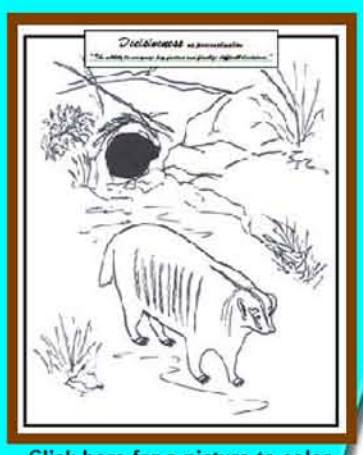

Click here for a picture to color

Decisiveness in History

Douglas McArthur

Douglas MacArthur grew up in a military family and graduated from West Point in 1903. In 1930, MacArthur became the youngest man ever appointed Army Chief of Staff, continuing to demonstrate the decisive commitment that characterized his career.

For example, in 1932 thousands of World War I veterans converged on Washington to petition Congress for a $2.5 billion bonus package. Concerned about rioting and the potential spread of disease among the crude shelters used by the demonstrators, President Hoover ordered the military to disperse the gathering. Normally, a four-star general would delegate the job to a junior officer, especially in light of its unpopularity, but MacArthur determined to do the job himself. "I would not give this distasteful and disagreeable job to any other," he said.

Did you spot the "I Will"? He understood the moral implications of a decision and would not delegate the job to someone of a lower rank to save himself from being associated with it in the public eye.

MacArthur was often accused of making decisions for personal glory. It is possible that his reclusiveness-combined with his decisive capability-looked like arrogance to those who did not know him, but those who worked closely with the general saw things differently. "I have never seen the slightest egotism in Douglas MacArthur," remarked longtime aide Courtney Whitney. "He made an excessive effort to make others count."

MacArthur demonstrated compassion and self-control when given occupying authority over Japan after World War II. Urged by some to use his new position to punish the Japanese, MacArthur replied, "I am not concerned with how to keep Japan down but how to get her on her feet again."

Did you spot the "I Will"? He purposed to make the right decision and accept the responsibility of his choice.

Decisiveness is counting the cost before making a decision and then following through, whatever the cost. Decisiveness is not just making decisions. It is making the right decision-the wise, moral, informed decision-and sticking with it.

Concept by Character First

Decisiveness

ACROSS

4 The ability to recognize key factors and finalize difficult decisions.
5 General MacArthur said he did not want to keep this country down, but help her get back on her feet.
7 An animal the badger has been known to defeat even though it is several times larger.
9 Became the youngest man appointed Army Chief of Staff in 1930.
10 When threatened, a badger determines whether to stand its ground or _____.
11 When making decisions we need to understand the ____ implications.

DOWN

1 If it weren't for the badger's decisive movements, it would have been destroyed by _____.
2 General MacArthur graduated from this military school.
3 I need to look at things from more than one point of _____ before making up my mind.
6 Do not give into this kind of pressure when making decisions.
8 When faced with a difficult situation, this animal uses quick and decisive movements to escape.