

ANONYMITY DILUTES ACCOUNTABILITY

A major way to increase accountability is to reduce anonymity. There is a reason that crime is less per capita in small towns; people know each other. They know what each other is up to, and they talk. They know who is at the bar and whose car is parked outside of “that person’s” house all night long. While gossip is certainly a negative; small town accountability can promote higher character. If people know they are being watched, they are more likely to act above reproach. This is one of the reasons people do more stupid things in Las Vegas while on a business trip. Anonymity dilutes accountability. This is the reason why some conscientious families move computers into the main living area. By having the computers in a more public space, family members are less likely to go on sites they would be embarrassed to be found searching. And it’s the same reason why offices with open work spaces promote greater productivity than ones with solid doors and walls. Colleagues can see whether each other is napping, tweeting, or working.

Five Ways to Build Character

1. **Be humble.** It is the beginning of wisdom.
2. **Live out your principles and values.** Whether it’s “love others,” or “do the right thing,” living by your principles will make decision making easier and your character more steadfast. Make sure to hire principled people because it is very hard for any of us to learn principles after age 10.
3. **Be intentional.** Integrity does not happen by accident. We are all products of our thoughts and habits. Be intentional about filling your mind with good thoughts. Creating a habit of this internalizes principles and breeds high character.
4. **Practice self-discipline.** Being of high character takes the ability to do what is right over what is easy. As Harry S Truman said, “In reading the lives of great men, I found that the first victory they won was over themselves... self-discipline with all of them came first.”
5. **Be accountable.** Surround yourself with people who have high expectations for you. Be responsible to yourself first. Lose the pride. Open yourself up to accountability.