<http://teachingamericanhistory.org/library/roosevelt/> - primary docs on TR

Roosevelt's Personality

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Laurel King, Contributor |  |     |

The legendary personality of Theodore Roosevelt is timeless. He went from an insatiably curious child, to an active young man, and finally, a boisterous revolutionary as a politician. In the eyes of Theodore Roosevelt, characteristics worthy of admiration included consistent hard work, dedication to family, quiet religious adherence, and a willingness to help the fellow man.

To a man like Theodore Roosevelt, character was the very definition of a man (or woman). Overcoming his asthmatic, sickly childhood years through vigorous exercise and unyielding determination, he frequently applied this incomparable work ethic to other areas of his life. He was a voracious reader, prolific writer, and consummate academic. His dedication to 'playing fair' led to the reform of various corrupt government offices and organizations, as well as the 'busting' of the biggest corporate trusts of U.S. history. Teddy's love for the outdoors transformed U.S. domestic policy into a forerunner of conservation and preservation efforts, leading to the signing of the Antiquities Act and the designation of countless refuges, preserves, and national monuments. And his indomitable spirit led to the implementation of his Big Stick Policy, which placed the U.S. squarely at the top of the global powers.

For Theodore Roosevelt, "speak softly and carry a big stick" was more than just a catch phrase. Actually, for Theodore Roosevelt, voice wasn't just sound or speech, it was meant to be a legacy for those in the future. In politics, he unabashedly pounded his policies and theories into his fellow countrymen, convincing them to act with diplomacy while maintaining the threat of military action in the background. This led to foreign policy still in use a century after his time as president, as well as a solid place in history, among the greats.

Some famous Theodore Roosevelt personality traits include: hard work, physical activity, tenacity, drive, determination, friendship, compassion, mutual respect, and an inexhaustible supply of infectious optimism. He was well-known for his round steel spectacles, thick mustache (to hide an overbite), toothy grin, and a firm, ready handshake. Always one to appreciate the joke – even at his own expense – he frequently told some great ones, or guffawed loudly at the best ones told by others. His hobbies were numerous and varied: skinny-dipping, judo, polo, hiking, hunting, rowing, boxing, tennis, swimming, reading, writing, and spending an inordinate amount of time with his six beloved children. Throughout his life, he was always 'on the go', whether hiking the 90-plus acres around his home at Sagamore Hill, or trekking through the jungles of South America, it was common to find him in his khakis with a rifle over his shoulder. As a proud family man, when he was away from his children and wife, he wrote to them frequently. The sheer volume and sage, loving content of the letters written by Teddy, to his children, resulted in a book so others could appreciate and enjoy them for years to come.

For a man who began life as a sickly child confined to his parents' home, he made a lasting impression on everyone who came into contact with him. His gregarious, back-slapping nature was easily balanced by his ability to invoke the underlying will of his fellow man to get things done, and helped make his mark on history.