

### **It's What's on the Inside that Counts**

Our country's founding father, George Washington, was famed as a formidable commander. He served admirably in the French and Indian War, as well as in the American Revolution. He is recognized as one of history's greatest commanders and was honored posthumously as a six-star general. However, George Washington's most impressive feat was to transform, as he described them, an army "composed of men sometimes half-starved, always in rags, without pay and experiencing...every species of distress which human nature is capable of undergoing" into the victorious fighting force that allowed for the birth of our nation ("Letter"). But, what exactly made our first president a great commander? To answer this question, one must delve deeper into more than just war strategy or politics. The true reason for Washington's success was his honest personality and his hardworking character, which contributed to the many heroic things he did during America's infancy.

While Abraham Lincoln might be the president best known for his honesty, George Washington was also considered to be an extremely honest man in his time. Honesty is an important characteristic in a military general because soldiers would not follow someone (possibly to their deaths) whom they could not trust. George Washington always did what he promised. For example, Washington told the United States' citizens that he would revoke his power after the end of the American Revolution. This was unheard of at the time; most generals would have assumed all post-war power for themselves. Nevertheless, George Washington was true to his word. Journalist Richard Brookhiser noted, "[Washington had won] a war for independence and then gone home. [He embodied] the legend of the Roman who returned to his plow after saving his country" (Brookhiser).

In addition to his trustworthiness, George Washington had a calm and reserved demeanor. According to Philosophy professor Kelly L. Ross, "[Washington] was resolute and brave in action, moderate and restrained in his judgment" (Ross). Whenever the Continental Army was in a bad position, like when it lost control of New York and Philadelphia during the early years of the Revolution, Washington remained quiet and composed. Sensing his calmness, his troops were

inspired to continue to fight. Others have argued that Washington was not the most innovative military tactician. However, he overcame this one weakness by virtue of his excellent work ethic. Even when Washington was just a schoolboy, he adhered to high ideals of conduct, writing in his notes, "Labor to keep alive in your breast that little spark of celestial fire called conscience" ("George"). Ultimately, it was Washington's dedication to hard work and his honorable character that convinced the Continental Congress that he would lead his troops to a successful end.

In conclusion, George Washington's great character allowed him to guide our new nation to victory against the oppressive British monarchy. His honesty and work ethic gained the respect of his soldiers who then fought harder to win our freedom. Moreover, his levelheadedness allowed him to keep his composure during the chaos of war. Washington may have not had a perfect track record in battle, but what set him apart from other Revolutionary War heroes is what was on the inside—and it made all the difference in our nation's history.

**Works Cited Page**

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