

The Red Bandanna Project

High School (Grades 9-12) inspired by the example and spirit of Welles Remy Crowther,
a 9/11 Civilian Hero known around the world as the 'Man in the Red Bandanna.'

Developed by: Kevin R. Holbrook, Ph.D. – BC 15', 22'



LEADERSHIP

What makes someone worth following?

Unit 1: Leadership **Time:** 45-60 minutes **Learning Experience:** 1

Big Idea

Leadership is often associated with titles, positions, or public recognition. Yet the people who shape our lives most profoundly are often those who lead quietly through their character, relationships, and everyday choices.

Essential Question

What makes someone worth following?

Learning Objectives

By the conclusion of this learning experience, students will be able to:

1. Reflect on the people who have shaped their own lives.
2. Examine personal assumptions about leadership.
3. Develop an emerging understanding of leadership grounded in character rather than position.
4. Listen respectfully to multiple perspectives and support their thinking with evidence
5. Prepare to explore Welles Crowther's life through the lens of leadership.

Materials

- Index cards
- Pens or pencils
- Chart paper or whiteboard
- Markers

Facilitator Note

Many students initially associate leadership with titles, authority, popularity, or public recognition. Resist the temptation to redefine leadership too quickly. The purpose of this learning experience is not to provide students with a definition of leadership, but to help them discover that the people who influence our lives most deeply often lead in quiet and unexpected ways.

Listen carefully to student responses. The most meaningful insights should come from the class—not from the facilitator.

Opening Experience

Purpose

Students begin by reflecting on their own experiences before examining broader ideas about leadership. This opening establishes that the learning experience will begin with their lives, their observations, and their thinking.

Procedure

As students enter the room, display only the following question:

Who has shaped the person you are becoming?

Allow one minute of quiet thinking before distributing an index card.

Invite students to respond anonymously.

Prompt

Think of one person you have actually known—not someone famous—who has had a meaningful influence on your life.

Do **not** write the person's name.

Instead, answer these two questions:

Who is this person in relation to you?

(For example: grandparent, teacher, coach, friend, sibling, neighbor, employer, etc.)

How has this person helped shape the person you are becoming?

Collect the cards and shuffle them.

Activity One: Discovering the Story in the Room

Purpose

Students recognize that the classroom itself contains the evidence needed to begin exploring leadership.

Procedure

Read several anonymous responses aloud.

Resist the temptation to interpret or summarize them.

Allow brief pauses between responses so students can simply listen.

After approximately ten to fifteen responses, ask:

What do you notice?

Record student observations exactly as they are shared.

Avoid paraphrasing whenever possible.

Students may notice:

- Many responses describe family members.
- Several mention teachers or coaches.
- No one selected a celebrity.
- The people described often influenced others without seeking recognition.
- Many examples emphasize kindness, trust, encouragement, or consistency.

Allow students to identify these patterns themselves.

Activity Two: Looking Beneath the Surface

Purpose

Students identify the qualities shared by the people they described and begin considering whether these qualities reveal something about leadership.

Procedure

Ask students:

What qualities do these people seem to have in common?

As students respond, create a class list.

Encourage students to explain **why** they selected each quality.

Possible responses may include:

Students may notice:

- Integrity
- Compassion
- Patience
- Humility
- Responsibility
- Courage
- Reliability
- Generosity
- Honesty
- Service

Do not rank or prioritize responses.

Simply build the list together.

Activity Three: The Realization

Purpose

Students reconsider their assumptions about leadership through their own observations.

Procedure

Once the class list is complete, pause before asking the next question.

How many of the people we've described today would probably call themselves leaders?

Allow students time to think before inviting discussion.

Follow with:

Why or why not?

As discussion develops, return to the list of qualities students created.

Circle several words.

Then ask quietly:

We've spent most of today's class talking about people who have shaped your lives.

Pause.

How many of you think we've actually been talking about leadership this entire time?

Allow silence.

Resist the urge to explain.

This is not a trick.

It is an opportunity for students to recognize that leadership may be broader than they originally imagined.

Core Discussion Questions

- What patterns emerged from our anonymous responses?
- Which qualities appeared most often? Why do you think those qualities mattered?
- Can someone have a profound influence without holding a leadership position?
- Is influence the same as leadership? Why or why not?
- What assumptions about leadership were challenged today?

Extension Questions

Students complete the following prompts:

- Does leadership always require followers?
- Can someone lead quietly?
- Is leadership earned, given, or developed?
- Can leadership exist in everyday moments?

Reflection

Invite students to respond independently.

At the beginning of today's learning experience, what did you think leadership meant?

Has today's discussion changed or expanded your thinking?

Explain your response using examples from today's discussion.

Assessment

Students demonstrate understanding through:

- Active participation in class discussion
- Thoughtful contributions during collaborative activities
- Individual written reflection demonstrating evolving thinking

The emphasis is not on reaching consensus but on examining assumptions through evidence and dialogue.

Looking Ahead

Display a photograph of Welles Crowther.

Allow students a few moments simply to observe the photograph.

Then say:

Welles Crowther was twenty-four years old.

Just a few years older than many of you will be after graduation.

Over the next several learning experiences, we'll explore his life—not simply to understand what happened on September 11, but to better understand the person he had become long before that day.

As you learn more about Welles, continue thinking about today's question:

What makes someone worth following?

Welles' Way

Reflect

Think about one person whose leadership often goes unnoticed.

What qualities make them someone others trust, respect, or rely upon?

What have you learned from their example?

Your Leadership Mission

Choose **one** quality discussed in class today.

Practice that quality intentionally this week without seeking recognition or praise.

At the beginning of the next learning experience, be prepared to reflect on what you noticed about yourself, others, or the experience.

Learning Experience Insight

Students discover that leadership may be found not only in people with titles or authority, but in ordinary individuals whose character quietly shapes the lives of others.

LEADERSHIP

Character before the moment

Unit 1: Leadership **Time:** 60-75 minutes **Learning Experience:** 2

Big Idea

Extraordinary moments rarely create character. More often, they reveal the character that has been developed through years of everyday choices.

Essential Question

How is character formed long before it is tested?

Learning Objectives

By the conclusion of this learning experience, students will be able to:

1. Describe important experiences that shaped Welles Crowther's life.
2. Identify character traits demonstrated throughout Welles' childhood and young adulthood.
3. Analyze how ordinary experiences can prepare individuals for extraordinary moments.
4. Connect Welles' life to the qualities of leadership identified during Learning Experience 1.
5. Reflect on how their own everyday choices contribute to the person they are becoming.

Materials

- Internet connection and projection equipment
- [ESPN: "The Man in the Red Bandanna" \(YouTube\)](#)
- Student journals
- Whiteboard or chart paper

Facilitator Note

Students may arrive expecting this learning experience to focus primarily on September 11. Instead, invite them to discover **who Welles was before that day**.

Throughout the discussion, continually redirect attention toward the habits, relationships, values, and experiences that shaped his character.

The goal is not simply for students to admire Welles.

The goal is for students to recognize that character develops gradually through ordinary moments long before it is revealed during extraordinary ones.

Opening Experience

Purpose

Students begin by considering whether a single moment can fully define a person's life.

Procedure

Display the following question:

Can you truly know a person by looking at only one moment of their life?

Allow students two minutes to write independently.

Invite students to share their thinking in pairs before opening a whole-class discussion.

Follow with:

What else would you want to know about someone before deciding who they really were?

Record student responses.

Students may mention:

- family
- friendships
- interests
- failures
- values
- daily habits
- experiences
- goals

Explain that today they will begin getting to know Welles Crowther—not simply through the events of September 11, but through the life he lived beforehand.

Activity One: Meeting Welles

Purpose

Students develop an understanding of Welles as a young adult before examining his actions during the attacks.

Procedure

Provide a brief introduction to Welles Crowther.

Focus on his life rather than his legacy.

Include examples such as:

- his close relationship with his family
- his love of sports and teamwork
- his years at Boston College
- his service as a volunteer firefighter in Nyack
- his work in New York City
- his long-term goal of becoming a firefighter

Pause frequently.

Invite students to notice not accomplishments, but qualities.

Ask:

What kind of person is beginning to emerge?

Record responses.

Do not yet discuss September 11.

Activity Two: Viewing Welles' Story

Purpose

Students identify evidence of character rather than simply recounting events.

Procedure

Before beginning the documentary, tell students:

As you watch, don't try to remember every detail.

Instead, look for evidence.

Display the following four prompts:

- What qualities of Welles' character do you notice?
- What people or experiences appear to have shaped him?
- Which moment surprised you most?
- What questions do you still have?

Show the ESPN documentary:

[ESPN: "The Man in the Red Bandanna" \(YouTube\)](#)

Allow one minute of quiet reflection after the video before beginning discussion.

Activity Three: Looking Back

Purpose

Students connect today's learning with the discoveries they made during Learning Experience 1.

Procedure

Return to the list of leadership qualities created during the previous learning experience.

Ask:

Which of these qualities did you see in Welles?

Invite students to support each response with evidence from the documentary.

As discussion concludes, ask:

Did Welles become a leader on September 11, or did September 11 reveal the leader he had already become?

Do not seek consensus.

Allow students to respectfully disagree.

Encourage them to support their thinking using examples from both learning experiences.

Core Discussion Questions

- Which experiences most shaped Welles' character?
- What surprised you about Welles' life before September 11?
- Which leadership qualities did you recognize from our previous learning experience?
- How did ordinary experiences prepare Welles for an extraordinary moment?
- What does Welles' story suggest about the relationship between character and leadership?

Extension Questions

- Can character be intentionally developed?
- Which experiences have most shaped your own character so far?
- Are there habits you hope your future self will thank you for?

Reflection

Respond to the following prompt:

Think back to the person you wrote about during our first learning experience.

In what ways do you now see similarities between that person's influence and Welles' life?

What does this comparison teach you about leadership?

Assessment

Students demonstrate understanding by:

- participating thoughtfully in discussion,
- using evidence from the documentary,
- connecting Welles' life with previously identified leadership qualities,
- completing an individual written reflection.

Looking Ahead

Next time, we'll examine the events of September 11 more closely—not to focus on the tragedy itself, but to understand how character, leadership, and service become visible during moments of extraordinary challenge.

Welles' Way**Reflect**

Think about one habit, value, or relationship that is shaping the person you are becoming today.

How might that influence the person you will be five years from now?

Your Leadership Mission

Choose one everyday habit that reflects the kind of person you hope to become.

Practice it intentionally throughout the coming week.

Remember that character is rarely formed in extraordinary moments.

It is formed through ordinary choices, repeated over time.

Learning Experience Insight

Students discover that the qualities revealed on September 11 were not created that day. They were cultivated through years of ordinary choices, meaningful relationships, and a life intentionally lived.

LEADERSHIP

Leadership Through Service

Unit 1: Leadership **Time:** 50-60 minutes **Learning Experience:** 3

Big Idea

Leadership is not measured by authority or recognition, but by a willingness to place the needs of others before our own.

Essential Question

How does serving others reveal true leadership?

Learning Objectives

By the conclusion of this learning experience, students will:

1. Analyze how Welles Crowther's actions reflected a life of service.
2. Examine the relationship between leadership and caring.
3. Use evidence from the ESPN documentary to support their thinking.
4. Reflect on how everyday opportunities to serve others shape character.
5. Recognize that leadership often begins with choosing to put others first.

Materials

- Student journals
- Whiteboard or chart paper
- Leadership qualities generated during Learning Experience 1
- Student notes from Learning Experience 2

Facilitator Note

Students have now met Welles—not only through the events of September 11, but through the story of his life.

The purpose of today's learning experience is **not** to revisit the events themselves. Rather, students should consider why Welles responded the way he did.

As discussion unfolds, encourage students to move beyond describing what Welles did and toward examining the values that shaped his choices.

The realization students should begin to reach is that leadership and caring are deeply connected.

Opening Experience

Purpose

Students reconsider their original understanding of leadership in light of everything they have learned about Welles.

Procedure

Return to the leadership qualities students generated during Learning Experience 1.

Display the list without comment.

Ask students to quietly review the words.

Then ask:

If we created this list today instead of on the first day, would we add anything? Would we remove anything? Why?

Allow students to revise the list together.

Do not suggest additions.

Let them emerge naturally.

One word may begin appearing repeatedly:

Service.

Activity One: Looking Beyond the Headlines

Purpose

Students distinguish between remembering an event and understanding a person's character.

Procedure

Ask students:

Imagine someone summarized Welles' story in one sentence:

"He saved lives on September 11."

Then ask:

What important parts of his story would be missing?

Record responses.

Students will likely mention:

- his family
- his friendships
- Boston College
- volunteer firefighting
- his faith
- his compassion
- his dreams
- the values he developed over time

Guide students toward this realization:

A defining moment is important—but it is never the whole story.

Activity Two: Why Did He Choose to Help?

Purpose

Students examine Welles' actions through the lens of character rather than heroism.

Procedure

Ask students to think silently before discussing.

Display the question:

What motivated Welles to put the needs of others before his own?

Encourage students to support every response with evidence from the documentary.

Possible responses may include:

- a sense of responsibility
- compassion
- courage
- preparation
- love for others
- commitment to service
- volunteer firefighter training
- family values

Continue probing.

Whenever students mention an action, ask:

What does that action reveal about the person Welles had become?

Activity Three: Leadership and Caring

Purpose

Students recognize that leadership is expressed through care for others.

Procedure

Write two words on the board.

Leadership

Caring

Ask students:

Are these two different ideas...or are they connected?

Allow students to debate respectfully.

As the conversation develops, invite students to identify moments from Welles' story that demonstrate both leadership and caring simultaneously.

Students may conclude:

- Leadership without caring becomes authority.
- Caring without action may never influence others.
- Welles demonstrated both.

Do not summarize too quickly.

Allow students to wrestle with the relationship.

Core Discussion Questions

- Which qualities best explain why Welles acted as he did?
- Why is it important to understand who Welles was before understanding what he did?
- Can someone lead effectively without caring about others?
- Is service an act of leadership?
- What opportunities do young people have to demonstrate leadership through service?

Reflection

Respond to the following prompt:

Think about someone who consistently puts the needs of others before their own.

What makes that person worthy of your trust or respect?

In what ways does caring become a form of leadership?

Assessment

Students demonstrate understanding by:

- contributing thoughtfully to discussion,
- supporting ideas with evidence,
- making connections between leadership and service,
- completing an individual written reflection.

Looking Ahead

Throughout this unit, we've explored what makes someone worth following.

Again and again, one idea has emerged:

Leadership is about more than influence.

It is about how we choose to use that influence in service of others.

In our next learning experience, we'll look more closely at a quality that appeared throughout Welles' life—and throughout today's discussion.

Caring.

We'll ask a new question:

Why do some people consistently notice the needs of others—and choose to respond?

Welles' Way

Reflect

Think about someone whose leadership is expressed through kindness, compassion, or quiet acts of service.

What makes that person's influence meaningful?

Your Leadership Mission

This week, intentionally notice one opportunity to help someone without being asked and without expecting recognition.

Afterward, reflect on how that experience shaped your understanding of leadership.

Learning Experience Insight

Students discover that leadership reaches its fullest expression when it is rooted in genuine care for others. Welles' actions on September 11 were not separate from the life he had lived—they were a reflection of the person he had become.

CARING FOR OTHERS

The Choice to Care

Unit 2: Caring For Others **Time:** 50-60 minutes **Learning Experience:** 1

Essential Question

What makes someone choose to care for others when they don't have to?

Big Idea

Caring is more than a feeling. It is a choice to notice the needs of others and respond, even when doing so requires courage, sacrifice, or repeated effort.

Why This Matters

The choices we make for others reveal the kind of person we are becoming.

Learning Objectives

Students will:

1. Examine caring as a deliberate choice rather than simply an emotion.
2. Analyze historical evidence to identify qualities of character.
3. Compare acts of caring across different historical contexts.
4. Reflect on how everyday choices shape their own character.
5. Connect historical examples of caring to the life of Welles Crowther.

Materials

- Historical Reading: *The Moses of Her People* (Sarah H. Bradford excerpts)
- Student journals
- Pens or pencils
- Whiteboard/chart paper

Facilitator Background

Leadership invited students to consider what makes someone worth following.

This learning experience shifts the conversation.

Rather than asking **who** deserves admiration, students now consider **what choices reveal genuine care for others**.

Students first encounter the life of an extraordinary American woman through the words of one of her earliest biographers. Rather than immediately identifying the historical figure, students analyze the author's description to infer the character traits that made her remarkable.

Only after discussion is her identity revealed.

Students then return to Welles Crowther's story and discover that although Harriet Tubman and Welles lived in different centuries and faced vastly different circumstances, each repeatedly chose to place the needs of others before their own.

Opening Reflection (5-7 minutes)

Display the following prompt.

Think about someone who has cared for you.

What did they do?

Why has that act stayed with you?

Students write independently.

Invite volunteers to share.

Without defining caring, record student responses on the board.

Possible themes:

- noticed me
- listened
- sacrificed
- encouraged
- protected
- stayed
- returned

Activity One: Meeting an Extraordinary Person (20 minutes)

Distribute the historical reading.

Explain:

Today, you will read excerpts written in 1897 by Sarah H. Bradford.

As you read, do not focus first on discovering **who** this person is.

Instead, ask yourself:

What kind of person is Sarah Bradford describing?

Students independently read the excerpt.

Small Group Discussion

Students discuss:

- What qualities stand out?
- Which sentence had the greatest impact?
- Which actions reveal this person's character?
- What evidence supports your thinking?
- Who do you think Sarah Bradford is describing?

Groups record several words describing the person's character.

Activity Two: The Reveal (10 minutes)

Reveal the title page:

Harriet: The Moses of Her People

Briefly introduce Harriet Tubman.

Rather than lecture, simply provide enough historical context for students to situate the reading.

Then ask:

What surprised you most after learning this person's identity?

Follow with:

Sarah Bradford writes that Harriet Tubman returned to the South nineteen times.

What does repeatedly choosing to return reveal about her character?

Allow students to wrestle with the question.

Avoid summarizing.

Activity Three: Returning to Welles (10–15 minutes)

Remind students of Welles Crowther.

Share the documented account from survivor Judy Wein, as recounted publicly by her husband, Gerry Sussman:

Welles was observed helping others, putting out fires, and administering aid. He encouraged those around him:

“Everyone who can stand, stand now. If you can help others, do so.”

Then share Ling Young’s recollection:

Before returning upstairs, Welles simply said,

“I’m going back.”

Pause.

Ask:

What similarities do you notice between Harriet Tubman’s choices and Welles Crowther’s choices?

Allow students to generate the connections.

Avoid suggesting answers.

Whole-class Discussion

- Is caring something people feel or something people choose?
- Can repeated small choices reveal more about a person's character than one extraordinary act?
- Why might someone continue helping others when it would be easier not to?
- How does caring influence leadership?

Closing Reflection

Journal Prompt:

Harriet Tubman and Welles Crowther lived more than a century apart.

Their circumstances were entirely different.

Yet each repeatedly chose to care for others—and they both kept **going back**.

What do their lives suggest about the kind of person you hope to become?

Welles' Way

Reflect

Think about someone in your own life who consistently chooses to care for others.

What habits or choices make that person remarkable?

Act

This week, intentionally choose one opportunity to care for someone else.

It does not have to be dramatic.

Notice someone.

Encourage someone.

Help someone.

Return to check on someone.

Afterward, reflect:

How did that choice affect both the other person and you?

Looking Ahead

Today we discovered that caring is revealed through repeated choices.

Next, we'll explore another question:

Can one person accomplish great things alone, or do our greatest achievements require others?

Historical Reading - Primary Source

The following excerpts were written in 1897 by author Sarah H. Bradford. As you read, consider the following questions:

- **What kind of person is Sarah Bradford describing?**
- **What evidence from the text supports your thinking?**
- **By the end of the reading, who do you think she is describing?**

“The title I have given my black heroine, in this second edition of her story, viz.: The Moses Of Her People, may seem a little ambitious. But I only give her here the name by which she was familiarly known, both at the North and the South, during the Anti-Slavery struggle, in which she took so prominent a part.”

“And though the results of her unexampled heroism were not to free a whole nation of bond-men and bond-women, yet this object was as much the desire of her heart...”

“Her name deserves to be handed down to posterity, side by side with the names of Jeanne D’Arc, Grace Darling, and Florence Nightingale; for not one of these women, noble and brave as they were, has shown more courage, and power of endurance, in facing danger and death to relieve human suffering...”

“For the satisfaction of the incredulous... I have received corroboration of every incident related to me by my heroic friend. I did this for the satisfaction of others, not for my own. No one can hear **[her]** talk, and not believe every word she says... Many incidents quite as wonderful as those related in the story, I have rejected, because I had no way of finding the persons who could speak to their truth.”

“After her almost superhuman efforts in making her own escape from slavery, and then returning to the South nineteen times, and bringing away with her over three hundred fugitives, she was sent by Governor Andrew of Massachusetts to the South at the beginning of the War, to act as spy and scout for our armies, and to be employed as hospital nurse when needed.”

“Her own sands are nearly run, but she hopes, ere she goes home, to see this work... Her last breath and her last efforts will be spent in the cause of those for whom she has already risked so much.”

TEAM

More Than Me

Unit 3: Teamwork **Time:** 50-60 minutes **Learning Experience:** 1

Essential Question

How do the teams we belong to shape the people we become?

Big Idea

Being part of a team is about more than accomplishing a shared goal. Healthy teams help shape our character by teaching trust, responsibility, sacrifice, and service to others.

Why This Matters

The strongest teams don't just change outcomes—they change people.

Learning Objectives

Students will:

1. Reflect on the influence teams have had on their lives.
2. Identify characteristics that transform a group into a genuine team.
3. Examine how Welles Crowther's experiences on teams shaped his character.
4. Consider how symbols can represent shared values and identity.
5. Reflect on how they contribute to the communities and teams they belong to.

Facilitator Background

Students often think of teams only as athletic teams.

This learning experience expands that understanding.

Families.

Friend groups.

Bands.

Clubs.

Classrooms.

Volunteer organizations.

Workplaces.

Communities.

Throughout his life, Welles Crowther belonged to many different teams. His experiences as a student-athlete, volunteer firefighter, friend, coworker, and son helped shape the character for which he would later be remembered.

Opening Reflection

Display only this question.

How many teams are you already part of?

Students write individually.

Encourage broad thinking.

Possible responses:

- Family
- Sports
- Band
- Choir
- Drama
- Robotics
- Church
- Scouts
- Student Government
- Classroom
- Workplace
- Friend group

Follow with:

Which of those teams has shaped you the most?

Students discuss in pairs.



Activity One: What Makes a Team?

In small groups, students complete the following prompt.

A group of people becomes a team when...

Each group creates one sentence.

Record responses.

Students will likely identify:

- trust
- communication
- sacrifice
- shared purpose
- accountability
- encouragement
- belonging

Rather than correcting responses, ask:

Which of these qualities is hardest to develop?

Activity Two: Welles and the Red Bandanna

Explain that Welles Crowther was a varsity athlete in high school and later played Division I lacrosse at Boston College.

Ask:

What lessons do sports teach that have nothing to do with winning?

Discuss.

Transition.

Explain that one of Welles' Boston College lacrosse teammates, Tyler Jewell, later represented the United States in the 2006 Winter Olympics as a snowboarder.

During the Olympics, Tyler wore a red bandanna in honor of his friend.

Share his words exactly as spoken:

“For me the red bandanna symbolizes everything that I want to be and everything that Welles was... strength, honor, courage.”

Allow silence.

Do not explain the quote immediately.

Small Group Discussion

Students discuss:

- Why do you think Tyler chose to wear the red bandanna at the Olympic Games?
- Why didn't he talk about Welles' athletic ability?
- What does Tyler's quote suggest about the influence one teammate can have on another?
- What do strength, honor, and courage look like outside of athletics?

Whole-class Discussion

Ask:

Why do some teammates remain influential long after the season ends?

Transition naturally into Welles.

Discuss how Welles' teammates remembered him not simply because he played lacrosse...

...but because of the kind of teammate and person he became.

Reflection

Journal Prompt

Tyler Jewell said,

“For me the red bandanna symbolizes everything that I want to be and everything that Welles was... strength, honor, courage.”

What values or qualities do you hope people associate with you?

What experiences or communities are helping shape those qualities today?

Welles' Way**Reflect**

Think about one team or community that has shaped your life.

Who has influenced you?

What qualities have you learned from them?

Act

This week, intentionally strengthen one of the teams you belong to.

Encourage someone.

Offer help without being asked.

Support a teammate.

Notice someone who often goes unnoticed.

Ask yourself afterward:

How did my contribution make our team stronger?

Looking Ahead

We've explored how teams shape character.

Next, we'll consider another question:

Can one person truly make a difference?

Learning Experience Insight

Students discover that teams are more than collections of people working toward a common goal. The healthiest teams shape character, strengthen one another, and inspire us to become the kind of people others remember long after the game, the season, or the moment has ended.

THE POWER OF ONE

You have the power!

Unit 4: The Power of One **Time:** 50-60 minutes **Learning Experience:** 1

Essential Question

How can one person's life continue to shape others long after a single moment has passed?

Big Idea

One person may never fully realize the influence they have on others. Through everyday acts of kindness, encouragement, integrity, and courage, individuals can leave a lasting impact that extends far beyond their own lifetime.

Why This Matters

The greatest influence we have often comes not from what we accomplish, but from how we shape the lives of others.

Learning Objectives

Students will:

1. Reflect on individuals who have positively influenced their own lives.
2. Explore how character can inspire others across generations.
3. Examine the idea that ordinary people often have extraordinary influence.
4. Connect personal reflection to the life and legacy of Welles Crowther.
5. Consider the kind of influence they hope to have on others.

Facilitator Background

Students often think influence belongs to famous people, celebrities, or world leaders.

This lesson begins somewhere much closer to home.

Before students consider Welles Crowther's influence, they first reflect on someone who has quietly shaped their own lives.

Only after recognizing that influence in their own experience do students explore how Welles' character continues to inspire teammates, friends, family members, and people who never had the opportunity to meet him.

The goal is not to ask students to become famous.

The goal is to help them recognize that every person has the capacity to positively influence another life.

Opening Experience (10-12 minutes)

Introduce the lesson by saying:

Today we're going to begin with a simple question:

Can one person truly change another person's life?

Show the following five-minute video:

Explain: In 1999, television host Fred Rogers accepted an award and used his acceptance speech in a way no one expected.

Fred Rogers – Television Hall of Fame Induction (5:59)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TcNxY4TudXo>

Ask students simply to watch and listen.

Individual Reflection

After the video, allow students to sit quietly.

Then ask:

Fred Rogers invited his audience to think about someone who "loved them into being."

Students respond privately:

- Who came to mind during those ten seconds?
- What did that person do that continues to influence your life today?
- Do you think that person realizes how much they have influenced you?

Students are not required to share.

Allow several quiet minutes for writing.

Activity One: The Influence of One Person

Invite students into discussion.

Possible prompts:

- What qualities did the people you thought about have in common?
- Were they famous?
- Did they likely know the impact they had on your life?
- Can ordinary people have extraordinary influence?

Record recurring ideas on the board.

Students often identify:

- kindness
- encouragement
- consistency
- courage
- honesty
- compassion
- belief in others

Transition:

Sometimes we recognize a person's influence only after we step back and reflect on their life.

Activity Two: Welles' Legacy

Remind students that throughout this curriculum they have explored Welles Crowther's leadership, caring, and commitment to his teammates.

Explain that after Welles' death, many people began describing not simply what he did, but who he had been throughout his life.

Re-share Tyler Jewell's reflection from the ESPN documentary.

“For me the red bandanna symbolizes everything that I want to be and everything that Welles was... strength, honor, courage.”

Allow students a moment to reread the quote.

Ask:

- Why do you think Tyler chose those three words?
- What does this quote suggest about Welles' influence?
- Why might Tyler have worn a red bandanna while competing in the Olympic Games?
- What does it mean when another person's life becomes a model for your own?

Whole-class Discussion

Bring the conversation back to students.

Discuss:

- Is influence something we choose?
- Can small everyday actions shape another person's life?
- Why do some people continue influencing others long after they are gone?
- What kind of influence do you hope to have on others?

Closing Reflection

Journal Prompt

Think back to the person you remembered during Fred Rogers' ten seconds of silence.

Now imagine someone reflecting on **your** life many years from now.

What do you hope they will remember about the kind of person you were?

Allow students several quiet minutes to write.

Welles' Way**Reflect**

Who has quietly helped shape the person you are becoming?

How have they influenced your values, choices, or goals?

Act

This week, thank someone who has positively influenced your life.

It may be a parent, teacher, coach, friend, neighbor, or family member.

Tell them specifically what they have meant to you.

Then reflect:

How did expressing gratitude affect both you and the other person?

Looking Ahead

Throughout this lesson, we've explored the lasting influence one person can have.

Next, we'll consider another challenge of character:

How do we respond when relationships are damaged or trust is broken?

BRIDGING DIVIDES

More Than Meets the Eye

Unit 5: Bridging Divides Learning Experience: 1

Essential Question

How can learning more about a person's life change the way we see them?

Learning Objectives

Students will:

1. Recognize that every person has a life story that extends beyond first impressions.
2. Explain why a person's identity cannot be fully captured by a single role, accomplishment, or photograph.
3. Reflect on how taking time to know others more deeply can strengthen relationships and build greater understanding.

Opening Reflection (5 minutes)

Display only the following statement:

Every person has a story.

Ask students:

- Do you agree with this statement?
- Can you truly know someone's story simply by looking at them?
- What kinds of things can a photograph tell us? What kinds of things can it never tell us?

Tell students:

"Today you'll meet four remarkable people. Before learning anything about them, your job is simply to observe carefully."

Activity: Four Lives

Each person is introduced in exactly the same way.

Students first see only a photograph.

For each photograph, students complete the following questions on their worksheet.

Looking Closely

What do you notice?

What do you think this person's life has been like?

What assumptions are you making?

Only after students have shared their observations does the teacher reveal more about the person's life.

Person 1: Junior Bridgeman

(Business portrait—not an NBA photograph.)

Students discover:

- Husband and father
- First-round NBA Draft pick
- Twelve-year NBA player
- Entrepreneur who built one of the nation's largest restaurant franchise businesses
- Later became one of the wealthiest former professional athletes, with an estimated net worth of approximately \$1.4 billion

Reflection

Which parts of Junior Bridgeman's story could you never have known simply by looking at this photograph?

Person 2: Indra Nooyi

(Professional portrait—not standing with Pepsi branding.)

Students discover:

- Daughter and mother
- Immigrated from India to pursue graduate study
- CEO of PepsiCo
- One of the world's most influential business leaders
- Played guitar in an all-girls rock band while growing up
- Mentor, philanthropist, and author
- Advocate for healthier products and long-term corporate responsibility

Reflection

Which part of Indra Nooyi's life most expanded your understanding of who she is?

Person 3: Paul Farmer

(Photograph smiling in tie—not wearing a white coat or out in the field.)

Students discover:

- Son and brother
- Physician
- Medical anthropologist
- Harvard professor
- Co-founder of Partners In Health
- Dedicated his career to improving health care in some of the world's poorest communities
- Teacher, mentor, author, and humanitarian

Reflection

What part of Paul Farmer's life impressed you most? Why?

Person 4: Mae Jemison

(Photograph speaking to an audience—not in an astronaut suit.)

Students discover:

- Engineer
- Medical doctor
- Peace Corps physician
- First Black woman to travel into space
- Founder of an educational nonprofit
- STEM educator and advocate
- Lifelong learner and public speaker

Reflection

How did learning more about Mae Jemison change your understanding of who she is?

Whole-Class Discussion

After students have explored all four biographies, ask:

Looking back at these four people...

- Were your first impressions completely wrong?
- Or were they simply incomplete?
- What did you learn about each person that could never have been known from a single photograph?
- Why is it important to remember that every person's life is more complex than we first realize?

Allow students to arrive at the central insight:

Our first impressions often aren't wrong—they're simply incomplete.

Bringing it Back to Welles

Say:

“Throughout this curriculum, we’ve spent time getting to know someone else whose life was wonderfully complex.”

Display four photographs of Welles Crowther—one as a child with his red bandanna, a second as a volunteer firefighter for his hometown of Nyack, NY, a third in his BC lacrosse uniform, and a fourth taken in June 2001, standing next to a NYC firefighter with the World Trade Center behind them.

Do **not** provide a biography.

Instead ask students:

Who was Welles?

Write as many words or phrases as you can that describe who he was.

Possible responses may include:

- Son
- Brother
- Friend
- Boston College graduate
- Athlete
- Lacrosse player
- Volunteer firefighter
- Equity trader
- Leader
- Hero
- Loyal teammate
- Compassionate
- Courageous

Ask:

- Could any one of these words fully describe Welles?
- If someone knew Welles only as a firefighter...would they truly know him?
- If someone knew him only as a trader...would they know him?
- If someone knew him only because of September 11...would that tell his whole story?

Guide students toward the realization:

Every title is true.

Yet none of them, by themselves, tell the whole story.

Closing Reflection

Return to the statement from the beginning of class:

Every person has a story.

Ask students:

How would you rewrite this statement after today's lesson?

Invite several responses.

Conclude with the lesson's enduring understanding:

Every human being is wonderfully complex.

No photograph, title, profession, accomplishment, or single moment can fully capture a person's life. Every person carries experiences, relationships, gifts, struggles, and dreams that cannot be seen at first glance. The more we take time to truly know others, the more we discover stories richer than we ever imagined.

And finally, when attempting to communicate with someone, it is much more effective when you know more about the person with whom you are trying to communicate with.

Welles' Way

This week, intentionally get to know someone a little better. It could be a classmate, teacher, neighbor, coworker, family member, or someone in your community. Ask a thoughtful question. Listen carefully. Learn something about that person you didn't know before.

Then take a few minutes to reflect:

- What did you learn?
- How did it change the way you saw that person?
- What might have remained hidden if you had never taken the time to ask?

Remember: Every person you meet has a story you cannot see at first glance. Like Welles, each of us is more than any single role, title, accomplishment, or moment. When we take time to truly know others, we begin to see the richness and dignity of every human life.

Junior Bridgeman - Photo 1 (show first)



Junior Bridgeman - Photo 2 (show second)



Indra Nooyi - Photo 1 (show first)



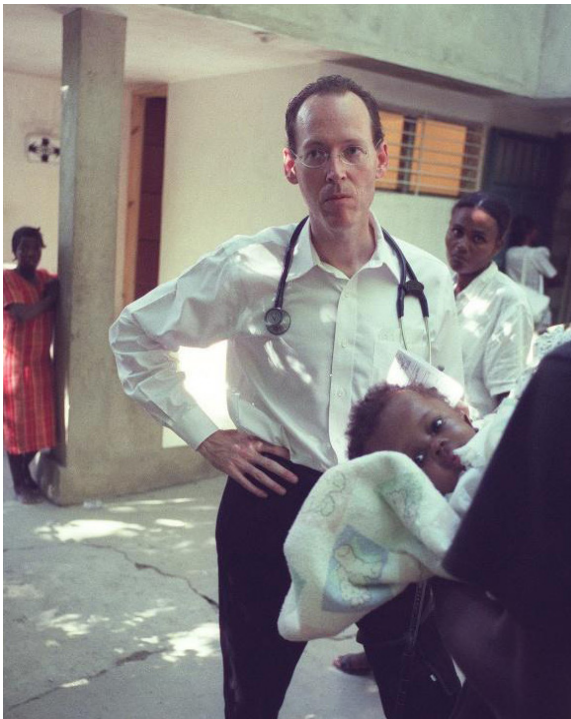
Indra Nooyi - Photo 2 (show second)



Dr. Paul Farmer - Photo 1 (show first)



Dr. Paul Farmer - Photo 2 (show second)



Dr. Mae Jemison - Photo 1 (show first)



Dr. Mae Jemison - Photo 2 (show second)





Welles Crowther, as young boy with his red bandanna



Welles Remy Crowther, as a volunteer firefighter for Nyack, NY



Welles Crowther, Boston College Lacrosse Division 1 Athlete



NYC Firefighter Harry Wanamaker and Welles Remy Crowther, June 20, 2001

BRIDGING DIVIDES

Choosing Hope After Tragedy

Unit 5: Bridging Divides Time: 50-60 minutes Learning Experience: 2

Essential Question

How can people respond to tragedy in ways that bring hope, healing, and purpose?

Big Idea

While we cannot erase tragedy, we can choose how we respond to it. Acts of remembrance, service, generosity, and community become bridges between loss and hope.

Why This Matters

Our response to hardship often becomes part of our legacy.

Learning Objectives

Students will:

1. Examine why societies create memorials and charitable organizations.
2. Explore different ways communities respond to tragedy.
3. Analyze how remembrance can inspire service rather than simply preserve memory.
4. Understand why the Welles Remy Crowther Charitable Trust reflects Welles' values.
5. Reflect on how individuals can help bring hope to others after difficult experiences.

Facilitator Background

Previous learning experiences explored leadership, caring, teamwork, and the influence of one person's life.

This lesson shifts attention from the tragedy itself to the choices people make afterward.

Rather than asking students simply to remember Welles Crowther, this lesson explores how his family, friends, and community chose to honor his life by investing in future generations.

Students discover that remembrance is not only about looking backward.

It can also become a way of looking forward.

Opening Reflection (5 minutes)

Display one question.

When something precious is lost, what can never be replaced?

Allow students one minute to write.

Then ask:

Even though some things can never be replaced...can something good still grow afterward?

Collect a few responses.

Do not evaluate them.

Simply let students hear different perspectives.

Activity One: Why Do We Build Memorials?

Display photographs of several memorials.

Examples:

- National September 11 Memorial
- Oklahoma City National Memorial
- Flight 93 National Memorial
- A local memorial in your community

Instead of researching facts first...

Ask students simply to observe.

Discussion:

- What emotions does each memorial communicate?
- Why do different communities choose different forms of remembrance?
 - Is a memorial meant to help us
 - remember...or help us heal...or both?

Activity Two: Beyond Stone

Transition.

Ask students:

Are memorials always made of stone?

Generate ideas.

Students may suggest:

- scholarships
- charities
- community service
- gardens
- annual events
- traditions
- foundations
- mentoring
- volunteer work

Now introduce the Welles Remy Crowther Charitable Trust.

Rather than presenting it as simply a charitable organization, ask:

Why might Welles' family have chosen this kind of memorial instead of stopping with a monument?

Allow students to explore the idea before providing background.

Activity Three: Living Memorials

Explain that after tragedies, many organizations are created to continue helping others.

Examples might include:

- The Welles Remy Crowther Charitable Trust
- National Day of Service
- StoryCorps initiatives preserving personal stories
- Other community organizations created in response to loss

Small groups investigate one example.

Instead of simply reporting facts, students answer:

- What problem is this organization trying to address?
- How does it transform memory into action?
- What values does it hope to preserve?

Groups briefly share.

Whole-class Discussion

Ask:

- Why do some people respond to tragedy by serving others?
- Can acts of service become a form of remembrance?
- Which memorials continue changing lives?
- Which kinds of memorials speak most powerfully to you?

Closing Reflection

Journal Prompt

Imagine someone wanted to honor a person who deeply influenced your life.

Instead of building a statue...

they wanted to continue that person's values.

What would they create?

Why?

Welles' Way**Reflect**

Think about someone whose values deserve to continue beyond their lifetime.

What qualities would you hope others remember?

Act

Identify one way you can continue another person's legacy this week.

Perhaps by serving someone.

Mentoring.

Volunteering.

Showing kindness.

Supporting a cause that mattered to them.

Ask yourself afterward:

How can our actions keep someone's values alive?

Looking Ahead

Today we explored how people choose hope after tragedy.

Next, we'll examine one of the most difficult choices of all:

How do we forgive after we've been hurt?

FORGIVENESS

The Courage to Forgive

Unit 6: Forgiveness Time: 50-60 minutes Learning Experience: 1

Essential Question

What does forgiveness ask of us, and why is it often one of the hardest choices we can make?

Big Idea

Forgiveness does not erase pain or excuse wrongdoing. Instead, it is a deeply personal decision that can free individuals from bitterness and allow hope, healing, and love to move forward.

Why This Matters

Forgiveness is rarely about changing the past. It is about deciding what kind of future we will choose to live.

Learning Objectives

Students will:

1. Explore forgiveness as a deeply personal and often difficult human experience.
2. Distinguish forgiveness from forgetting or excusing harmful actions.
3. Analyze an authentic personal reflection through close reading and discussion.
4. Reflect on how forgiveness can shape individuals, families, and communities.
5. Consider how character is revealed through difficult choices.

Facilitator Background

Throughout this curriculum, students have encountered authentic voices that reveal character through lived experience.

In this lesson, students encounter perhaps the most personal voice of all.

Following the death of her son, Welles Crowther, Alison Crowther wrote a reflection describing her own journey toward understanding forgiveness.

Teachers should resist the temptation to summarize, shorten, or “improve” this text.

Its strength lies not in polished rhetoric, but in its authenticity. Students may notice repetition, unfinished thoughts, or moments where emotion shapes the writing. Encourage students to recognize them as evidence of an honest human voice wrestling with profound grief.

This lesson is not intended to persuade students toward a particular personal decision. Instead, it invites thoughtful reflection on one family’s experience with forgiveness after unimaginable loss.

Opening Reflection (5 minutes)

Display one question.

What does it mean to forgive someone?

Students write privately.

Do not discuss responses yet.

Follow with a second question.

Is forgiving someone the same as forgetting what happened? Why or why not?

Again, students write privately.

Explain that these questions will remain open as the class explores today’s reading.

Learning Experience

Alison's Story

Provide students with Alison Crowther's Lessons of Forgiveness in its entirety.

Invite students to read silently.

If appropriate for your classroom, teachers may also choose to read the essay aloud, allowing students simply to listen.

Encourage students to underline or note any sentence that particularly stands out to them.

No additional instructions are necessary.

Allow Alison's voice to remain at the center of the experience.

Quiet Reflection

Following the reading, allow one or two minutes of silence.

Then ask students simply to write:

What sentence has stayed with you?

No discussion yet.

Students should have time to gather their own thoughts before hearing those of others.

Whole-class Discussion

Invite volunteers to share the sentence they selected.

As students respond, guide discussion through questions such as:

- Why do you think this sentence stood out to you?
- What does Alison teach us about the difference between forgiveness and forgetting?
- How does she describe the personal cost of holding onto anger?
- What surprised or challenged you about her reflections?
- In what ways does forgiveness require courage?

Throughout the discussion, encourage students to support their thinking with Alison's own words.

Literary Reflection

Invite students to consider the reading itself.

Ask:

How does knowing this is the authentic voice of a mother writing after the loss of her son affect the way you read the text?

Possible follow-up:

You may notice moments of repetition, emotion, or ideas that unfold gradually rather than perfectly. How do those qualities contribute to the authenticity of Alison's message?

Encourage students to recognize that some of the most powerful writing is powerful because it is deeply human.

Closing Reflection

Return to the opening questions.

Students reread what they wrote before reading Alison's essay.

Then respond to one final prompt.

Has Alison Crowther's reflection changed or deepened your understanding of forgiveness?

Explain your thinking using examples from the text.



Welles' Way**Reflect**

Think about someone you admire for their compassion, patience, or grace.

What qualities make that person someone others trust or respect?

Act

This week, pay attention to opportunities to practice understanding, patience, or compassion in everyday interactions.

Reflect afterward:

How did choosing compassion affect the situation?

Looking Ahead

Throughout this curriculum, we have explored leadership, caring, teamwork, influence, remembrance, and forgiveness.

Our final learning experience asks perhaps the simplest—and most challenging—question of all:

If today truly matters...how will you choose to live it?

CARPE DIEM

Make Today Matter!

Unit 7: Carpe Diem **Time:** 50-60 minutes **Learning Experience:** 1

Essential Question

If today truly matters, how will I choose to live it?

Big Idea

Every day presents opportunities to make choices that reflect courage, compassion, integrity, and service. While none of us can control tomorrow, we can choose how we live today.

Why This Matters

Character is not built in one extraordinary moment. It is built through the choices we make every ordinary day.

Learning Objectives

Students will:

1. Reflect on the enduring lessons of the Welles' Way curriculum.
2. Synthesize the virtues explored throughout the course.
3. Recognize that character is expressed through daily choices.
4. Consider the kind of person they hope to become.
5. Commit to one intentional action that will help them "make today matter."

Facilitator Background

Throughout this curriculum, students have explored timeless questions through the life of Welles Crowther.

They have examined leadership, caring, teamwork, influence, hope, and forgiveness through authentic voices, historical examples, and personal reflection.

This final learning experience is intentionally different.

It introduces no new historical figures.

No new stories.

No new virtues.

Instead, students are invited to pause, look back on what they have learned, and then look forward.

The goal of this lesson is not to celebrate the end of the curriculum.

It is to invite students to begin living it.

Opening Reflection

Without saying anything, place a **red bandanna** somewhere visible in the classroom.

Allow students to notice it.

Then ask:

When we first encountered the red bandanna, it was simply an object.

Pause.

What does it represent to you now?

Allow students to think silently before inviting discussion.

Record words students offer.

Leadership.

Courage.

Compassion.

Service.

Hope.

Character.

Purpose.

Community.

Choice.

Notice how many ideas now live inside a simple piece of cloth.

Activity One: Looking Back

Invite students to think about the journey they have taken.

Display the seven unit titles.

- Leadership
- Caring for Others
- Team
- The Power of One
- Bridging Divides
- Forgiveness
- Carpe Diem

Ask students to select **one** learning experience that has stayed with them.

Perhaps it was:

- Harriet Tubman's repeated return.
- Tyler Jewell's reflection about the red bandanna.
- Fred Rogers' ten seconds of silence.
- Alison Crowther's letter.
- A class discussion.
- A journal reflection.
- Something else entirely.
- Students write privately.

Prompt:

Which lesson do you hope you still remember five years from now? Why?

Activity Two: Looking Forward

Transition naturally.

Say:

Throughout this curriculum, we've spent a great deal of time thinking about other people.

Harriet.

Tyler.

Fred.

Alison.

Welles.

Today...

we turn the question toward ourselves.

Ask students:

What kind of person do you hope others experience when they encounter you?

Students reflect individually before discussing in pairs or small groups.

Whole-class Discussion

Ask:

- Which virtue from this curriculum do you think our world needs most today?
- Which virtue do you find most challenging?
- Which virtue comes most naturally to you?
- How are character and daily choices connected?
- Can ordinary days become extraordinary because of the choices we make?

Final Reflection

Provide students with one final journal prompt.

Imagine someone reading the story of your life many years from now.

What do you hope they would say about the kind of person you chose to become?

Allow several quiet minutes for writing.

This reflection is not collected unless students choose to share.

Closing

Share the following reflection with students.

Welles' story did not end on September 11. Every person who chooses to live with greater courage, compassion, and purpose becomes part of the story that continues today. His legacy is not found only in memorials or history books. It lives in the choices people make every day to lead, to care, to serve, to forgive, and to make a difference in the lives of others.

Pause.

Allow the words to settle.

Then simply say:

Now...go make today matter.

No further explanation.

Class dismissed.

Welles' Way

There isn't one this time.

Because...

the entire lesson is Welles' Way.

Teacher Recommendation

If possible, consider concluding the curriculum by presenting each student with a simple red bandanna. Over the course of the curriculum, students have discovered that the red bandanna came to symbolize courage, compassion, leadership, service, forgiveness, and the daily choices that shape character. Offering each student a red bandanna serves as a tangible reminder that these values are now theirs to carry forward.