

Character Council of Indiana

TOLERANCE vs. PREJUDICE

“Realizing that everyone is at varying levels of character development.”

How tolerant are you?

- Do you view each person as an individual rather than as a member of a race, culture, or group?
- Do you make allowances for those who are not as wise and mature as they should be?
- Do you look for common ground with people of different viewpoints and behavior rather than focusing on differing opinions and standards?

Tolerance commitment:

- I will not confuse what is right with what is popular.
- I will expect the same of myself as I expect of others.
- I will look for ways to help others mature.
- I will accept my own unchangeables and the unchangeables of others.
- I will listen before I form an opinion.

By: Steve Becker

As a leader, one of the greatest tests of teamwork is the ability to keep your team focused in the midst of opposition. Tolerance is the ability to keep united in the battle by keeping peace in a camp staffed by many different-minded individuals. Tolerance is learning to get along with people....the ones you don't think you can get along with.

Tolerance is a character quality that overcomes prejudice. It is however, more than just overlooking differences. It is accepting others *despite* their aggravating faults. It is upholding a high standard while accommodating the real imperfections of those striving to meet that standard. ***It is the quality that blends idealism with realism in order to promote progress.***

Lets look at another side of tolerance. It is not proper to “wink” at character violations, to encourage rebellion, or to lower standards in the name of tolerance. This is a devastating misunderstanding of this quality. Here are some examples of things leaders should ***not*** tolerate:

- Employees with rebellious and unwilling attitudes
- Behavior that damages relationships, property, company reputation

The things that aggravate you often reveal more about *you* than they reveal about others. When we have a character failure, our sense of guilt heightens our sensitivity to that same fault in others. Our sense of personal guilt will often stir us to react strongly against others with the same fault. Parents who feel they are doing a poor job raising a child will often jump to blame the school, the teachers or the child's friends when their child gets a bad grade or gets into trouble. A personal example of this concept is one of my bad habits: interrupting others. You guessed it; it bothers me when I am interrupted.

It is always easier to pull a string than to push it. It is easier to inspire children to improve than it is to push them for achievement. We need to encourage them in their development. When your nine-year-old gives you a picture she drew of the sunset, do you criticize its imperfections? No, you would adjust your expectations to the development level of the child. Why is it we often forget this concept with our rookie employees?

Where do you need to be more tolerant today? Where do you need to uphold the standard of good character by not tolerating bad behavior? Determine to answer these questions and act upon your answers. You will be better off, and your organization will continue to grow in character.

A rule of thumb to help you determine whether or not it is your place to criticize: If you have an earnest desire welling up inside you to give someone *!\$#... you would be wise to keep silent.