

Practically applying the character quality of

security

vs. Anxiety

"Structuring my life around that which cannot be destroyed or taken away."

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Security in Uncertain Times

Terrorism, financial uncertainty, SARS (Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome), and other world events all have the potential to cause anxiety in our lives. The character quality of security is a choice to center our life on things that cannot be taken away. Everyone believes in a core set of truths from which they make their choices in life. Not everyone has clearly defined those basic beliefs, but we all have them. Building character helps us define those basic beliefs. Security can only be built on a foundation of truth.

- We *demonstrate* security when we back up our computer, when we use checklists to make sure we don't forget things for a trip, etc. Security is practiced when we are mindful of possible risks and take precautions against them.
- We *experience* security after we take such precautionary measures. Your hard drive can crash without fear of losing all your data. You can enjoy your vacation by finding you took everything you needed. The peace and confidence of security is experienced when life is built around unshakable truths.

There is a big difference between net worth and self worth. Even wealthy people need others to encourage them. All of us have areas in which we feel insecure. A lack of security often hinders us from accomplishing the positive things that we would like to do in life. The word "encourage"

means "to inspire courage". Learn to encourage others, especially those you love. The latent potential within your spouse in his or her areas of insecurity may await your encouraging words.

Secure Children

Most of us have been taught to focus on achievement. We repeat the process when we become parents by encouraging our children to excel in sports or the arts, to get good grades, etc. Sometimes we send a message that we do not mean to send in the process. The unintentional result of focusing on achievement can be creating a sense of insecurity in our children during periods of poor outcomes. One of my friends admitted that she cheated in school to get straight A's in an effort to win the approval of her parents. In her case, cheating seemed to be the best way to win her parents' approval, approval that appeared to her to be conditional based on straight A's. Create a sense of security in your children by loving them unconditionally.

Safety Checklist for Parents

- My children know that if someone attempts to take them, to scream, kick and make as much noise as possible to draw attention.
- My children know that if any adult tells them to keep something from their parents, they must tell mom and dad immediately.
- My children know the proper way to exit our home in case of fire.

- My children know to never leave home without informing us first.
- My children know how and when to call 911.
- My children know what things in the house (matches, poisons, power tools, etc.) are off-limits to them.
- My children are aware of the dangers of drug use and have been taught how to say no to dealers.
- My children have been taught that premarital abstinence is the safest means to avoid contracting AIDS.
- My children have been protected from internet, cable and satellite pornography and will say no when offered printed pornography.
- My older children have been trained in CPR.

Foundation of Life

So what are you going to build your life around? Hopefully not career, money, fun or other temporal values. None of these are strong enough to hold you together when life starts to break apart. You need an unshakable center. It has been said that there are no atheists in foxholes during time of war. From an eternal perspective, our faith in God is an unshakable center for our lives. From an earthly perspective, our character is something that cannot be taken away from us, regardless of the loss of health or wealth. The words of J.R. Miller capture this concept best. He said, "The only thing that walks back from the tomb with the mourners and refuses to be buried is the character of a man."