

Charlie Jones' three R's: Readin', Writin', and Reality.

Charlie Tremendous Jones has a mantra: "The only difference between where you are now, and where you'll be next year, are the books you read and the people you meet." He has said it for more than 50 years and has influenced hundreds of thousands of people with that single sentence. Me included.

Charlie Jones has dedicated his life to learning new things, meeting new people, inspiring new people with his words, and giving away thousands of books... so he could sell millions of books.

But Charlie's charisma is the most compelling aspect of his character. It's instant. He doesn't just shake your hand – he hugs you with a capital H. No one who ever meets him forgets him. Everyone who meets him is touched by him -- mentally and physically. If you've ever been hugged by Charlie Tremendous Jones, you know exactly what I'm talking about.

Here are the 11.5 characteristics of Charlie:

1. He's so likable that he's lovable.
2. He makes you laugh and think at the same time.
3. His presentation skills are so excellent, that you're compelled to listen.
4. His concepts are transferable, so you can use them the minute you listen to them.
5. He reads to you, and talks to you, kind of like your mom or dad did -- only better.
6. His spirit is ever present. His spirit comes from his spirituality.
7. His honesty and integrity are silent, but evident.
8. He always has a song in his heart and on his lips.
9. He's not just smart, he's not just knowledgeable -- he's wise. And his wisdom has come from the books he has read and the people he has met.
10. He has learned that by giving one he receives ten. He looks at it as returning some of what you owe for the blessings you have received.
11. His loyalty to others – including Gloria, his wife of more than 50 years -- is as genuine as his loyalty to himself.
- 11.5 He doesn't just teach it, he lives it.

How do you measure up against those characteristics?

Everyday is Christmas at the Jones' residence in Mechanicsville, Pennsylvania. He invites underprivileged children to his perennial Christmas room where he performs for them, and gives them gifts as though he were Santa. (Maybe he is.)

He's the most non-offensive religious person I have ever met. He doesn't tell you what you should do or how to believe. He tells you what he does, and how he believes. He has set an example of living, and it makes his teaching more powerful as a result. You may know it as "walks his talk."