

## CHAPTER 20

### CHARACTER

**D**ad always valued character as one of the most important things in life, which is why, when we started Regent, we began with the ethos that, the end result of education is character. Character has a huge part to play in life and is a huge part of what Dad taught me. He talked about it a lot and clearly it is a vast topic, so I will cover some of the ideas he shared here.

Dad believed character was linked to thought because, as humans, our thinking makes our character. Humans literally are what they think about, and our character is effectively a composite of our thoughts.

Dad said that as the plant springs from one seed, so every act of man or woman springs from thought. This applies to spontaneous acts as much as it does to those that have been long thought-out. Normally the spontaneous, unpremeditated acts are driven by your paradigms and your habits, while deliberate acts are driven by habits but also by being

conscious that with your habits you can control your actions; something that is incredibly hard. While writing this book, I have faced various incidents where my own behaviour was challenged, and I realised it was to do with my own thoughts rather than anybody else's actions.

Action comes from thought and man can choose whether he is in joy or suffering. By thought, we can build, or we can destroy. Man is effectively in growth and is continuously growing, whether he likes it or not. 'Man is not a static object,' Dad said, 'but growth is continuous.'

Humans are made or unmade by themselves. Humans have huge power; with intelligence and love in the right combination, life becomes a joy. Human is always the master, even in his weakest state.

Character is forged by the effects of our environment. We can compare the human mind to a garden, which can be well cultivated or can be badly neglected. I read a story about a farmer who had a beautiful farm, in which there were plentiful trees and rose gardens. One day an onlooker complimented him on his farm, observing that nature had given him everything. The farmer agreed and said he was incredibly grateful. 'But,' he said, 'you should have seen the farm when nature had it alone.' The farmer understood that everyone is given a farm to work with and it is up to us to cultivate it.

Just like the farmer who looks after his plot well, so must we look after our minds, by keeping out negative thoughts. These useless thoughts are created by us, and we can choose not to have them. In this way, a man discovers that he is that master, the gardener, the director of his life. Dad always said, 'Be the main man in the movie, never be a supporting actor.'

Thought and character are one. What happens inside, Dad said, always shows outside. This does not mean that a man's circumstances at any given time are an indication of who he is, for circumstances make an impact. But every human is where he is by the law of being, the laws of nature.

As a progressive and evolving beings, humans are where they belong. Every man or woman knows that circumstances grow out of thought if they practise self-control, which Dad said is incredibly important. This is something I am still improving. Humans will notice that the alteration of circumstances can occur through self-control and self-purification.

Nature attracts good things to life if people are thinking about good things. The outer world of circumstances shapes itself through the inner world of thought. Both pleasant and unpleasant external conditions are factors.

Humans do not attract what they want, but what they are. It is so important to understand that in the law of attraction, what we attract is what we are thinking inside our mind. 'Humans are often keen to improve their circumstances, but do nothing to improve themselves,' Dad said. If you are constantly saying you want to change, but you are not doing anything, you are not willing to improve so you remain impounded. The human who does not think of self-improvement will never succeed in what they want. Here is a man who can be rich or poor by their actions.

Circumstances are complicated. Thought is so deeply rooted, and the conditions of happiness vary so much between individuals, that

the entire human condition is judged using external factors, when in fact, it is everything to do with internal factors.

‘A human may be honest in certain directions and suffer problems, while the dishonest person looks to be achieving. The honest person cannot understand why they are not getting good results. There are sometimes, deeper issues,’ Dad said. What you see outside may not be the full story; sometimes that honest person may in fact be dishonest. Dad believed in the old saying, ‘Never judge a book by its cover.’ By understanding this, and building knowledge, you will create a happy life.

A human only begins to be human when he starts to understand the law of nature. The proof is in every person, and it therefore makes for easy investigation by systemic development of study and regular practice of these concepts. Humans think their thoughts can be kept secret, but that is not true. A thought rapidly turns into a habit, and a habit turns into circumstances. A man or woman might think in secret, but it will become a reality. Therefore, any thoughts may for a period be kept secret, but they will turn into actions and change your circumstances. Therefore, Dad said, do not entertain bad thoughts because you will eventually act upon them. These ideas can be directly linked back to the work of Clay Christensen and Bob Proctor.

Thoughts crystallise into habits of good or bad, depending on the habits you are trying to achieve. Thoughts of every kind crystallise, and if you find yourself in a state of confusion between your positive habits versus your negative habits – your fear, your doubt, your indecision – you are confused as a human being. This is where mental health

issues, anxiety and disease arise. All are because we entertain negative thoughts that crystallise into unclear habits and dishonesty, which solidify into circumstances. If we can clean this up, life becomes a joy.

Dad said that if a person stops having negative thoughts, the world will move in their favour. He also said we must encourage good thoughts to make good things happen. Just entertain good thoughts, mahan, he said. ‘Think good of everyone, be good to everyone, and then the world is your baby.’

Understanding this, leads to purpose. Every thought is linked to purpose and no intelligent accomplishment can be achieved without purpose. Still, the majority of humans do not have a purpose, they do not have a goal, and if they do have a goal, they do not have an exact timeline for achieving that. Dad said, how can you have life without a purpose? It is like the driver who does not know where they are going. You need to know exactly where you are going and then you will get there. If you do not have a goal, every day you are getting up without purpose.

‘Those who have no central purpose in their life fall easily into worries, fears, troubles and self-pity,’ wrote Allen, all of which indicates weakness. They constantly blame circumstances and others.

A human should conceive a legitimate purpose in his heart and set out to accomplish it. He should make this purpose and think about it every day, emotionalise it, and take action. It may be intangible, because life is intangible and therefore many of the things we seek to achieve in life are intangible. But to have no goals in life is creating weakness; to begin to think with purpose is to enter the ranks of those

strong humans who recognise failure only as a temporary setback. There is no such thing as failure for a human being who has a clear purpose, who fearlessly attempts and masterfully accomplishes each and every day.

‘Having conceived our purpose,’ Allen said, ‘humans should mentally mark out a straight pathway to achievement, looking neither right nor left. No doubts or fears should ever be entertained, and the route should be effectively worked through every day. Thought allied fearlessly to purpose becomes creative force. He who knows this is ready to become something higher and stronger than a mere bundle of wavering thoughts, with a clear direction and a clear purpose, so he can achieve whatever he wants in life.’

Dad used to say that all that a man or woman achieves, and all that he or she fails to achieve, is a direct result of their own thoughts. In a justly ordered world, where losses or gains reflect your thinking, individual responsibility must be absolute, wrote Allen. ‘The strong man cannot help a weaker man unless the weaker man is willing to be helped,’ he said, ‘and even then, the weaker man must become strong of himself.’

As the saying goes, you need to do it by yourself, but you cannot do it alone. The man must, by his own efforts, develop the strength that he admires in others, but none but himself can alter his condition. ‘When you are admiring others,’ Dad always said, ‘never ever do so with jealousy. To admire others, to learn from others and to be inspired by others is good. But to engage in jealousy is effectively purposefully destroying your own life.’

Often people blame others for their misfortune. Do not waste your time on that, Dad said. The truth is that whoever is trying to damage others should just be ignored. Concentrate on your own world. If you have selfish thoughts you will fail, if you banish those thoughts, you are free.

‘Before a human can achieve anything, he must live above animal indulgence,’ said Allen. You need not, in order to succeed, give up all that matters to you in selflessness. Dad said it is very difficult to give up all selfishness and animality, but a portion of it must at least be sacrificed. This is an interesting concept, because what we are really talking about is that as human beings, because we are programmed in different ways, sometimes it is very difficult to change our lives, but day by day we become human.

Quoting Allen, Dad said that, there can be no progress or achievement without sacrifice. Nature does not favour the greedy, the dishonest or the vicious, though on the surface it may appear to do so. Nature helps the honest and it helps the person with the right mental attitude. Honesty is the best way.

All the great teachers, including my dad, have declared this in various forms. Allen said that man has always achieved a balanced life when they have honesty in their life. Achievement of any kind is the crown of effort and the success of life is walking with truth every day. All achievements, be they in business, society, or politics, are the result of definitely directed thoughts and are governed by the same laws. The only difference lies in the object of attainment.

Dad used to say if you sacrifice a little, your success and accomplishment will be little. He who will attain highly, must sacrifice greatly. What a beautiful way to link sacrifice to character.

In character, Dad also talked about calmness of mind – something he was passionate about. Dad used to say that a mind becomes a mind when you are making decisions. ‘Think about water,’ he said. ‘If water is calm, you can see what is below the surface. If it is not calm, you cannot see anything properly.’ That is how Dad explained calmness of mind. Calmness of mind is down to patience and self-control and is an indication of our experience, knowledge and wisdom.

The human becomes calm when he understands himself as a thought-evolving human being, because such knowledge necessitates the understanding of others and he sees more clearly how actions cause an effect. This goes back to the laws of nature. The calm human, having learned how to govern himself or herself, knows how to adapt to others and in turn has a calm, tranquil personality that creates success, Allen said. A strong, calm human is always loved and cherished by others. People want to be in their presence. Humanity surges with uncontrolled passion, which left ungoverned is blown away by human anxiety. Only the wise human, whose thoughts are controlled, makes life balanced.

In the world of satisfaction, happiness and success, self-control is a strength, right thought is mastery and calmness is power. If you mix all of that, life becomes a peaceful place. Dad said, this journey is not forever; for him it was 72 years, and for my grandfather it was 80 years. Being in that environment, my paradigm makes me think those



are the years that we are here to live. Nevertheless, it is true that we make our own lives. The dreamers are the saviours of the world, as the visible world is sustained by invisible human minds. We must have those dreamers, but the dreamers, as we said, have got to take action. By desiring to attain, and aspiring to achieve, the human that gives gratitude will achieve great success in their life.

The greatest achievement of humans is to understand that we have the ability to create. Dad used to say, ‘The oak is sleeping in the acorn, the bird is waiting inside the egg, and maybe some of the greatest powers, thinking and achievements are inside the human being.’ You must unleash that with your imagination, your desire and your purpose, and when you do, the world becomes a beautiful place to live.

Dad also said imagination and character are wonderful. Imagination and desire will take you to a role, but your character will keep you there. So, *The Power of Learning from DAD* has enabled me to understand what I have been studying for the past five years, ever since meeting Clay Christensen at Harvard Business School. These last five years have enabled me to converge some of Dad’s conversations with the greatest research that mankind has done in the past 100 years.

Some of these ideas are from the research, and I am linking Dad’s words to the research so that human beings like myself, and every son and daughter, can have the opportunity to understand and express these things. One regret I have is that I did not appreciate many of these wonderful things when he was alive. I knew there was something there, but I did not have the understanding to appreciate it.

I lost Dad in 2006 and now these things are coming to fruition and I understand the world better. Even though there is no way I have achieved everything I talk about in this book, it is what I am striving towards. I turn 50 on the day of publication, but I look forward to improving myself further and reading this book every day, because these are ideas that come from the heart. These are ideas that I have heard throughout my 50 years, and I will read this book every day until my end so that I can make myself even better.

When you read this book again and again, you will observe that the book has not changed, but you as the reader will change a great deal in terms of awareness. We know that change comes about through constant repetition, but also when humans endure emotional shock, usually when something goes terribly wrong, as happened to me in 2006.

You cannot wait for something negative to happen to make a change, but you have a choice to take action in your own way. Understanding these concepts and impressing them upon your subconscious mind can only come through study, and once you impress them upon your subconscious mind, your body moves. Keep sight of your goal, your destination, and take action.