

## ABOUT CSEE

The Council for Spiritual and Ethical Education supports the moral and spiritual development of young people through offering resources and educational opportunities to elementary, middle, and secondary schools. See more about our work at [www.csee.org](http://www.csee.org)

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## EIGHT EMPOWERING PRINCIPLES: BUILDING GREAT KIDS

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BY CLIFTON L. TAULBERT

When I looked back at the world that created my life, I encountered eight principles that were commonplace among the adults who dreamed “big” for my future. At first I thought them to be held captive by time and geography, but over the years I have learned that the eight principles are timeless and universal and just as powerful in the lives of youth of the 21st century as they were for me and countless others in the 20th century when we first encountered them.

It was an environment where we valued each other and shared our lives. This is indeed necessary for today’s youth. If they are to fully and positively maximize their personal journey, they need to experience being valued and being a beneficiary of “shared unselfishness” lived out in their presence. Great Kids are not automatic! To build them, we must be intentional. We must expose them to the principles that build greatness. Let’s look at the Eight Habits of the Heart—the eight intentional principles I encountered while growing up in the Mississippi Delta.

### **Nurturing Attitude**

This habit is foundational to building Great Kids. It has everything to do with our allotment of time to build the great kids we envision for our societies. In our very fast-paced and easy-fix society, allocating quality time might seem old fashioned and out-of-date, but I beg to differ. Although we might be more inclined to reach for a “computer program” to jump-start the process, I say our kids need our time—good quality hands-on, one-on-one time. This is what I experienced and it continues to serve me well. Share your time and your kids will experience being valued.

### **Responsibility**

Again, this is a hands-on opportunity to help our youth understand that learning and accomplishing is indeed a process—one of unselfishness. Responsibility is best

understood when experienced. It takes more than a carefully crafted document to introduce young people to this principle. They need to see and experience responsibility being lived out. Building great kids is not easy! Our presence matters. And our actions matter even more! We empower our youth to be their best, as they experience us being and sharing our best with them. When I was a kid on my way to adulthood, Mr. Cleve, our iceman, became this principle in my life. He took the time to pass along his knowledge and to stick with me until I had mastered the lessons, thus empowering me to become this principle and to understand its importance going forward.

### **Dependability**

We want our youth to know that their word should matter. This must be more than a conversation. They must see first-hand that we have kept our word. I understand this habit because I experienced the value of it in my life. I saw consistency of involvement through the efforts of my great-aunt who raised me. I could count on her word! I was left with the notion that others mattered. They still do. Kids will understand this if we show it to them.

### **Friendship**

Great Kids look for an opportunity to be positively involved in the lives of others. They know this to be of value because they will have experienced it from us. On days when we think that they are goofing off, they are watching, and what they see within our adult world will make all the difference in how they set out to craft their own. Their lives are enhanced through building friendships. Again it’s about valuing. It’s about sharing.

### **Brotherhood/Sisterhood**

We start with friendship and we keep moving ahead. This principle invites us beyond our comfort zones.

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And if we are to build Great Kids, they must see and understand the value of moving in such a direction. I call this principle “stretching your table.” As an African-American growing up in the segregated South, I experienced the table stretch from an older white lady who welcomed me into her world. It’s about honestly welcoming others who may be different from ourselves and experiencing the tremendous outcomes, on campuses and within our lives.

### High Expectations

For our youth, this is the opportunity to give “high fives” to others, to celebrate their success as if it were their very own. Someone believed in me. They shouted it loud and clear. We celebrated. This is about understanding that it’s not always about us, it’s about others. They will become Great Kids as they see us celebrating others in our lives.

### Courage

Great Kids will be kids of courage. They will have learned the value of doing the right thing even when no one has their backs. They will learn this from us. Courage is not a document. It’s a person. It’s a young girl or boy understanding what is right and doing it. Courage is meaningful for our youth because it gives them vision beyond the moment. Great Kids will be courageous kids.

### Hope

Hope is believing in tomorrow. Building Great Kids is about hope. It’s about their voices being used on campuses, on playgrounds, and in classrooms to motivate, comfort, challenge, and rescue others. However, if they are to fully embrace the notion that they can become this principle, they must first see and experience it. This is our job! We must become the hope we want them to emulate. Without hope it becomes difficult to embrace others and share their lives.

Building Great Kids is all about the future of our societies—building productive, caring citizens. We do this by creating a lifestyle of valuing others and being willing to share our lives through intentional unselfishness. ✨

*Clifton Taulbert, a Pulitzer-nominated author, international lecturer, and founder of the Building Community Institute, has taken life lessons from the ordinary people of his Mississippi Delta youth to create eight engaging principles that are timeless and universal to help our focus on leadership and relationships. This article is an excerpt from CSEE’s publication Good Things to Do: Expert Suggestions for Fostering Goodness in Kids (2009). See more about Taulbert at [www.clifontaulbert.com](http://www.clifontaulbert.com)*

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## MARCH/APRIL SALE ON ELEMENTARY CHARACTER EDUCATION RESOURCE

During March and April, CSEE is selling Margaret Walding’s character education resource for elementary schools, *Creating Classrooms and Homes of Virtue*, at the incredibly low price of \$10 per volume, or \$35 per set. *Creating Classrooms and Homes of Virtue* comes as a four-volume set, with one volume each for grades pre-K through K, 1 and 2, 3 and 4, and 5 and 6. Each volume contains stories about moral exemplars, resources, and activities. The volumes have been used in independent schools throughout North America. See additional information at <http://www.csee.org/products/10> ✨

## THE QUEST FOR GOD: A PERSONAL PILGRIMAGE

*Paul Johnson*

NEW YORK: HARPERCOLLINS, 1996

## WHY I AM A CATHOLIC

*Garry Wills*

NEW YORK: HOUGHTON MIFFLIN, 2002

BY RICHARD BARBIERI

It's a remarkable symmetry: two prolific historians, one British, the other American, each Catholic; each, at age 68, publishes an apologia for his faith. One journeying from liberal to conservative, the other passing in the opposite direction, produce two books so different from each other that they not only describe one church under two manifestations, but exemplify two ways of being, and writing about being, Catholic.

Johnson's brief work (barely 200 pages), is indeed personal, and mightily idiosyncratic. He tells us he is "as used to it [Catholicism] as a much-loved old teddy bear, or a favourite armchair, or a smelly old favourite dog." At the heart of his faith is a conviction that "authority, organization, and structure have their uses," and that the Church is attractive because it provides certitude and discipline, and "lays down the spiritual law and insists on it and, insofar as it lies in its power, enforces it."

Johnson is, in the old phrase, more Catholic than the Pope, yet remarkably heterodox on certain subjects. He seems to have taken to heart the proclamation of Emerson, whom he terms "thoughtful": "A foolish consistency is the hobgoblin of little minds, adored by little statesmen and philosophers and divines."

So he tells us environmentalism "can degenerate into a new form of pantheism, even paganism," and "to talk of animal rights is wrong and misleading," but believes "we shall gradually come to regard eating the flesh of animals as no more acceptable than cannibalism." The gay rights movement is "bent on making fundamental—and to most of us horrifying—changes to civilised

patterns of sexual behavior," yet "it is possible to imagine situations in which an adulterous love, or a homosexual love, or even perhaps an incestuous love—a love which violates the traditional rules—is more acceptable to God than a licit love." He rejects feminists' calls for a non-gendered liturgical language, and passionately defends clerical celibacy, but announces "the all-male priesthood of the Roman Catholic Church is a lost cause, and rightly so...I believe I will live to see women priests in the Catholic Church, and my grandchildren may well live to see the first woman Pope."

Strangely, the result of all this is not a muddle, but an encounter with a thoughtful pilgrim who will follow where his mind and heart lead him. And they lead him through an examination of the persistence of faith, the role of liturgy, and a vivid and literalist view of eschatology—over a quarter of the book is devoted to "the four last things."

At times, certainly, Johnson seems both polemical and peculiar. Why, for example, does he need to squeeze in an encomium to "Margaret Thatcher, this Queen of Politics, this outstanding exponent of the art of ruling"? And how can he concede that "Christians tend to see the church with almost exclusively European eyes," or that we need to be "less globocentric," within three pages of asserting that "it may be the task of us monotheistic earthlings to carry the truth to the 'natives' of space and 'convert' them to our way of thinking, just as the Spaniards and Portuguese originally evangelized and baptized the American Indians"?

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## OPTIMIZING OUR STUDENT LEADERS' APPRENTICESHIPS

Both common sense and extensive research confirm the best ways for adults to learn leadership. We know, for instance, that successful learners about leadership need opportunities to practice new skills and to learn from experience. They need self-assessment and feedback on the results they produce, and they need ample time to reflect, to assimilate new competencies, attitudes, and knowledge. Furthermore, they need to do all this before cycling back through the same experiential learning process again.

State-of-the-art leadership training must thus be a time-intensive, labor-intensive, even messy pedagogical process. Since paradox, complexity, and messiness are almost inevitable whenever we exercise leadership, Dr. Ellen Schall likens leading—and even learning about leading—to wading through a boggy swamp (“Learning to Love the Swamp: Reshaping Education for Public Service,” *Journal of Policy Analysis and Management*, Spring 1995). So shouldn't even our school-based leadership-development programs acknowledge this truth by including such swampy dynamics in the learning experiences we provide for our students?

Some of the best leadership-development programs in graduate schools provide such bog-laden experiential training. For example, see Sharon Daloz Parks's *Leadership Can Be Taught* (Harvard Business School Press, 2005) for an account of Professor Ron Heifetz's seminal course offerings at Harvard University. What would it look like to bring similar pedagogical approaches to leaders-in-training in our middle and secondary schools?

We simply need to raise the stakes, to expand our students' opportunities to exercise genuine leadership in meaningful ways. This can be risky, of course. What if some of their well-meaning efforts fall short of the mark? What if their prom-planning logistical prepara-

tions or other such annual school rituals go awry, as a result? Are we willing to let our apprentice student-leaders learn from experience—including from their mistakes—in the same ways we do in the classroom, on stage, or on the playing fields?

Increasing their spheres of influence, their opportunities to be accountable, their ranges of responsibility throughout the life of the school need not be hard to achieve. For instance, the Potomac School in McLean, Virginia takes its student leaders seriously enough to deputize them as fellow “stewards” of their school. In other words, Potomac faculty and staff delegate—or, more properly, share—certain school maintenance and community-building tasks with the students who attend their August leadership retreat. The faculty-student collaboration that ensues from this process enables both students and adults to blend the theory and practice of learning leadership in a pedagogically potent way.

Much more often, by contrast, the status quo in terms of student leadership-development opportunities in many of our schools entrusts our students with what Harvard's Heifetz would call merely technical challenges. Unlike adaptive challenges—which require creative problem-solving and new learning—the solutions to technical challenges are already known.

Planning a prom or producing a yearbook tends more toward the technical than adaptive side of the leadership spectrum. Yet these are precisely the kinds of (more managerial) tasks most schools are far more willing to offer their student leaders. Adaptive leadership challenges, by contrast, would entail things like changing a culture of hazing in a team, school group, club, or committee that hews to such practices as almost sacred traditions. Leadership challenges of a more adaptive sort might include decreasing the daily litter that students leave for custodians to clean up, or eliminat-

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WHEN LIGHTNING STRIKES

During a rather unruly time in the history of ancient Israel, the people were ruled by a motley crew of judges. We have heard of Samson with his wild, long hair and stupendous strength, but the more reserved judge Deborah has caught my eye recently. She was a woman with great power at a time when women rarely held positions of authority. God chose Deborah to be a judge and a leader and also a prophetess. Not bad!

Deborah is quite special with a unique leadership style. We are told that all the people came up to her for judgment while she sat on a hill under a palm tree (Judges 4:1-7). She didn't busy herself with dramatic military campaigns, she didn't set up shop in an elaborate meeting hall, she didn't schedule meeting after meeting each day, she didn't run from one activity to another with no rest in between. She didn't do any of those things we associate with leadership. Instead, she was a wise woman who used to sit. That's as counter-cultural today as it was back then. Today, leaders rarely sit and listen.

My mom used to sit. I remember in the morning, as a boy, I would wake up and run downstairs. I would always find my mom in our sun-porch sitting with her morning coffee, her prayer book, and a cigarette. My mom and dad worked an awful lot, and she was often challenged to work two jobs—one at the hospital down the street, and the other at home managing the house, taking care of me and my father, who was often ill, and also caring for her elderly mother. She was juggling a lot, as most moms do. I knew that her time in the sun-porch in the morning was sacred time. It made all the other things she did possible. Sitting didn't solve the problems or the challenges of the day, but it did open up a window of order in the midst of some chaos. Sitting gave my mom a chance to breathe and a chance to listen. Sitting gave her a sense of peace in the midst of stormy times.

I think that may have been true for Deborah as well. Leaders need the wisdom and courage that comes from

introspective moments. Leaders can't always be up front leading the charge. Sometimes leaders just need to sit.

We are told that Deborah is faced with the threat of the Canaanite king, Jabin, and the army led by the mighty general Sissera. God tells Deborah to call someone from her own camp, someone who has not made a name for himself, someone who shows great promise but who is inexperienced at leading—a man named Barak, whose name means “lightning” in the Hebrew. Deborah calls Barak to her palm tree and tells him God's plan. Barak is frightened. He is hesitant, but Deborah agrees to walk with him.

Barak could not do it on his own. He needed someone with unshakeable faith and confidence to help him muster his own bravery, to help him live into the meaning of his own name.

Sitting Deborah and hesitating Barak are not our usual models of leadership. But they work together, and, I believe, they represent two powerful voices in each of us: the voice of silence and wisdom, and the voice of fearful hesitation and hidden talent.

Leaders are not always the bold and the loud. They are also the quiet, confident, wise ones who sit on the hills of silence and listen. My hope is that we find time to sit and listen. My guess is that if we do, unexpected things will rise up out of unexpected places. And maybe lightning will strike. Maybe today, maybe tomorrow, maybe in our tomorrows far away from here. If we sit on the hills of silence, the lightning will strike and charge us up to be forces for peace and change and justice in the world. ✨

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## CHARACTER WORK SHOWS LONG-TERM BENEFITS

The December 2008 issue of *Archives of Pediatrics & Adolescent Medicine* published important research findings on the effects of well-done character education programs. In short, students whose schools had worked with them on social development in the elementary grades were still reaping the benefits 15 years later. We have known for the last decade that well-constructed programs have effects that last two to three years, but this is the first such study to follow students into their adult lives.

Data for this study were collected from 15 different schools in the Seattle area. Of the 598 students, 146 had undergone interventions in the first through the sixth grades, and 251 had learned information and social skills in only the fifth and sixth grades; the remaining 201 students were controls, not exposed to the interventions in question.

Even those students who had undergone interventions in only two grades, as opposed to all six, showed positive gains relative to those who had “just gone to school,” although the results were more striking for the individuals who had worked on social and emotional skills for six years of elementary school.

Despite the fact that the character development efforts had stopped by the end of sixth grade, as the young people in these programs got into their teen years, their rates of heavy alcohol use, of leaving school, and of violence had significantly declined, and in early adulthood they experienced fewer mental-health and sexual-health problems.

The skills taught to the children in this study included how to recognize the feelings of others, how to get what they want appropriately, and how to have a good time without getting into trouble. Those who had received interventions for all six grades of elementary school reported higher incomes as adults, greater responsibilities at work, and more involvement in their communities. ❁

*J. David Hawkins, Rick Kosterman, Richard F. Catalano, Carl G. Hill, and Robert D. Abbott, “Effects of Social Development Intervention in Childhood Fifteen Years Later,” Archives of Pediatrics & Adolescent Medicine, 2008 (Dec), pp. 1133-41.*

## IN THE WEB

### ETHICS MATTERS

<http://ethics.sandiego.edu/resources/cases/HomeOverview.asp>

Should the law require that those planning to become parents be licensed to do so, in order to have the right to keep their children? Dr. Jack Westman at the University of Wisconsin Medical School believes so, maintaining that certain minimum requirements and guarantees must be fulfilled to help society avoid so many of the early childhood tragedies we see today.

Should noted film director Elia Kazan (*On the Waterfront*, *East of Eden*) be eligible for a Lifetime Achievement Award in film, despite the fact that during the McCarthy era he informed on eight fellow film writers and directors as being members of the American Communist Party?

These issues, in much greater detail, are but two of many on the list of case studies available on the University of San Diego Ethics Department's Web site “Ethics Matters” (see URL above).

Case studies are but one section. USD offers a wealth of information on ethical concerns, from explanations of ethical theories to classic texts and video selections. For educators dealing with ethics in any of a number of ways, “Ethics Matters” is a rich resource. ❁

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See additional details, including holy days for the month of March, at [www.csee.org](http://www.csee.org)



FOUNDED IN 1898

### April 3 Rama Navimi (Hinduism)

This day marks the birth of Rama, a divine figure in Hinduism who is referred to as Maryada Purushottama, or “the perfect man.” Rama’s birthday is celebrated with evening processions of murtis, Hindu symbolic figures, and drinking Panakam, a sweet drink made with jaggery and pepper. Ceremonial weddings are also often staged in houses and temples, using murtis of Rama and his wife Sita.

### April 5 Palm Sunday (Christianity)

Falling on the Sunday before Easter, Palm Sunday commemorates the entry of Jesus into Jerusalem. It is said that a crowd greeted Jesus by carpeting his path with palms, as the palm is a symbol of triumph and victory. In many churches, palm leaves are distributed to all worshippers.

### April 7 Mahavir Jayanti (Jainism)

Mahavir Jayanti, the most important holiday in Jainism, celebrates the birth of Mahavira, the last Tirthankara. A Tirthankara is a human being who achieves enlightenment and becomes a role model and teacher. On this day, Jain temples are decorated with flags, and lectures are often held to discuss the path to virtue. Special ceremonies and processions are also performed, and devotees will make offerings of rice, fruit, milk, and other items to those participating in the procession.

### April 9-16 Pesach, Passover (Judaism)

Pesach, or Passover, commemorates God “passing over” the houses of the Jews—sparing them—when God was

slaying the firstborn of Egypt. In some traditions, Passover lasts for seven days, with major feasts on the first and last days. The first night of Passover is celebrated with a Seder, a special dinner where the story of the Exodus from Egypt is retold. The last day, celebrated with prayer services and special meals, commemorates the day the Children of Israel crossed the Red Sea and found safety. Different traditions call for varying levels of diet restriction at this time, but generally all Jews abstain from eating chametz (leavening and fermenting agents) as commanded in the Torah.

### April 9 Maundy Thursday (Christianity)

Also known as “Holy Thursday,” this Thursday before Easter commemorates the Last Supper of Jesus with the apostles. It was on this night that the Holy Eucharist was introduced. Services on this day include readings from the biblical accounts of the Last Supper.

### April 9 Hanuman Jayanti (Hinduism)

Hanuman Jayanti is the birthday of Hanuman, a monkey god and devotee of Rama. Hindus often perform special chants to Hanuman when they are faced with obstacles, since Hanuman is seen as a symbol of physical strength and perseverance. On this day, worshippers fast and visit temples, where they apply a tilak of sindoor (vermillion) from the Hanuman’s body to their foreheads for good luck.

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April 9-12

New Year  
(Theravada Buddhism)

On the first three days after the full moon in April, the Theravada Buddhists of Thailand, Burma, Sri Lanka, Cambodia, and Laos celebrate the New Year. This is a time to reflect on one's karma, focus on cleansing, and offer good wishes to others.

April 10

Good Friday  
(Christianity)

The Friday preceding Easter Sunday, known as "Good" or "Holy" Friday, commemorates the Crucifixion of Jesus and his death. Some sects of Christianity fast on this day, and many hold special church services.

April 12

Easter  
(Christianity)

Christians believe that Jesus was resurrected from the dead on Easter Sunday, two days after the crucifixion. This day is celebrated in different ways among the many Western and Eastern Christian sects, including vigils, readings, re-enactments, and eating special foods. The egg is a significant symbol of Easter, as it represents the resurrection: it is dormant, but contains new life. Easter traditions involving eggs include egg hunts, egg games, and gifts of candy eggs.

April 14

Baisakhi  
(Sikhism)

One of the most significant holidays on the Sikh calendar, Baisakhi marks the day that Guru Gobind Singh established the Khalsa, a military order of saint-soldiers. Today, the term *Khalsa* is used to refer to all Sikhs who are formal members of the community. Baisakhi is celebrated with worship and offerings in gurdwaras, processions, and reflection.

April 21

Yom HaSho'ah  
(Judaism)

Established in 1951, Yom HaSho'ah is a remembrance day for the six million Jews who perished in the Holo-

caust. Many Jewish communities hold solemn ceremonies on this day. In Israel, Yom HaSho'ah is a national memorial day, and a state ceremony is held.

April 21-May 2

Ridvan  
(Baha'i)

On April 21, 1863, Baha'u'llah, founder of the Baha'i faith, declared his mission. To celebrate the commencement of his prophethood, Baha'is hold a 12-day festival called Ridvan, named after the Garden of Ridvan where Baha'u'llah stayed for twelve days in exile. The first, ninth, and twelfth days of Ridvan are special holy days, marking Baha'u'llah's arrival in the garden, his family's arrival, and his departure respectively. On these days, work is prohibited and time is spent in prayer and celebration.

April 23

Saint George's Day  
(Christianity)

This day commemorates Saint George, one of the most prominent military saints and patron saint of England, Greece, Russia, Ethiopia, Palestine, and Portugal. Saint George's Day is observed throughout the world and in different fashions, including flying the flag of Saint George's Cross and participating in parades.

April 29

Yom Ha'Atzmaut  
(Judaism)

Since 1948, Yom Ha'Atzmaut has marked the national independence day of Israel. Many celebrate the holiday with picnics, singing, and dancing; Hallel, a Jewish prayer, is often recited.

April 30

Saint James the Great Day  
(Orthodox Christianity)

This is the feast day for Saint James the Great, one of Jesus' twelve apostles. He is the patron saint of Spain, where tradition says he preached Christianity and was later put to rest. ✨

### LITERATURE IN REVIEW CONTINUED FROM P. 3

Among Johnson's dicta is that "writers have a mixed record in God's service...it is remarkable how many writers, in all civilizations, have tended to take a critical view of established order and sought to subvert it." Garry Wills might happily accept that characterization, but contend that subverting established order is precisely God's work, though not, unfortunately, the Church's.

Wills's much longer book is three-headed. It begins with a brief and much less revealing memoir of his Catholic roots, seminary days, and early influences. (That both Wills and Johnson are Jesuit-trained explains much about their combativeness and iconoclasm.) It ends with an equally brief summary of five clauses in the creed. But at its center, and triple the length of the other parts combined, is a historical survey of the Papacy and its role in both uniting and dividing the People of God. (Interestingly, Johnson and Wills both embrace this locution, Johnson even asserting, despite his enthusiasm for John Paul II, the "divine juggernaut," that "It is important to remember...that what is meant by the church is not the Vatican or those ecclesiastics, but the living church of countless souls seen collectively. Otherwise one dissolves in laughter.")

Wills's title could be expanded to "Why I Am a Catholic: Because of the Papacy—and in Spite of the Popes." Writing as a historian, he surveys the history of Christianity, rejecting claims both to Roman episcopal primacy and to infallibility. From anti-Semitism to misogyny to contempt for key pillars of modernity, such as the separation of church and state, freedom of conscience, and religious tolerance, he analyses innumerable instances of papal and hierarchic evils, yet asserts that "a person who loves the church can have a lover's quarrel with its leadership," and that "as bad as the papacy has been all throughout history, just think how much worse things would have been without it. Even in the darkest hours of the papacy, there is more life and light within the church than in the groups that split off from it." (He and Johnson agree that the old

doctrine of *extra ecclesiam nulla salus* is untenable and indeed has been discarded.)

Catholic readers have much to learn from Wills, as do others who want to understand what Catholics argue about. Any reader of faith, or in search of it, will enjoy grappling with the peregrinations of Johnson's spirit. As Augustine would have said of both, *Tolle, lege.* ✠

*Richard Barbieri, after seven interim headships, is giving himself a well-deserved sabbatical this school year to read and relax, write and reflect. He can be contacted at richarde.barbieri@gmail.com.*

### EDUCATING FOR LEADERSHIP CONTINUED FROM P. 4

ing fans' unsportsmanlike baiting of opponents during athletic contests

Purposely offering our students more adaptive leadership opportunities—as well as the inevitable array of technical ones—might entail some risk, and a paradigm shift for many of our schools. But it would also be a much more powerful way to provide state-of-the-art leadership training to our aspiring student leaders. Moreover, it would certainly prepare them much better for the kinds of challenges they are bound to encounter after they leave our cloistered campuses and start exercising leadership themselves out in "the real world." ✠

*Mike Pardee is CSEE's consultant on student leadership development, and a member of the Gardner-Carney Leadership Institute. He is Director of Character Education at the Kinkaid School, in Houston, Texas, a member of CSEE's moral development team, and a contributing author to CSEE's 2007 publication Highly Effective Programs: Character Education in Independent Schools.*

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## UPCOMING CONFERENCES

### MAY 2009

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### CSEE Experienced Teacher Workshop

By application only, for teachers of world religions. This year's focus will be on Hinduism and teaching the *Ramayana*, with further discussion on how to work with the world religions classroom. With Arti Dhand, Ph.D. April 3-5, 2009 New York

participants in 2007, this year's institute will return to the relaxed natural beauty of the Whidbey Institute in Washington state's Puget Sound.

With Dan Heishman  
July 18-23, 2009  
Whidbey Island  
Clinton, Washington

### Developing Student Leaders

Directors of model programs for developing student leadership in middle and upper schools will present their programs, and discuss similarities and differences with other school endeavors to develop strong student leaders.

April 17-18, 2009  
Colorado Academy  
Denver, Colorado

### Evaluating Character Education Programs

A CSEE "Working with the Best" event, this workshop will focus on how to assess our progress in character education initiatives. One day will concentrate on evaluation, and one will highlight schools that have developed effective character education programs.

With Edward de Roche, Ph.D.  
October 24-25, 2009  
San Diego, California

### JUNE 2009

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### 2009 Institute on Teaching the World's Religions

This year's focus will be on Buddhism and Islam, but with lots more, too. Get new ideas and deepen understanding with nationally recognized scholars, and share resources with world religions teachers from independent schools across the country.

With Christian Wedemeyer, Ph.D. and Asma Afsaruddin, Ph.D.  
June 25-29, 2009  
Chicago, Illinois

### Community Service and Service Learning

With Mary Pashley  
November date TBA  
Florida

### JULY 2009

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### 2009 Summer Adult Ethics Institute

A perennial favorite, the Adult Ethics Institute invites school teachers, administrators, and trustees to discuss meaningful pieces of fiction and nonfiction, as well as ethical case studies from real situations in independent schools. Based on the enthusiastic recommendation of

### Greening the Curriculum

Postponed from 2009, this event will focus on the two great impediments to better success in our schools' efforts to be green: the curriculum and the climate.

With Ursula Goodenough, Ph.D. and others  
January 17-19, 2010  
Miami, Florida ☼

## DISCIPLINE POLICIES VERSUS DISCIPLINE PHILOSOPHIES

All schools deal with behavior problems, but far too many miss a golden opportunity: that of having our disciplinary procedures further our goals for moral and character development. Unfortunately, the way some schools approach discipline counteracts these character goals. It barely takes more time, if any more at all, to use discipline to further the social, emotional, and moral growth. Goal number one is, of course, that misbehavior be curtailed. But don't stop there. Goal number two can, and should, be to have the young people involved leave the encounter both with greater skills and not wanting to repeat anything like the offense—not because of the punishment involved, but because of the way the misbehavior affects others. This is where a discipline philosophy can play a role.

Discipline policies are easy. It is good to be clear with students, and their parents, about disciplinary expectations and consequences. But when policies reflect what is easier for the school rather than what is best for the student, they are almost certain to work counter to social and moral growth. This is especially the case for policies that attempt a comprehensive list of “if you do this, we'll do that.” Research on school discipline has told us that schools that draw up long lists of rules and consequences actually see an increase in student misbehavior, rather than a decrease.

Think about what the goals of your school are. All schools have goals for student learning of academic material—information and skills; love of learning is often a goal, too. All CSEE schools also have goals for the kinds of citizens they want to develop. Typical goals include development of virtues like respect for people and property, kindness, and honesty.

A philosophy of discipline should include a disciplinary strategy that, while attempting to curtail misbehavior, will simultaneously promote (or at least not hinder) the school's character goals. For example, if a boy scratches his name into a desk or writes graffiti on the locker room wall

(an infraction against respect for property and people), “punishment” or “consequences” (the latter is often another word for punishment, though it should not be) can be meted out rather quickly. The harsher the consequences, the greater the chances that the student will not scratch on desks in that classroom, or write on walls in that locker room. The harsher the consequences, also, the greater are the chances that the resulting anger will manifest itself outside the context of the school day or later in life and the less are the chances that the student's respect for people or property will increase.

Dealing with this student in a different manner, however, may increase—or certainly will not decrease—the respect the student has for others and property. For example, we know that attempts to focus on empathy for those who might either be harmed by the graffiti or be obligated to clean it off or resurface the desk can increase the student's feelings for others, when such attempts are handled the right way. Similarly, attempts to have the offending student participate in deciding on the most appropriate consequences of his action (even if the consequences need to be tweaked by the adult or adults in question) can help preserve the student's dignity and diminish the possibility of subsequent anger, and thus subsequent infractions in or out of school. At the same time, a greater amount of respect (for the guilty party) is shown in the latter scenario, meaning that respect is modeled by an adult, by the school. Modeling the values we want students to learn is one of the most powerful ways to teach values.

Policies cannot cover all possible cases. Philosophies do cover all possible cases. What they say is that, regardless of the offense, we believe in certain principles to such an extent that we will work to the best of our ability to deal with all offences according to these principles. General policies can accompany philosophies of discipline, but the philosophy should always take precedence over the policy.

Does your school have a philosophy of discipline? ✨

David Streight