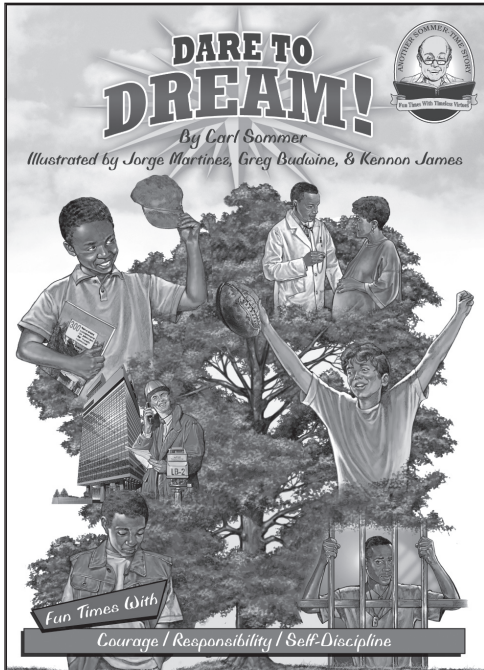


Character Education Lessons

Carl Sommer

2. Dare to Dream!



about the book

Roy wondered why his father was a successful doctor, his dad's best friend Jesse was an architectural engineer, and his dad's brother Alvin ended up in jail. His dad, Nelson, tells about his childhood of living in a single parent home in a poor area with gangs and drugs. His grandfather and grandmother taught him and his friend Jesse, but Alvin always resisted learning.

Grandma tells them about the struggles of Benjamin Franklin, George Washington Carver, Helen Keller, and Abraham Lincoln. After hearing of their struggles, Nelson and Jesse felt ashamed that they had complained about things being difficult. Grandpa read to them, "Dare to Dream Guidelines." Alvin's refusal to listen caused him to end up in jail; however, Nelson and Jesse listened and became successful.

Main Virtues

Courage/Responsibility/Self-Discipline

Other Virtues

Appreciation, Citizenship, Diligence, Obedience, Perseverance, Proper Work Ethic, Respect, and Trust

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Desiring Wisdom

Roy lived in a large house in a beautiful neighborhood. He often wondered why his dad was a successful doctor, his dad's best friend Jesse was an architectural engineer, and his dad's brother Alvin ended up in jail.

One day Roy asked his dad, "What was it like when you were growing up?"

Nelson was a wise; he desired wisdom. One of the best ways to obtain wisdom is to ask and then listen to what your parents have to say.

Overcoming Temptation

My brother Alvin and my best friend Jesse lived in the poorest part of town where there were lots of drugs and gangs. My dad died when I was four years old.

Mom, Grandpa and Grandma had often warned us not to use drugs or join a gang.

But one day a gang leader said to me, "Nelson, we want you to join us."

I wanted to obey my grandparents, so I whispered, "I don't know."

The leader looked me in the eye and warned, "Nelson, you'd better join us if you want to be protected."

"And what about you?" asked the leader as he jabbed Alvin with his finger.

"I think it's a great idea."

"Great!" said the gang leader as he slapped Alvin on the back. Then he poked Jesse and asked, "And what about you?"

Jesse just stood there.

"Make up your mind!" snapped the leader. "I'll be back to ask you again."

Even though Nelson wanted to obey his grandparents, he nearly got trapped into joining the gang. Many children yield to social pressure and get into all sorts of trouble. It takes a strong person to do what is right, regardless of what others do.

Seek Advice

Grandpa always tried to teach us valuable lessons. While driving to the lake, he said, "Don't think you know all the answers. Learn to ask for advice. I don't know this lake, so the first thing I'll do when I get to the bait shop is to ask about the best place to catch fish."

We stopped at the bait shop. Grandpa asked, "Where's a good place to fish?"

"I've heard there's excellent fishing at the cove," said the store owner.

So we drove to the cove and went fishing. Sure enough, the fishing was great.

Learn to seek advice from the wise. Listen to your teachers, counselors, and especially your parents.

Do Your Best to Become Successful

Grandpa always wanted us to do our best, even when we were playing a game. He threw the football short and over our heads so we had to run fast to catch the ball. He had a motto: "If you want to be successful at anything, you've got to make it a habit to do your best."

Choosing Friends

After we played for a while, Grandpa said, "Let's sit down under the giant oak tree."

Alvin was mad. He still wanted to play football. He sat down on the bench while Jesse and I joined Grandpa under the oak tree. We talked for awhile, and then I said, "Grandpa, a gang in our neighborhood wants us to join them. All the kids our age have joined. What should we do?"

Choose your friends carefully. Those who get mixed up with the wrong crowd often get into trouble. Also, your friends often tell what kind of person you will become.

Refuse to Listen to Voices of Defeat

“You need to dare to dream,” challenged Grandpa. Then he looked straight into our eyes. “Don’t be like the thousands of acorns that never amount to anything. Dream that one day you’ll become a giant oak tree. There are voices that want to keep you poor and ignorant. Refuse to listen to those voices of defeat. Instead, dare to dream *big* dreams!”

Drunkenness

Alvin went along, but he pouted for the entire trip. Grandma pointed to people lying on the sidewalk and groaned, “See those poor people? They were once just like you. They started out with wrong friends. They thought they were having lots of fun going to parties and getting drunk. Now as addicts their lives are destroyed.”

Many a young person’s life has been destroyed on this road of fun, parties, and drinking. Nothing is wrong with fun and parties, but young people need to be careful of temptations that destroy people’s lives.

Smoking and Drugs

We drove a few blocks. “See those drug addicts?” said Grandpa. “All they dream about is getting another high from drugs. They probably started smoking cigarettes, and then friends encouraged them to try something stronger. They listened, and after trying all sorts of drugs—they’re hooked and ruined.”

Smoking, drugs and chemical abuse have destroyed many young people. What started out as having a little pleasure has turned out to become a destructive nightmare. The secret is not to get started in the first place.

Sexual Temptations

“Lots of people warned me, but I listened to my friends. Now I have this incurable disease because of my careless living.”

Then Sam pointed his finger at us. “Whatever you do, pick good friends. And don’t do anything that will harm your body. I wish I had listened to my parents.”

One of the quickest ways to destroy the body is to yield to sexual temptations. There are many sexual diseases, and many will have lifelong diseases and even die early because they refuse to follow that sex belongs only in marriage.

Be Strong and Courageous

When we sat down, Grandpa looked us in the eyes and warned, “Beware of people who want to destroy your dreams. They’ll make fun of you, call you names, and even threaten you. Be strong! Refuse to listen to them! *Never* let anyone steal your dreams!”

“But it’s so hard in our neighborhood,” I said. “Jesse and I work hard in school and get good grades. But our friends keep making fun of us.”

“Don’t listen to them!” urged Grandpa. “One day you’ll be glad you did the right thing.”

Learn to be strong and courageous to do what’s right. Don’t yield to those who want you to do what you know is wrong.

Biographies

Biographies are an excellent source of studying men and women’s lives to see how they became successful. Let’s examine the lives of Benjamin Franklin, George Washington Carver, Abraham Lincoln and Helen Keller to discover the reasons for their success. (Those inclined to do so may want to read the fuller biographies from Advance Publishing and share the story with others.)

Ask the students, “What can we learn from these statements about the character of (name of the person being studied)?”

Benjamin Franklin

1. In Benjamin Franklin's family there was no time to waste. His parents had 17 children, and at the age of eight, Ben went to grammar school. After one year in school, he was the best student in his class.

Ben was studious in school. He loved learning.

2. At the age of ten, his father wanted him to leave school and learn his trade of making soap and candles. Even though Ben was no longer in school, he loved learning so much that he spent all his money to buy books.

Even though Ben no longer went to school, he still was eager to learn.

3. At the age of 17 he left his brother's shop to work in another print shop in Philadelphia. After working there he boarded a ship and went to work in a print shop in London, England. The workers called him "Water American" because he drank only water while they drank lots of beer.

Ben was willing to be different because he knew what he was doing was right.

4. Ben started his own print shop. He bought the best printing press and type. His work was so good that his print shop became the official public printer for Pennsylvania. He then printed a newspaper that became the best in all of the American colonies.

Ben was a diligent worker. He applied the things he learned and became the best print shop in all of the American colonies.

5. Ben became a businessman, inventor, scientist, and an ambassador for the United States.

Ben's eagerness to learn and to do what was right led him to become successful.

George Washington Carver

1. As a young boy, George became curious. He studied why some plants grew better in the shade and others grew better in the sun. He learned what made trees and plants sick, and he experimented with different kinds of soils. George became known as the "Plant Doctor."

George had lots of questions. He needed books to provide the answers. His adopted mother Susan gave him an old spelling book and helped him learn to read. But that wasn't enough. George wanted to learn more.

At age 12, George left home to go to school. To pay for his schooling, he did laundry and housework.

George was a diligent learner. He kept on wanting to learn more.

2. Some white folks once beat him because he was a black boy carrying books. But that didn't stop him from getting an education. George kept working and going to school. When he was 21 years old, he graduated from high school.

When he applied to attend college, he was accepted. But when he went to enroll, the principal said, "You didn't tell me you were Negro. This college does not accept Negroes!"

Saddened, George left. It was hard to get an education as a black person. For the next five years George did various kinds of work. Friends at church suggested he apply to Simpson College in Iowa. At 26 years of age he was accepted. George again did laundry work to pay for his education.

George would not let his persecutions and difficulties stop him.

3. The school was poor, but that didn't stop Carver from teaching his students well. In addition to

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his teaching, Carver traveled to teach poor farmers, both black and white, how to plant.

Carver was a kind man wanting to help the poor and needy.

4. Carver became a famous scientist, recognized all over the world. From the peanut alone he created over 300 products! Carver had all kinds of reasons to give up, but he never lost his dream!

Because of his diligence, George became a world famous scientist.

Helen Keller

1. At the age of one, Helen Keller became sick with scarlet fever. Although she became better, the scarlet fever left her blind and deaf. Her parents tried to help her see and hear, but nothing helped. Helen became angry and refused to behave.

Helen's parents invited Annie Sullivan to become a private tutor for their daughter. The first time Annie saw Helen, she was shocked—Helen's hair had not been combed for weeks, she was filthy, her shoes were untied, and anyone trying to tie them was kicked.

The battle was on. Helen pinched, hit, and kicked to get what she wanted. But one thing Helen did not know, Annie was just as stubborn as she was.

After applying much love and discipline, Annie taught Helen to obey. Even though Helen was blind and could not see, she learned words by using hand-talk.

After applying much love and discipline, Annie taught Helen to obey.

2. Helen also wanted to learn to speak. Even though this was harder than learning to lip-read, with Annie's help she mastered the art of speaking.

Helen had a great eagerness to learn.

3. Helen choose Radcliffe College—the best university for women in the United States!

Helen passed the entrance exam to Radcliffe College when she was 19 years old. At the college, Helen learned to read and write French, Greek, German, and Latin. Helen graduated with honors.

Difficulties did not stop Helen from being her best.

4. Helen Keller wrote six books and traveled around the world speaking to promote the needs of the physically challenged. Under the most difficult circumstances, Helen Keller had every reason to give up, but she never lost her dream!

Helen because of her eagerness to learn and to overcome her problems became world famous.

Helen practiced the Golden Rule of doing to others as she would have wanted others to do to her by using her influence to help those physically challenged.

Abraham Lincoln

1. Abraham Lincoln, known as Abe, was born in 1809 in a tiny one-room log cabin in Kentucky. When Abe was eight years old, his mother died.

Abe loved to read. The family Bible was the only book in Abe's home, so he read it over and over. Abe said, "My best friend is the man who'll get me a book I ain't read."

As a young child Abe was an eager learner.

Wise are those eager to learn, for that's the road to becoming successful.

2. Abe made it a habit to be honest. When Abe and a neighbor built and opened a small log cabin store, he had overcharged a woman a few pennies. Honest Abe walked twelve miles round trip to return the money. Although his business venture failed and his partner died, Abe paid all the money he owed.

Abe always wanted to be honest.

An honest person can always be trusted. The opposite of being honest is being a liar.

3. In the 1850s, more and more people were against slavery. They formed the Republican Party. Abe ran for the Senate and spoke against slavery. He lost. Again he ran for the Senate. He lost. Determined Abe would not give up. Then in 1860 his party nominated him as their presidential candidate. Abe was the only candidate who spoke against slavery. This time he won.

Several southern states tried to leave the union. Abe wanted the states to stay together. Civil War broke out between the North and the South.

Then in 1863 Abe signed the Emancipation Proclamation which stated, "All persons held as slaves within said designated states...shall be free." In 1865 the North won the war, and all slaves were set free

Abe was interested in helping the poor slaves to become free. We also should be interested in helping the unfortunate people around us.

4. Abraham Lincoln was born into poverty and faced constant defeat. He had lost eight elections, failed twice in business, and suffered a nervous breakdown. He had every reason to give up, but he never lost his dream! He became one of America's greatest presidents.

Abe would not let his failures and discouragements keep him down.

Seek Wisdom

"What do you think about those people?" asked Grandpa.

"I feel ashamed that I complained that my life was so difficult," I said.

"If they could fulfill their dreams," said Jesse, "I know we can! We have it much, much easier."

Then Grandpa challenged us. "Dare to dream big dreams. Be willing to sacrifice and work hard to make those dreams come true."

Grandma added, "Take advantage of the schooling you're getting. Don't let anyone discourage you. One day when your dreams come true, you'll be glad you listened."

Then I gave Jesse a high five and shouted, "Let's go after our dreams!"

"Yeah!" proclaimed Jesse. "Let's never give up!"

"Let's go to the backyard," said Grandpa.

Many children get on the road of failure because they listen to the wrong people. They let peer pressure dictate what they will become. But those who are wise turn a deaf ear to those voices. One of the most important issues in becoming successful is to get an education. Even if it is very difficult for you, if you persist, one day you'll be glad you did.

Dare to Dream Guidelines

When we went outside, Grandpa read to us, “Dare to Dream Guidelines.”

1. Stand up straight and do what’s right.
2. Choose your friends and music carefully.
3. Don’t follow “If it feels good—do it!”
4. Be honest and work hard.
5. Never do anything that harms your body.
6. Refuse to listen to voices that lead you to poverty and ignorance.
7. Earnestly desire wisdom and understanding.
8. Listen to your parents.
9. Find places where good people meet and join them.
10. Dream realistic dreams that build on your desires and on your abilities. But dream big, for dreams are the paths to your future.

After tucking the guidelines into his pocket, Grandpa pointed to an oak tree he had planted and said, “Hang these guidelines up so you can read them over and over again. Dream to become a giant oak tree! Then use your success to make this world a better place!”

Encourage children to follow these “Dare to Dream Guidelines.” Go over them point by point. When discussing, “Never do anything that harms the body,” be frank and discuss according the ages of the students the danger of drugs, sniffing glue, smoking, alcohol, and premarital sex. Many children’s lives are destroyed early because of involvement with these vices.

(Go to www.advancepublishing.com and go to Dare to Dream and print “Dare to Dream Guidelines.”)

Questions

1. What did Roy often wonder about his family?

Roy often wondered why his dad was a successful doctor, his dad’s best friend Jesse was an architectural engineer, and his dad’s brother Alvin ended up in jail.

Nelson was wise; he desired wisdom. One of the best ways to obtain wisdom is to ask and then listen to what your parents have to say.

2. A. Roy’s dad tells the story of how he grew up. What was Roy’s dad’s name?

Roy’s dad’s name was Nelson.

B. Why is it a wise thing to do to ask your parents how they grew up?

When we ask our parents how they grew up it help us understand our parents and to learn things on how we can become successful.

3. What did the gang leader want Nelson, Jesse, and Alvin to do?

The gang leader wanted Nelson, Jesse, and Alvin to join his gang.

4. How did Nelson, Jesse, and Alvin react to the gang leader when he asked them to join the gang?

A. Nelson said to the gang leader, “I don’t know.”

B. Jesse never replied.

C. Alvin said, “I think it’s a great idea.”

Even though Nelson wanted to obey his grandparents, he nearly got trapped into joining the gang. Many children yield to social pressure and get into all sorts of trouble. It takes a strong person to do what is right, regardless of what others do.

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5. Grandpa always tried to teach Nelson, Jesse, and Alvin valuable lessons. Grandpa said, “Don’t think you know all the answers.” What did Grandpa say as he was driving to the bait shop?

Grandpa said, “Learn to ask for advice. I don’t know this lake, so the first thing I’ll do when I get to the bait shop is to ask about the best place to catch fish.”

Learn to seek advice from the wise. Listen to your teachers, counselors, and especially your parents.

6. How was the fishing where the store owner recommended?

The place where the store owner recommended was great for fishing.

7. Grandpa always wanted Nelson, Jesse, and Alvin to do their best, even when they were playing a game. What did Grandpa do when they were playing football?

Grandpa threw the football short and over their heads so they had to run fast to catch the ball.

8. What was Grandpa's motto about doing your best?

Grandpa's motto was, “If you want to be successful at anything, you’ve got to make it a habit of doing your best.”

9. How did Alvin react when Grandpa asked them to sit under the oak tree?

Alvin got mad.

10. Why did Alvin get mad?

Alvin got mad because he still wanted to play football. He did not want to listen to grandpa.

11. What was Grandpa's advice when Nelson said, “Grandpa, a gang in our neighborhood wants us to join them. All the kids our age have joined. What should we do?”

Grandpa said, “Choose your friends carefully. Those who get mixed up with the wrong crowd often get into trouble. Also, your friends often tell what kind of person you will become.”

12. What did Grandpa do when Nelson asked what he should do about the gang that wanted him to join them?

Grandpa said, “Pick up an acorn. This acorn can grow to be as big as this giant oak tree.”

13. When Grandpa was teaching them about how to become a giant oak, what did Alvin do?

Alvin interrupted Grandpa and said, “Let’s play football.”

14. What did Alvin do when Grandpa said to him, “It might help you to listen to what I’m trying to say.”

Alvin got mad. He plopped down and stared at the ground.

15. What did Grandpa say when Nelson said everyone says it is hopeless where he lives to become a giant oak tree?

Grandpa said, “You need to dare to dream. Don’t be like the thousands of acorns that never amount to anything. Dream that one day you’ll become a giant oak tree.”

16. What was Grandpa’s advice about those voices that want to keep you poor and ignorant?

Grandpa said, “Refuse to listen to those voices of defeat. Instead, dare to dream big dreams!”

17. What did Grandma say as she pointed out the people sitting on the sidewalk?

Grandma said, “See those poor people? They were once just like you. They started out with wrong friends. They thought they were having lots of fun going to parties and getting drunk. Now as addicts their lives

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are destroyed.”

Many a young person’s life has been destroyed on this road of fun, parties, and drinking. Nothing is wrong with fun and parties, but young people need to be careful of temptations that destroy one’s life.

18. A. How did Grandpa say most of the drug addicts got started taking drugs?

Grandpa said that they probably started by smoking cigarettes.

B. Why is smoking bad?

It is expensive, it makes your breath smell, it can lead to cancer, and it is addictive.

19. Sam in the hospital said, “Lots of people warned me, but I listened to my friends. Now I have this incurable disease because of my careless living.” What was Sam’s advice?

Sam’s advice was, “Whatever you do, pick good friends. And don’t do anything that will harm your body. I wish I had listened to my parents.”

One of the quickest ways to destroy the body is yielding to sexual temptations. There are many sexual diseases, and many will have lifelong diseases and even die early because they refuse to follow that sex belongs only in marriage.

Benjamin Franklin

20. After one year in school Ben was the best student in his class. What does this show about Ben?

Ben was eager to learn.

21. Even though Ben was out of school, what did he do because he loved learning so much?

Ben spent all his money on books.

22. Why was Ben called a “Water American”?

Ben was called a “Water American” because he drank only water while the others drank lots of beer.

23. What did Ben’s print shop become in Pennsylvania?

It became the official public printer for Pennsylvania.

He then printed a newspaper that became the best in all of the American colonies.

24. What did Ben help Thomas Jefferson write.

Ben helped Thomas Jefferson write the Declaration of Independence.

On July 4, 1776, Congress approved it. That day became the birthday of the United States of America.

George Washington Carver

25. During the Civil War how was George Washington Carver born?

During the Civil War George Washington Carver was born a slave.

26. As a young boy, George loved to study plants and trees, and he experimented with different kinds of soils. What was did people start calling him?

People started calling him the “Plant Doctor.”

27. At age 12, George left home to go to school. What did he do to pay for his schooling?

To pay for his schooling, George did laundry and housework.

28. One day some white folks beat him because he was a black boy carrying books. Did that incident stop him from getting an education?

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No, it did not stop George from getting an education.

29. At what age did George graduate from high school?

George was 21 when he graduated from high school.

30. At what age did George attend college?

George started college when he was 26 years old.

31. How did George pay for his college education?

George did laundry work to pay for his education.

32. When George finished college where did he teach?

George taught at a college founded by Booker T. Washington in Tuskegee, Alabama.

33. How many products did George Washington Carver create from the peanut alone?

George Washington Carver created over 300 products from the peanut.

Helen Keller

34. What happened to Helen Keller after she became sick with scarlet fever?

From the scarlet fever Helen Keller became blind and deaf.

35. Who was the private tutor that came to help Helen Keller?

Annie Sullivan became the private tutor for Helen Keller.

36. Helen was blind and deaf, so how did Annie Sullivan teach Helen words?

Annie Sullivan taught Helen words by using hand-talk.

37. At what age did Helen attend Radcliffe College?

Helen was 19 years old when she started college.

38. What languages did Helen learn to read and write?

Helen learned to read and write French, Greek, German, and Latin.

39. How many books did Helen Keller write?

Helen Keller wrote six books.

Helen Keller traveled around the world speaking to promote the needs of the physically challenged.

Abraham Lincoln

40. What kind of house was Abe born in?

Abe was born in a tiny one-room log cabin in Kentucky.

41. How old was Abe when his mother died?

Abe was eight years old when his mother died.

42. What book did Abe read over and over again?

Abe read over and over again the family Bible.

43. What did Abe do when he overcharged a woman a few pennies?

Honest Abe walked twelve miles round trip to return the money.

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44. What happened when several southern states tried to leave the union because of slavery?
When several southern states tried to leave the union because of slavery, Civil War broke out between the North and the South.

45. What did Abe sign that stated, “All persons held as slaves within said designated states...shall be free.”

In 1863 Abe signed the Emancipation Proclamation.

46. Why is it important to read biographies?

It is important to read and study biographies because it help us learn from the mistakes and successes of others.

Biographies are often a great inspiration. Have students discuss the lessons they learned from these biographies.

47. What did Nelson say when Grandpa asked, “What do you think about those people?”

Nelson said, “I feel ashamed that I complained that my life was so difficult.”

48. A. What did Grandpa read to Nelson and Jesse?

Grandpa read to Nelson and Jesse the “Dare to Dream Guidelines.”

B. Name some of the “Dare to Dream Guidelines.”

1. Stand up straight and do what’s right.

2. Choose your friends and music carefully.

3. Don’t follow “If it feels good—do it!”

4. Be honest and work hard.

5. Never do anything that harms your body.

6. Refuse to listen to voices that lead you to poverty and ignorance.

7. Earnestly desire wisdom and understanding.

8. Listen to your parents.

9. Find places where good people meet and join them.

10. Dream realistic dreams that build on your desires and on your abilities. But dream big, for dreams are the paths to your future.

C. Take each guideline and have students discuss why it is an important principle for them to become successful.

49. What happened to Alvin, Jesse, and Nelson?

A. Alvin ended up in jail.

B. Jesse became an architectural engineer.

C. Nelson became a doctor.

50. What did Alvin always groan when Nelson visited him?

Alvin always groaned, “Oh, how I wish I had listened to Grandpa and Grandma.”