



EST. 1863

COLLEGE

CULTURE



# The COLLEGE CULTURE Handbook

## Summary

The oldest boys' school in KwaZulu-Natal, Maritzburg College has for nearly 160 years proudly produced not only young men who have taken their place in the front rank of South African society, but also legions of plain-speaking, roll-up-your-sleeves, upstanding citizens, who have been able to withstand the struggles that life throws against them with courage and good cheer. Through their steady character and adherence to time-honoured values, they made positive contributions to those around them.

This document attempts to codify what it means to be a Maritzburg College boy and to outline key aspects of the unique "Maritzburg College Experience". A school that fosters in its young men a strong sense of identity, as well as *esprit de corps* and camaraderie, College has for generations produced men who can proudly claim to be stamped as "College Men" – but what does that mean?

In a fast-paced, global world, Maritzburg College would like to honour and celebrate its special ethos and culture.

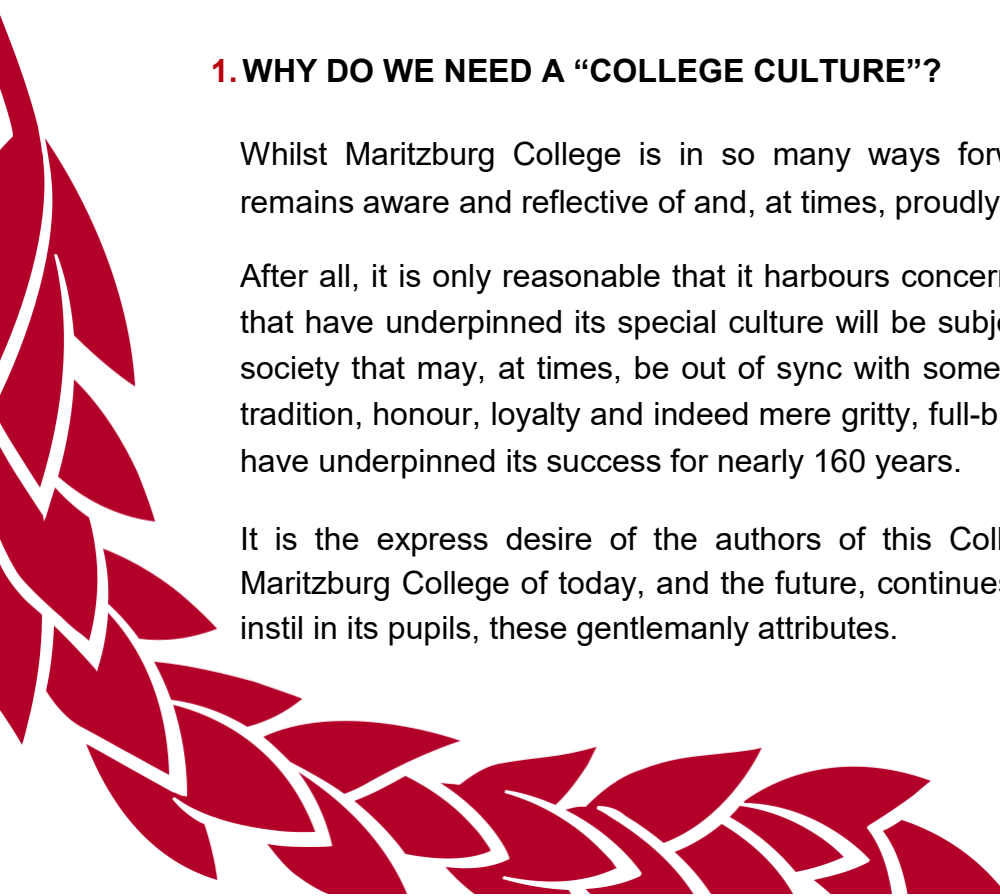
### **WE ARE A PROUD SCHOOL – AND THIS IS WHAT WE'RE ABOUT!**

#### **1. WHY DO WE NEED A "COLLEGE CULTURE"?**

Whilst Maritzburg College is in so many ways forward-looking and progressive, it remains aware and reflective of and, at times, proudly anchored to its past.

After all, it is only reasonable that it harbours concerns that the age-old fundamentals that have underpinned its special culture will be subject to the pressures of a broader society that may, at times, be out of sync with some of its deeply-rooted views – like tradition, honour, loyalty and indeed mere gritty, full-blooded participation – all of which have underpinned its success for nearly 160 years.

It is the express desire of the authors of this College Culture Handbook that the Maritzburg College of today, and the future, continues to value, cherish, and therefore instil in its pupils, these gentlemanly attributes.



Lastly, it is important, in a bustling, complex school with various rites of passage, some of which have remained uncodified for generations, to provide certainty and clarity to the boys (and to their parents), before they each embark on the deeply meaningful journey of being a Maritzburg College boy. Without a doubt, Maritzburg College is a unique school, with its own flavour and character, and indeed its own personality. It has long-established rites of passage and privileges, all of which are vetted and monitored by staff and the Traditions Committee, but have also been adapted to the changing climate of our times.

Collectively, they place a certain stamp on the boys who attend the school.

- If you are a new boy, about to enter Maritzburg College, are you up to the task?
- Have you given thought to the rites of passage that await you and the value system that underpins them?
- Are you prepared to subscribe to the Core Values of the school and to participate, to give your best and to roll up your sleeves?

It is important that each and every young man who is about to embark on the Maritzburg College journey deliberately considers these and other, related issues.

While the Maritzburg College of today allows boys of a wide range of interests and personality to thrive and to be happy, it is not necessarily for everyone. There is a place for everyone in this school except for the shirker or the malingerer, or for the moaner determined for narrow, self-glorification. It is definitely for the team-player and



for a certain type of individualist – but one who is nonetheless happy to be part of “something bigger”.

## 2. THE FRAMEWORK FOR THE “COLLEGE CULTURE”

### 2.1 LEGISLATION / TRADITIONS / CORE TRADITIONS

Of all the many facets of Maritzburg College life, one of the most cherished by its boys and Old Boys is its set of traditions, privileges and duties, which, it is argued by many, sets the school apart from its peers and contributes to the unique flavour of the place.

However, the stated and accepted guiding principles are that all such traditions, privileges and duties must –

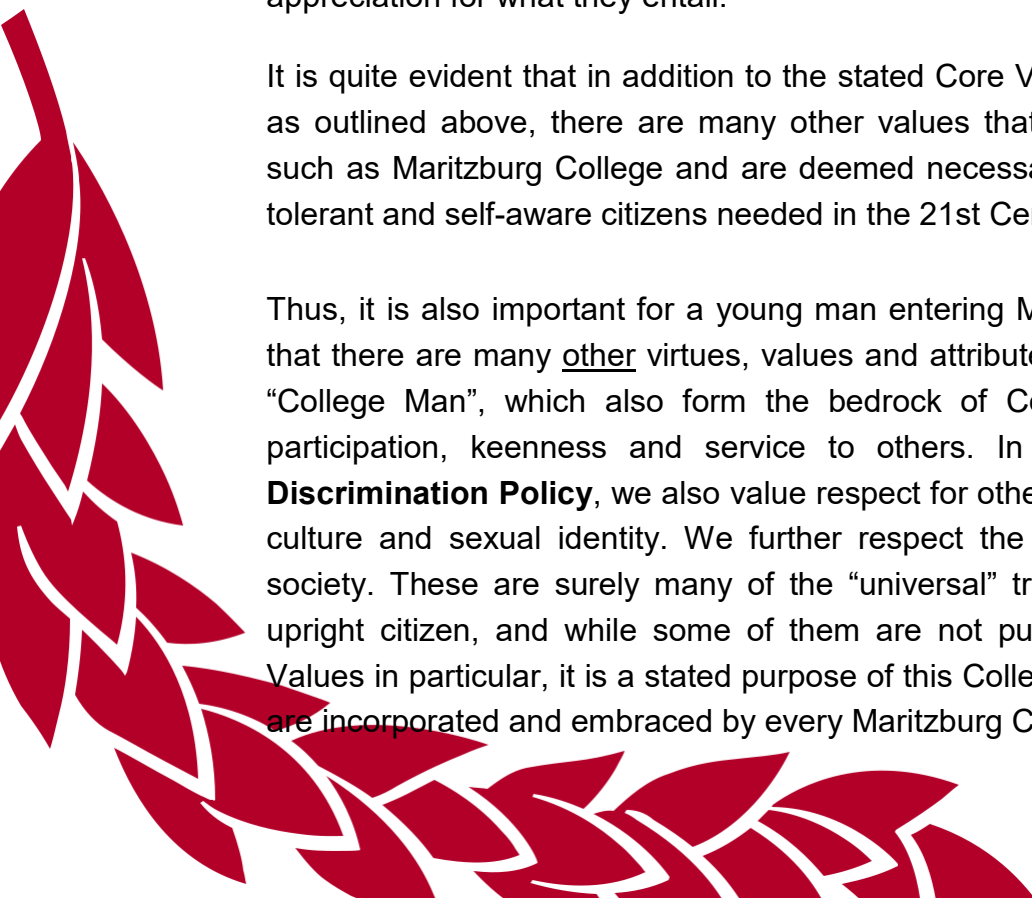
- be in accordance with the school rules and, in particular, the provisions of the South African Constitution and any other applicable legislation;
- underpin and reinforce the Core Values of the school;
- not demean any boy;
- not require the performing of any irrelevant tasks that serve little or no purpose; and
- be something of which the school can be justifiably – and humbly – proud.

### 2.2 CORE VALUES – AND OTHER VALUES

The Core Values of Maritzburg College – as emblazoned on a metal display that is visible as one drives up the Calder Drive – are Honesty, Integrity, Courage, Self-Discipline, Commitment and Respect. Every Maritzburg College boy is expected to be fully acquainted with these six Core Values, and to have a deep and genuine appreciation for what they entail.

It is quite evident that in addition to the stated Core Values and the Core Traditions, as outlined above, there are many other values that abound at a noble institution such as Maritzburg College and are deemed necessary to produce the upstanding, tolerant and self-aware citizens needed in the 21st Century.

Thus, it is also important for a young man entering Maritzburg College to be aware that there are many other virtues, values and attributes that are required of a future “College Man”, which also form the bedrock of College Culture. These include participation, keenness and service to others. In line with the school’s **Anti-Discrimination Policy**, we also value respect for others, regardless of race, religion, culture and sexual identity. We further respect the contribution of women in our society. These are surely many of the “universal” traits of a good person and an upright citizen, and while some of them are not published as much as the Core Values in particular, it is a stated purpose of this College Culture Handbook that they are incorporated and embraced by every Maritzburg College boy.





### 3. A “MARITZBURG COLLEGE MAN” IN THE 21ST CENTURY

While the school’s Core Values remain broad reminders of what is expected of its young men, and we have already in this document suggested a few questions (above) in this regard, a young man wishing to attend Maritzburg College will also need to ask himself the following questions:

- Whatever my interests are, am I prepared to participate, give my best and learn life’s lessons along the way, as I engage with my fellow College boys both in the classroom and in a host of extra-mural activities on offer?
- Am I willing to embrace the sense of brotherhood and camaraderie that Maritzburg College offers?
- Am I willing to serve my school and my fellow man, and put the interests of others before my own?
- Do I value and respect the role of women in society? Am I willing to acknowledge their contribution to our community and afford them the respect they deserve?
- Am I going to be a passenger in life, comfortably sailing along, or am I going to cut my own path and make a determined contribution to those around me?
- Whether I am an extrovert or an introvert or whether I like the company of others or not; am I willing to stick the matter out, be a team-player when needed and take a task to the end?
- Am I willing to win gracefully and lose graciously?

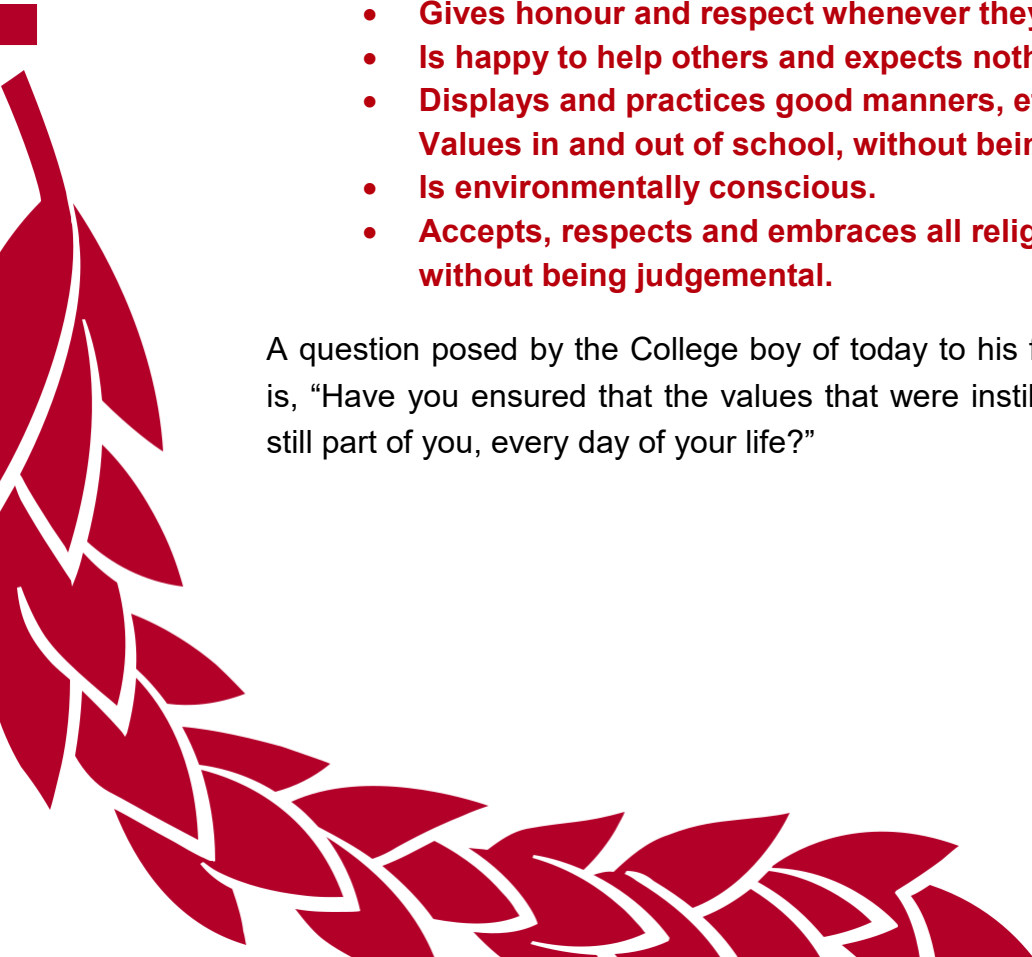


- **IN THE WORDS OF MARITZBURG COLLEGE BOYS THEMSELVES**

In late 2019, the Maritzburg College boys were, via their mentor classes, asked to contribute to this document, outlining what they thought were the important aspects of their school's "culture". Many of their suggestions have already been referred to in this document – but here is a sample of others:

- Am I culturally tolerant? Am I honest and humble and do I want to live an ethical life?
- What am I getting out of Maritzburg College? Is it enough? If it is not, what must I put in to get more out of my school?
- College is a brotherhood that belongs to all boys. We are "brothers in arms".
- For us, attire and appearance are important ingredients, as they make every College boy proud to be a College boy.
- A College boy –
  - **Should cut his own path and make a determined effort to all those around him.**
  - **Has a winning / winner's mentality.**
  - **Has true fighting spirit, is resilient, and never gives up.**
  - **Has a sense of chivalry.**
  - **Stands up for what is right, even when it hurts to do so.**
  - **Is polite and displays gentlemanly behaviour.**
  - **Is honest and loyal towards his school and the people in it.**
  - **Gives honour and respect whenever they are due.**
  - **Is happy to help others and expects nothing in return.**
  - **Displays and practices good manners, etiquette and the Core Values in and out of school, without being a hypocrite.**
  - **Is environmentally conscious.**
  - **Accepts, respects and embraces all religions, races and sexuality, without being judgemental.**

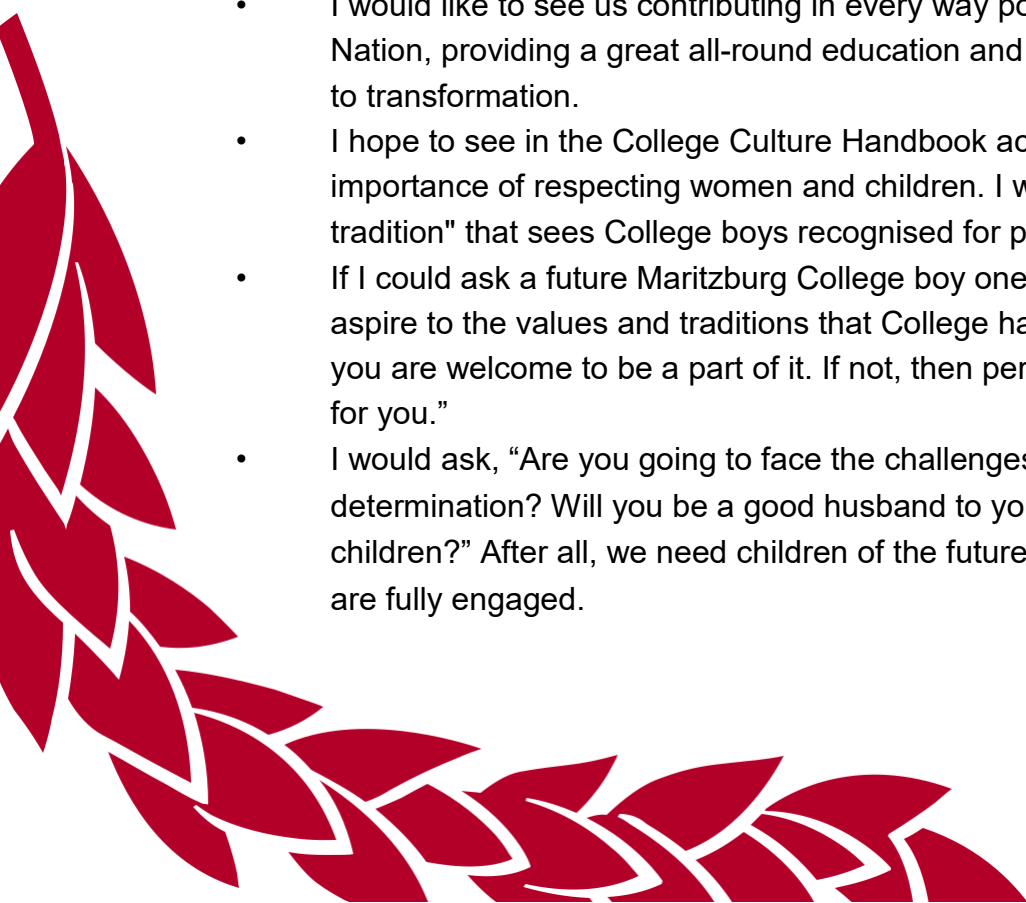
A question posed by the College boy of today to his future, Old Collegian, self is, "Have you ensured that the values that were instilled in you at College are still part of you, every day of your life?"



A number of senior Old Collegians were in 2019 also asked about Maritzburg College and its particular culture.

Here are some of their comments:

- I expect Maritzburg College boys to be enterprising, pioneering, energetic, determined to succeed, and resilient.
- For me, the key ingredients of the “Maritzburg College Experience” are loyalty, honesty, integrity, respect, and the “Band of Brothers” culture.
- “Giving things a go” ought to be the objective of every Maritzburg College boy – and to see a thing through to its conclusion. Giving up ought not to be part of his vocabulary.
- I’d like to see a College Culture that continues to encourage the boys to work in teams and to work proactively with each other – one that challenges the boys to go out and make a difference.
- I see key aspects of College Culture to be pride, a competitive spirit and a desire to win and compete.
- I would like to see us contributing in every way possible to a true Rainbow Nation, providing a great all-round education and a balanced, positive approach to transformation.
- I hope to see in the College Culture Handbook acknowledgement of the importance of respecting women and children. I would love to see a “College tradition” that sees College boys recognised for protecting the rights of women.
- If I could ask a future Maritzburg College boy one question, it would be “Do you aspire to the values and traditions that College has always stood for? If so, then you are welcome to be a part of it. If not, then perhaps College is not the school for you.”
- I would ask, “Are you going to face the challenges of life with character and determination? Will you be a good husband to your partner, and father to your children?” After all, we need children of the future to grow up with fathers who are fully engaged.





- **rites of passage**

For many young men at Maritzburg College, their enrolment at the school is the start of a deeply personal, enriching and much-cherished journey; one that continues deep into adulthood and later life, as the lessons that they learn at the school continue to colour and shape the adult they become.

Much of the unique “Maritzburg College Experience” stems from the various rites of passage that the boys, especially the juniors, are expected to undergo. These rites of passage are monitored and managed by the senior management of the school as well as the members of the Traditions Committee (set up in late 2012). Many of the traditions have the collective purpose of reminding a young man that for the time being he is a junior; that he has a way to go; that he needs to earn his stripes; that good things come to he who waits; that it will take time to prove himself; and that in the end he will be rewarded for passing through these rites of passage along his journey. Although some of them are innocuous, it needs to be borne in mind that there is a collective effect of having so many trivial rites of passage for a young man to go through.

In short, he will be reminded each day as a 2nd Former at the school that he is indeed a junior boy, that he needs to respect the hierarchy above him, and that he will one day, hopefully, be able to take his place among the schoolboy leaders, upon which he, in turn, will be able to enjoy the much-cherished privileges of seniority at the school.





A number of the rites of passage cited below have been part of the “Maritzburg College Experience” for over 100 years and remain with boys long after school. It is notable that the Head Prefect of 1921, who later went on to captain the Springboks, Mr Philip Nel, was able to recite the names of the school prefects when he was a junior, at an Old Collegians’ Reunion Dinner in the 1950s - nearly 40 years after he had matriculated from the school!

Another important factor to bear in mind is that the rites of passage collectively colour and shape a young man’s relationship with the school itself. It is a different journey to the experience that he might endure at another school, and the rites of passage collectively are of substance and require character and grit. Every College boy will be stronger and more able to trust in himself, his peers and his school for having gone through this process.

These rights of passage amount to a personal journey for all the junior boys at Maritzburg College to undergo together, creating a powerful sense of shared experience and thus camaraderie and brotherhood. They support the stated intention of the Traditions Committee to create an environment where all Maritzburg College boys of different backgrounds, characters and interests are brought closer together, forming enduring friendships and a long-lasting commitment to their school and fellow schoolboys.

As a 2nd Former at Maritzburg College, he will be expected to (in accordance with the printed guidelines) –

- participate in team-testing;
- complete all sentences to higher formers with the word, “please”;
- greet all prefects by surname, followed by “please”;
- greet all higher formers, followed by “please”;
- stand/wait/pause at doors (“wait-at-doors”) for all adults and higher formers;
- stand respectfully when talking to an adult or higher former;
- sprint in silence past Clark’s, on Hudson’s Highway, on Goldstone’s and on the Clark House Quadrangle;
- sprint inside and outside the prefects’ study;
- sprint to a destination when told to carry out a duty by a prefect;
- walk at attention when unable to sprint;
- jog on Barns’, Pape’s and Lamond’s;
- line up smartly and in silence before roll-call;
- keep his tracksuit top zipped up at all times;
- do up both buttons on his blazer, which must be worn at all times when in Full School Uniform (No. 1s);
- do up both buttons on his Greys and (if applicable) boarder uniform;
- when wearing Full School Uniform, roll up his shirt-sleeves to above the elbow; and
- give up his seat at a bench to adults and higher formers.

These, and other rites of passage, form part of the traditions and culture of the school – and are thus integral parts of College Culture itself.

Although many of these traditions are over 100 years old, we have adapted, removed and revisited some, to ensure that they are entrenched in a sense of brotherhood and leave room for every College boy to belong.



## 6. WHAT COLLEGE CULTURE DOES NOT ENTAIL

It is the very clear intention of the authors of this document that College Culture should amount to something that is positive and inspiring, and indeed heroic, offering a blueprint for College boys of the future.

Further, it aims to provide clarity to prospective College boys and their parents, about the journey that awaits them.

The whole framework that underpins College Culture is by no means meant to provide an oppressive environment, in which senior boys are afforded the opportunity of bullying younger boys. While there is a strong hierarchy at the school, it is without a doubt a system that is carefully managed and monitored, and it is the express intention that College Culture should provide a noble and virtuous framework for the journey that young men are required to undertake at the school.

## 7. A LIFELONG JOURNEY

Finally, this document provides the blueprint for a young man's experience while he attends Maritzburg College, ensuring that is held accountable as a College boy for his misdeeds, should he fail to live up to these expectations.

It is therefore the firm desire of the authors of this College Culture Handbook that every boy who passes through Maritzburg College will not only adhere to these provisions, but will embrace these character traits through his life journey and interactions with others.

