



How to Make a Difference in Other People's Lives

One definition of character is how you act when no one is looking at you. Another definition of character is: how you treat people who could not possibly help you in any way.

How you treat people who cannot help you says a lot about you. Do you ignore them? Do you walk over them? Or do you encourage them and help them out?

What difference does it make? It makes a huge difference. Character is a big part of leadership because people are more likely follow and trust you if you are a person of character. They will want to develop long-term relationships with you. If you're in sales (and by the way, everyone is in sales), they will buy more often and buy more product from you. Your whole quality of life improves if you are a person of character.

One of the worst luge crashes of my career came at a terrible time – three days before the luge race at the Salt Lake City Olympics. I didn't even see my crash coming. It caught me completely off guard. For the first time in my life I was completely disoriented. I remember seeing the sky twice and hitting the bottom of the track twice. The whole time thinking, "Please, God, don't let me brake any bones! I'm racing in the Olympics in three days!"

Thank goodness, I didn't break anything. Unfortunately, my sled was a mess. The steel runners were gouged and scratched so badly that I didn't think I would be able to fix them in time for the race. The medics picked me up and drove me back to the Men's Start House at the top of the mountain.

I walked into the start house holding my sled. My face must have been ashen because all the other athletes there looked at me and started mumbling in different languages. Then, something incredible happened. Jonathan Edwards walked right up to me, took a look at my sled, and said, "Give me thirty minutes and a file and I'll have your steels looking like new."

I didn't even know Jonathan Edwards. Jonathan had competed in the luge in the 1994 Lillehammer Winter Olympics. In Salt Lake City Jonathan was coaching the Bermuda Luge Team.

Jonathan had nothing to gain from helping me. He helped me because he has a big heart; he's a person of character; a person who is genuinely interested in helping other people out. He's just a terrific guy. Jonathan got me out of a terrible situation. He just showed up out of nowhere. Kind of like a guardian Angel.

It's very unusual to find someone like that. You want to be around people like that. What if we all strived to be a little bit more like Jonathan? Would we have more influence over everyone we meet? Would the world be a better place?

Character counts. Big time!

Put it into action:

Strive to become a person of character. Help others succeed. Touch other people's lives. Become the type of person you'd want your kids to be around.

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