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NHS Induction Speech: Character

Good morning parents, guests, faculty, students, and inductees.

Think if these three letters: s-e-t. The word spells quite simply "set." Nothing special; nothing terribly unique; a gift on any first grade spelling test. So why am I bringing it up?

Well the miniscule “set” is actually quite special. "Set" holds the record for the English word with the most definitions - 464.

Now think about character. It may not have 400 plus definitions, but character does have many different definitions – both to Webster and every individual.

Character can be seen as the moral or ethical quality of a person; a reputation. The collective features and traits that form the individual nature of some person or thing.

Just how there can be many different definitions for character, we can all embody character in different ways.

One person's character could be that really really nice kid who you know you can always go to for help on a math problem.

Another person could be the class clown. To peers, a class clown seems funny, amusing and laid back. However, to teachers, a class clown could be a nightmare!

Character is the most basic and important quality that National Honor Society members possess. It isn't measured at one instant in time, but rather over all instances in time – it is who we really are. It is what we put out into society, and how society sees us.

Our reputation is extremely important. Abraham Lincoln said “Character is like a tree and reputation is like its shadow. The shadow is what we think of it; the tree is the real thing,” In other words, we want to make sure our character and reputation are strong and “real” - not phony.

It’s hard to live a fulfilling life without being true to ourselves. If we aren’t true to ourselves, acknowledging our strengths and frailties, we can’t expect others to know who we are and therefore be secure in the reputation which follows us.

If we develop strong character, we can stand up for our beliefs, follow our consciences, be honorable and upright, live by our principles no matter what others say, and especially don’t lose heart if we fail or don’t get what we want.

People of strong character stand up for what they believe in, follow their consciences, live by their principles no matter what others say, and don’t lose heart if they fail or things don’t turn out the way they hope.

People of strong character face their failures, learn from them, and become stronger as a result. In fact, people of strong, moral character help others who may not be strong enough on their own to meet life’s challenges: family, school, our social circles, and networks. In order to develop character we must first figure out who we are.

In order to develop character we must first figure out who we are. If we are true to ourselves, live by doing what is right, rely on our family and good friends, and pray for strength during our moments of confusion and doubt, we will have the confidence and fortitude to exude strong character.