growth than when we are in the midst of offense and adversity. Although none of us likes it, it is a place where we can be pruned, sharpened, corrected, and matured. The way we see and handle the situation determines how much we grow from it. Do not be deceived, if at first we do not get it, we will find ourselves experiencing similar situations repeatedly. These are lessons in our journey of life.

4. Be grateful for all things. A grateful person can accomplish so much. Why do you think this is? Most of us want to help, give to, assist, empower, and share with a grateful person. A grateful person knows how to appreciate and say thank you for even the smallest act or thing. Recently my Pastor, Carolyn Spellman, taught on gratefulness and something she said just sat so sweetly on my heart, “People who are grateful are more likely to help someone else. Saying thank you is just one part of being grateful; we must also act on it.” What does this mean? If we are grateful for our children - spend quality time with them. If we are grateful for our spouse - let them know and do acts of kindness that are demonstrative of that; such as leaving them handwritten notes in the car or on their pillow. If we are grateful for our job - raise the bar on the quality of work we produce and go the extra two miles where others do not. Grateful people have a brighter, healthier outlook on life.
5. Do not make it personal. Often we have heard it said, “*Do not take it personal.*” We not only take it personal, we actually *make* it personal. We invest excuses, ideas,

ACTION * RESULTS * INTEGRITY * ZEAL * ENCOURAGEMENT

© COPYRIGHT 2009 ARIZE COACHING & CONSULTING™. ALL RIGHTS RESERVED. PRIVACY POLICY.

WWW.ARIZECC.COM OFFICE: (866) 874-9925 FAX: (866) 379-0819

perceptions, and stories into a matter giving it the explosive power of “*How dare they!?!*” Why do we do this? Our reactions come from an underdeveloped art of not reacting first. Caught off guard, we react. Those who have developed maturity in this area impress us. They are stoic in their facial expression seeking to get a better understanding. The expression on their faces and the inflection in their voices remains smooth, gentle, and inquisitive as they seek to understand the speaker before they say a word. They will ask a question or two and patiently listen with no defensiveness or anger. I have personally known a few people who have mastered this habit and it is certainly evident in the great leaders mentioned in habit 1. The key here is listening for understanding.

6. Skip the excuses. Take full accountability and responsibility for your words and actions. Add no excuses to them. When we are wrong... let us just do as habit #3 directs then learn from it and move on quickly. Do not wallow in it or allow it to steal your wins, joy, or peace. When something works --- take note of it also. George Washington Carver said it so well, “*99% of the failures come from people who have the habit of making excuses.*”
7. Have a sense of humor. Laugh, laugh, laugh... There is no better medicine for the soul than laughter. It lightens up the atmosphere, changes perceptions, disarms defensives, and softens hearts. Most of all, it does not allow us to take ourselves too seriously. One of my favorite line in a movie comes from the “*The Dark Knight*” when the Joker says, “*Why so serious?*” Laughter makes us feel good. It also raises our metabolism... now that is a bonus!
8. Make the golden rule your highest rule in all your actions. There is only one rule for making decisions... *the golden rule*. The golden rule is universal; a version of this rule exists in practically every culture. The golden rule encompasses love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control.

Below is an excerpt from Dr. John Maxwell’s book, *There’s No Such Thing As “Business” Ethics*:

- **Christianity:** *“Whatever you want men to do to you, do also to them.”*
- **Islam:** *“No one of you is a believer until he loves for his neighbor what he loves for himself.”*
- **Judaism:** *“What is hateful to you, do not do to your fellow man. This is the entire Law; all the rest is commentary.”*
- **Buddhism:** *“Hurt not others with that which pains yourself.”*
- **Hinduism:** *“This is the sum of duty; do naught unto others what you would not have them do unto you.”*
- **Zoroastrianism:** *“Whatever is disagreeable to yourself, do not do unto others.”*
- **Confucianism:** *“What you do not want done to yourself, do not do to others.”*
- **Bahai:** *“And if thine eyes be turned towards justice, choose thou for thy neighbor that which thou chooseth for thyself.”*
- **Jainism:** *“A man should wander about treating all creatures as he himself would be treated.”*
- **Yoruba Proverb (Nigeria):** *“One going to take a pointed stick to pinch a baby bird should first try it on himself to feel how it hurts.”*

Life is short, yet we can all enjoy an extraordinarily sweet one while creating a legacy for generations to come. Let us take the high road together --- the scenes we will travel promise to leave us breathless by its beauty and rewards.



Nellie Felipe is the founder of [ARIZE Coaching and Consulting](#). As a certified personal growth and leadership coach, she aspires to provoke people to rise in excellence. She believes everyone is born with a purpose that is not just their own; that every person's success impacts and facilitates the success of others. No vision is too small or too large to achieve. If you are truly ready to do what it takes to get to your mountaintop, she will be there to evoke the leader in you. She will come along side you as an accountability partner, a godly counsel, a seasoned professional, a caring friend.

As a consultant, Nellie will equip you with repeatable processes and systems. The consulting services offerings consists of process improvement, project management and change management utilizing proven Six Sigma, Lean Six Sigma and PMI PM methodologies.

She has substantial experience helping leaders achieve greater goals. Attend one of Nellie's online teleseminars, take her on as a coach, or bring her in as a consultant to help you with your business needs. Invite her to speak at your next team building or leadership event. [Check out her services](#). Subscribe to the [free newsletters](#) and [follow her on Twitter!](#)

ACTION * RESULTS * INTEGRITY * ZEAL * ENCOURAGEMENT

© COPYRIGHT 2009 ARIZE COACHING & CONSULTING™. ALL RIGHTS RESERVED. PRIVACY POLICY.

WWW.ARIZECC.COM OFFICE: (866) 874-9925 FAX: (866) 379-0819