

Action, Character and Moral Formation for Catholic School Catechesis 2013a



Steve Johnson
Markkula Center for Applied Ethics
Santa Clara University

sjohnson@scu.edu
www.scu.edu/character

My students?



Can we impact the character of our students?



My students?

Can we impact the
character
of our students?

ethics

is about relationships

ethics

- Being the kind of person other people would choose as a study partner, friend, business partner, lab partner, team mate, companion, confidant, even a life partner.

Ethicists talk

- About actions
- What people should do
- **About people**
- **What people should be like**

moral

There are things you ought to do and ought not to do.

moral

There is a kind of person it is desirable to be
and desirable not to be.

Values

Firmly held dispositions or traits.

Values

What is important to you, what you value.

Core Values

the most important values

Common Values

values a group shares

Common Values

- We may not agree on all values but that doesn't mean we cannot agree on any values
- Human minimums: values no human society can hope to succeed without

Would you oppose?

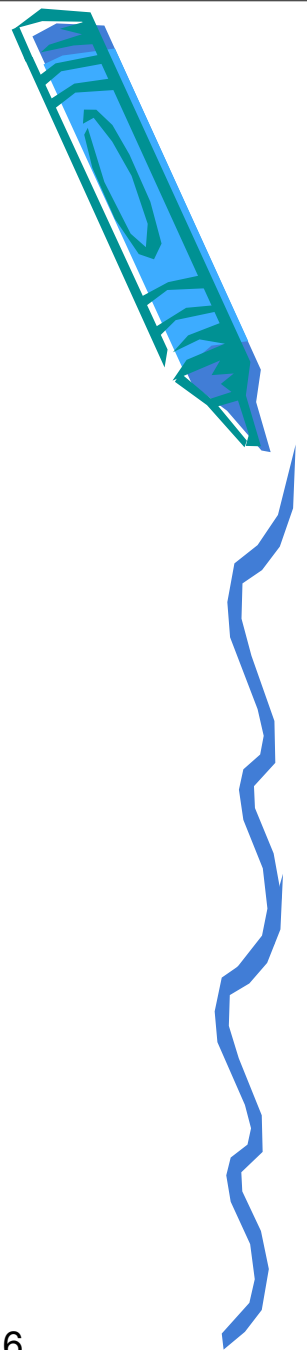
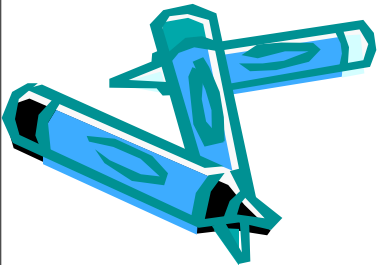
- Responsibility
- Respect
- Self control
- Integrity
- Effort

Character

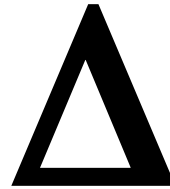
- The sum of my virtues and my vices.
- Who I am today as a result of everything I have become and overcome in my life so far, plus what I become and overcome today.
- The kind of human being that I am.
- Who I am.

Basic Habits

- Show up
- On time
- Start promptly
- Follow directions
- Finish tasks
- Get along with teachers
- Get along with peers
- Good hygiene



CHARACTER FORMATION



VALUES

1. Role Models
2. Legends
3. Stories
4. Reinforcement

THOUGHT

1. Problem Solving
2. Real: Undistorted
3. Reflection
4. Frameworks

SKILLS

1. Coping
2. Cooperation

Values

Role Models



1. **Parents**
2. **Other adults**
3. **Peers**
4. **Mass media**

Legends and Heroes



1. Media, entertainment, sports
2. People you know and can learn from
3. Unknown effects

Reinforcement



- People value what they desire to get and avoid getting

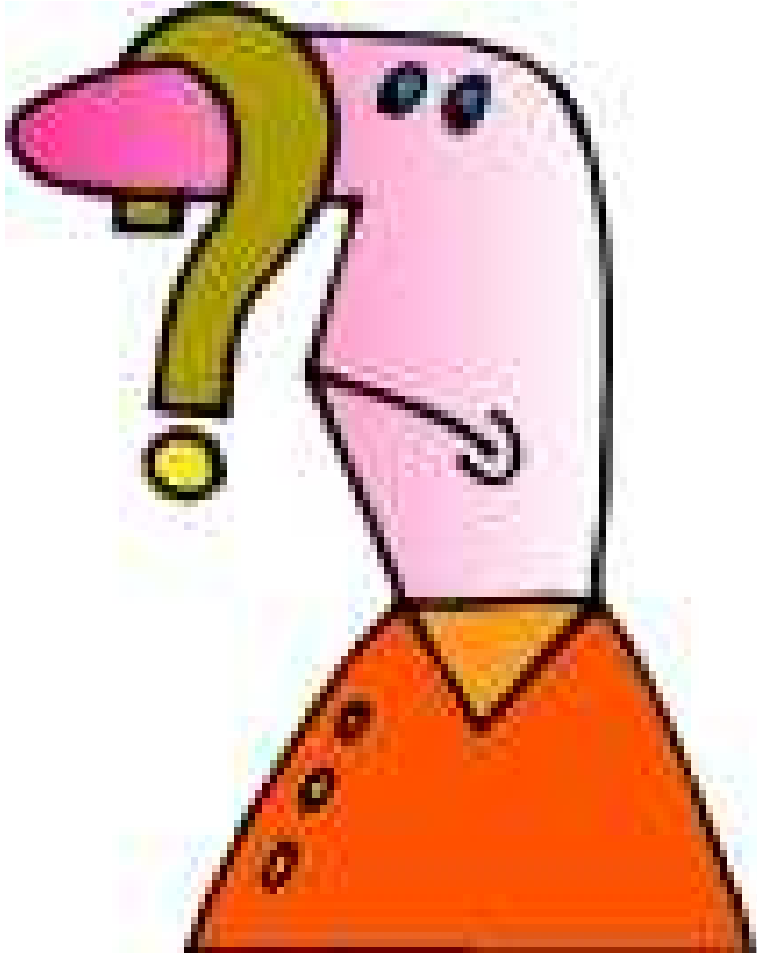
Narrative: Stories



- Family stories
- Bedtime stories
- Novels, poems, plays, biography
- TV, films, videogames
- Peer stories

Thoughts

Problem Solving



1. Identify problem
2. Define
3. Brainstorm solutions
4. Choose solution
5. Implement
6. Check solution

Reflection



- Learning from experience
- Levels of reflection from surface to deep
- Ability to acquire wisdom

Frameworks



- Ability to use formal ethics frameworks when I genuinely don't know what to do

A Simple Framework

If I **do**/**don't do** this:

1. What kind of person do I become?
2. Will I do more good or harm?
3. Will I treat others with dignity and respect?
4. Will I be fair and just?
5. Will the community, as a whole, be better off?

Thinking straight



- Avoiding cognitive distortions like all or nothing thinking, mollification or entitlement.

Skills

Coping



- Anger control
- Emotional management
- Impulse restraint

Cooperation



- Social skills
- Language routines
- Skills to get along
- Success skills

How can I communicate effectively?

By being available and credible;

- we have to be willing to talk to kids
- when they want to talk,
- about what they want to talk about.



How can I communicate effectively?

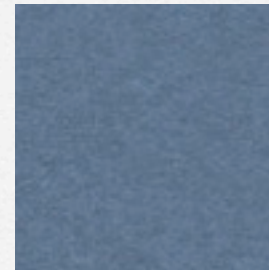
**Don't eyeball:
maintain a triangle
when you want to talk.**



How can I communicate effectively?

Ask questions that can't be answered with

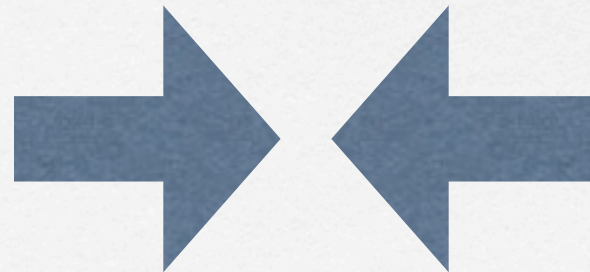
- yes,
- no,
- nothing or
- I don't know.



How can I communicate effectively?

Use the right proxemics to show

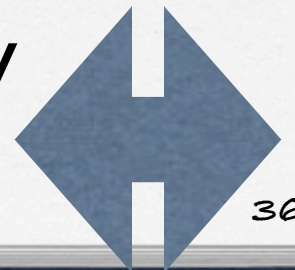
- interest
- without over doing it.



How can I communicate effectively?

Listen, share from your experience,

- **summarize but avoid advice unless it is asked for;**
- **don't trivialize or try to top your kid's stories.**
- **And remember you can't walk up hill six miles uphill both ways [and your kids already**



How can I communicate effectively?

Remember you have patience and wisdom on your side:

- use them.

The Bottom Line

You are always the adult,

- you are in control.
- Save the directive mode for when you really need it.



Anger Tool One

Don't go there.

Anger Tool Two

*Move,
stretch or
breathe.*

Anger Tool Three

- 1. Keep your teeth together, and*
- 2. Stretch your fingers to the ground*

or

palms flat, fingers stretch

Anger Tool Four

1. *Backward count*
2. *Breathe deeply*
3. *Puzzle solve*
4. *Visualize*

Anger Tools

1. Don't go there
2. Move, stretch or breathe
3. Keep your teeth together and stretch your fingers to the ground [palms flat - finger stretch]
4. Anger Reducer
 1. Backward count
 2. Deep breathing
 3. Imagery
 4. Puzzle

Mistakes Parents of Problem Children Make

1. Little one to one communication
2. Don't know where child is often
3. Don't know child's friends
4. Reward when parent is in good mood
5. Harshly punish when parent is in bad mood

What are five key parent behaviors?

1. Daily conversation with your child.
2. Always know where your child is.
3. Know your child's friends.
4. Reinforce desired behaviors consistently.
5. Be firm, fair and consistent with problem behavior.

What are the five key parent behaviors?



Daily conversation with your child.

#1

It is about being in the loop.

Be one of the people
your child consults
because the opportunity
to do so exists each day.

What are the five key parent behaviors?



Always know where your child is.

#2

Monitor and check in a way that is age appropriate, but puts you there, where the child is, even when you are not.

What are the five key parent behaviors?

#3

Know your child's friends.



Become an adult participant in their relationships.

utilize peers as an enormous source of influence.

What are the five key parent behaviors?

#4

Reinforce desired behaviors consistently.



Make sure the kid sees the connection.

Avoid rewarding because you're in a rewarding mood

What are the five key parent behaviors?

Be firm, fair and consistent with problem behavior.



#5


Don't go punitive just because you're in a bad mood.

*Community:
to act, respond, change
for and with others*


not just finding others
who make you feel good

A large, rectangular green highway sign with a white border and a white outline. The sign is mounted on a metal structure and is set against a blue sky with light clouds. The word "Community" is written in a large, white, sans-serif font in the center of the sign.

Community

A large green highway sign with a white border and white text. The sign is mounted on a metal post against a blue sky with light clouds. The text on the sign reads: "To choose to be for, with, to others".

To choose to be
for, with, to
others

A large green highway sign with a white border and white text. The sign is mounted on a metal structure against a blue sky with light clouds. The text on the sign reads: "To be responsible and able to respond".

To be responsible
and able to
respond

A green highway sign with a white border and white text. The sign is mounted on a metal post and is set against a blue sky with light clouds. The text on the sign is centered and reads: "I am responsible for my actions" followed by "An explanation is not an excuse." in a larger font.

I am responsible for my actions

An explanation
is not an excuse.

A green highway sign with a white border and white text, mounted on a metal post against a blue sky with light clouds. The sign is the central focus of the image.

I am responsible for my actions

An explanation may help me understand my actions, grow from them, and not repeat my mistakes.

A large green highway sign with a white border and white text. The sign is mounted on a metal post and is set against a clear blue sky. The text on the sign is centered and reads: "I am responsible for my actions" followed by "I am responsible for the decisions I make, or don't." on the next line.

I am responsible for my actions

I am responsible for
the decisions I make,
or don't.

A large green highway sign with a white border and white text, mounted on a metal post against a blue sky with light clouds. The sign is divided into four quadrants by a horizontal and vertical line.

I am responsible for my actions

I am responsible for
the actions I take,
or don't.

A green highway sign with a white border and white text, mounted on a metal post against a blue sky with light clouds. The sign is the central focus of the image.

I am responsible for my actions

Responsibility may be lessened only to the extent my actual freedom or knowledge was actually and unavoidably limited.

I am responsible for my actions

Responsibility
Requires
Action

A green highway sign with a white border, mounted on a metal post. The sign is set against a blue sky with light clouds. The text on the sign is white and reads: "I am responsible for my actions", "Responsibility", "is doing what", and "I should do.".

I am responsible for my actions

Responsibility
is doing what
I should do.

A green highway sign with a white border, mounted on a metal post. The sign is set against a blue sky with light clouds. The text on the sign is white and reads: "I am responsible for my actions", "Responsibility", "is doing what", and "I say I will do.".

I am responsible for my actions

Responsibility
is doing what
I say I will do.

A green highway sign with a white border and white text. The sign is mounted on a metal post against a blue sky with light clouds. The text on the sign reads: "I am responsible for my actions", "Responsibility", "is doing what", "is best for", and "everybody.".

I am responsible for my actions

Responsibility
is doing what
is best for
everybody.

A green highway sign with a white border and white text. The sign is mounted on a metal post against a blue sky with light clouds. The text on the sign reads: "I am responsible for my actions", "Responsibility is", "doing the one", "thing I should be", "doing right now.".

I am responsible for my actions

Responsibility is
doing the one
thing I should be
doing right now.

A green highway sign with a white border and white text. The sign is mounted on a metal post against a blue sky with light clouds. The text on the sign reads: "I am responsible for my actions", "Responsibility", "Requires", and "Action".

I am responsible for my actions


Responsibility
Requires
Action

*Community:
to act, respond, change
for and with others*

not just finding others
who make you feel good



*Change Requires
Effort*





Change is possible.





*Change requires 3
things.*



A Vision.





A Plan.




and Effort.




*It requires changing bad
habits to good habits.*





It requires effort even
when I don't feel like
working.



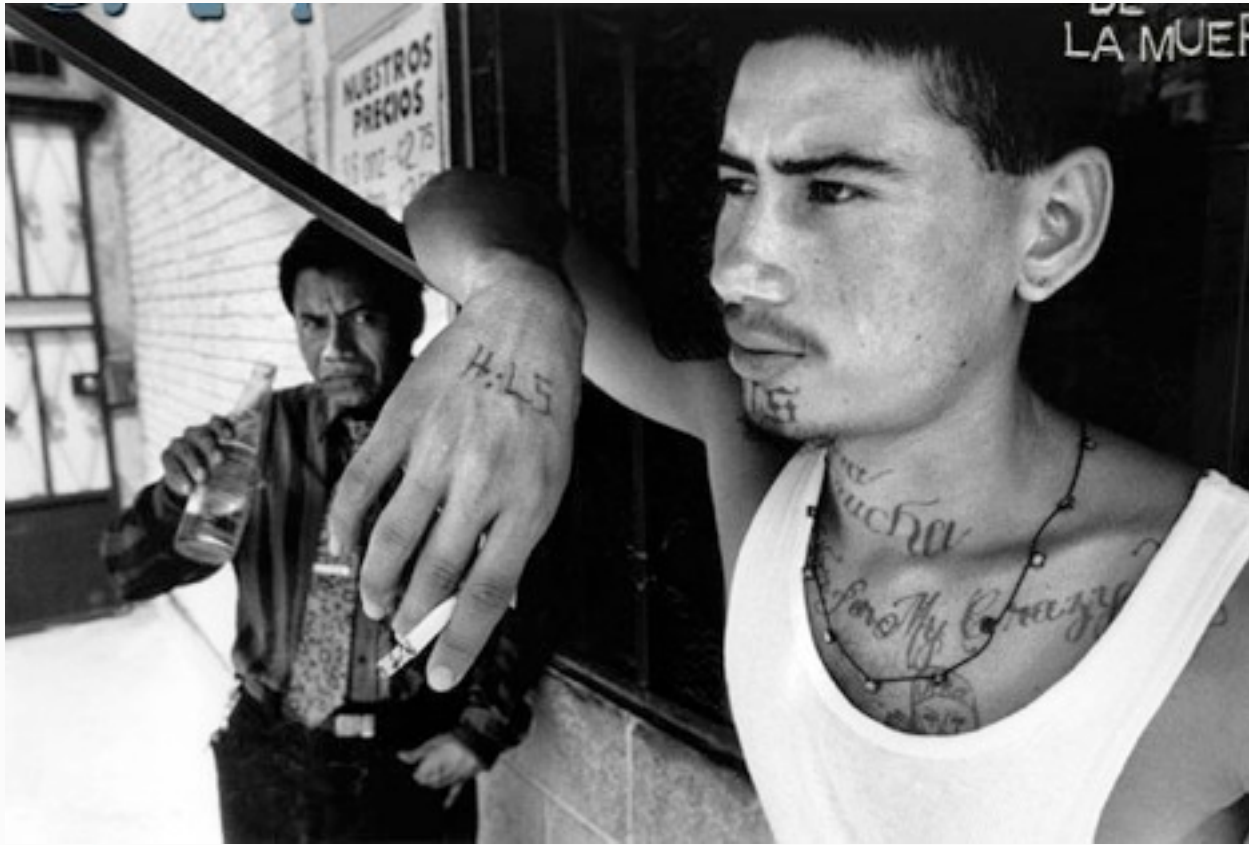


*It requires taking one
step at a time.*



*Community:
to act, respond, change
for and with others*

not just finding others
who make you feel good



How do we become who we are? There's always a story.

76



people
places
actions
events

what's done
to you
by you
for you

what you do
what you don't
what you won't

77



people
places
actions
events



what's done
to you
by you
for you

what you do
what you don't
what you won't

78



Hasn't history taught us that every person has rights and must be treated with respect?



Aren't there things you just can't do to anyone?



79 Every person has rights.



Can you do anything to people?



isn't there a limit?



80 Every person has rights.



Where does it end?



or does it?



81 Every person has rights.

Doesn't justice require we consider how our decisions and actions will affect ourselves, others and the planet?





Doesn't that especially mean the rights of those smaller and less able to protect their own rights?



What do you do? We see it coming.
Some things you just don't do.
Its like an oncoming train and we see it.



84

Sometimes we just see the lights - instead of the train - and we don't get out of the way.



85



Justice is virtue entire. It means to help not hurt. Stop yourself. Get out of the way of doing harm.



Stop
yourself.

86



Respect is the restraint side of morality. It is what you don't do or say to avoid the harm it would do.



Stop
yourself.

87



we share the world
we are not alone
what we do impacts
ourselves
other people
the planet

Respect Requires Restraint

There are things I
can not do or say.



89



not there



There are things I can not do or say to myself, any other person, or the planet.

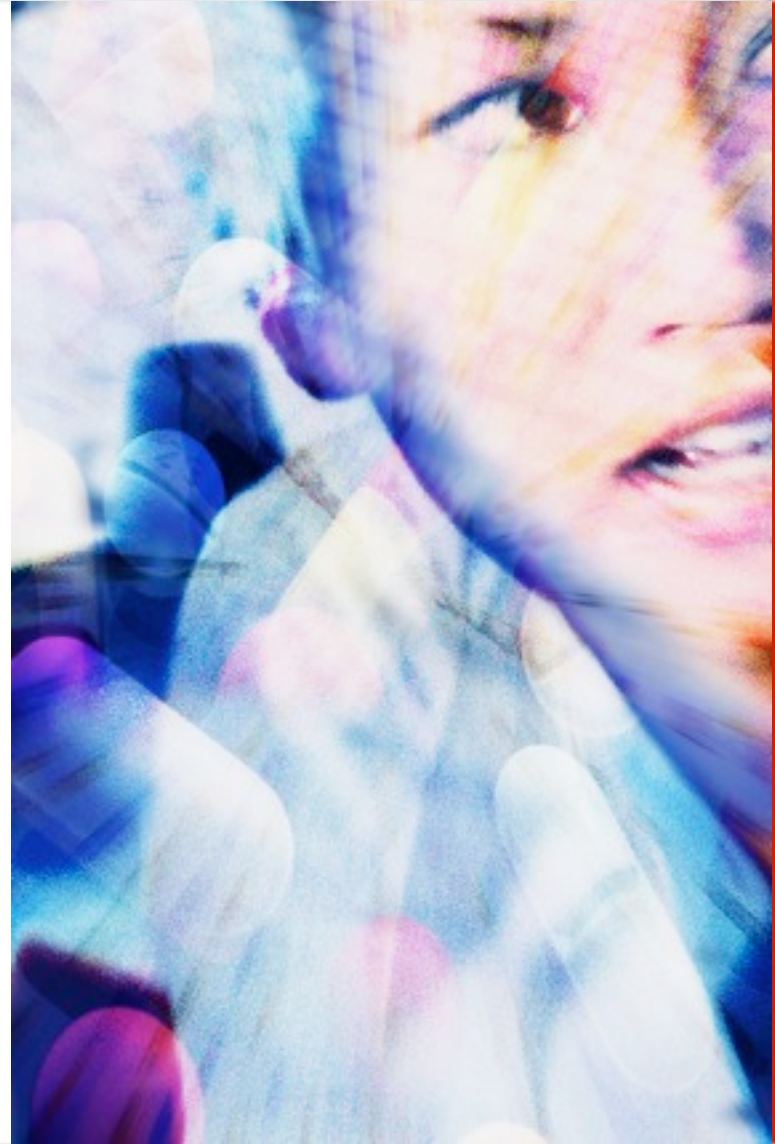


not do, not say

There are things I can
not do to myself.



There are things I can not do to myself.



not to myself



92

There are things I can not do to others.



not to others



There are things we can not do to our planet



not to the planet



94

The decisions I
make must respect
the rights of all.



decisions, rights

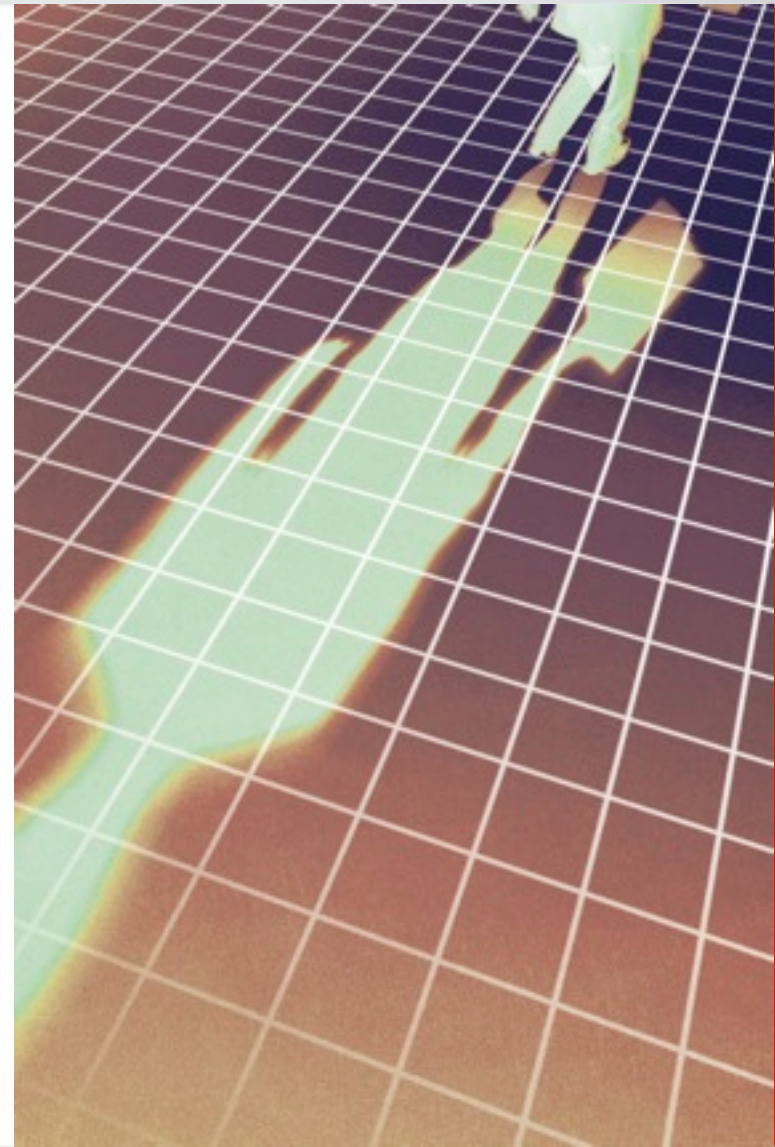


The actions I take
must respect the
rights of all.



actions, rights

Justice demands I not say or do some things.



justice demands



Stop yourself.

Get out of the way of
doing harm.



stop yourself



It means to help
not hurt.



help not hurt



The world depends on it.

99

Compassion and Courage for the Journey

compassion is a
verb: you have to
do something



Compassion and Courage for the Journey

compassion is not
an emotion: no
points for just
feeling something



Compassion and Courage for the Journey

the journey from
empathy to action



Compassion and Courage for the Journey

**Courage
is risk for a reason**





not risk for a thrill



not risk for a thrill



**thrill
danger
risk
power
posture
strength
win
force
fight**

not just for the thrill of it





**courage
requires
I moderate
my impulses**



**courage
requires
I moderate
my
emotions**

leads me to
consider the
heroic
journey in
which
people



Courage



live for purposes
bigger than themselves



and their wants and needs



**home in the ordinary
world the journey begins**



**the
call
to
adventure
comes**



**but the call is often
rejected - we are
reluctant heroes**

A gravel path winds through a lush green forest. The path is made of small, light-colored stones and is flanked by dense green foliage and trees. On the left side, there is a rustic wooden fence made of logs. The path curves slightly to the right in the distance.

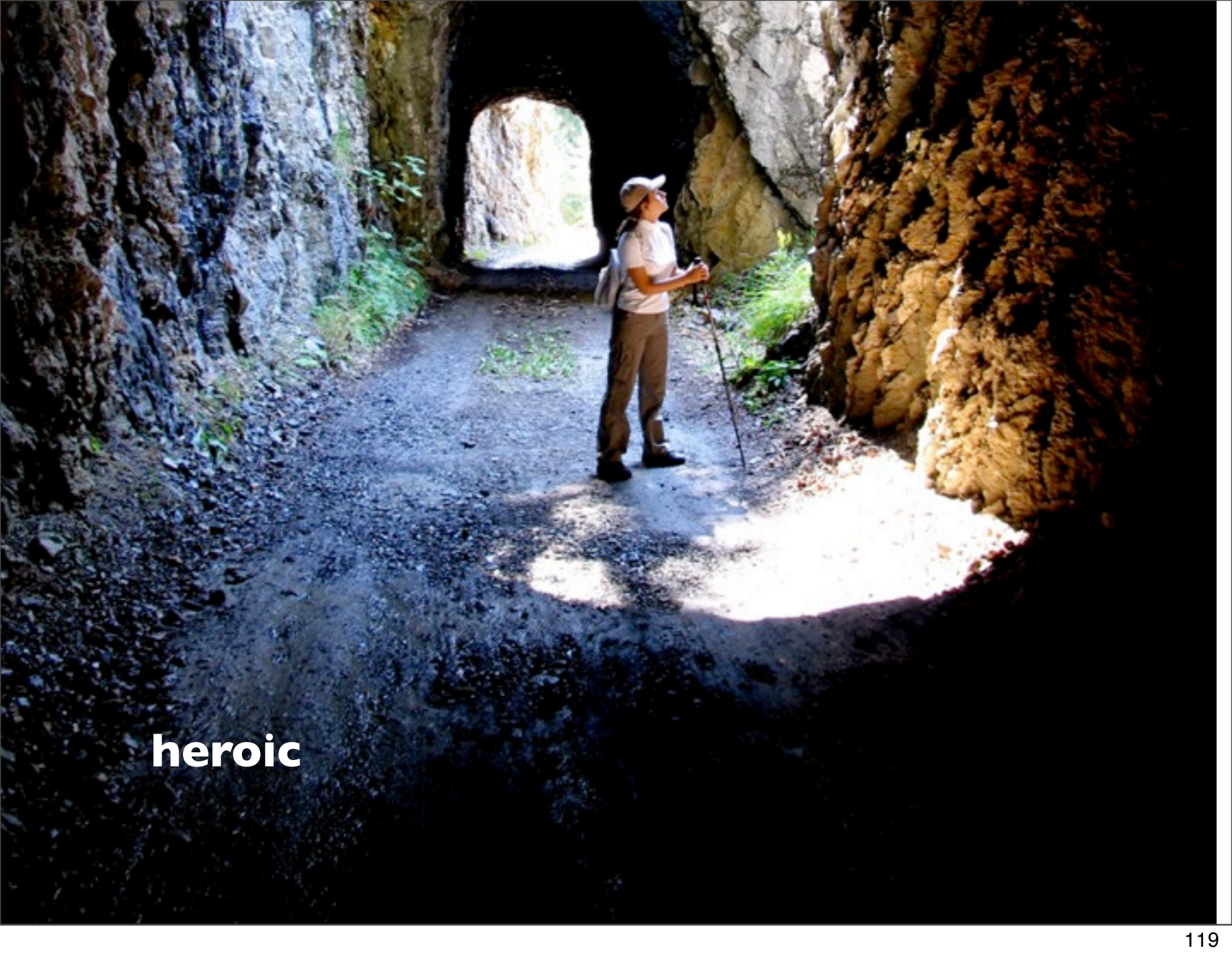
**the heroic journey begins on an
often trusted and curving road**



**an often scary road where we
confront what we most dread**



**but we confront it and with
companions move on and prove
ourselves**




heroic



**but what did you learn?
did you change?**

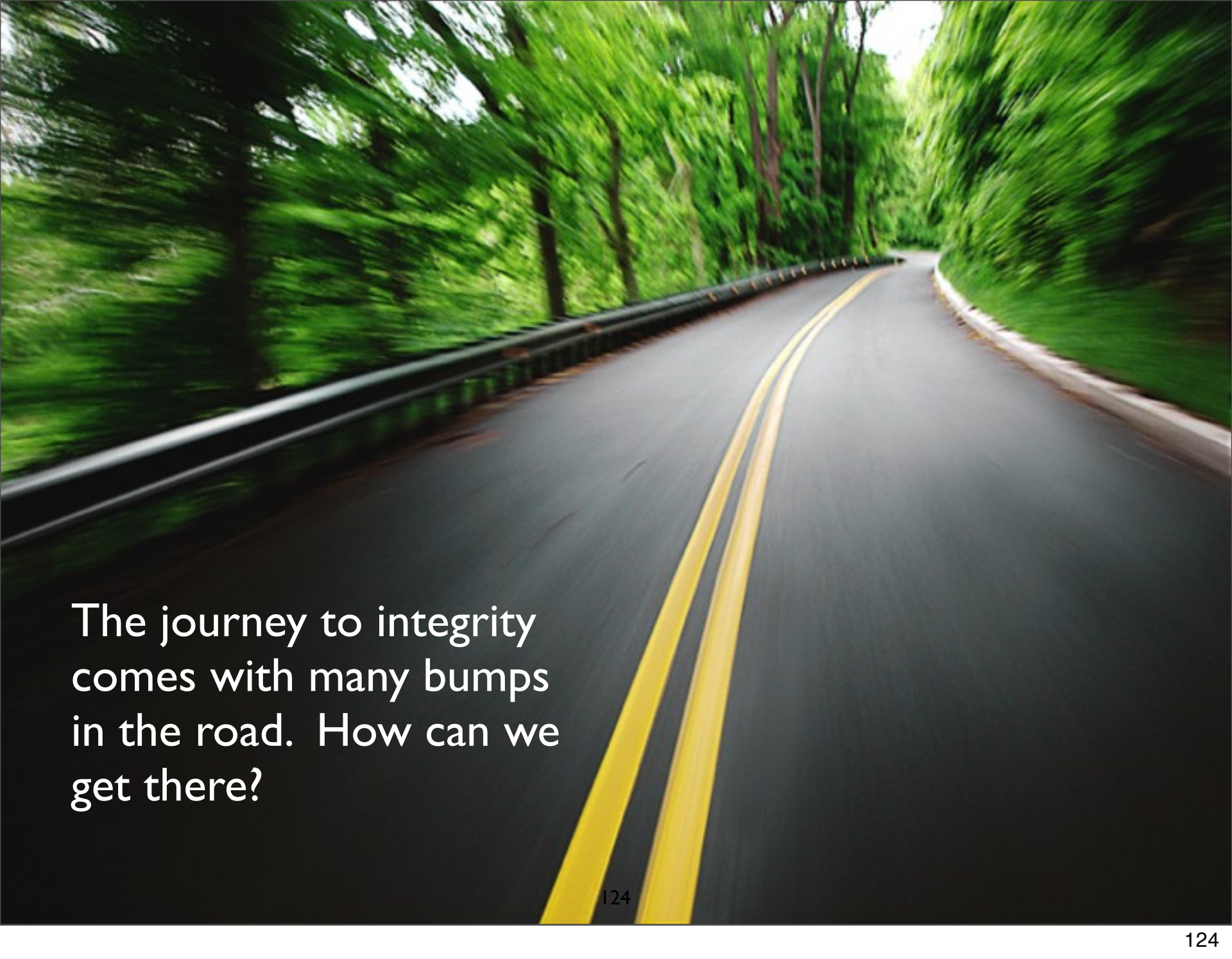





Home

but what do you do
when you get home?
compassion leads to
fortitude: living for a
goal regardless of the
emotions or obstacles
in the way





The journey to integrity comes with many bumps in the road. How can we get there?



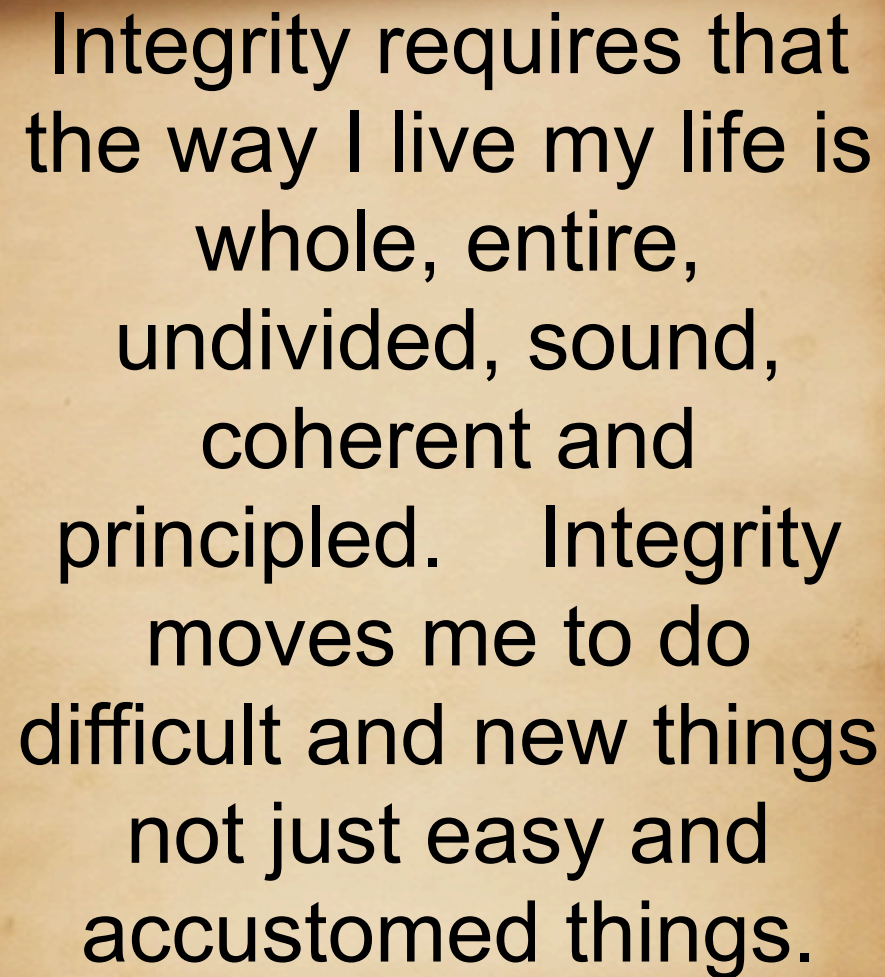
Who has helped?
Who can help?

Values.
Thoughts.
Skills.

Sooner than we can believe.
Sooner than we may be ready we are off on their own.
Making choices. Taking action. Moving in directions.



As we move from infants to individuals -
as we move to becoming independent individuals
we face the many choices.

A scroll of aged parchment with a slightly textured, yellowish-brown surface. The scroll is unrolled in the center, showing a piece of paper with a slightly irregular, torn edge. The text is written in a simple, black, sans-serif font, centered on the parchment. The scroll is set against a plain white background.

Integrity requires that
the way I live my life is
whole, entire,
undivided, sound,
coherent and
principled. Integrity
moves me to do
difficult and new things
not just easy and
accustomed things.



responsibility
respect
integrity
courage
moderation
effort

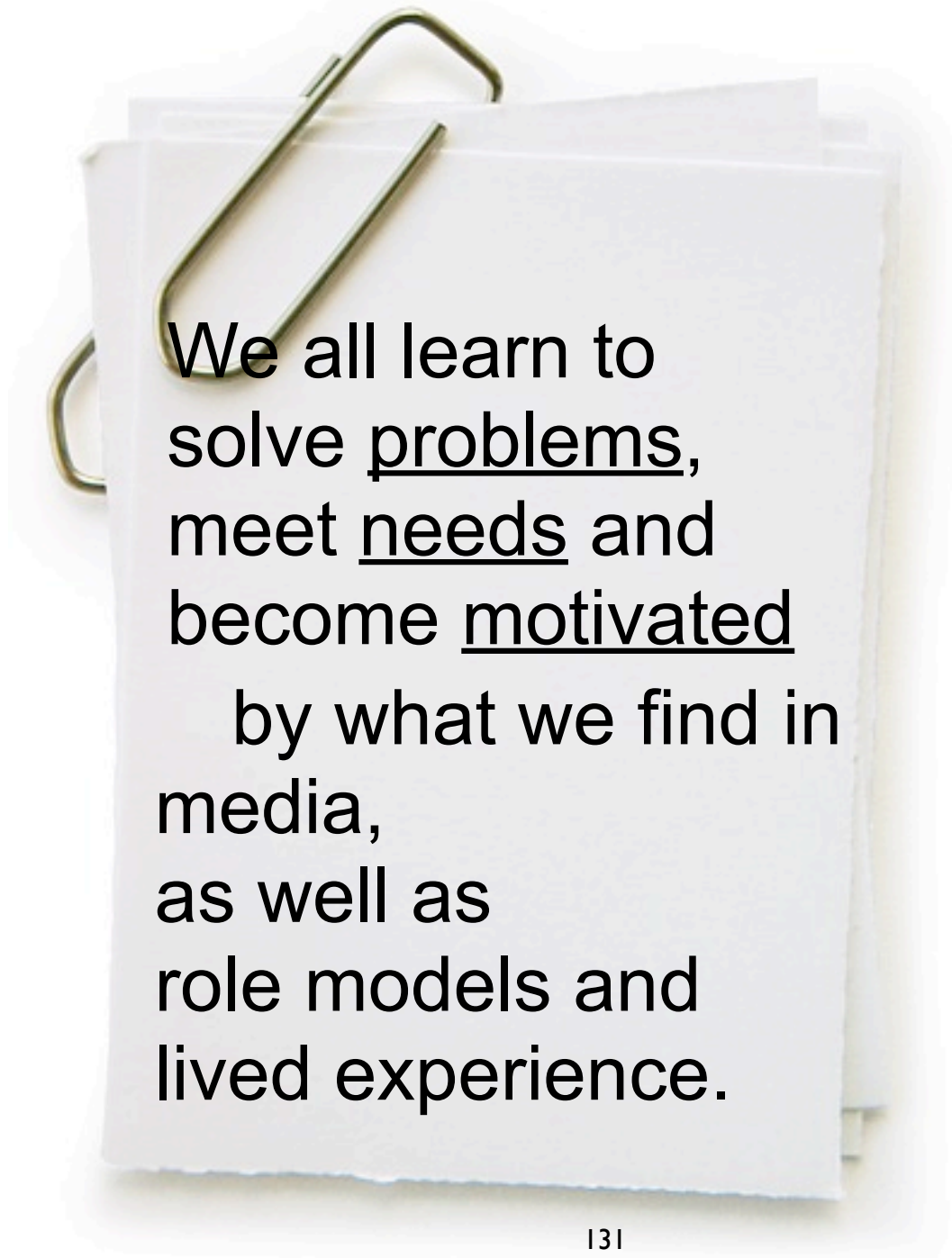


fun
avoid boredom
friends
popularity
success
thrill
stuff



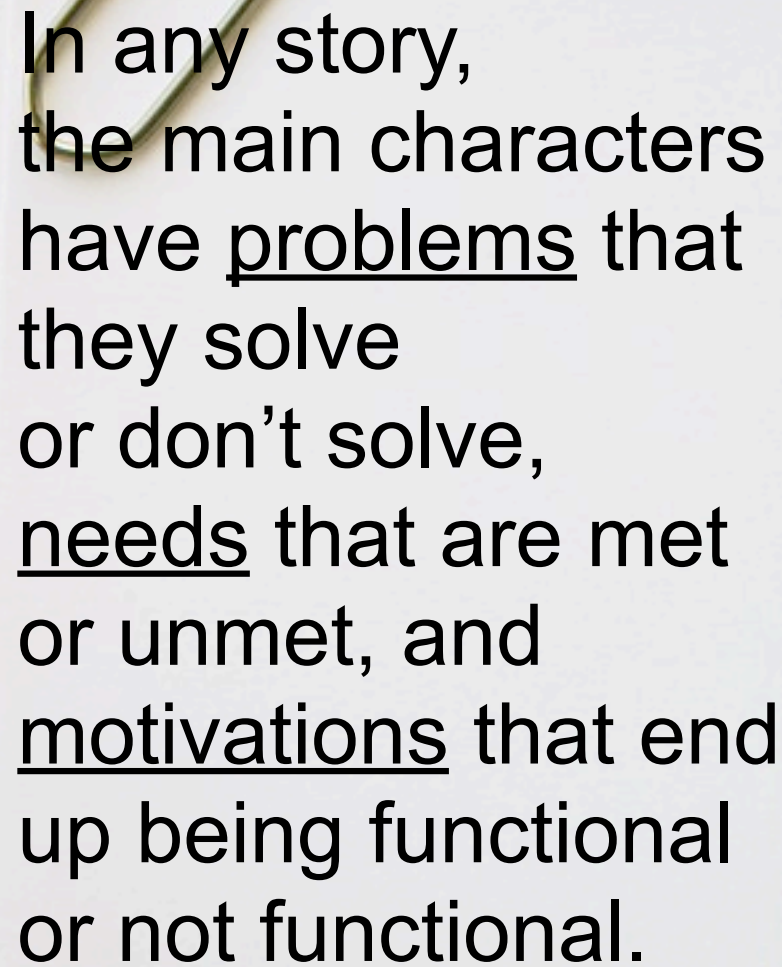
How does media affect core values and moral development?

The basics are the interplay between characters, actions, consequences, thoughts and feelings.



We all learn to
solve problems,
meet needs and
become motivated

by what we find in
media,
as well as
role models and
lived experience.



In any story,
the main characters
have problems that
they solve
or don't solve,
needs that are met
or unmet, and
motivations that end
up being functional
or not functional.

TV, video games and movies provide video and audio images powerfully and at high speed. Radio is audio embedded with text.



And the computer?

We can influence

poorly or well:

- villains and heroes

- evil and good

- instrumental

emotion

and real emotion

- getting away and

paying the price

- vicarious learning:

as if you were there

Utilize the potential
for vicarious
learning in media

- you have to be
there
- discussion is the
tool

dangers

altered reality

dead for a while?

discontinuity

high status villains

easy success

magical thinking

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Who are some high
status villains that your
kids are attracted to
that concern you?

▷ 23A

24

▷ 24

What we look for

worthy heroes or clearly
unworthy villains

virtuous lives or the costs
of vice

heroic journeys or the real
journeys and struggle

What we look for

inspiration

good problem solving or
the costs of poor problem
solving

learning from life or the
costs of not learning

What we look for

learning from mistakes or
the costs of continuing to
make them

What we avoid

violence, cruelty, unreal
death, unreal pain

gratuitous sex, profanity

distorted thinking:
mollification, discontinuity,
super optimism

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How do we facilitate this discussion?

problems: solve or don't

needs: met or unmet

motivations: what end

23A

24

24



How does your kids think the world works?

Will your kids be
ready for the world
they will be living in?



A black and white soccer ball is positioned on a vibrant green artificial turf field. The ball is in the lower-left quadrant of the frame. A white line, likely a sideline or endline, runs horizontally across the middle of the image. Another white line, possibly a corner arc, is visible in the upper-left corner. The lighting is bright, casting a soft shadow of the ball onto the grass to its right.

If we were at our best, what would we be like?



the best is yet to come