

9 TIPS FOR FOSTERING HUMILITY THROUGH STORYTELLING

\$50M A 2023 study found that movies incorporating character strengths in stories generated on average \$50 million more globally compared to those that did not.



Humility is the practice of maintaining an unpretentious attitude while also being confident. It involves being willing to acknowledge one's limitations, changing one's mind when presented with evidence, and respecting the beliefs of others.

Extended adolescence, which includes ages 10-24, is a critical period of development when young people gain independence and form their values.



ADOLESCENCE AND HUMILITY

1 Show humble characters who thrive.

Why? People who are more humble experience lower levels of stress, anxiety, and depression.



Research insight: Increased humility is linked to college students' love of life.

2 Portray humble characters who embody power and strength.

Why? People who display humility are often overlooked for leadership roles.



Women are interrupted 33% more than men—this emphasizes the need for fostering humility through active listening and respecting diverse voices.

Research insight: Younger generations, such as male millennials, place a higher value on humility (55%), compared to older generations, such as male boomers (32%).

3 Show characters practicing humility by seeking reliable information from trustworthy sources and using it to make better decisions.

Why? In today's digital world, misinformation is widespread, and adolescents can often make decisions based on inaccurate information.



Research insight: Approximately 70% of decisions are influenced by emotion, with only 30% based on rational information.

CONNECTING HUMILITY TO GENDER, RACE, AND DISABILITY

Different life experiences can impact people's comfort with expressing and exploring humility. Below, we offer guidance on exploring humility from various perspectives so storytellers can accurately and inclusively portray how humility may appear across various identities.



When content is created from a research-informed perspective, it better supports adolescent mental health. Stories that reflect [Authentically Inclusive Representation \(AIR\)](#) deliver stronger financial returns and a positive impact on Gen Z audiences.



GENDER AND HUMILITY

4 Show humble AND confident female teens who are admired by others and celebrated for expressing humility.

Why? Women can face social backlash for showing either too much or not enough confidence. Demonstrating that humility complements strength challenges gender stereotypes and dispels the misconception that humility diminishes capability.



In our society, humility can often be mistaken for having low self-esteem or lacking self-confidence. For example, a female executive who exhibits humility may be considered less assertive and not capable of "leaning in."

Research insight: When women display humility, they are often perceived as less capable compared to men who exhibit similar behavior.

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5 Show a variety of girls, including popular ones, failing and recovering from it.



DID YOU KNOW?

Societal expectations of humility can clash with the need for confidence and empowerment, especially in spaces where underrepresented individuals (e.g., people of color, people with disabilities, women) strive for respect and influence.

Why? Encouraging female adolescents to have a positive attitude towards failure can boost their confidence.

Research insight: A significant number of girls aged 12-13 experience pressure to avoid failure, with the percentage more than doubling year-over-year, going from 18% to 45% of girls experiencing such pressure.



RACE, ETHNICITY, AND HUMILITY

DID YOU KNOW?

Racial humility involves a person recognizing and acknowledging their own racial identity while also valuing and respecting the racial/ethnic identities and unique experiences of others.

6 Portray monoracial parents displaying racial humility when interacting with their biracial or multiracial children.



DID YOU KNOW?

In 2021, children of color made up nearly half (49.8%) of all children in America.

Why? Biracial children feel closer to their parents when their monoracial parents show racial humility.

Research insight: Over 33 million Americans identify as multiracial, an increase of nearly 25 million people in the past decade. Multiracial Americans are this country's fastest growing demographic.

7 Demonstrate people in power exercising humility, questioning established power dynamics, and promoting people of color to positions of influence.



Why? Recognizing one's privilege can be a good thing for people who have power as it helps them develop empathy and better understand others.

Research insight: Black female characters are twice as likely as white female characters and other female characters of color to be depicted in a service industry job (56.3% compared to 26.4% and 20.6%, respectively).



DISABILITY AND HUMILITY

8 Show characters without disabilities interacting with characters with disabilities.



Why? Regularly interacting with people with disabilities can lead youth to be more humble and accepting of people with disabilities.

Research insight: Youth with disabilities are three to four times more likely to be victims of any type of violence than their non-disabled peers, whether that be at home, in the community, or at school.

9 Portray characters who actively adapt to their disability, learn through new approaches, and grow in their ongoing journey.



Why? Inaccurate stereotypes often focus on "curing" one's disability, overlooking the humbling and ongoing journey of adapting to the world with a disability.

Research insight: In 2020, more than 1.3 million U.S. young people, ages 16 to 20, had a disability.