



# Character is What We Do in the Toilets!

Presented By James Brown | Monday 2<sup>nd</sup> September 2024

 @BH\_Coventry



# The toilet problem



- How do we get students to do the right thing when no one is looking?
- Character is what we do when no one is looking (Character.org, Principle 5; Berkowitz, 2021, Ch. 14)

# Character education at Barr's Hill



- Character education refers to educational activities aimed at helping young people develop virtues (Jubilee Centre, 2022)



## I am honest...

**Why?** Positive relationships rely on trust, respect and communication. When mistakes are made, it is important to be open and honest about them. Nobody trusts, respects or wants to communicate with someone who is dishonest.

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## I am kind...

**Why?** When people choose to be kind, they are deliberately trying to make a positive impact on the lives of others, which helps to build a more positive community overall. This can help us feel good while encouraging others to be kind too.

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## I am considerate...

**Why?** Everyone has the right to learn and succeed in later life, but we almost always need the support of others to help us reach our goals. It is far easier for people to support us when they are trusted, respected and listened to.

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## I am brave...

**Why?** Being brave means standing up for what's right. When bystanders don't help or speak out, situations can get worse and more harm could be caused.

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## I am respectful...

**Why?** Everyone has the right to work, learn and play in a clean, safe and inclusive environment. We each have a responsibility to care for both our environment and the people we share it with, while encouraging others to do the same.

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## I express gratitude...

**Why?** People feel valued and appreciated when they know they have made a positive impact. It is also polite and kind to thank people for their help or support.



## Responsible virtues:

- Moral virtues
- Intrinsically valuable

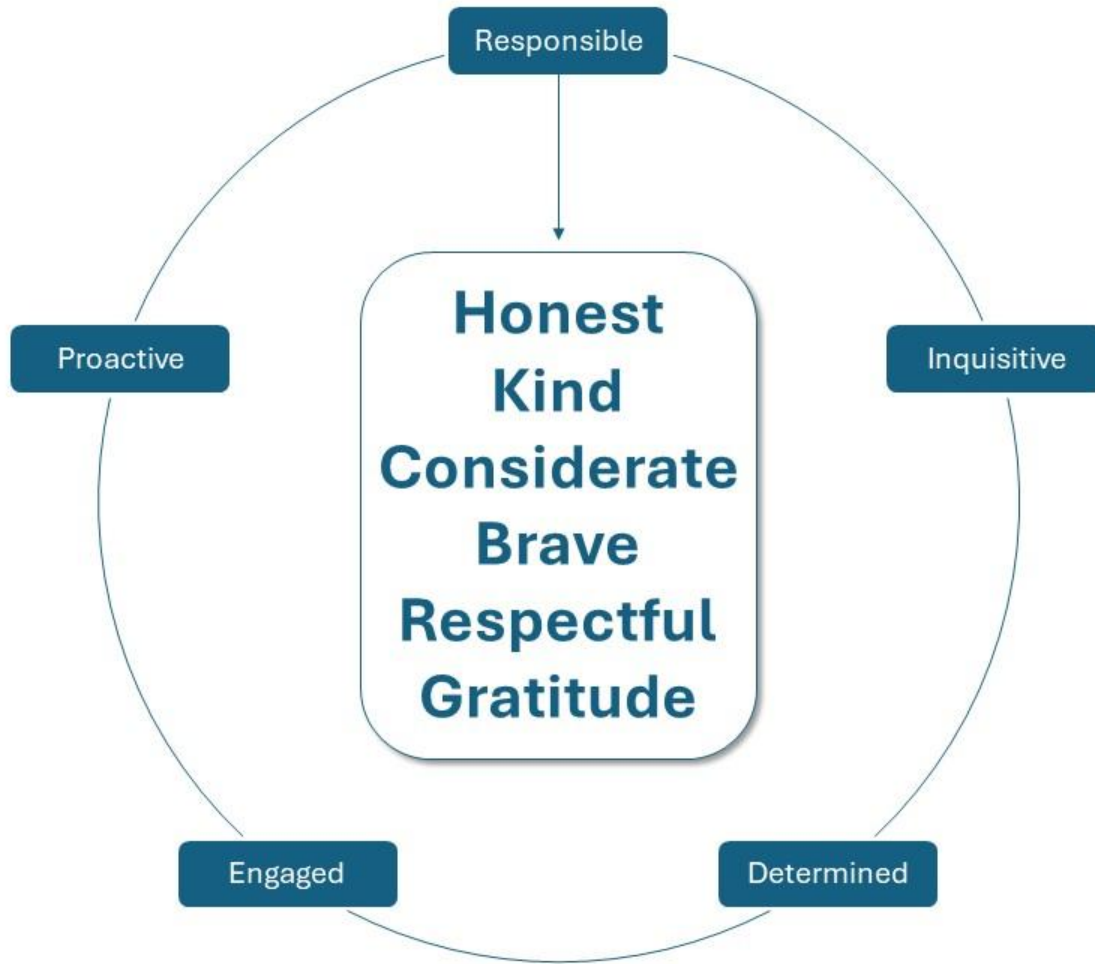
## Other PRIDE virtues:

- Performance/intellectual virtues
- Instrumentally valuable – if at all (Kristjánsson, 2017)



Bright Future (and Present) = Responsible virtues





# Internalising the Responsible virtues



- A bad strategy – *rewards!*
- Rewards undermine internalisation (Berkowitz, 2022; Ryan & Deci, 2017; Warneken & Tomasello, 2008)
- So, what should we do about PRIDE Points? Discuss, 5 minutes
- No more PRIDE Points!

# Internalising the Responsible virtues



Good strategies (Berkowitz, 2021, Ch. 16):

- Social affirmation (spontaneous, private, effort-focused)
- Building a sense of belonging
- Role-modelling
- Promoting empathy

# Summary



- How do we get students to do the right thing when no one is looking?
- By encouraging them to *internalise* the Responsible virtues
- No more PRIDE Points
- Instead: social affirmation, belonging, role modelling, empathy

# Further reading



Aristotle. (2004). *The Nicomachean ethics* (J. A. K. Thomson, Trans.). Penguin.

Berkowitz, M. W. (2021). *Primed for character education: Six design principles for school improvement*. Routledge.

Berkowitz, M. W. (2022). Introducing the complexity of character education: A review of *Understanding character education: Approaches, applications and issues*. *Journal of Moral Education*, 51(4), 589–594.

Character.org. (2018). *The 11 principles of character: A validation framework: For inspiration, validation and certification, Introductory guide, 2018-2020 revision*. <https://character.org/11-principles-in-schools/>

Jubilee Centre for Character and Virtues. (2022). *Framework for character education in schools*. University of Birmingham. <https://www.jubileecentre.ac.uk/wp-content/uploads/2023/08/Framework-for-Character-Education-3.pdf>

Kristjánsson, K. (2017). *Aristotelian character education*. Routledge.

Ryan, R. M., & Deci, E. L. (2017). *Self-determination theory: Basic psychological needs in motivation, development, and wellness*. Guilford Press.

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