

Character Is Tested When a Person Receives Power

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This favorite quote of Coach Wooden's was one of many he used and applied from his favorite American, Abraham Lincoln. Coach Wooden began studying Abraham Lincoln in college because President Lincoln was a man that his father Joshua Wooden had often studied and quoted.

Coach wanted to learn more about how his own father had become such a great person, and he thought that by studying President Lincoln he would gain some additional insight into his dad.

Much of Coach Wooden's leadership style and favorite ideas were a result of his extensive research of President Lincoln (Coach felt he had read every significant book ever written about President Lincoln).

Three key elements of great character: humility, consideration for others and integrity are sometimes severely tested when a person receives power.

These three character traits might be tested when we simply face adversity, but they are tested at a more intense level when we receive power, because maintaining these qualities when we have power requires self-discipline.

It is much like the idea that true character is what you do when you know no one will know what you did.

The boss will usually be humble and courteous to his boss, but will he or she have that same humility and consideration for the people he or she supervises if it is not required?

Coach Wooden often commented that he admired President Lincoln because he never lost his common-man touch.

As has been well-documented, Coach Wooden had the same humility and consideration for others whether he was dealing with the President of the United States, or a custodian that he encountered during a road trip with his basketball team.

With power often comes additional material wealth and recognition, which is easy to become attached to. When a leader has to make a decision knowing that if he or she acts with integrity it may cost him or her much, or all of his or her material wealth or recognition, it is a true test of character.

Coach believed that a leader's most powerful tool is his or her example. The leader who has power but maintains their humility, consideration of others and integrity is likely to inspire the same qualities in the people he or she supervises.

The waterfall of character that a leader starts throughout an organization can be very positive or very destructive.

The positive waterfall requires great character with great power; not an easy task, but a worthwhile one.

Joshua Wooden created this positive character waterfall for his son John. In one way or another we will have that same opportunity for someone else as well.

**Yours in Coaching,
Craig Impelman**