

ACT 1 PRESENTATIONS' MORAL COURAGE PROGRAMS

OVERVIEW

“Goodness is an optimist’s dream. Reality lies somewhere between that dream and the pessimism we have to deal with every day.” Anonymous

When we look around at the news being reported by the media, by the history we keep reading about, we begin understanding that the signposts of our lives revolve around war and colonization, poverty and starvation, holocausts and genocides.

Our ‘signposts’ extend to entertainment: The American Psychological Society reports that children watch 21-23 hours of television a week, and that by the end of elementary school, the child will have seen 8,000 murders and 10,000 other acts of violence. And this is beyond CNN’s instant recording of war.

Yet the child is also attacked in school itself. Our history books include so many violent acts. Notice how much ‘reality’ our books are full of. So we teach the violence and war that we see on television, see in our films, and hear in our modern music. The cycle grows and grips us. Watch children on the playground or in the cafeteria; notice inclusion/exclusion, haves/have-nots as a reflection of our lives. Isn’t this how wars begin? Isn’t this how the Holocaust began? Are we repeating history?

With our theatrical experiences as actors and teachers, we have found that in order to build a character on stage, we need to know the thoughts, behavior, and therefore the emotions of the character.

As this is true for theatre, why not in life? If I begin understanding my everyday thoughts (and therefore my behavior) I can change my thoughts and my behavior. My emotions and attitudes may change as well. Experts call this Behavioral Psychology. Actors call it Building a Character.

Schools offer us the possibility of planting these seeds. If a child can learn, through theatrical means, what his thoughts are, then he can change those thoughts with the theatrical games we play. Just as actors can choose how they build their character, so can children choose the person they want to be. Once they learn the technique of choosing their thoughts, they can also choose their behavior and become the person they want to be through choices, hopefully loving, caring and non-violent.

We have a chance to change society, one good step at a time.

ACT 1's MORAL COURAGE PROGRAMS P-2

Here are four ways we can begin with:

THE WORKSHOPS:

Moral Courage: A Way of Life

Theatre games for the individual to gain outer awareness; inner and moral questions that offer determination using Random Acts of Kindness and volunteering as the signposts. Includes an interview with an adult who has made a difference in the community.

Moral Courage: The Caring Community

How we bring our newly found Moral Courage into the community includes learning empathy for others, pledge posters for classroom & community behavior, a kindness game, and the Birmingham Pledge Project.

Moral Courage: Social Justice

How does history play a part in teaching Moral Courage? Through rescue in the Holocaust, through the White Community's support for Martin Luther King and the Civil Rights Movement, through the Women's Movement, and through non-violent Peacemakers we begin to understand that we ourselves create history that can make a difference.

Moral Courage Leadership Program

With all of the above elements at our disposal, we challenge both students and their teachers in a 3 hour session for future leaders chosen by a school's faculty.

ACT 1's MORAL COURAGE PROGRAMS P-3

INCIDENTALS

Each program stands on its own.

All 4 programs include theatre exercises and are interactive.

The first 3 programs are each 1 hour 10 minutes long once a week for 4 weeks and are for grades 4 through 6.

The Moral Courage Leadership Program is 3 hours long usually held in a central location where faculty from various middle schools and high schools choose 5 students whom they consider possible leaders to attend. Class limit is 30 students. Or any given school can choose 30 students (with attending teachers) with leadership qualities to create the MCLP in their own school.

ACT 1's MORAL COURAGE PROGRAMS P-4

QUOTES

IS SILENCE THE ANSWER? IT NEVER WAS.

Eli Wiesel, Holocaust Survivor

REMEMBER THAT IT IS EASY TO SAVE HUMAN LIVES. ONE DID NOT NEED TO BE HEROIC OR CRAZY TO FEEL PITY FOR AN ABANDONED CHILD. IT WAS ENOUGH TO OPEN A DOOR, THROW A PIECE OF BREAD, A SHIRT, A COIN; IT WAS ENOUGH TO FEEL COMPASSION....IN THOSE TIMES, ONE CLIMBED TO THE SUMMIT OF HUMANITY BY SIMPLY REMAINING HUMAN.

Eli Wiesel

THE WORLD IS HUNGRY FOR GOODNESS.

Archbishop Desmond Tutu

LIFE'S MOST PERSISTENT AND URGENT QUESTION IS: WHAT ARE YOU DOING FOR OTHERS?

Martin Luther King, Jr.

THE URGE TO SERVE AND CONTRIBUTE IS BASIC TO HUMAN NATURE AND SHOULD BE HONORED.

Dr. Catherine Cardinal, psychotherapist

BE THE CHANGE YOU WANT TO SEE IN THE WORLD.

Mohandas Gandhi

NEVER DOUBT THAT A SMALL GROUP OF THOUGHTFUL, COMMITTED CITIZENS CAN CHANGE THE WORLD; INDEED, IT'S THE ONLY THING THAT EVER HAS.

Margaret Mead, anthropologist

IF WE CAN'T OFFER OUR CHILDREN HOPE, THEN WE MIGHT AS WELL PACK IT IN.

Jane Goodall, environmentalist

NOTHING GREAT WAS EVER ACHIEVED WITHOUT ENTHUSIASM.

Ralph Waldo Emerson, poet

TO SERVE IS BEAUTIFUL BUT ONLY IF IT IS DONE WITH JOY, A WHOLE HEART AND A FREE MIND.

Pearl S Buck, writer

ACT 1's MORAL COURAGE WORKSHOPS P-5

WAR IS COSTLY
PEACE IS PRICELESS
Bumper Sticker

OUR GOAL MUST BE NOT PEACE IN OUR TIME BUT PEACE FOR ALL TIME.
President Harry S. Truman

THINK GLOBALLY
ACT LOCALLY
Bumper Sticker

BIOGRAPHIES

ISAAC DOSTIS has worn many hats in his artistic career. As actor, director and teacher, he has worked with the famed Henry Street Playhouse & The Sonia Moore Studio, both in New York City. As a filmmaker, he has produced the award winning video LIVES TO SAVE: THE RESCUERS, about those who risked their lives to save Jews during the Holocaust. Currently he writes and teaches with Act 1's Moral Courage Programs.

DIANA SUNRISE, co-founder of Act 1 Presentations, has helped create and write shows and workshops for schools and organizations throughout the states. While a member of the Actors Studio in New York, Diana also created many roles for stage including a video LIVES TO SAVE: THE RESCUERS. A graduate of Seattle Pacific College in Seattle, Washington, she received her BA in Speech and Drama receiving awards as Best Actress in THE INNOCENTS and THE MIRACLE WORKER.

BOTH are co-recipients of THE RAOUL WALLENBERG AWARD for teaching Moral Courage and THE AXELROD AWARD for educators in Holocaust Education.

ACT 1 PRESENTATIONS
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