



# Once a Week 52

small steps on a  
year-long journey  
to reach your full  
potential

**David A. Esposito**

Harvest Time  
Partners

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For additional information and permissions, please contact:  
Harvest Time Partners, Inc.  
Attention: David Anthony Esposito  
Email: [david@harvesttimepartners.com](mailto:david@harvesttimepartners.com)

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## DEDICATION

This book is dedicated to my children Stephanie, Samantha, David, and Jonathan.

Thanks for the inspiration you have provided me to keep climbing into the ring each and every day.

I hope these small lessons can provide some guidance along your journey to reach your full potential.

I am confident others will say of you, following Homer's comment to a returning warrior, that you are far better than your father and you make glad the heart of your mother.

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## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I want to thank my wife Tracy who has endured an alarm clock at 3:00 AM every Thursday morning for over 5 years as I woke up early to write the *Character Creates Opportunity*<sup>®</sup> blog before the 7:00 AM deadline. Your patience and understanding have been immeasurable.

I want to thank Michael Piperno and the team at Imbue Creative ([www.imbuecreative.com](http://www.imbuecreative.com)). Your support, ideas, and encouragement have given me the courage to take a few leaps into the unknown.

## INTRODUCTION

For many of us, life is moving at what seems like light-speed. Work responsibilities demand more time as challenges in the marketplace continue to grow, kids' schedules are jam packed, and then there are the events in the community that require us to do our part to give back. All this activity results in a heightened level of stress and anxiety in the home.

We are all running after a number of very admirable and honorable pursuits. Who can disagree with hard work, preparing kids for a bright future, building a solid career, and doing our part to make the world a better place?

The challenge for all of us is how do we ensure we keep moving in an effective direction to reach our goals while we keep our heads down doing the necessary things today? How do we course correct when our lives come off the rails? How do we find time to reflect on where we have been and where we are headed to ensure it is still where we need to go?

In essence, how do we stay active and engaged on the field of play while we get a view from the coach's box overlooking the field to ensure we are playing at our very best.

The idea for *Once a Week* came out of trying to answer these questions.

It originated with my weekly blog called *Character Creates Opportunity*<sup>®</sup>. New content has been available every Thursday morning for over five years. The blog's intent is to support and encourage readers to reach their full potential through the building and strengthening of their character. At

Harvest Time Partners — a company that my wife Tracy and I founded more than 20 years ago to provide resources that help individuals and families reach their full potential in an increasingly complex and uncertain world — we believe that Character Creates Opportunity to reach our hopes and dreams, regardless of our situation.

The content for *Once a Week* came from Harvest Time Partners' most popular blog posts over the years. Each weekly reading concludes with some thought-provoking questions to help ensure readers remain on an effective path to reach their full potential.

It is my hope that readers will commit a relatively small amount of time, approximately 30 minutes, *Once a Week*, to reinforce what is important in their lives and get re-energized to climb back into the ring for another week to reach their full potential in their most important roles in the home, the workplace, and the community.

As you begin this once a week journey, here are a few introductory comments to help build a foundation for the journey.

Why is character so important?

In order to answer that question, it is important to address some universal truths in our world.

1. We will experience both ups and downs, great highs and great lows. Whether it is in school, work, our community, and certainly in our homes, we will encounter situations that provide us with opportunities to grow.
2. There are always three elements to every one of our experiences:

a **SITUATION**: There is our present situation. Many times, our situation is beyond our immediate, personal control, like the weather, an emergency customer call late at night, a reckless driver, an outburst from an individual in an overwhelming situation, etc.

a **GAP**: There is a gap, a moment in our consciousness where we form our response to the situation. The gap could be a split second or a longer period of time.

a **RESPONSE**: There is our response to the situation.



3. How we fill the GAP will determine our potential and emotional health. In the GAP, lies our character. We are not confined to a stimulus-response type paradigm like we see in wild animals. Our unique human qualities provide us with the freedom to choose our response to our situation. We possess the potential to rise above our situation by effectively using the GAP between our SITUATION and our RESPONSE.

Our character is *Standing in the Gap*<sup>®</sup> between our situation and our response.

Our character is our inner voice (our internal compass) that guides our thoughts, decisions, and actions. When we guide our thoughts, decisions, and actions by principles like courage, loyalty, honesty, teamwork, and commitment, we build and strengthen our character. As our character is strengthened, we widen the GAP to develop our most effective response. Our most effective response to our present situation will eventually lead to improved situations in the future, which will form the foundation to achieve even greater goals and places us on an effective path to reach our full potential.

It is in the gap between a situation and our response where we have the opportunity to reach our full potential. Our character is **Standing in the Gap** and that is why character is the critical catalyst to reaching our full potential.

One important reminder is that as we face situations in life, there is **ALWAYS** a gap between that situation and our response. How we fill that gap will determine our potential and emotional health.

I hope this *Once a Week* journey will feed and nourish you in a most helpful and relevant way.

Please feel free to reach out to me if I can help you in your journey. I wish you all the best.

Be well my friend.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "David". The letters are stylized and cursive.

David  
[david@harvesttimepartners.com](mailto:david@harvesttimepartners.com)

PS: One final note; The readers of this book will most likely be adults. However, I would like to reinforce that the development of character begins early in life.

“Good habits formed in youth make all the difference.”

Aristotle

"You know that the beginning is the most important part of any work, especially in the case of a young and tender thing; for that is the time at which the character is being formed and the desired impression is more readily taken...Anything received into the mind at that age is likely to become indelible and unalterable; and therefore it is most important that the tales which the young first hear should be models of virtuous thoughts..."

Plato's Republic

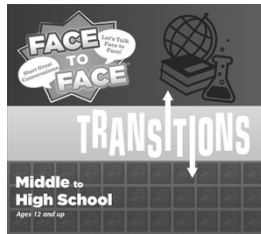
For those readers who have a connection to children, please consider that the teachings in ***Once a Week*** can help children start and stay on an effective path to reach their full potential.

## Resources from Harvest Time Partners

**Reality:** We all struggle to have difficult conversations around the important things in life with those we care about most.

### Face to Face

A unique set of resources to support families, educators, and counselors in opening a door to more effective communication about real-world, difficult issues and encouraging face-to-face discussion to improve decision-making and relationships. Available for various ages



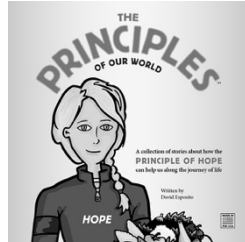
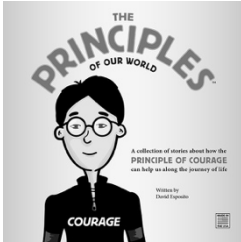
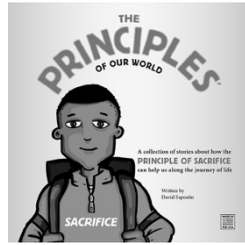
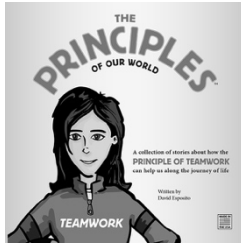
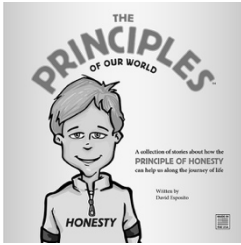
### Abundant Harvest for Kids and Abundant Harvest for Teens & Adults

A patented, award-winning board game to support effective communication, reinforce principle-based decision making and the Law of the Harvest; simply, you reap what you sow.



## The Principles of Our World Children's Book Series

It is never too early in the development of a child to start talking about the importance of principles like compassion, honesty, courage and teamwork. The Principles of Our World books provide parents and teachers with the opportunity to teach children how **The Principles** can help them in a variety of situations they will experience in life.



For more information and to order these resources go to

[www.harvesttimepartners.com](http://www.harvesttimepartners.com)

## ABOUT THE AUTHOR

David is a combat veteran, business executive, husband, father, and creator of character-building resources that help individuals and families reach their full potential in an uncertain world.

After launching his business career as a sales representative, David quickly rose through the ranks of corporate America, advancing to the position of President and Chief Executive Officer of several innovative medical diagnostics companies that have made significant contributions in the areas of allergic disease and the early detection of cancer.

David's character and leadership skills were cultivated at West Point and through leadership assignments in the US Army Infantry. As a young infantry officer, David led a rifle platoon of 38 men with the 101st Airborne Division through several combat operations in the Gulf War. He was recognized with a Bronze Star for combat operations in February 1991.

David and his wife Tracy develop programs and resources designed to strengthen the character of individuals and build and sustain healthy relationships. This includes Character Creates Opportunity®, an initiative that was specifically designed to improve the character development of children, adolescents, and adults. Their patented, award-winning conversation game, Abundant Harvest®, is played by families, schools, counseling programs, and faith-based organizations worldwide as it opens a door to more productive dialogue and encourages decision making based on principles such as honesty, loyalty, and commitment. Reinforcing the Law of the Harvest, the game's primary lesson is the age-old adage that you will always reap what you sow. They also have created a conversation card game called Face to Face® that helps to foster effective conversations on real-world issues and to develop the critical life skill of face-to-face communication in a world that is rapidly changing how people connect.

David holds an MBA from Syracuse University and a bachelor's degree in civil engineering from West Point. He has appeared on CBS, NPR, and PBS and has been featured by many other news outlets.

David is available to provide support to individuals, families, and organizations on a variety of topics, encompassing building a strong marriage and family, personal and executive development, and leadership training.



Character Creates Opportunity®  
Regardless of Our Situation

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