



*Building Our Future Through
Education, History and Culture!*

APRIL 2015

VIRTUES PROJECT



Bringing Virtues to Life

Compliments of:
Virgin Islands Department of Education
Division of Virgin Islands Cultural Education

Learning More About the Virtues Project

What is The Virtues Project? The Virtues Project was founded in 1991 by Linda Kavelin Popov, Dr. Dan Popov, and the late John Kaveline. It is a global grass roots initiative to inspire the practice of virtues in all aspects of life; it has inspired and mobilized many thousands of families, educators, leaders, and employees to commit acts of service and generosity, to heal violence with virtues, and to create safe and caring communities.

What's the difference between virtues and values? Values are what we value and care about. They could be anything. We may value getting rich and famous, we may value power over others, but that doesn't mean we will have good character. Values are culture-specific because what some families or cultures value, others don't. Virtues are much more elemental than values. While values are culture-specific, virtues are universally valued to all cultures. Virtues are the essence of who we are; it's what's good about us. It's our inner quality of character, which sometimes is there waiting to be awakened. They are the content of our character and the basis of genuine happiness.

Why teach virtues? Many teachers and administrators are finding that applying the strategies of The Virtues Project is transforming the culture in their schools by helping them to create a total environment of caring and respect. They have replaced discouragement with empowerment, having discovered that words such as "lazy" "retarded" "stupid" "unacceptable" were literally demoralizing and dis-courage-ing their students. When they filled their classrooms with encouraging words, such as "helpful", "excellent", "compassionate", self-disciplined", "integrity", and "kind", they found that these behaviors flourished.

How are the virtues taught? The virtues are taught through the Five Strategies, the signature contribution of The Virtues Project. These strategies are important because they help us to live more reverent, purposeful lives, to raise children of compassion and idealism, and create a culture of character in our families, schools, and workplaces. The five strategies are:

1. Speak the Language of Virtues
2. Recognize Teachable Moments
3. Set Clear Boundaries
4. Honor the Spirit

What is Honor the Spirit? Honoring the spirit is sustaining our vision and purpose by integrating virtues into our activities, surroundings, celebrations, and the arts. We have a daily routine of reverence to pray, reflect, and serve. It is something that gives you the energy and strength to stay focus and to push forward. Honoring the spirit is doing something that is stress free and it gives you the added energy and drive to re-focus and staying focus to your commitments at home, work, church, community, etc. It can be done through the day; for example, it can be done before your day starts in the quietness of the day before dawn, during your lunch time, or at bedtime.

The A.R.T. of Boundaries

Assertiveness

Do what is right for you!

Respect

Be deeply present without

Advising

Interrupting

Criticizing

Teasing

Trust

Be worthy of trust

What we say here, stays here!

Ways to Honor the Spirit

- **Virtues Sharing Circles**
- **Celebrations**
- **Traditions**
- **Reflective Time**
- **Moments in Nature**
- **Service Learning**
- **The Arts**
- **Virtues Picks**
- **Listening to your favorite music**
- **Attending your child's sporting activities**

Who can be contacted for additional information? Feel free to contact Virtues Project Facilitator, Arlene L. Pinney-Benjamin at alpbenjamin@doe.vi or 340-774-0100 x: 2804 at the Virgin Islands Department of Education Division of Virgin Islands Cultural Education.

APRIL 2015

VIRTUES OF THE MONTH:

. Trust

I am thankful for the gift of Trust. It renews my strength.

(April 5 - April 11, 2015)

. Trustworthiness

I am thankful for the gift of Trustworthiness. It is the foundation of my success.

(April 12 - April 18, 2015)

. Truthfulness

I am thankful for the gift of Truthfulness. It is my holy ground.

(April 19 - April 25, 2015)

. Integrity

I am thankful for the gift of Integrity. It supports me to walk my talk.

(April 26 - May 2, 2015)

Upcoming

MAY 2015

VIRTUES OF THE MONTH:

. Commitment

I am thankful for the gift of Commitment. It brings passion to my purpose.

(May 3 - May 9, 2015)

. Courage

I am thankful for the gift of Courage. It makes my life purposeful.

(May 10 - May 16, 2015)

. Confidence

I am thankful for the gift of Confidence. It helps me to contribute fully and freely.

(May 17 - May 23, 2015)

. Loyalty

I am thankful for the gift of Loyalty. It nurtures my commitments.

(May 24 - May 30, 2015)

TRUST

Trust is having faith, hope, and a positive outlook. Trust is believing in someone or something. We have confidence that the right thing will come about without trying to control it or make it happen. We trust others to do what they say they will do, and give them the space to be trustworthy. Sometimes it is difficult to trust when life brings painful experiences. Trust is being sure, in the depths of our being, that there is some gift or learning in everything that happens. We move confidently with the flow of life, gathering strength from adversity. We know we are never alone.

“Trust in the Lord and He will guide you aright. One who has this trust need fear nothing. He can be in perfect peace and happiness for he will be guided aright.

Mahavagga 8:15:13 Hinduism

The Practice of Trust

... I practice trust when I ...

Believe there is some good in everything that happens

Look for the lessons in painful experiences

Let trust take away my worries

Know that my best is good enough

Trust others unless I have good reasons not to

Don't nag, worry, or try to take control

Affirmation:

I am trusting. I have no need to control others. I release fear and worry.

I feel at peace and know I am not alone.

CULTURAL PROVERBS

“Ah could trus' yoh as far as ah could t'row yoh“

Meanings:

I can trust you only as far as I can throw you. In other words, I can't trust you behind my back or where I can't see you.

FOLKTALE

“The Man and the Snake”

This folktale shows how the man trusted the snake, in hope that the snake would keep his promise. Explore The Man and the Snake!

Activities with Trust



Trust Walk

Have students pair up, with one of them blind-folded while the other gently and carefully leads them around a field or a room. Then they reverse roles. Talk about how it felt to trust someone to lead you and how it felt to be the leader?



Virtues Reflection Questions

- ❶ How can you tell if you can trust someone or not?
- ❷ What helps you to trust that things will turn out right?
- ❸ Name something you do that you really trust yourself to do well. It could be something simple you do every day.
- ❹ Name a time it is difficult for you to trust that things will be okay.
- ❺ What would it look like to balance trust with assertiveness in your relationships?
- ❻ What do you trust a good friend to do?
- ❼ What would you do if someone was not trustworthy and kept asking you to trust him?



Drawing Trust

Draw a picture of a sunrise. You can always trust the sun to come up when it is supposed to rise.



Poster Points

- ❶ Friendship is a Sacred Trust.
- ❷ I trust in life.
- ❸ All will be well.
- ❹ Rain brings a rainbow.



Quotable Quotes

"I will tell you that there have been no failures in my life... There have been some tremendous lessons." Oprah Winfrey

"As soon as you trust yourself, you will know how to live." Goethe

*"For what has been – thanks!
For what shall be – trust."* Dag Hammarskjöld

"Every day, in every way, I'm getting better and better." Emile Coue

"When we trust as far as we can, we often find ourselves able to trust at least a little farther." Mark Gibbard

South Africa - The Man and the Snake

By Dr. Michael Lockett/The Normal Storyteller

The Man and the Snake

As Adapted by Dr. Mike Lockett, The Normal Storyteller

A long time ago, a Man was walking along the road. As he walked, he saw a Snake that was caught beneath a large rock that had fallen on him.

"Pleassssse... help me," said the Snake. "This rock has fallen on me. I cannot move. The heat of the sun is killing me. If you don't help me, I will die."

The Man looked at the Snake and said, "If I remove the rock, you will bite me. Then, I will die instead of you."

"Why would I harm the Man who has saved me?" asked the Snake. Besides, I am so weak, I only have enough energy to crawl back to my home to recover from this terrible event."

The Man was a kind Man and did not like to see anyone suffer, even a Snake. So, he lifted the stone off the Snake.

As soon as the stone was removed from his back, the Snake raised his head high in the air, and he bared his long fangs. "Prepare to be bitten," said the Snake.

"This is not right," said the Man. "You promised not to bite me if I helped you."

"You knew I was a Snake when you saw me. You knew that Snakes bite. You even said I would bite you when I was freed. You are right! Prepare to get bitten."

"Wait," said the Man. This is not fair,"

"Who is to say what is fair," said the Snake,

"Please," said the Man. At least let us ask another creature to see if it is fair for you to bite me."

"Very well," said the Snake. "because, I know other creatures will agree with me!"

First they went to the Hyena. The Man asked the Hyena, "Is it fair for the Snake to bite me after I saved his life by lifting a stone off his back?"

The Hyena said, "Man has never been fair to me! So why should the Snake be fair to you?" Besides, the Hyena thought he would be able to feed off the Man's body after the Snake bit and killed him.

The Snake raised his head to strike. But the Man said, "Wait! let's ask yet another creature."

They went and met Rabbit. The Snake stared at the Rabbit and said, "Is it fair for me to bite the Man after he lifted a rock off my back?" The Snake looked deep into the Rabbit's eyes.

The Rabbit knew that the Snake would eat him if he favored the Man over the Snake. So he said, "Man has never helped me before, so why should I help him? It is fair that you bite the Man."

The Snake again raised his head and prepared to bite the Man.

"Wait," said the Man. "Please let us talk to one more animal before you bite me." Just then, the Jackal walked

by. The Man said to the Jackal, "Is it right for Snake to want to bite me, after I saved his life by lifting the Stone off his back?"

The Jackal replied, "I do not believe that Snake could be caught under a stone ; so he could not get away. Unless I saw it with my two eyes, I would not believe it. Show me the place where you say it happened so I can see it."

When they arrived at the place where the Snake had been under the rock Jackal said, "Snake, lie down, and let me see how the the rock sat on you." The Snake laid down, and the Man covered him with the stone.

The Jackal asked, "Is this how you were when the Man found you?"

"Yes," said the Man and the Snake at the same time. Then the Man started to take the rock off the Snake once again.

The Jackal stopped him. "Do not lift the stone off the Snake. He wanted to bite you before. If you lift the rock, he will do it again."

Then they both went away and left Snake under the stone.

TRUSTWORTHINESS

Trustworthiness is being worthy of the trust others place in us. When we give our word, we stand by it. Others can rely on us with confidence. We demonstrate by our actions that we keep our promises and commitments. There is constancy in the way we love and loyalty in the bonds of our friendships. Trustworthiness is the foundation of our business agreements and our personal covenants. When we are worthy of trust, we attract abundance. We create lasting success.

“To be trusted is a greater compliment than to be loved.”

George MacDonald

The Practice of Trustworthiness

... I practice trustworthiness when I ...

Think before I make a promise to be sure I can do it
Take responsibility for remembering my commitments
Keep my promises even when they become hard to do
Abide by the rules even when no one is watching
Let nothing stop me from keeping my word
Do my best and finish what I started

Affirmation:

I am trustworthy. I keep my word. I am worthy of the trust others place in me.

CULTURAL PROVERBS

“Ah eat wid de debil but ah watch ‘e”

Meanings:

I may be consorting with my worst enemies, but I keep both my eyes wide open.

FOLKTALE

“Thin Foot, Big Belly, and Big Head”

Broo ‘Nansi A Selection of Anansi Stories

Collected and Transcribed by Lezmore E. Emanuel, Ph.D.

Thin Foot, Big Belly, and Big Head have been friends for a long time.
As you explore, you will understand how their lack or presence of trustworthiness affected or helped them!

Activities with Trustworthiness



Be a Promise Keeper

Think of a promise you can make to someone in your family or in this class, one that you can actually accomplish. Follow through on it this week and share the results at the end of the week. Name three things you can do to be sure to remember it and follow through on it.

Relay Race

Have a Trustworthiness relay race, in which everyone runs as fast as they can, carrying an object to a goal and running back to pass it on to the next runner.



Virtues Reflection Questions

- ❶ Why do friends need to be trustworthy?
- ❷ What is it like to find out that someone broke a promise to you?
- ❸ How easy would it be to trust this person the next time a promise is made?
- ❹ How would life in your home be if you were trustworthy all the time?
- ❺ Why is it important for people in the world of work to be trustworthy? (A car manufacturer, a farmer, a waitress, a storekeeper, a doctor)
- ❻ How does trustworthiness attract success?
- ❼ Everyone makes mistakes. When you are trustworthy, how do you handle them?
- ❽ What helps you to be trustworthy?
- ❾ Name three times you have practiced trustworthiness.



Drawing Trustworthiness

Draw a person doing a job in which it is important to be trustworthy.



Poster Points

- ❶ Promise keeper.
- ❷ You can count on me.
- ❸ Always reliable and dependable.
- ❹ Being worthy of trust.



Quotable Quotes

"Never esteem anything of advantage to you that will make you break your word or lose your self-respect." Marcus Aurelius Antoninus

"You are a guardian of the seeds for the world to come. All that has gone before and all that is yet to come is within you... You are running in a relay. This is the moment you have been chosen to hold the torch. You cannot refuse to run." Tolbert McCarroll

"If you fear that people will know, don't do it." Chinese Proverb

"If you think you can, or if you think you can't, you're right." Anonymous

"You do not attract what you want but what you are." Anonymous

"To be trusted is a greater compliment than to be loved." George MacDonald

THIN FOOT, BIG BELLY AND BIG HEAD

One day, Thin Foot, Big Belly and Big Head went to raid the neighbor's garden. In the middle of the garden stood a huge pawpaw tree with large ripe pawpaws. Since Big Belly could climb, he went up the tree and began to pick the pawpaws. As he picked them he ate them. His brothers on the ground begged him:

"Please brother Big Belly, send us down some pawpaws."

But he ate the pawpaws and threw down the skins.

They pleaded again, "Please brother Big Belly, send us down some pawpaws!"

But Big Belly only threw down the skins.

At last, he ate all the pawpaws that were ripe. His belly had become so large that he could not climb down from the tree. Well, in his efforts, he simply dropped to the ground where his belly burst. Big Head laughed and laughed and laughed till his head fell off.

Thin Foot became so frightened that he decided to run home and tell his mother. In his haste he stepped into an ant hole and broke his leg! And that was the end of Big Head, Big Belly and Thin Foot!

TRUTHFULNESS

Truthfulness is being honest in your words and actions. Trust is the bedrock of integrity on which we build all our other virtues. It is an ongoing commitment to live by what is real, authentic, and true for us. We make realistic decisions. We do not lie, cheat, or deceive. We tell the truth kindly. Our words and actions are trustworthy. Our promise is our bond. We do not allow others to have undue influence on our perceptions. We investigate the truth with our own eyes. Truth tells us that we are not here to live another's dream or to be all things to all people. We live by our own true nature.

“Truthfulness is the foundation of all the virtues ... When this holy attribute is established in man, all the divine qualities will also become realized.”

‘Abdu’l-Baha

The Practice of Truthfulness

... I practice truthfulness when I ...

Speak only the truth
Don't let others tell me what to think
Investigate the truth for myself
Can tell the difference between fact and fantasy
Admit it when I have made a mistake
Don't exaggerate or deceive to impress others

Affirmation:

I am truthful. I speak the truth. I see the truth with my own eyes.
I am content to be my true self.

CULTURAL PROVERBS

De gossip an' de liard ah de bush an' de macea.
You can hide from a thief, but you can't hide from a liar.

Meanings:

A gossip may be bad, but a liar is worse.
You can protect your valuables from being stolen, but there is nothing you can do about being lied on. No matter how much you hide from a liar, if he / she wants to tell a lie on you they will.

FOLKTALE

“Tukuma's Uncle's Death”

Broo 'Nansi A Selection of Anansi Stories

Collected and Transcribed by Lezmore E. Emanuel, Ph.D.

Tukuma and Nansi were best friends and some of Nansi's 'habits' rubbed off on Tukuma.
Read on and experience how the truthfulness of Tukuma and his uncle played out!

Activities with Truthfulness



True or False

Make up a list of true statements, such as "The grass is green" mixed with outrageous statements, such as "Money grows on trees." and have students check true or false boxes.

Story

Read or tell the Aesops Fable of "The Boy Who Cried Wolf" and discuss how the boy felt and what he can do to make amends. Ask "What would you do to make it right if you told a lie?"



Virtues Reflection Questions

- ❶ What it would feel like to have a good friend tell you a lie?
- ❷ What does the liar feel after telling a lie?
- ❸ Why do we sometimes try to exaggerate what we do or what we have?
- ❹ How does truthfulness help our relationships?
- ❺ What are some things you truly care about?
- ❻ What are some things you truly like to do?
- ❼ What would you do or say if someone began gossiping or saying prejudiced things in front of you?



Drawing Truthfulness

Make a collage or drawing to show several of the virtues you truly have, that describe your true self.



Poster Points

- ❶ The truth shall set us free.
- ❷ True to my word.
- ❸ True to myself.



Quotable Quotes

"This above all – to thine own self be true, and it must follow, as the night the day, thou canst not then be false to any man."

William Shakespeare

"Tell the truth. Do it now." Werner Erhardt

Truth is the secret of eloquence and of virtue, the basis of moral authority. It is the highest summit of art and life." H.F. Amiel

"If a man does not keep pace with his companions, perhaps it is because he hears a different drummer. Let him step to the music which he hears, however measured or far away."

Henry David Thoreau

"Truth exists. Only lies are invented."

Georges Braque

"To love truth for truth's sake is the principal part of human perfection in this world, and the seed-plot of all other virtues." John Locke

"An exaggeration is a truth that has lost its temper." Kahlil Gibran

"Be truthful, gentle and fearless." M.K. Ghandi

TUKUMA'S UNCLE'S DEATH

Tukuma was Nansi's best friend and after hanging out so many years with Nansi he began picking up some of his bad habits. Now Tukuma's uncle had a fine estate on which he grew yams, tannias, plantains, dasheens, all sorts of oranges, and mangoes. Tukuma couldn't resist stealing some of these things. He said to himself, "My uncle's estate is large and he will never miss a couple of mangoes or oranges here and there."

But Tukuma's uncle was shrewd and he realized that someone was stealing from his estate. He said to his watchman: "I know that it is that good-for-nothing nephew of mine. But we have to catch him."

The watchman thought and thought and finally said, "I have an idea, boss. I think that it's Tukuma that is stealing those things too. Let us pretend that you have died and I will tell Tukuma to come and see you before the burial. When he gets here, he will not be able to resist stealing a mango or two. Then we will have him."

When Tukuma received the news of his uncle's death, he suspected a trap. But he carried on as though sorely bereaved. "Oh, my dear uncle! How could you die and leave me like this?" He shed several tears, packed his belongings, and said in a loud voice, "I must go and see to my uncle's burial."

When he arrived, instead of going inside, he stood beneath the window and remarked, "When a man dies, he should belch one last time. I wonder if my uncle has belched yet!" Hearing this, his uncle let out a mighty gust of wind. At this, Tukuma laughed out loud and shouted, "I never yet heard of a dead man who could belch." And with that he took off through the yard and disappeared in the brush.

INTEGRITY

Integrity is standing up for what we believe is right. We keep faith with our ideals and live by our deepest values. We keep our agreements reliably. Our actions match our words. We strive to balance impeccable integrity and unfailing tenderness for others and ourselves.

We cherish the challenge of doing the right thing in all circumstances.

We give excellence to whatever we undertake. We live by our personal covenant.

“To put the world right ... we must first cultivate our personal life;
we must first set our hearts right.”

Confucius

The Practice of Integrity

... I practice Integrity when I ...

Think about what virtues matter to me

Stand up for what I believe in

Do the right thing even when it is hard

Willingly clean up my mistakes

Think for myself and avoid temptations

Affirmation:

I have integrity. I stand up for what is right.

I mean what I say and say what I mean. I am my own leader

CULTURAL PROVERBS

Ah de quiet bull de butcher kill.

Meanings:

Speak up for your rights.

FOLKTALE

“The Slaves and the Waterhole”

Broo ‘Nansi A Selection of Anansi Stories

Collected and Transcribed by Lezmore E. Emanuel, Ph.D.

Explore the fate of the watertap man, bomba, and the whole gang of slaves
for not having integrity!

Activities with Integrity



Role Play

Discuss situations that tempt us to cheat, lie or compromise our principles such as finding something we really like that doesn't belong to us. Then role play the scenario showing what it would look like with the practice of integrity.

What I Stand For

Make a list of three to five virtues that are most important in your code of honor, the ones you want to live by.



Virtues Reflection Questions

- ❶ What would a friendship be like without integrity?
- ❷ What would a friendship be like if both people were integrous?
- ❸ How do people feel around someone who doesn't do what they say they will do?
- ❹ What would help you to do the right thing even if others are trying to lead you into temptation?
- ❺ When is it hard for you to practice integrity? When is it easier for you to practice integrity?
- ❻ What do you think are the most important virtues?



Drawing Integrity

Make an integrity collage of the virtues you care about, with pictures and words.



Poster Points

- ❶ Doing the right thing.
- ❷ Standing strong for what I believe.
- ❸ Standing up for justice.
- ❹ What you see is what you get.
- ❺ I mean what I say and say what I mean.



Quotable Quotes

"The only thing necessary for the triumph of evil is for enough good men to do nothing."

Attributed to Edmund Burke

"If we don't stand for something, we'll fall for anything." Vic Kitchen

"We can change our whole life and the attitude of people around us simply by changing ourselves." Rudolf Dreikurs

"In matters of style, swim with the current, in matters of principle, stand like a rock."

Thomas Jefferson

"Character is destiny." Heraclitus

"Remorse is the echo of lost virtue."

Bulwar Lyton

"Compromise to please others is not as good as integrity that annoys others." Huanchu Daoren

"What you are speaks so loudly, I can't hear what you're saying." Ralph Waldo Emerson

THE SLAVES AND THE WATERHOLE

One time a gang of slaves was working in a field. The manager sent the overseer to call the driver and tell him where to go with his gang to work. At seven o'clock in the morning, he blew the conch shell for the slaves to go to work. The slaves began to ask the overseer to call for water. But there was no water to drink. The driver called the watertap man to bring water for the gang. When the watertap man came, he arrived at a pit. What did he find? He found a group of "ground" doves dancing. They were having a forecastle (forward part of a ship) dance. They had rum, gumbé drums, and tambourines. They beat them and danced. The watertap man put the tub on the ground near the pit. He went straight to dance. The bomba (headman of the crew) walked and watched but did not see the watertap man. He sent other men of the gang to go and bring the watertap man back. Each man went and found the dance. He jumped between the dancers and began to dance also. The bomba was there looking but he could not see anything whatever arriving. He sent three men and not one came back. The bomba said to himself that he would have to go himself. He took a long whip. He went with it to beat them till they cried in the fields. When the bomba went, he found the dance so sweet that he threw away the whip and jumped into the dance himself and began to dance with the gang. He danced and drank until he was stone drunk. The whole gang now got tired of waiting and came straight to the pit to look for water to drink. When they reached there, they found the dance so sweet that they did not bother with water to drink. They danced, all of them, until twelve o'clock.

When twelve o'clock blew, there was not a man in the entire field. The manager and the overseer had to go to the hill where the pit and the dancers were. They took all of them including the bomba. They beat all of them; each man received seven strokes and the bomba got fourteen.



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*An initiative of The Virtues Project,
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coordinated by the Community Foundation
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