

# The Cornerstone Of Meaningful Progress

An Interview with Robert L. Dilenschneider,  
 Founder and Chief Executive Officer, The Dilenschneider Group, Inc.

**EDITORS' NOTE** Robert Dilenschneider is the Founder and Chief Executive Officer of The Dilenschneider Group, a strategic counseling and public relations consulting firm. He is considered one of the world's foremost communications experts and is frequently called upon by the media for commentary on major news stories. He is the author of several books, including *The Ultimate Guide to Power and Influence and 50 Plus! – Critical Career Decisions for the Rest of Your Life*.



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**FIRM BRIEF** The Dilenschneider Group ([dilenschneider.com](http://dilenschneider.com)) provides access to CEOs and their communications professionals in fields ranging from mergers and acquisitions to marketing, government affairs and international media. The firm's objectives are to bring clients a level of communications counsel, creativity and exposure to networks and contacts not available elsewhere.

**Will you provide an overview of The Dilenschneider Group and what you feel have been the keys to the firm's strength and leadership over so many years?**

We founded the firm in 1991 with one goal in mind, to provide the highest level of strategic counseling to leaders in their field – whether they be Fortune 500 companies, not-for-profit organizations, high-net-worth individuals – both in the U.S. and globally. We are able to do this because all of the individuals in our firm have proven track records in their particular discipline, whether it be corporate relations, investor relations, crisis communications, internal and external relations, and more. This approach has worked.

The United States enters 2025 with a new president and too many domestic and international problems and opportunities to cite. But throughout all that lies ahead, The Dilenschneider Group will continue to do what it does best – give clients first-class advice on meeting their communications challenges, help them prepare for the new, and offer guidance in dealing with the unexpected.

**You have written many books during your career. Where did your interest in writing books develop?**

It has always been a goal of mine to share knowledge with others. My first book, *Power & Influence*, was a bestseller. People really want to

know how they can improve themselves and create better outcomes, and we can learn by example, taking important lessons from those around us and from those in history who made a mark on the world. It takes time, research, and then reflecting on how to apply important lessons to our own lives. I enjoy doing this and it is always rewarding when I hear from someone that they did something as a result of reading one of my books. So many have come into my life because they reached out to thank me for my advice and they remain good friends.

**What was your vision for writing your new book, *Character*, and what are the key messages you wanted to convey in the book?**

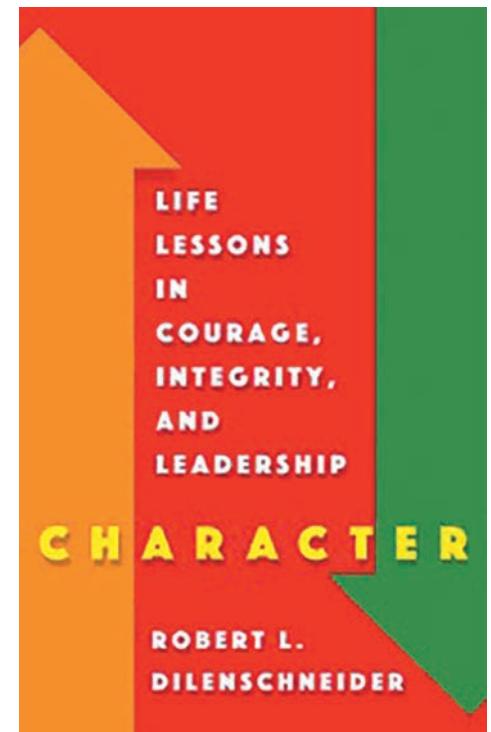
My vision was to remind readers that character – qualities like integrity, courage, resilience, and leadership – remains the cornerstone of meaningful progress, both personally and collectively. In an age dominated by fleeting distractions, divisiveness, and quick fixes, I wanted to emphasize the enduring importance of the traits that define great leaders and change-makers. The key message is that character is not only a personal asset but also a guiding force that can inspire others, navigate crises, and shape the future. Through the lives of iconic figures, I aimed to show that character is built through choices, not circumstances, and that it can unite and elevate society.

**Will you provide some examples from the book on how character helped shape history's most iconic figures?**

Here are a few:

- Nelson Mandela: His resilience during 27 years of imprisonment exemplifies how forgiveness and reconciliation can transform a divided nation and create a blueprint for healing.
- Mother Teresa: Her unwavering dedication to serving the poor demonstrated the power of selflessness and humility in inspiring global change.
- Walt Disney: His tenacity in the face of early failures helped him build an entertainment empire, showing how vision and persistence can turn dreams into reality.
- Florence Nightingale: Her courage and innovation in revolutionizing healthcare during the Crimean War laid the foundation for modern nursing.

These stories illustrate that character is the bedrock of leadership and influence.



**Why do you feel the book is so relevant at this time in history?**

We are living in an era marked by unprecedented challenges – political polarization, social unrest, environmental crises, and a growing sense of uncertainty. The examples in this book provide a roadmap for navigating these complexities with courage, integrity, and a commitment to the greater good. People are looking for authentic leadership and timeless values to guide them. *Character* offers lessons from the past to help us address the urgent need for strong, ethical leadership and inspire individuals to take action in their own lives.

**Who is the book targeted to when you look at its readership?**

The book is for anyone who seeks inspiration, whether they are seasoned leaders, young professionals, educators, or students. It's particularly relevant for emerging leaders who want to make an impact in business, politics, education, or social change. I also hope it resonates with individuals who feel disillusioned by the lack of moral clarity in today's world and are looking for practical guidance on how to lead with purpose and integrity.

**What do you hope readers will learn from the book?**

I hope readers come away with the understanding that character is the foundation of success, influence, and fulfillment. I want them to see that:

- Character is not innate – it's cultivated through choices and actions.
- Adversity is often the proving ground for greatness.
- True leadership requires courage, empathy, and a willingness to serve others.
- Each of us has the potential to shape the world around us by embodying these qualities.

Ultimately, I hope readers are inspired to look inward, embrace the principles that resonate with them, and become leaders in their own lives, no matter their circumstances. ●