



The Ultimate Character Development System

**Building a Successful Future
One Student at a Time!!!**



DECEMBER 2009 - OPEN-MINDEDNESS

Open-Mindedness means I like to learn about new things, new people, and new ideas!

Open-Mindedness means being open to new ideas and avoiding narrowness of thought.

OPEN-MINDEDNESS: DECEMBER 2009

Dear Family,

This month we will focus on the character concept, “open-mindedness.” Therefore, our power-chat discussions and activities will aim to help children understand what open-mindedness means as well as how they can become more open-minded, accepting, and tolerant in their actions at home, during school, in our classes, and out in the community.

December always brings thoughts of different cultures, different holidays, and different traditions. When we are open-minded, we can celebrate these differences, learn from one another, and recognize that there are similarities among us all. As we are teaching children to become leaders, having such tolerance and acceptance of other people’s views allows potential leaders to see that by learning about differences, we can open our minds to try new things, meet new people, and possibly see better ways of doing things.

Behaving in an open-minded way can be challenging for young children who have difficulty seeing ideas from perspectives other than their own. They often believe their way is the only way! Therefore, patience is in order when explaining open-mindedness to youngsters. In class, we will be discussing that there are many differences between us (as well as similarities) and that “even though we are different, we are all OK,” and we can all be friends.

Older children can open their minds more to issues of tolerance and diversity. We will discuss what it means to “judge a book by its cover” and how, by being open-minded, we can learn about different cultures and customs without bias or prejudice. Can we accept that different people have different ideas, beliefs and ways of life? We may not always agree, but we can show respect for different ways of thinking and for other people’s feelings. This theme will come up a great deal in 2010, as we discuss Powerful Words like empathy, self control, anger management, sportsmanship and manners. Of course we understand that teaching others to open their minds is no easy task; as research shows that when an issue is of a moral nature, such that people find them to be “non-negotiable,” the result is often greater intolerance, more distance, and less sharing with others (Wright et al, 2009). Sharing, however, is how we learn and grow.

This month the definitions of open-mindedness are as follows:

Young students: I like to learn about new things, new people, and new ideas!

Older students, teens & adults: Being open to new ideas and avoiding narrowness of thought.

During the four weeks of December we will be discussing the following:

- (1) Week 1: Just try it: Trying new things that seem different or strange
- (2) Week 2: New people: Being open to differences as well as similarities
- (3) Week 3: New ideas: Listening to new ideas and new ways of doing things
- (4) Week 4: Celebrate: Differences and similarities in holidays, language, and appearance

Upcoming Powerful Words

January: Empathy

February: Self Control

March: Anger Management

As always, one of the best ways to reinforce Powerful Words is by modeling strength of character ourselves. Share with your children all the ways you show open-mindedness each and every day!

We thank you for your support. You are pivotal in helping to make our school one of the best Martial Arts and personal development centers in the world.

Best Regards,
Your Motivated and Dedicated Martial Arts Teachers



For More Powerful Parenting Information, go to www.DrRobynsBlog.com

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(Paraphrased from a conversation; with permission)

Dear Dr. Robyn,

I was raised in a household where my parents felt “it’s my way or the highway” and where other people’s ideas were rarely considered. I think we missed out. My children are curious and I want to nurture that inquisitiveness. Can you give some ideas about how to raise open-minded children?

Margot K, Chicago, IL

Dear Margot,

Open-mindedness is a funny thing. It creates new opportunities for us to learn but that means that we have to be willing to listen and change-- two things that are hard for many people! It is a wonderful gift to nurture children’s curiosity and expose them to ideas, cultures, foods, and people who can positively impact their lives.

Here are some ways to encourage open-mindedness:

(1) **Teach perspective:** When two people have opposing ideas, it’s usually not that one person is completely right and the other person is completely wrong. There are two different perspectives that are coming to light. Teach your children to ask themselves “what can I learn from taking someone else’s perspective?” and “what would make a person see these issues in 2 different ways?” They will learn to be more understanding as well as more open-minded.

(2) **See similarities as well as differences:** Open-mindedness is not just about seeing where opinions diverge, but also where they converge. What are some similarities between opposing customs, ideas, foods and people? For example, we have the 2009 holiday season upon us; this would be a great time to discuss how traditions and holidays, throughout the world are not only different, but similar as well. By seeing the similarities, new things will seem less foreign and scary.

(3) **Talk about change and adaptability:** Keeping an open mind is a strength that allows people to take in new information and, when called for, change their point of view. When we close our minds, we may deny ourselves key information that helps us to grow and learn.

(4) **Expose your family to new people:** New people bring new perspectives, new foods, new traditions, and new ideas. When we embrace new people in our lives, it’s easier to accept and learn new ways of doing things. While we may not always agree, new people can help our children exercise tolerance as well as a peaceful way of discussing opposing points of view.

(5) **Ask your children what they think:** Parents want to teach their children right from wrong. However, sometimes the best way of teaching children to think critically, is allowing them to form their own opinions without a parent’s commentary. By allowing them to form their own opinions, perhaps even differing from your own, you teach them that even though people are different, it doesn’t mean that one is better than the other. We can all share our thoughts and grow together.

Here’s to your success!

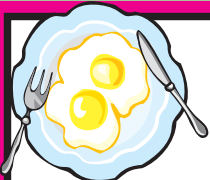




Izzy and Ivan's Incredible *(and not so incredible)* Ideas



Izzy and Ivan have lots of ideas. Some of them would be very good choices for us! Some of their ideas would not be great choices for us. Keep an open mind and then ask yourself; (1) Is this idea the same as what I think? (2) Is this idea different and a good choice or different and a bad choice for me? Check off your answer in the box.



Izzy would like to make her mother breakfast in bed! She asks her big brother to help her make some eggs and muffins. Then she serves it to her mother on a tray!

I do it the same way!

It's different but it's a good choice

It's different but it's a bad choice



Izzy would like to practice her balancing skill for our class. She stacks up some books on top of the kitchen table and climbs up to stand on the very top. She tries to stand on one leg.

I do it the same way!

It's different but it's a good choice

It's different but it's a bad choice



Ivan wants to feed the birds. He decided to climb up a tree in his backyard with a loaf of bread and sprinkle it in a bird's nest. He thought they would be hungry.

I do it the same way!

It's different but it's a good choice

It's different but it's a bad choice



Ivan loves to celebrate the holidays with his family. He hears that one of his friend's families doesn't have a place to go on the holidays. He asks if he could invite them.

I do it the same way!

It's different but it's a good choice

It's different but it's a bad choice

What's one way that you show that you are open-minded? _____

Send your name and answer to this question to drrobynsblog@gmail.com for a chance to be published on the powerful parenting blog! Please get your parents' permission first!

Are you open-minded?

Read the “new ideas” in the left column. Check off “all the time”, “sometimes,” or “never” depending on which one is most true for you.

New idea:	All the time	Sometimes	Almost Never
Example: I learn about different people’s holidays	X		
(1) I try new foods			
(2) I introduce myself to new people.			
(3) I ask my friends to tell me about their family traditions.			
(4) I read up about different cultures.			
(5) I’m friends with people who are different from me.			
(6) I listen to other people’s ideas about how to do things.			
(7) I try new activities.			
(8) I get to know people instead of pre-judging them by their looks.			

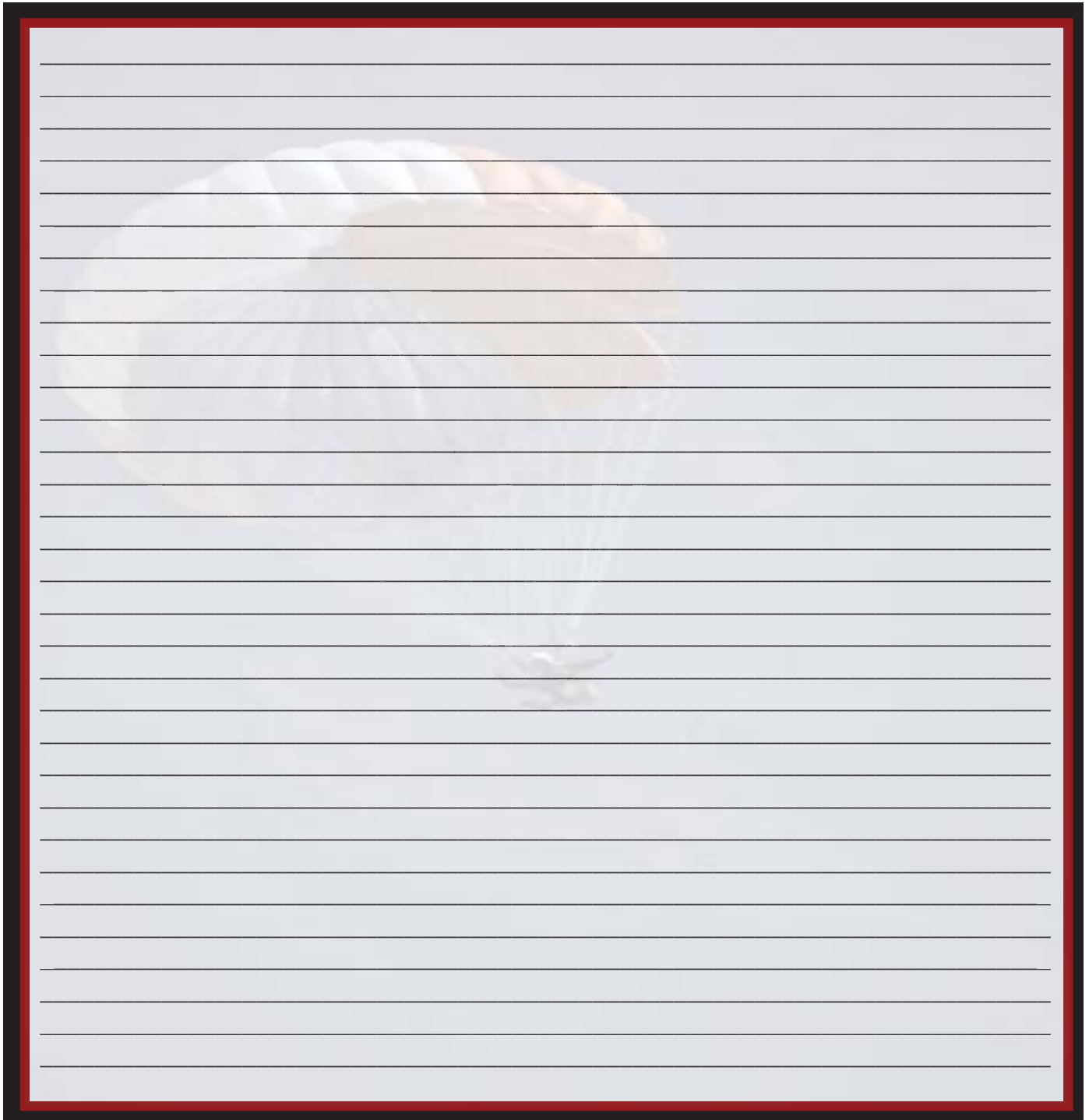
What is something new that you’ve tried recently? _____

How do you show that you are open-minded? _____

'Minds are like parachutes - they only function when open.'

--Thomas Dewar

As leaders, how can we teach ourselves and others to keep an open mind and yet be critical of what we are all seeing and hearing? As writer, Terry Prachett once wrote; 'The trouble with having an open mind, of course, is that people will insist on coming along and trying to put things in it.' How do you create balance that gives you innovation as well as discretion? When have you done this in your life?

A large rectangular area with a red border. Inside, there is a faint, semi-transparent image of a hand holding a glowing lightbulb. The background of this area is light gray, and it is overlaid with horizontal lines for writing.