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Humility is seeing yourself realistically.

Opposite: arrogance, pride, thinking oneself better than others, egoism, pretentiousness, self-importance

Related Concepts: servant-leader, affability, modesty, restraint

Summary: Seeing yourself and your accomplishments realistically.



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Thomas Merton (January 13, 1915 – December 10, 1968) was an American writer and Catholic Mystic. A Trappist monk, Merton authored more than 70 books (Wikipedia).

Other Humility Quotes:

"Life is a long lesson in humility." – James M. Barrie

"There is no respect for others without humility in one's self." – Henri Frederic Amiel

"Humility is not thinking less of yourself, it's thinking of yourself less." – C.S. Lewis

"We learned about gratitude and humility - that so many people had a hand in our success, from the teachers who inspired us to the janitors who kept our school clean... and we were taught to value everyone's contribution and treat everyone with respect.." – Michelle Obama

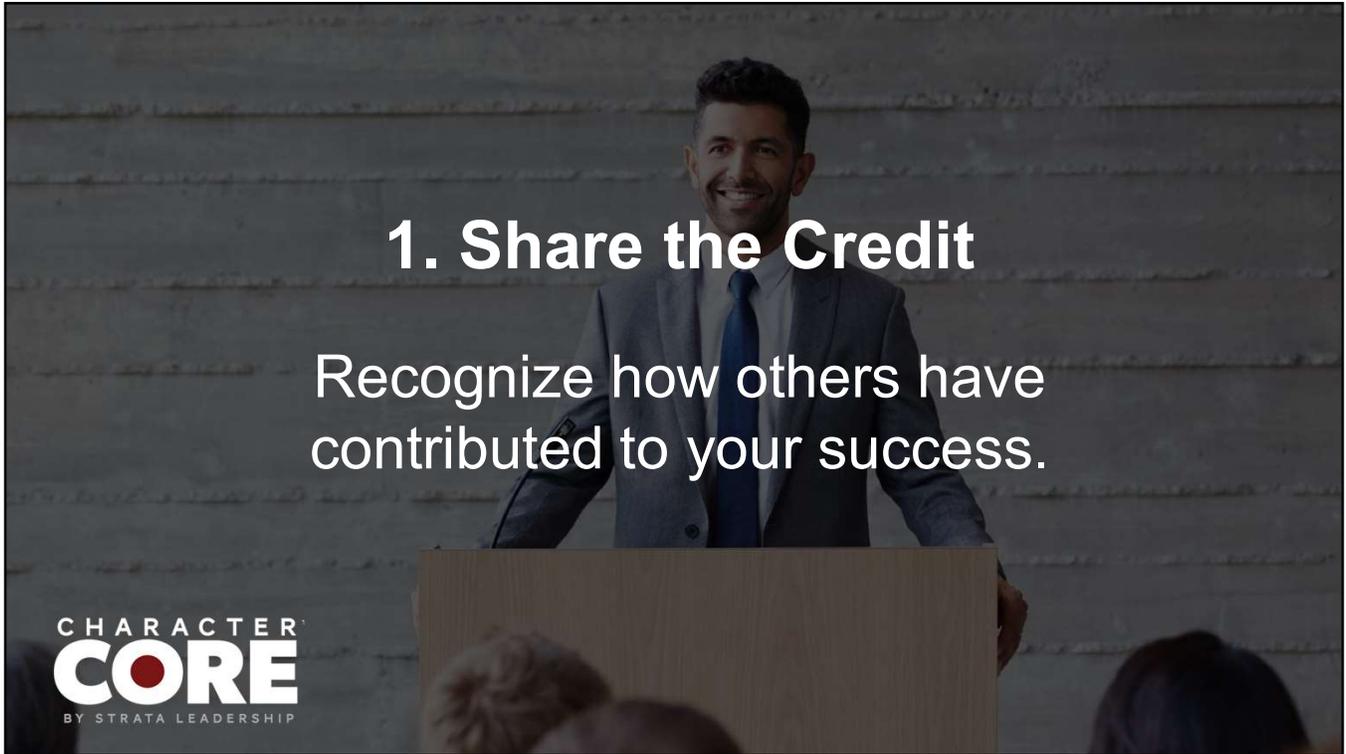
"I claim to be a simple individual liable to err like any other fellow mortal. I own, however, that I have humility enough to confess my errors and to retrace my steps." – Mahatma Gandhi

"Do you wish to rise? Begin by descending. You plan a tower that will pierce the clouds? Lay first the foundation of humility." – Saint Augustine

"True humility is intelligent self respect which keeps us from thinking too highly or too meanly of ourselves. It makes us modest by reminding us how far we have come short of what we can be." – Ralph W. Sockman

"Humility is the solid foundation of all virtues." – Confucius

"The first test of a truly great man is his humility. By humility I don't mean doubt of his powers or hesitation in speaking his opinion, but merely an understanding of the relationship of what he can say and what he can do." – John Ruskin



1. Share the Credit

Recognize how others have contributed to your success.

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A humble person recognizes how others have contributed to his or her success.

Humility is a trait that brings people together. It fuels teamwork, cooperation, and trust because the end result is what matters – not who gets the credit.

In contrast, arrogance separates people. It breeds infighting, back-stabbing, jealousy, and division. It leads people to think they know everything, they are above the law, and they are better than, and do not need others.

By sharing credit where it is due, you strengthen relationships and boost morale.

A man in a grey suit and blue tie stands behind a wooden podium, smiling. The background is a dark, textured wall. Overlaid on the image is the text '2. Ask for Help' and 'Save time and effort by asking for advice.' In the bottom left corner, there is a logo for 'CHARACTER CORE BY STRATA LEADERSHIP'.

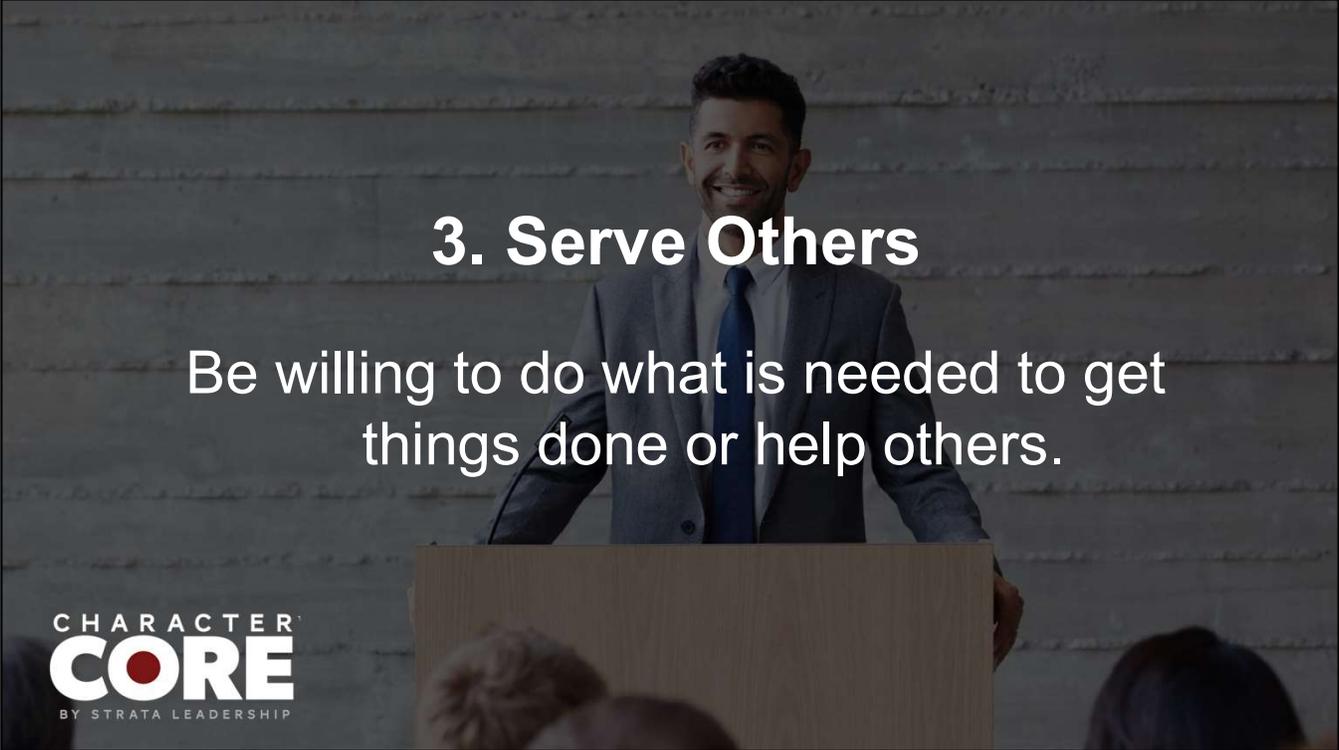
2. Ask for Help

Save time and effort by asking for advice.

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Connect with others and don't be afraid to ask for advice from more experienced workers or others who may have a new, creative approach. Run decisions past someone who will tell you when you are wrong. Be coachable...especially when advice comes as criticism.

By asking for help, you increase your knowledge, skill, understanding, and competence. By seeing yourself and others realistically, you can combine your efforts and accomplish more together than you ever could alone.

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3. Serve Others

Be willing to do what is needed to get things done or help others.

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Life requires a number of unpleasant tasks. In these situations, the humble get the job done without arguing over job descriptions, drawing attention to their “humility,” or even thinking how they are helping. To a humble person, there is only a need and the means to meet it.

By serving others, you increase your value and build a good name.

Discussion Starters

1. What is something you accomplished in the past week? Who else played a role in your success?
2. What are your strengths? How can you use your talents to contribute to the team?
3. How can you be a “servant-leader” at work and at home?

Additional Humility Questions:

- Think of two or three individuals who made a significant investment in your life. What did they sacrifice on your behalf?
- What are your strengths and weaknesses? How can you work to improve both? Who can you ask to help you?
- Think of a leader you respect. How did that person show “servant-leadership”?

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