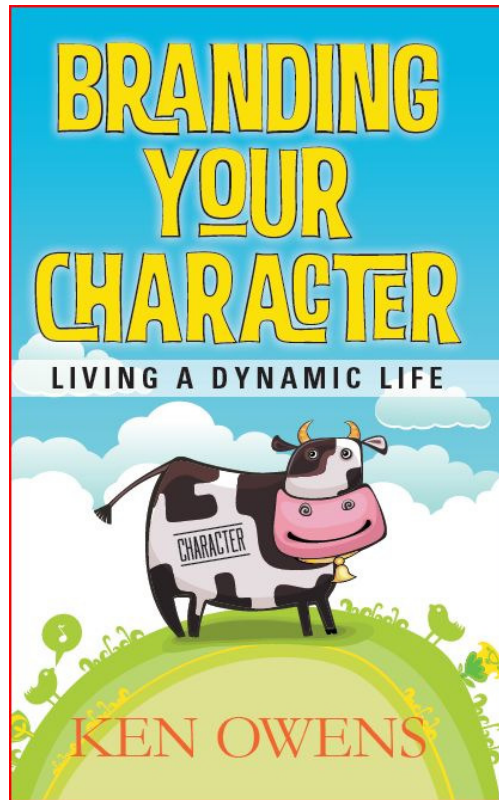


Branding Your Character

Living A Dynamic Life

By Ken Owens

Marketing Prospectus



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Overview

Large corporations do it. Small businesses do it. Product managers, service industries, entertainers, ministers and politicians do it. They brand themselves and their products every day. It's about achieving success – whatever their definition of success is – whether it's money, image or an election. Corporations know that higher product sales come from a higher, positive brand image.

Likewise, on an individual level, your character is the reflection of your true identity and is your brand recognition within the community. What kind of brand image do others perceive about you? Is it positive or negative? The concepts found within the pages of *Branding Your Character* will help you lay a foundation for a successful dynamic life – or help you repair a life gone astray.

Bad character is rampant in business, sports, entertainment and most notably with our elected officials. A majority of the worlds' negative situations and products would not be that way if leaders lived by the elements of good character. Positive role models are becoming harder to find and this is especially true with parents. What image are you going to brand upon your kids? Parents must play a crucial role in equipping and branding their children with elements of character. Parents read this book and learn how to raise a kid you can be proud of!

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Book Category Placement

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- Parenting Classes
- Book Clubs
- Church Groups / Study Groups
- United Way Non-Profit Agencies – Parent and Family Services, Children’s Agencies, etc
- Prison Library
- College – Possible secondary text book for teacher certification and positive parenting courses
- Service Organizations – Boy Scouts, Girl Scouts, etc
- Church Bookstores
- Library Retail Stores
- Amazon.com
- Ken Owens Web Store
- Speaking Engagements
- MLM – Multi-Level Marketing Organizations

About The Author – Ken Owens

Ken Owens is a human-potential consultant in the areas of motivation, sales and personal development. He has over 20 years of corporate and small business management experience. As an Ordained Minister, Ken has worked with many individuals, along with group sessions for non-profit organizations.

Ken is a Certified Stress Management Consultant with the International Association of Counselors and Therapists, Board Certified/Registered Hypnotherapist by both the American Board of Hypnotherapy and the Professional Board of Hypnotherapy in Canada, Certified Sales Trainer, and an Instructor with the International Hypnosis Federation.

Ken blends his corporate sales and management experience with his 14 years of crisis counseling and training expertise, along with several degrees in Liberal Arts, Business Management and Counseling/Therapy.

Speaking programs range from one-hour overviews or keynote addresses to full-day, in-service workshops. Let Ken help you and your staff take the first step in a positive change toward a happier, healthier, and more productive life filled with character!

Branding Your Character Testimonials

“*Branding Your Character* will definitely be required reading for my students! The concepts in this book are certain to give any young professional an advantage toward making their mark in the world.” Rodrigo Acosta, Teacher – Mexico

“Ken Owens undertook the remarkable feat of writing what could conceivably have been another dry read on self-growth concepts, into a ‘hard to put down’ inspirational book on personal and professional branding. What business person would not want this information? I am excited to be able to promote *Branding Your Character* to all my corporate and business colleagues and clients here in Australia.” Lenny Gillett, Business Manager – Australia

“The power of a memorable brand is well known in the business world as the critical key in creating and maintaining a successful business. What is often overlooked or never considered is the power of developing a personal brand as well, for owners, managers and staff. As a multiple business owner and consultant for over twenty years, *Branding Your Character* is definitely going to the top of my list of ‘must have business tools’ that I recommend to all my clients. The character and brand of owners, top executives as well and rank and file staff will ultimately support or hinder a business. Owens’ book should be in the hands of all HR Departments as well as required reading in schools of business.” Michelle Matteson, Mind Management Consultant www.MichelleMatteson.com – USA

“*Branding Your Character* is designed to help people build strong character traits that set the stage for a brand that can sell itself! Ken describes ways character is manifested by becoming instilled and cultivated in an individual at an early age, and develops over time with experience and environmental feedback. Empowering educators and parents to teach methods producing a purposeful life helps people develop free will and a sense of personal responsibility.” Rachael Beutler LCSW, Social Worker/Therapist – USA

“*Branding Your Character* is a book I will refer to often. It is filled with research, inspiration, and practical tips that will support anyone wanting to establish and nurture their personal brand. Ken Owens is imminently qualified in this subject. I know him as someone who walks his talk! His persistence, integrity and passion for helping others are inspirational.” Gail Hurt, Career and Life Mentor www.LivingAuthentically.com – USA

“I’ve read MANY ‘self-help’ and psych books without any real ‘interest’ - this one not only held my attention but actually helped me too. This book made me recognize the need to develop my own ‘personal brand’.” Mary Millard, Author – USA

“*Branding Your Character* has convinced me that by following the principles therein the reader will create not only a strong professional brand, but will also develop the personal ability to have a positive impact upon society.” John Kirvan, International Best-Selling Author: *30 Days With A Great Spiritual Teacher* series – USA

Sample Chapter

Chapter 1

A Man's Character Is His Fate

"People grow through experience if they meet life honestly and courageously. This is how character is built." ~ Eleanor Roosevelt

We are about to embark on a journey of self-definition and discovery. A trek that will have us exploring core values which shape and mold a person into their true meaning. This will not be a religious exploration, but more importantly one filled with an inner sense of spiritual, philosophical and practical awareness. This journey will help to guide and define you into a positive and successful member of society.

This will not be an easy road to walk. Character is that silent elusive quality which our culture insists on, but is getting harder and harder to find. We look around our worldwide society and it is rare to find role models who exemplify good character for our youth to idolize. In many homes and businesses it is getting harder to find parents and leaders to instill these qualities in their children and employees. Turn on the news and we see politicians taking payoffs, parents being taken to jail, sports figures using drugs, clergy exposed in sexual scandals and business leaders purposely cheating the poor, elderly and hard working individuals.

Personal character at one time was one of the most fundamental issues in life, but that was before it started a downward spiral over the past few decades. What a person is in their inner-most self is their character, their true nakedness before their Creator. It is who you are when you are alone and the lights are off.

What is character? Merriam-Webster Dictionary defines character as:

- “1) one of the attributes or features that make up and distinguish an individual.
- 2) moral excellence and firmness.”

Your character, your inner essence, shines through the best during the hardest times in your life. It takes many years of life and living for you to develop your character. It is not something that will just come to you from reading the pages of a book.

Character is found in people, within a corporate philosophy and in a product's traits. Character can come and go. We can have it one day, but then by greed and ego we lose it. It is much easier to keep it once we have it than it is to try and regain it if we lose it.

There is a big difference between reputation and character. Reputation is what others estimate, see, or think us to be, regardless of the validity of their judgment, while character is what one truly is. Through ignorance or malice or prejudice, a person may have a reputation that has been falsely imposed and one that has no connection to their true character. Although in some cases, it may be true that those assumptions which people put upon us are a representation of our true character, one must be ready to accept both positive and negative assumptions, and strive to correct or repair any false or negative reputation traits.

It is important to note that character formation and character appreciation are qualities that take time to grow and develop. That is why it is so important to begin instilling these qualities in our youth at an early age.

Let's use this analogy: think of your character as a freshly baked pie. The ingredients which you put into that pie - the flour, water, sugar and shortening - will determine the taste and outcome of the finished pie. Each of the qualities that we are going to discuss in this book are equal to the ingredients of that pie. Some ingredients are used more than others - two cups of flour versus a pinch of salt equates to a pinch of imagination blended with a whole bunch of faith. The individual ingredients are not equal in proportion, but each is an essential integral component to the successful outcome of the pie.

Before we can enjoy a taste of that pie, it first has to be baked in the oven under high heat. Likewise, before you can recognize your true perfection within yourself, you must endure a long period of failures and successes to hone your character. You have to be baked in the oven called *life*, forced under heat and pressure to bubble and blend each of the qualities which define your character.

A quick flash of monetary popularity is seen all around us and is not a basis of character: winning the lottery, hitting a jackpot in Las Vegas, a windfall inheritance, signing a new multi-year sports contract, etc. We must remember that these instances tend to be empty, unsatisfying, and deceiving to the elements of good character. It has been said, "many a person has come to moral starvation by feeding on the empty husks of popularity." Many times these empty flings with popularity are known to over-inflate the ego which leads to a negative shift in a person's character. We see this in sports when an athlete turns to drugs and sex, or in business when an executive turns to corruption and scamming customers.

I once knew an individual who won a \$10 million lottery, but within a couple years was back to being broke. This person bought many material possessions and was proud of his flashy ego – however, he lacked the personal character to show charity or be wise enough to secure long term financial security for his family. Can you relate this story to someone you know or to a local business person, sports celebrity or politician in your area?

*"Sow an act, and you reap a habit,
Sow a habit, and you reap a character,
Sow a character, and you reap a destiny."
~ G.D. Boardman*

We grow a little every day, either for better or for worse. It is wise to ask yourself at the end of each day, "which did I do today?" Emerson said: "Mankind divides itself into two classes – Benefactors, one who does good toward another (good character) and Malefactors, one who does evil toward another (bad character)." If we belong to the latter, we turn our friends into enemies, make memory of pain, life a sorrow, the world a prison and death a terror. On the other hand, if we put one bright and good thought into anyone's mind, a smile on someone's face, one happy hour into a person's life, then we have done the work of an angel.

The word *character* is used in daily life in a very confusing and sometimes opposing manner. We say: "That is a person of character," meaning that they are one who has good character – a positive sense. Or we say with a shake of the head, chuckle in our voice or a shrug of the shoulders: "they are a character," meaning that they are peculiar, weird or sometimes even devious – a negative sense. In our discussion of character throughout this book we will only be using the context of the word in the positive sense.

The word *character*, strange as it may seem, is not found in the English version of the Bible, and yet religious educators have much to say about character. Character formation within a cultural or religious context was a key component to living within a society and its importance cannot be overestimated - even though the word does not occur in Holy Texts. The closest translation to *character* is in the New Testament Greek version of Hebrews 1:3, where the word from which the English word *character* is derived occurs:

“God, who at sundry times and in diverse manners spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets, hath in these last days spoken unto us by His son, whom He hath appointed heir of all things, by whom also he made the worlds; who being the brightness of his glory, and the **express image** of His person...”

Character has its origins to the phrase *express image* or *very image*. The Christian translation means that character or *very image* is the true expression of God's supreme love to man. If we further search into the derivative of *character*, we find more Greek roots that lead to the idea of engraving, cutting and stamping. By what we are, by our character, we engrave, carve or stamp (brand) ourselves upon our work, upon our environment and upon everyone with whom we come in contact. It is this impression of our lives that goes beyond time; it shares the deathless nature or immortality of the soul.

In a more metaphysical and spiritual sense, good character permeates your three-fold being and shines from within your body, mind and spirit. I believe that our spiritual essence is defined by our character, ethics, morals and beliefs. The world is full of many wonderful people, so why limit meeting them based on race, gender, sexuality, mannerisms, religion or age? Let an individual's character be the magnet which attracts or repels them, and not by one of these fore-mentioned prejudices.

One must take a holistic approach to character. Character education must be integrated into every part of your life. Your personal life, church life, business life, school life and your family life must all be touched by the effort to develop the positive core values that we will discuss in the upcoming pages.

We have all heard stories about the individual who is a devoted church-goer on Sunday mornings, shines with a smile to the congregation, but then goes home and beats the family and kicks the dog. Those people are not one's with character. You cannot develop a positive character by just passively attending a religious service. Character is an active participatory process which is developed over time!

One's character will, to a large extent, be what one chooses to make it. A philosophy supported by the title of this chapter is a quote from the Ancient Greek Philosopher Heraclitus: “A man's character is his fate.” What is your fate in life? As you read these pages within this book, you may feel that you are approaching a fork in your life with two paths which lay ahead of you. One path will have you repeating the unfulfilled lessons from the past, while the other will have you implementing the lessons found here and growing into an enriched person whose fate will be a blessing to society.

“One thing is needful,” says William Wordsworth:

*“Money is not needful;
power is not needful;
cleverness is not needful;
but character alone –
a thoroughly cultivated will –
is that which can truly save us.”*

The development of character reminds me of an athlete in training for a big game. It takes years of training, practice, losses and wins to condition a great athlete to become their best. So too are those rules when they are applied to *you* in developing your character to live a prosperous, healthy and spiritual life. Your personal sense of character is not something that can be attained by inactivity and indifference. It is the result of a continual strenuous endeavor; it is a major life goal achievement.

Within the pages of this book, we will discuss six essential attributes of character which will brand you as an upstanding person. These individual elements, when brought together, produce a power which is greater than their sum parts: Individuality, Purpose, Imagination, Relationships, Work and Faith.

However, before we begin our exploration into these individual essential attributes, let us first take a look at the sub-groupings of important people within our lives who are responsible for instilling these six attributes within society's members.

Character Progression

Parents are the ones responsible for laying the foundation of good character early-on in their children's lives. In his book *The Four Agreements*, Don Miguel Ruiz enlightens us on how raising children is like training a dog. Both require a positive and nurturing environment which uses stimulus reinforcement to reward or punish the appropriate behaviors. Potty-training a child requires the same process as house-breaking a puppy.

The problem I see is the fact that many times parents themselves don't know how or what to do. We tend to pass on the traits with which we were raised. It takes education, and in some cases therapy too, for us to recognize and then overcome our shortcomings in order for us to be happy and successful. You can't teach your children something which wasn't taught to you.

I have the firm belief that parenting courses should be mandatory for raising a family. You can't drive a vehicle without taking classes and passing examinations. The same thing should be true for parents. I feel it would help us raise a generation of healthy and successful individuals whose lives are devoted to the betterment of themselves and society. Parents need to take responsibility for their actions and for the training and conditioning of their children.

The next group in line for instilling positive character traits within children is that of teachers. Teachers **MUST** recognize the importance they play in childhood development and the long term ramifications that continue into adulthood from what happens within their classrooms. Good teachers do the work of angels to inspire and uplift their students.

However, there are too many teachers who only show up in a classroom to collect a paycheck and who lack the ethical standards to recognize the damage that they are doing to their students. They have no sense of personal character and need to find other means of employment. Our entire worldwide society rests on the shoulders of those who educate our children – for our children are our future. All nations of the world need to empower their local governments to place a stronger emphasis on the importance of education.

Extended families, relatives and preachers are the next group which has an impact on the character development during youth. If someone within this group sees shortcomings in those around them, I empower you to intervene and assist to instill the positive elements we are discussing in this book. Character traits seem stronger in communal living households where the great-grandparents, grandparents, parents and children all reside within close proximity – or even under the same roof. A sense of shared responsibility for the successful development of the child seems evident. I share the same belief as what Hillary Clinton said:

“It takes a village to raise a child.”

The last major group to have responsibility for character development is us – ourselves. We need to recognize as individuals our personal weaknesses and make the necessary changes to turn those weaknesses into strong positive traits. Even as young children growing into older adults, most have an innate sense to know right from wrong and good from bad; we need to listen to those inborn feelings, trust our intuition, and take responsibility for our own actions. Search out positive role models who are willing to be mentors. Educate yourself on those qualities which you are less familiar with – use this book as a guide. Don't be afraid to ask for assistance or guidance; asking others for help is a sign of strength – it's never a sign of weakness.

An ancillary group who has the power to shape character development includes: scout leaders, coaches, politicians and bosses - basically, anyone who has some form of power or direction over others. When you assume those roles of leadership, with it comes a sense of moral obligation to be of positive service to those under your direction. Contrary to that statement is the culture within many organizations who seemingly use and abuse their subordinates for their own power and advancement. It has been studied and documented that a decrease in morale and production occurs within those types of a dictatorship environment. People's inner drives for creativeness and motivation are fostered within a sharing group dynamic where open two-way communication is encouraged.

On a personal note, I still can name those teachers, relatives, scout leaders and family friends whom I feel had a positive impact on my life – even back to elementary school. Their names and faces are still clear in my mind. Some may not remember me to this day, but their words, actions and lessons shaped me for a lifetime. Who do you remember as those significant people who helped shape your current character traits?

A very important key to remember as you go through life is that you may not remember someone – but you never may know the impact which you had on their life – both positive and negative. A person living with the highest of character traits will always interact with people in a manner which will bring some level of happiness, peace, love and joy to those around them. How are you shaping the lives of those around you? We are all part of a larger society which can only grow healthier, stronger and more prosperous, when we as individuals choose to live our lives directed by peace, love and character.

So how does the title of this book and the act of branding fit into the realm of discussing character traits? Our next chapter will tie together the concepts of identity awareness (branding) for both businesses and individuals. That will then lay the framework for the rest of the chapters as we then embark on the journey to uncover six key character components to living a successful and dynamic life.