

Lessons from a 100-year-old president

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Centenarian: Jimmy Carter was born in 1924, the same year that Denmark claimed Greenland and the first crossword puzzle was published.

Is a good life the greatest achievement? Jimmy Carter was not America's leader for very long. But some say what he did afterwards is what really matters.

What's happening?

Yesterday, **Jimmy Carter** turned 100. He was **president** of the **USA** 44 years ago.

He was not president for very long — from 1977 to 1981 — but he is loved by many Americans for what he has done in his years after politics.

Find out more

During his presidency, Carter promoted peace with the **USSR** and hoped to turn America to **renewable** energy. He wanted the USA to focus on **human rights** in other countries, too.

But the next president, **Ronald Reagan**, took America down a different path. The conflict with the **USSR** became worse and he turned away from Carter's plans for **solar** energy.

But even after he left the **White House**, Carter has continued to lead his nation by example.

So here are some **moral** lessons we can all learn from Jimmy Carter:

Be dignified. Carter refused to criticise Reagan for his first year as president. He wanted to give him a fair chance.

Be humble. Since 1984 Carter has volunteered with **charities** and helped to build houses.

Be balanced. Carter has never been afraid to **criticise** his friends and praise his enemies.

Be bold. Carter has never lost his belief that with just a little **courage**, peace can be made everywhere. In 2017, he volunteered to try to secure peace with **North Korea**.

Is a good life the greatest achievement?

Some say

Yes! Carter has led a good life since he left office. He has inspired millions of people at a time when politics is less and less focused on morals.

Others think

No! We should be thankful that he has led a good life. But what really matters is having the power to create significant change. Carter did not, and still does not, have that power.

Some people say

"The good life is one inspired by love and guided by knowledge."

Bertrand Russell (1872 – 1970), British philosopher

Six steps to discovery

1. Connect

How do you feel about this story? - After reading the above, what do you feel about Jimmy Carter?

2. Wonder

What questions do you have? - For example: Which is more important: morals or power?

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What do you think?

3. Investigate

What are the facts? - Pick out one thing we know for certain about this story and one thing we cannot say for sure.

4. Construct

What is your point of view? - What is the most important thing one should do to lead a good life?

5. Express

What do others believe? - Who is the most moral person you know? Discuss in groups.

6. Reflect

What might happen next? - Get into pairs. Then write a one-minute speech that could be delivered at their 100th birthday party.

Glossary

Jimmy Carter - The US president from 1977 to 1981. He was a Democrat.

President - In some countries, the leader is called the president.

USA - The United States of America is a country in North America. It has a population of 329 million.

USSR - The United Socialist Soviet Republic, the USA's main rival in the Cold War before it collapsed and broke up into a number of smaller states in 1991.

Renewable - Energy sources, such as wind and solar power.

Human rights - The basic rights and freedoms that belong to every person in the world, from birth until death. They apply regardless of where you are from, what you believe or how you choose to live your life. Some have called for animals and even natural phenomena like rivers to have some form of human rights.

Ronald Reagan - The 40th US President.

Solar - To do with the sun.

White House - The official residence of the US president, in Washington DC. Burnt by British troops in 1814, it was rebuilt and painted white to hide the smoke stains.

Moral - Concerned with what is right and wrong.

Charities - Organisations that helps people in need. They do not make money as a business does. Most people who work for charities are volunteers. This means they are not paid.

Criticise - Find faults with something.

Courage - Bravery. Strength in the face of difficult situations.

North Korea - A country formed in 1945 when Japanese-occupied Korea was split between a Communist government in the north and a capitalist one in the south. Today it is extremely reclusive, and hostile to the West.