

## Character isn't "fixed;" it's refined.



Many change professionals mistakenly think they can develop character in the same way they might attain new knowledge or better their communication skills. They think they can improve it by simply pushing themselves to greater heights. Cultivating character, however, isn't about adding or removing parts; it's about surfacing and honoring what has always been there but which, over time, might have become covered up or is leading to unwanted consequences.

We can't "correct" our character by assessing what is missing and attaching the absent elements (e.g., "I'd like to be more caring so I think I'll infuse some empathy into my makeup"). There is no Photoshop equivalent for character enrichment.

In other words, it isn't about learning as much as it is about remembering. Character is revitalized by sinking into the depths from which we came in order to rediscover it...it is uncovered, not concocted.

The most effective approach to refining our character involves reviving and amplifying existing qualities, instead of trying to develop something that didn't exist before. We can also learn to downplay (but not totally eliminate) facets that aren't helpful in our work, or re-channel their impact into more constructive endeavors. What we can't do is fashion character features that were never there or destroy the ones we don't like.