



Character, like a photograph, develops in darkness.

A photograph starts its journey long before it is seen. The artist begins to imagine and then practices framing, focus and perspective. The artist considers their options and makes their choices. Ultimately, unique beauty emerges.

Character can form from many different seeds.

Character can be adopted. We see attributes we admire in others and seek to develop those within ourselves. Looking closely, we can discern those things – embodied in our heroes – that draw us close. We see their steadfast commitments, their consistent decisions, the lines they rarely cross or the steps they usually take. We can welcome those actions into our daily life and in time they might become our own.

Character can be cultivated. We see qualities we appreciate within ourselves and nurture their flourishing in our life. We honor those parts of ourselves that are infused with integrity and that lean into the best of our common humanity. We can focus on when those characteristics find expression in action and also discern when those parts of us recede. We can actively call forth ways to make ourselves proud to be ourselves.

Character can be humbly received. At times without thought, laudable reactions to circumstances simply emerge. We are faced with a situation and graced with courage or strength or fidelity. Power beyond that which we control flows through us, aiding us in being more than we have been before. Gratitude is the only honest response.

We are reminded that character is, at its origin, a gift.

What part of my character am I building today? What things around me influence who I am?