



EDUCATION FOR CHARACTER—Swami Vivekananda

1 Faith, faith, faith in ourselves, faith, faith in God – this is the secret of greatness. If you have faith in all the three hundred and thirty millions of your mythological gods, and in all the gods which foreigners have now and again introduced into your midst, and still have no faith in yourselves, there is no salvation for you.

2 What makes the difference between man and man is the difference is this Shraddha and nothing else. What makes one man great and another weak and low is this Shraddha.

3 You have in you a thousand times more than is in all the books. Never lose faith in yourself, you can do anything in this universe. Never weaken, all power is yours.

4 You must not say that you are weak. How do you know what possibilities lie behind that degradation on the surface? You know but little of that which is within you. For behind you is the ocean of infinite power and blessedness.

5 To succeed, you must have tremendous perseverance, tremendous will. "I will drink the ocean," says the preserving soul, "at my will mountains will crumble up." Have that sort of energy, that sort of will, work hard and you will reach the goal.

6 **Strength is Life** : Brave, bold men, these are what we want. What we want is vigour in the blood, strength in the nerves, iron muscles and nerves of steel, not softening namby-pamby ideas. Avoid all mystery. There is no mystery in religion. Mystery mongering and superstition are always signs of weakness.

7 Your country requires heroes; be heroes!

8 Strength is life, weakness is death. Strength is felicity, life eternal, immortal; weakness is constant strain and misery; weakness is death.

9 What makes you weep, my friend? In you is all power. Summon up your all-powerful nature, O mighty one, and this whole universe will lie at your feet. It is the Self alone that predominates and not matter.

10 **Be Fearless** : Be not afraid of anything. You will do marvelous work. The moment you fear, you are nobody. It is fear that is the great cause of misery in the world. It is fear that is the greatest of all superstitions. It is fear that is the cause of our woes, and it is fearlessness that brings heaven even in a moment. Therefore, 'Arise, awake, and stop not till the goal is reached'.

11 One man does not resist, because he is weak, lazy and cannot, not because he will not; the other man knows that he can strike an irresistible blow if he likes; yet he not only does not strike, but blesses his enemies. The one who from weakness resists not commits a sin, and as such cannot receive any benefit from the non-resistance; while the other would commit a sin by offering resistance.

12 The earth is enjoyed by heroes – this is the unflinching truth. Be a hero. Always say, 'I have no fear'. Tell this to everybody – 'Have

no fear'. Fear is death, fear is sin, fear is hell, fear is unrighteousness, fear is wrong life. All the negative thoughts and ideas that are in this world have proceeded from this evil spirit of fear.

13 What makes a man stand up and work? Strength. Strength is goodness, weakness is sin. If there is one word that you find coming out like a bomb from the Upanishads bursting like a bomb-shell upon masses of ignorance, it is the word fearlessness. And the only religion that ought to be taught is the religion fearlessness. It is fear that brings misery, fear that brings death, fear that breeds evil. And what causes fear? Ignorance of our real nature.

14 In this world we work through fear of others, we talk through fear, we think through fear, alas! we are born in a land of enemies. Who is there who has been able to get rid of this feeling of fear, as if everyone is a spy set specially to watch him? And woe unto the man who pushes himself forward! Will it ever be a land of friends? Who knows? We can only try.

15 **Strength of Character** : Neither money pays, nor name, nor fame, nor learning; it is CHARACTER that can cleave through adamant walls of difficulties.

16 If you really want to judge of the character of a man, look not at his great performances. Every fool may become a hero at one time or another. Watch a man do his most common actions; those are indeed the things which will tell you the real character of a great man.

17 Every work that we do, every movement of the body, every thought that we think, leaves an impression on the mind-stuff, and even when such impressions are not obvious on the surface, they are sufficiently strong to work beneath the surface, subconsciously. What we are every moment is determined by the sum total of these impressions on the mind. This is really what is meant by character; each man's character is determined by the sum total of these impressions. If good impressions prevail, the character becomes good; if bad, it becomes bad.

If a man continuously hears bad words, thinks bad thoughts, does bad actions, his mind will be full of bad impressions; and they will influence his thought and work without his being conscious of the fact. He will be like a machine in the hands of his impressions, and they will force him to do evil, and that man will be a bad man; he cannot help it. Similarly, if a man thinks good thoughts and does good works, the sum total of these impressions will be good, and they, in a similar manner, will force him to do good, even in spite of himself. When such is the case, a man's good character is said to be established.

18 The miseries of the world cannot be cured by physical help only. Until man's character changes, these physical needs will always arise, and miseries will always be felt, and no amount of physical help will cure them completely. The only solution of this problem is to make mankind pure. Ignorance is the mother of all the evil and all

the misery we see. Let men have light, let them be pure and spiritually strong and educated, then alone will misery cease in the world, not before. We may convert every house in the country into a charity asylum, we may fill the land with hospitals, but the misery of man will still continue to exist until man's character changes.

19 Truth does not pay homage to any society, ancient or modern. Society has to pay homage to Truth or die. Societies should be moulded upon truth, and truth has not to adjust itself to society. That society is the greatest, where the highest truths become practical. That is my opinion; and if society is not fit for the highest truths, make it so; and the sooner, the better.

20 It is in the nature of things that many should fall, that troubles should come, that tremendous difficulties should arise, that selfishness and all the other devils in the human heart should struggle hard, when they are about to be driven out by the fire of spirituality. The road to the good is the roughest and steepest in the universe. It is a wonder that so many succeed; no wonder that so many fall. Character has to be established through a thousand stumbles.

21 The only remedy for bad habits is counter habits; all the bad habits that have left their impressions are to be controlled by good habits. Go on doing good, thinking holy thoughts continuously; that is the only way to suppress base impressions. Never say any man is hopeless, because he only represents a character, a bundle of habits, which can be checked by new and better ones. Character is repeated habits, and repeated habits alone can reform character.

22 **Self Responsibility** : We are responsible for what we are; and whatever we wish ourselves to be, we have the power to make ourselves. If what we are now has been the result of our own past actions, it certainly follows that whatever we wish to be in future can be produced by our present actions; so we have to know how to act.



23 Men in general lay all the blame of life on their fellowmen, or, failing that, on God, or they conjure up a ghost, and say it is fate. Where is fate, and who is fate? We reap what we sow. We are the makers of our own fate. None else has the blame, none has the praise.

24 For every weakening thought you have put into anybody's head you will have to pay with compound interest.

25 "It is the coward and the fool who says, 'This is fate'" – so says the Sanskrit proverb. But it is the strong man who stands up and says, "I will make my fate". It is people who are getting old who talk to fate. Young men generally do not come to astrology.

26 Positive Thinking : If you speak kind words to boys and encourage them, they are bound to improve in time. If you can give them positive ideas, people will grow up to be men and learn to stand on their own legs. In language and literature, in poetry and the arts, in everything we must point out not the mistakes that people are making in their thoughts and actions, but the way in which they will gradually be able to do these things better. Pointing out mistakes wounds a man's feeling.

27 Never mind failures, they are quite natural, they are the beauty of life, these failures. What would life be without them? I never heard a cow tell a lie, but it is only a cow – never a man. So never mind these failures, these little backslidings; hold the ideal a thousand times, and if you fail a thousand times, make the attempt once more. The ideal of man is to see God in everything.

28 Men are taught from childhood that they are weak and sinners. Teach them that they are all glorious children of immortality, even those who are the weakest in manifestation. Let positive, strong, helpful thought enter into their brains from very childhood.

29 You must not say that you are weak. How do you know what possibilities lie behind that degradation on the surface? You know but little of that which is within you. For behind you is the ocean of infinite power and blessedness.

30 Whatever you think, that you will be. If you think yourselves weak, weak you will be; if you think yourselves strong, strong you will be.



31 Control of the Mind : The powers of the mind are like rays of light dissipated; when they are concentrated, they illumine. This is our only means of knowledge.

32 The man that has practiced control over himself cannot be acted upon by anything outside; there is no more slavery for him. His mind has become free. Such a man alone is fit to live well in the world.

33 Nature wants us to react, to return blow for blow, cheating for cheating, lie for lie, to hit back with all our might. Then it requires a super divine power not to hit back, to keep control, to be unattached.

34 If the mind is not under control, it is no use living in a cave because the same mind will bring all disturbances there. If the mind is under control, we can have the cave anywhere, wherever we are.

35 It is very hard thing to understand, but you will come to learn in time that nothing in the universe has power over you until you allow it to exercise such a power. Nothing has power over the Self of man, until the Self becomes a fool and loses independence. So, by non-attachment, you overcome and deny the power of anything to act upon you. It is very easy to say that nothing has the right to act upon you until you allow it to do so; but what is the true sign of the man who really does not allow anything to work upon him, who is neither happy nor unhappy when acted upon by the external world? The sign is that good or ill fortune causes no change in his mind: in all conditions he continues to remain the same.

36 The man who has control over his own mind assuredly will have control over every other mind. That is why purity and morality have been always the object of religion; a pure, moral man has control of himself. He who knows and controls his own mind knows the secret of every mind and has power over every mind.

37 Power of Concentration : Take up one idea, make that one idea your life; think of it, dream of it, live on that idea. Let the brain, muscles, nerves, every part of your body, be full of that ideas, and just leave every other idea alone. This is the way to success and this is the way great spiritual giants are produced. Others are mere talking machines.

38 All knowledge that the world has ever received comes from the mind; the infinite library of the universe is in your own mind. The external world is simply the suggestion, the occasion, which sets you to study your own mind, but the object of your study is always your own mind. The falling of an apple gave the suggestion to Newton, and he studied his own mind; he re-arranged all the previous links of thought in his mind and discovered a new link among them, which we call the law of gravitation. It was not in the apple nor in anything in the centre of the earth.

39 How has all the knowledge in the world been gained but by the concentration of the powers of the mind? The world is ready to give up its secrets if we only know how to knock, how to give it the necessary blow. The strength and force of the blow come through concentration. There is no limit to the power of the human mind. The more concentrated it is, the more power is brought to bear on one point; that is the secret.

40 Power of thought: The highest men are calm, silent and unknown. They are the men who really know the power of thought; they are sure that, even if they go into a cave and close the door and simply think five true thoughts and then pass away.

41 It is thought which is the propelling force in us. Fill the mind with the highest thoughts, hear them day after day, think them month after month. Never mind failures; they are quite natural, they are the beauty of life, these failures. What would life be without them? It would not be worth having if it were not for struggles. Where would be the poetry of life? Never mind the struggles, the mistakes.

42 We are what our thoughts have made us; so take care of what you think. Words are secondary. Thoughts live, they travel far. Each thought we think is tinged with our own character, so that for the pure and holy man, even his jests or abuse will have the twist of his own love and purity and do good.

43 Each thought is a little hammer blow on the lump of iron which our bodies are, manufacturing out of it what we want it to be.

44 The word and the thought are inseparable. The external part of one and the same thing is what we call word, and the internal part is what we call thought.

45 Evil thoughts, looked at materially, are the diseases bacilli.

46 Every thought projected from every brain goes on pulsating, as it were, until it meets a fit object that will receive it.

47 Every vicious thought will rebound, every thought of hatred which you may have thought, in a cave even, is stored up, and will one day come back to you with tremendous power in the form of some

miserable here. If you project hatred and jealousy, they will rebound on you with compound interest. No power can avert them; when once you have put them in motion, you will have to bear them. Remembering this will prevent you from doing wicked things.

48 "Liberty of thought and action is the only condition of life, of growth and wellbeing." Where it does not exist, the man, the race, the nation must go down.

49 Whatever you do, think well on it. All your actions will be magnified, transformed, deified, by the very power of the thought. If matter is powerful, thought is omnipotent.

50 There is a great tendency in modern times to talk too much of work and decry thought. Doing is very good, but that comes from thinking. Little manifestations of energy through the muscles are called work. But where there is no thought, there will be no work. Fill the brain, therefore, with high thoughts, highest ideals, place them day and night before you, and out of that will come great work. Talk not about impurity, but say that we are pure.

51 Art of Meditation – The greatest help to spiritual life is meditation (Dhyana). In meditation we divest ourselves of all material conditions and feel our divine nature. We do not depend upon any external help in meditation. The touch of the soul can paint the brightest colour even in the dingiest places; it can cast a fragrance over the vilest thing; it can make the wicked divine – and all enmity all selfishness is effaced. The less the thought of the body, the better. For it is the body that drags us down. It is attachment, identification, which makes us miserable.

52 Meditation is one the great means of controlling the rising of these waves. By meditation you can make the mind subdue these waves, and if you go on practicing meditation for days, and months, and years, until it has become a habit, until it will come in spite of yourself, anger and hatred will be controlled and checked.

53 Think and meditate that you are the omnipresent Atman. "I am neither the body, nor the mind, nor the Buddhi (determinative faculty), neither the gross nor the subtle body" – by this process of elimination, immerse your mind in the transcendent knowledge which is your nature. Kill the mind by thus plunging it repeatedly in this. Then only you will realize the Essence of Intelligence, or be established in your real nature.

54 Meditation is the focusing of the mind on some object. If the mind acquires concentration on one object, it can be so concentrated on any object whatsoever.

55 The greatest thing is meditation. It is the nearest approach to spiritual life – the mind meditating. It is the one moment in our daily life that we are not at all material – the Soul thinking of itself, free from all matter – this marvelous touch of the Soul!

56 Do not spend your energy in talking but meditate in silence; and do not let the rush of the outside world disturb you. When your mind is in the highest state, you are unconscious of it. Accumulate power in silence and become a dynamo of spirituality.

57 Meditation again is a constant remembrance (of the thing meditated upon) flowing like an unbroken stream of oil poured out from one vessel to another.

When this kind of remembering has been attained (in relation to God) all bondages break.

58 What is education? Is it book-learning? No. Is it diverse knowledge? Not even that. The training by which the current and expression of will are brought under control and become fruitful is called education.

59 Education is not the amount of information that is put into your brain and runs riot there, undigested, all your life. We must have life-building, man-making, character-making assimilation of ideas. If you have assimilated five ideas and made them your life and character, you have more education than any man who has got by heart a whole library.

60 What we want are Western science coupled with Vedanta, Brahmacharya as the guiding motto, and also Shraddha and faith in one's own self.

61 **True Worship** – The only God to worship is the human soul in the human body. Of course, all animals are temples too, but man is the highest, the Taj Mahal of temples. If I cannot worship in that, no other temple will be of any advantage.

62 We are the servants of that God who by the ignorant is called MAN.

63 This is the gist of all worship – to be pure and to do good to others. He who sees Shiva in the poor, in the weak, and in the diseased, really worships Shiva; and if he sees Shiva only in the image, his worship is but preliminary.

64 If the Lord grants that you can help any one of His children, blessed you are; do not think too much of yourselves. Blessed you are that privilege was given to you when others had it not. Do it only as a worship.

65 May I be born again and again, and suffer thousands of miseries, so that I may worship the only God that exists, the only God I believe in, the sum total of all souls – and above all, my God the wicked, my God the miserable, my God the poor of all races, of all species, is the special object of my worship.

66 **Secret of Work** – This life is short, the vanities of the world are transient, but they alone live who live for others, the rest are more dead than alive.

67 Blessed are they whose bodies get destroyed in the service of others.

68 Him I call a Mahatman (great soul) whose heart bleeds for the poor; otherwise he is a Duratman (wicked soul).

69 This world is not for our sake. Millions pass out of it every year; the world does not feel it; millions of others are supplied in their place. Just as much as the world is for us, so we also are for the world.

70 By means of the constant effort to the good to others we are trying to forget ourselves; this forgetfulness of self is the one great lesson we have to learn in life.

71 Three things are necessary to make every man great, every nation great: (1) Conviction of the powers of goodness. (2) Absence of jealousy and suspicion. (3) Helping all who are trying to be and do good.

72 "Misery comes through attachment, not through work." As soon as we identify ourselves with the work we do, we feel miserable; but if we do not identify ourselves with it, we do not feel that misery.

73 You should work like a master and not as a slave; work incessantly, but do not do slave's work.

74 Expansion is life, contraction is death. Love is life, and hatred is death.

75 Ask nothing; want nothing in return. Give what you have to give; it will come back to you – but do not think of that now, it will come back multiplied a thousandfold; but the attention must not be on that. Yet have the power to give: give, and there it ends. Ask, therefore, nothing in return; but the more you give; the more will come to you. The quicker you can empty the air out of this room, the quicker it will be filled up by the external air.

76 The desire to do good is the highest motive power we have, if we know all the time that it is a privilege to help others. Do not stand on a high pedestal and take five cents in your hand and say, "Here, my poor man," but be grateful that the poor man is there, so that by making a gift to him you are able to help yourself. It is not the receiver that is blessed, but it is the giver. Be thankful that you are allowed to exercise your power of benevolence and mercy in the world, and thus become pure and perfect.

77 **Call to the Youth** – Arise, awake for your country needs this tremendous sacrifice. It is the young men that will do it. 'The young, the energetic, the strong, the well-built, the intellectual' – for them is the task.

78 Lay down your comforts, your pleasures, your names, fame or position, nay, even your lives, and make a bridge of human chains over which millions will cross this ocean of life.

79 My children must be ready to jump into fire, if needed, to accomplish their work. Now work, work, work! We will stop and compare notes later on. Have patience, perseverance and purity.

80 Go from village to village to do good to humanity and to the world at large. Go to hell yourself to buy salvation for others. It is only by doing good to others that one attains one's own good, and it is by leading others

to Bhakti and Mukti that one attains them oneself. Take that up; forget your own self for it; be mad over the idea.

81 All great undertakings are achieved through mighty obstacles.

82 Eternal India – Shall India die? Then from the world all spiritually will be extinct, all moral perfection will be extinct, all sweet-souled sympathy for religion will be extinct, all ideality will be extinct; and in its place will reign the duality of lust and luxury as the male and female deities, with money as its priest, fraud, force, and competition its ceremonies, and the human soul its sacrifice. Such a thing can never be.

83 I was asked by an English friend on the eve of my departure, "Swami, how do you like now your motherland after four years' experience of the luxuries, glorious, powerful West?" I could only answer, "India I loved before I came away. Now the very dust of India has become holy to me, the very air is now to me holy; it is now the holy land, the place of pilgrimage, the Tirtha."

84 The national ideals of India are RENUNCIATION and SERVICE. Intensify her in those channels, and the rest will take care of itself.

85 Our life-blood is spirituality. If it flows clear, if it flows strong and pure and vigorous, everything is right; political, social, any other material defects, even the poverty of the land, will all be cured if that blood is pure.

86 In India, it is religion that forms the very core of the national heart. It is the backbone, the bed-rock, the foundation upon which the national edifice has been built. Politics, power, and even intellect form a secondary consideration here.

87 India will be raised, not with the power of the flesh, but with the power of the spirit; not with the flag of destruction, but with the flag of peace and love

88 All knowledge that the world has ever received comes from the mind the infinite library of the universe is in our own mind.

89 Fill the brain with high thoughts, highest ideals, place them day and night before you, and out of that will come great work.

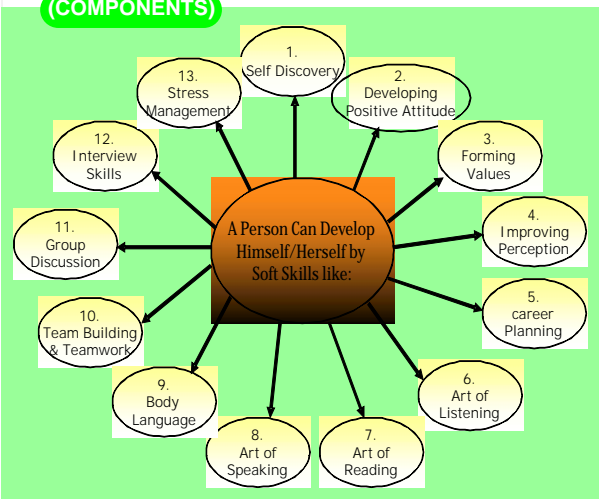
90 Knowledge can only be got in one way of experience; there is no other way to know.

91 Take up one idea. Make that one idea your life – think of it, dream of it, live on that idea. Let the brain, muscles, nerves, every part of your body, be full of that idea, and just leave every other idea alone. This is the way to success, and this is the way to success, and this is the way great spiritual giants are produced. Others are mere talking machines.

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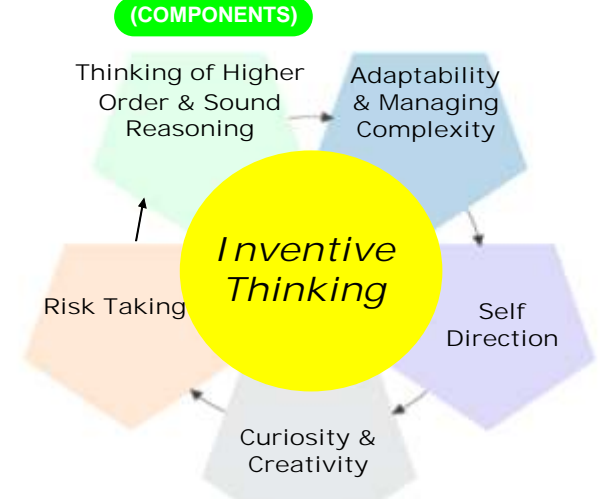
SOFT SKILLS

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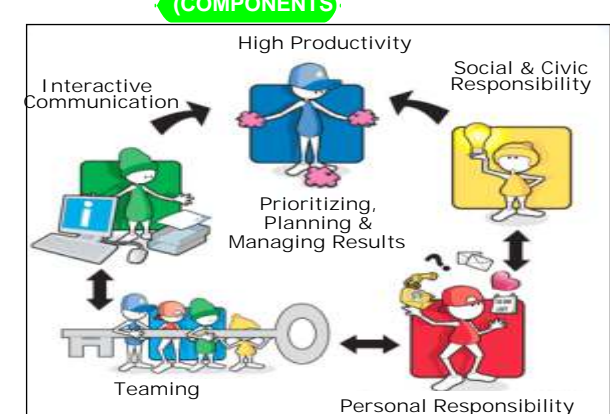
INVENTIVE THINKING

(COMPONENTS)



PERSONAL SKILLS

(COMPONENTS)



SPATIAL PLANNING OF EDUCATION