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Pillars of character: Strength of the business community



Small Biz Strategies
 Dr. Marc Clark mdclark@kih.net

Have you ever been to the beautiful country of Greece? To Athens? The Acropolis or to the Parthenon? Those who relish history make this a stop in their world travels.

Over 2,500 years ago the Greeks created the most beautiful temples and statues in the ancient world using white marble. The best of these creations were erected upon the Acropolis, a small plateau in the heart of the city of Athens. The Parthenon, a temple dedicated to Athena, the Greek goddess of war and wisdom, was built here and it remains still standing today. Construction began in 447 BC and ended in 432 BC at the cost of 469 talents of silver (57 pounds per talent and at today's prices per ounce over \$11.5 million).

The most amazing thing about the Parthenon's construction was the use of more than 70 pillars. These pillars have faithfully supported the upper structure for

centuries. They weathered seasons, storms, earthquakes, fires, pollution and wars.

The primary function of a pillar is support! Synonyms of "pillar" confirm this: column, support, backbone and strength.

Now another set of questions. Have you ever considered yourself and your business as a pillar of the community, supporting its success and contributing to the welfare of many? Do you care what others think of you? About the reputation of your business? The quality of the products and services you promote or your own personal character?

Several years back I became involved in a program at one of the schools in our community entitled Character Counts. The program consists of learning about pillars of character that help build personal character. In our ever-changing business world this is something that we all should consider doing from time to time: evaluate and assess who we are, what is our purpose, and what positive contributions are we making in the community we live in and on the people we encounter.

Take a look at the follow six pillars. Which do you possess? Which are strong? Which need to be worked on? Be honest. No one will know how the rating turns out except you. When you read about the pillar, you will note that it is in the form of an oath. Are you willing to take these oaths and live by them? They are powerful. They support relationships and community.

The Six Pillars of Character

Trustworthiness

We will be honest in our words, actions and deeds. Our word becomes our bond. We will do what we say we will do and not make promises that we have no intention of keeping. We will do what we know is right and stand up for what is right. Our beliefs will be grounded in truth. We will look at creating lasting friendships.

Respect

We will treat all others the way they and we would want to be treated. Each person will be of value to us. Courtesy and politeness will not be the exception to the rule, but a part of our daily character. Disagreements will be solved peacefully and we will treat others well no matter how different they were from us.

Responsibility

We will strive hard to do what we are supposed to do and not cut corners, value or quality. We will think about how our actions will affect others and work hard to always do our best. We will take ownership of our responsibilities and attend to them to the best of our ability.

Fairness

We will play by the rules and not take advantage of others. We will have an open mind to other viewpoints. We will work

to change things that are unfair. Starting today we will begin working at not being prejudice towards anyone who is different than we are. We will become active listeners and find a common ground even on things that we have a difference of opinion on. We will step forward and take up for others without a hidden agenda or motive. We will not blame others in order to try to secure an advantage.

Caring

We will take time to help others and be concerned about their feelings. Our actions and words will reflect kindness, and we will thank others for what they do for us. We will have a compassionate heart for those in need and we will put our differences aside for the well being of the down trodden and helpless.

Citizenship

We will contribute to our community to make it better. We will obey rules, statutes and laws and work towards cooperating with others. We will work for the common good of all and not for just personal gain.

I believe that if we as adults and business professionals adopt new pillars of character and apply them, it will drive the industry to higher levels of success and prosperity and our personal lives to a new level of joy.

References: *TOC: Making Ethical Decisions & Pillars Stand for Something* by John Reid