

## Personal Coaching: Cultivate and Guard Your Character

**Good character is a purposeful decision. You cannot assume it will just happen; you must intentionally cultivate and guard it through an ongoing process. Consider these elements of character as you answer questions and make new commitments.**

- 1. Clarify Your Values.** When values are vague, human nature naturally defaults toward selfishness and the greed and fear that it spawns. As a powerful exercise, write out at least 4 short statements clarifying your character values as non-negotiable commitments. Use the list below as a launching pad to come up with your own:

*(Honesty, Truthfulness, Reliability, Responsibility, Honor, (choosing to do what is right), Valuing others, Respect, Loyalty, Faithfulness, Keeping Commitments/Word/Promises, Gossip, Confidentiality, Money and Finances, etc.)*

Define your values in some detail, so you have a very clear idea what they *do* and *do not* entail. For example, if you choose “*Keeping Commitments*” as a value, write something specific like “In Keeping Commitments, I will complete work projects on time, take my spouse to dinner as promised, and fulfill my volunteer obligations.”

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_
4. \_\_\_\_\_

- 2. Challenge Your Behaviors.** Are you currently living and leading in congruence with your values and beliefs?
  - a. Recall an example of a challenge to your character that you met successfully. What enabled you to stand firm with your commitments? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
  - b. Recall a missed opportunity such as a broken promise or a time when you did not live up to your commitments. What pulled you away? Did you take responsibility and corrective action for this deviation? What did you learn from this experience? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

- 3. Check in with others.** You cannot maintain good character alone. Without accountability checkpoints, you will tend to drift from your values. You will need support, encouragement, counsel, and accountability to stay on course. Name a group of two or three friends with whom you can be transparent and vulnerable? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

- 4. Cultivate character in your sphere of influence.** Are you intentionally modeling character at work and at home? What are you doing to pass along your values about character to others? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Bottom Line: Authentic leaders intentionally cultivate character. Clarify your values with a high degree of specificity and objective honesty. Then structure accountability around your values so you will live in accordance with them with courage and transparency.**