

THE Splash

What is my personal impact as a citizen?

9/26/2013 4:37:58 PM

By **Gleb Liashedko**

Splash Guest Column



[Search the News Archive](#)

Every individual is part of a community which is dependent on citizens to do their part. Every person should ask themselves, "What is my personal impact as a citizen?" On a daily basis, we always impact our surroundings, whether at work, at school or maybe even around our friends, we all have a responsibility.

The PACE (Partners Advancing Character Education) trait for October is responsibility. We've all heard about it. It might even appear that we already know everything we need to know about it. However, in reality, do we really realize what responsibility is and how it affects our lives?

Responsibility is not something that has to be big, but it does require effort. We are all heroes in our minds, but when it actually comes down, how many of us pass by a candy wrapper lying on the sidewalk and bend down to pick it up? Many picture responsibility as something immense, and although it can be, it begins very small. As a student, your responsibility might be submitting your homework on time. As an employee, you must be able to do your job without being reminded to do so. Many do not realize the path to being a responsible citizen starts out small.

Have you ever given a thought to why some people become successful in their lives? Some of us dream of having everything we need in a split second, but nothing happens immediately. People like Steve Jobs, Bill Gates and Richard Branson did not depend on others to do their job. They made a commitment, took on responsibility, and honored being accountable to themselves as well as others. My personal theme is "to go beyond expectations." When I am presented with an idea or a project, part of my responsibility is taking on the job and completing it in a timely manner. I believe no job is finished when you think it might be finished. Sometimes additional undertakings are added on to make the final product better.

Responsibility is something greater than one can imagine. Finishing a simple task can influence a person, a group of people, an organization or even a corporation. Doing your part is essential to a prosperous community. We are all dependant on each other and when one person doesn't honor his/her responsibility, everything dominos. What do I mean by dominos? Well imagine this ... your body has legs, arms, a heart, eyes, ears, a mouth, etc. What if one's eyes "stopped functioning" - the entire body would be stressed out, confused and unable to find direction.

We might think that our actions have little impact, but it is not true. About 40 percent of Americans do not vote - that's about 125 million. During this last election season, I asked one of my friends (who's 18) why didn't he vote. His answer was simple: "My vote doesn't matter, because it's only one person." Now imagine if 125 million individuals had the same mindset. Maybe as a single person your impact may not be as great, but when combined with the rest, it's beyond comprehension.

I believe not taking responsibility is a thought of "someone else will do it for me." Every day in our lives, we fail because of this sort of thinking. Many great leaders rise up to their positions by having the exact opposite thinking. "Nothing will get done, unless I take responsibility!" Leadership is responsibility. You must be able to carry your own weight before moving on to the next dimension. Throughout life you will work with many different people; however, you must do your part as if the final task depends on you and only you - that's when you and your colleagues will succeed.

Gleb Liashedko is ASB President at Spokane Valley High School in the West Valley School District. In addition, Gleb is a student representative to the West Valley Board of Directors, and he also serves as a board member at Chase Youth Commission. He wrote this column as part of a monthly series highlighting the Partners Advancing Character Education (PACE) trait of the month.