

breakthrough

## news &amp; events

## UPCOMING EVENT

**JUSTICE, RELIGION AND CONFLICT  
RESOLUTION: WORLD FORUM 2007**  
The Argent Hotel, San Francisco  
February 1–4, 2007

Extraordinary Conversations is pleased to be taking part in the Youth Dialogue Project of the World Forum. Patrick O'Neill and Angeles Arrien will be leading a pre-conference youth delegate learning lab for over 40 participants from South Africa, Denmark, New Zealand, Cyprus and the United States. The learning lab will cover the skills of the inquiry dialogue conflict resolution.

**WORLD FORUM SPEAKERS:**

**Madeleine Albright**, Former U.S. Secretary of State

**Elie Wiesel**, Nobel Peace Prize Laureate

**Kavita Ramdas**, President & CEO, Global Fund for Women

**Juan Mendez**, Special Advisor to the U.N. on Prevention of Genocide

**Katherine Marshall**, Counselor to the President, World Bank

**Bob Edgar**, National Council of Churches

**Eva Paterson**, President, Equal Justice Society

**Join Us:** The greatest challenge facing our world in the 21st century will not be a conflict over resources, culture, or ideology—it will be our inability to resolve those conflicts without violence.

**You Are Invited To Come To The Table** with leaders from around the world to face this ultimate challenge together: How do we prepare people and societies to resolve conflicts and co-exist peacefully?

**Youth Dialogue Project in partnership with:** Angeles Arrien Foundation for Cross-Cultural Education and Research—Extraordinary Conversations—Just Think Global Nomads—Global Tribe

**Register Now!**

[www.rockroseinstitute.org/Register.html](http://www.rockroseinstitute.org/Register.html)

**Learn More**

[www.rockroseinstitute.org](http://www.rockroseinstitute.org) or call 888 544 2695

## LEARNING MATERIALS

**3 CD SET****Extraordinary Conversations  
for Breakthrough Results**

Patrick O'Neill, in conversation with Angeles Arrien, outlines the philosophy and concepts that comprise his transformative three-day seminar. Learn the eight skills for personal and collective leadership, including: suspending your assumptions; building trust; moving from reactivity to proactivity; and recognizing your own gifts and talents as well as those of others. This is an engaging introduction for newcomers or a vital support for those who have already enjoyed the seminar.

To order, contact us at 416 361 3331 or [info@extraordinary.on.ca](mailto:info@extraordinary.on.ca)

Costs: \$55.00 CDN + taxes = \$63.25  
\$50.00 U.S. + shipping/handling and taxes  
where applicable

If you know someone who would be interested in receiving a copy of our quarterly newsletters, please send us an e-mail including their name, company name and address to: [linda@extraordinary.on.ca](mailto:linda@extraordinary.on.ca)

## CORPORATE PROFILE

Extraordinary Conversations helps leaders generate breakthroughs in organizational, team and individual performance.

Since 1988, we have supported large, medium and small organizations to build environments where people can do their best work. Clear vision, commitment and responsibility, open communication, courage and the passion to accomplish meaningful goals lead to extraordinary results.

We have proven approaches that can assist you and your organization to create breakthroughs in:

- *Productivity*
- *Change Management*
- *Teamwork and Collaboration*
- *Conflict Resolution*
- *Leadership Education*
- *Organizational Communication*
- *Individual and Team Coaching*

Equip your organization with the knowledge, the skills and the will to create breakthrough results.

Extraordinary Conversations works with diverse industries including manufacturing, retail, financial institutions, entertainment and service companies. Our clients include Fortune 500 leaders, medium-sized national companies and small entrepreneurial enterprises. Our work has taken us to global corporations in North America, Europe, Asia and Australia, to the townships of South Africa and the peace process in the Middle East.

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“MUCH OF MAN'S CHARACTER WILL BE FOUND BETOKENED  
IN HIS BACKBONE... A THIN JOIST OF A SPINE NEVER YET  
UPHELD A FULL AND NOBLE SOUL.” HERMAN MELVILLE

# CHARACTER

By Patrick O'Neill

At a time where corporate fraud, breaches of public trust and insider trading are commonplace, it would seem that the requirement for character in leadership has never been more urgent. Story continued inside...

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# CHARACTER

Story continued from front cover

**“Courage is not simply one of the virtues...but the form of every virtue at the testing point...which means the highest reality.”**

C.S. LEWIS

Worldcom, Tyco, Enron, Adelphia, Hollinger, the Catholic Church, the Canadian government sponsorship scandal in Quebec, and doping in sports are just a few examples of leadership lapses that have led to significant erosion of public trust and confidence. We face a crisis of character at every level of leadership—in business, the community, government, institutions, and even in our families.

That these are becoming the norm should alarm everyone. David Letterman jokes on network television, “This might be getting serious. The Security and Exchanges Commission is going to investigate Vice President Dick Cheney. They’ll begin the investigation as soon as Congress finishes investigating the Securities and Exchanges Commission.”

In such a climate it’s easy to lose faith in leaders. Leadership is never easy. It is an initiation into character and courage because it requires ordinary people to take on extraordinary responsibilities. A greater risk is that we abandon the notion that each of us can be—must be—principled leaders. It is a mark of character to be a trustworthy leader in a world where mistrust is the norm and integrity is conditional.

Character is formed by the allegiance to a code of moral and ethical conduct. Integrity is the adherence to that code, no matter the circumstance. For our parents it was a matter of honor and respect to conduct one’s affairs with integrity. The family’s name and reputation depended on it. You did business through the extension of your word as your bond, and you didn’t go back on your word. Warren Buffet warns, “It takes 20 years to build a reputation and five minutes to ruin it. If you think about that you’ll do things differently.”

## The Courage To Do The Right Thing

One of the arms of character is courage. Courage is the ability to put values, principles and the greater good before personal gain, to do the right thing. Courage is supported by character and integrity.

Angeles Arrien, an award winning author, cultural anthropologist and corporate consultant says, “Where we are not strong-hearted is where we lack the courage to be authentic or to say what is true for us. “Strong-heartedness is where we have the courage to be all of who we are in life. The word “courage” is derived from the French word for heart, *coeur*, and etymologically it means “the ability to stand by one’s heart or to stand by one’s core.”

It takes a good deal of courage to stand by our core beliefs, especially when others are not, and our commitment will be tested. The tests of character come in the form of temptations, seductions and challenges. For some, these are mundane and brilliantly subtle—fudging on our taxes, ignoring a struggling colleague, turning a blind eye to bullying in the workplace. The late Katherine Hepburn remarked to the Los Angeles Times, “To keep your character in tact you cannot stoop to filthy acts. It makes it easier to stoop the next time.”

Those called to take on world issues face even greater tests of courage and character. Stories are plentiful of those who are unable to resist the allure of money, sex and power and fall from grace through character flaws. President Clinton, always “the smartest guy in the room”, is one relatively recent example. For every brilliant man or woman who falls through self-interest, public mistrust or scrutiny, the cynicism about leadership grows even stronger.

That’s why it is so important that the size of our *talent* be matched by the strength of our *character*. Great talent, like all power, comes with obligations. The greater the size of the talent and ability, the more important it is that ethics and integrity act to balance, anchor and guide. Where talent is not balanced by character, arrogance, conceit, expediency, and entitlement lead to the abuse of power.

## Your Character Traits

The literal meaning of the word character is “a distinctive mark”. Character qualities come in two varieties—those that we are born with and those that we acquire through the journey of life’s experience. Both contribute to integrity because they provide the inner strength to face outer circumstances and conditions. The more difficult or challenging the journey, the more our character traits allow us to persevere. Horace Greeley once remarked: “Fame is a vapor, popularity an accident, riches take wings; only one thing endures—character.”

Character traits are fundamental to the humane and ethical approach to conduct. A leader in today’s world requires the fortitude that supports adherence to a moral code even when others are unable or unwilling to go along. For many in leadership, the acceptance and approval of their colleagues and peers is far more important than taking a principled stand and doing the right thing. One can rationalize bad behavior for only so long; eventually lack of integrity catches up with everyone. It cannot be outrun.

**“The ultimate measure of a man is not where he stands in moments of comfort and convenience, but where he stands at times of challenge and controversy.”**

MARTIN LUTHER KING

How do we attend to the development and strengthening of character? First, we need to understand our resources. Many of us cannot name our character traits...but we are quick to name our faults! Without a conscious knowledge of our traits, we undermine our own capacity to marshal these resources when we meet challenging people, circumstances or temptations. To inventory our character traits, to develop, affirm and apply them, is one of the important tasks of personal leadership. Healthy pride—not rooted in conceit or self-importance—provides a positive sense of identity, self-esteem, and the personal power to make sound moral choices. It is also the fertile ground for the development of our gifts and talents.

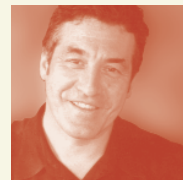
What are the core beliefs that guide you in your day-to-day conduct both personally and professionally? What are the values and principles that guide your decisions and interactions with others? What people and circumstances challenge you to hold true to your core beliefs? What are the character traits that you employ to face those challenges?

## Character traits include:

- **Accountability**
- **Commitment**
- **Conscientiousness**
- **Courage**
- **Dependability**
- **Determination**
- **Discipline**
- **Equity**
- **Faith**
- **Faithfulness**
- **Flexibility**
- **Generosity**
- **Humility**
- **Integrity**
- **Kindness**
- **Loyalty**
- **Optimism**
- **Patience**
- **Steadfastness**
- **Tolerance**

Character is the currency of the road of leadership. With character and integrity, we find the ability to make difficult decisions, take a stand on moral or ethical issues, and face the challenges that accompany responsibility and power. We are able to resist the temptations that accompany privilege.

Those that demonstrate that they can be trusted with power are usually rewarded with the respect and allegiance of followers, peers and other authority figures. More power comes their way. Those who do not overcome the corrupting influence of money, sex and power often end up in a comedian’s monologue.



PATRICK O'NEILL