



Useful Definitions

CHARACTER: The sum of one's good and bad habits.

CRITICAL THINKING: The process of separating truth from untruth, fact from fiction, and reason from passion. To judge based on reason and intellect. Critical thinking decreases the chance of being deceived or manipulated.

DILEMMA: A problem with two potential outcomes, neither of which is acceptable.

ETHICS: What one ought to do according to well-established community expectations. Ethics is obedience to the unenforceable. (Adapted from Kidder's, "How Good People Make Tough Choices.")

INTEGRITY: The practice of being honest, consistent, uncompromising to one's moral and ethical principles and values. In practice, to *discern* what is right, to *act* with what you have discerned, and to *profess* your action to all. (Adapted from Stephen L. Carter's book, "Integrity.")

LAW: The system of rules created and enforced by a government to regulate behavior. What one must do.

MORAL COURAGE: After determining what is right, possessing the will to carry out the decision, even at great personal risk.

MORAL REASONING: The process of determining right or wrong, in a given situation. The lowest level of moral reasoning is choice based on avoiding punishment. The second level of moral reasoning is the belief that the law is the judge of morality. The highest level of moral reasoning is choice based on the social contract and expectations or unspoken agreement to behave in a certain way: ethics. (Based on Lawrence Kohlberg's stages of moral development.)

VALUES: The things we think are important and their priority; the framework upon which we base our actions. Values help us choose what to do.

