

# IDEAS 72

**International Online Teachers Society  
Debate  
Educational Materials For  
Advance and Upper Intermediate  
Students**



**International Online Teachers Society  
Publishing Committee**



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## HOW INTEGRAL IS INTEGRITY?

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Integrity is equated with honor, or the ability to do as you say. An individual with unquestionable integrity is able to match actions with words, and does everything he can to fulfill obligations and promises made. Someone who fails to do as they say falls flat on integrity. People do not particularly like others that fail to deliver as they promise.

In the world that we live in today, vows are made instantly to gain trust, to grow business, to manage reputations. Unfortunately, what is said and written is not quite the same as actually doing a deed. I can say, for instance, that I can finish 5 essays in a day. But the failure to deliver those essays according to my declaration merely resounds with nothing but lies, braggadocio, conceit, and incredible self-confidence. It is important that what we do can speak a lot louder than what we say, and this is specially so with what the younger generation see in us.

We may preach honesty and trustworthiness to our kids, but if we willfully neglect our obligations to society and our fellowmen, our words come out hollow. We may attend prayer meetings and participate actively in fellowships and worship gatherings, but if we fail to keep a healthy and loving family atmosphere, what good is all that then? We may wish each and everyone all the blessings in this world, but if we fail to be sources of comfort, guidance and needed wisdom at their most vulnerable, where is the integrity in that? We need to say what we mean and mean what we say, and of course, a suitable plan of action is but a given in all cases.

Acknowledging humbly that we are but humans with human limitations (read: financial burdens) that hinder us from giving material blessings is fine, but too much of that can be seen as just being miserly or worse, selfishness. Remember the widow's mite? "She gave all she had". Whatsoever we do to the least of our brethren, that we do unto Him. We may preach selflessness and talk about how we value human interactions and relationships, but if we fail so miserably to ease the burden of others in our own little ways, we also fail miserably in building our bridges towards the Lord.

It is important that we always strive to live according to the Lord's teachings. But what is equally significant is how we strive to live according to what we believe in. A pillar's strength is in its foundation just as our own strengths lie within our integrity. With integrity, our lives are not subject to the termites of doubt and uncertainty in our actions. Let's put back integrity in our lives once and for all.

## QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION:

1. Define integrity in your own words. How do you practice integrity in your personal life?
2. Who is your model of integrity? Be able to talk about this person in class.
3. Why is it difficult for most people to do as they say? How do you personally deal with this difficulty?
4. How can knowing oneself be a safeguard against making empty promises?
5. Why is integrity an important lesson to be taught to the young? What are the effects of a society without integrity?



## INTEGRITY NOT EQUAL TO PRIDE

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I was listening to a radio program featuring a young politician. It's the young politician's regular program after all, aired once a week and that is co-anchored with a radio station personality. Anyone listening to the program would easily know the politician is bent on running in the upcoming elections this year for a local post. The politician talked about the many efforts directed toward helping countless others get their hospital bills reduced, thanks to this politician's influence. Yes, the politician dared say "...because of MY influence". I had to turn the radio off because I was easily growing tired of this young politician's posturing. I was surprised by all the conceit and self-importance the young official had shown at such a young age. Are there simply no modesty, truthfulness and integrity anymore in these parts?

I live in a city that is modest in growth. While it is true that we have been able to experience significant growth here, they are by no means gigantic and astoundingly huge. Of course, this is not to make light of all the efforts that many of our local officials have capably exerted. Fortunately, most of them have determinedly worked hard toward giving services and realizing potentials for our city. But the way in which so many of them crow about this and that achievement while forgetting about the contributions of their constituents that have made their projects possible, is reprehensible at best. People are not blind; we see what they are capable of doing and what they have done. There's no dire need to highlight them and put all sorts of glitter all over them just because it's almost election period.

The true measure of integrity is the ability to be able to do as one has promised and as one professes. Government officials have a genuine obligation to their constituents. They have been granted a mandate to serve the people and offer them a better way of living in society. It's also the same in our personal lives. We must strive to maintain truthfulness in all our dealings and stay honest in all we do. Crowing about our achievements, especially when those form part of our duties and responsibilities, is nothing but bragging. We can find pride in what we do, find honor in our accomplishments. But others will see the honorable way with which we conduct our lives as a more palpable testament to our untarnished and unshakable reputation.

How we live our lives is infinitely more important than how often and how much we talk about our good deeds. Hopefully, behind all the bragging and grandstanding that the young politician has been doing, the will to serve burns brighter than ever.

## QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION:

1. How do you choose the officials you vote for? What criteria do you personally use?
2. Would you vote for someone who is very aggressive about development but lacks standards in personal conduct (i.e., a womanizer or an oppressor of the poor)? Why or why not?
3. Why is it important to vote for people with integrity?
4. Can having a well-established name be a guarantee of integrity from a person? Why or why not?
5. How important is integrity to you? How does it pervade or influence your personal and career life?



## LIVING WITH INTEGRITY

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Living a life that is honest, upright and truthful is living with integrity. It can often be difficult to live a life imbued with integrity. A lot of worldly temptations abound, so much so that living with integrity seems to be more the exception than the rule. We are challenged, therefore, to keep to our honest values and live an exemplary life despite every lure to the dark side.

There's always a new form of corruption in a particular corner of society.

We experience corruption when we obtain particular permits or licenses, all in the name of having our papers expedited or immediately acted upon. We need to put allowance for SOPs and other such euphemisms for grease money. We need to treat this or that individual to a night out just so we can have our requests granted. We need to bribe certain people with gifts such as food, clothes and stuff in order to receive favorable decisions, etc.

Integrity is not as sacred as it used to be. People have "invented" innovative ways of getting what they want. We use our names to influence people to do things we want and not necessarily to do things that are right and just. A pretty prominent name gets sure seats for a show or a position way ahead of the others. It doesn't matter whether that particular person has a crooked life or has an unsavory reputation himself: it is his name that precedes him.

My late father used to say, "Once you lose your honor, you lose everything." He wasn't one to pay grease money just to have document processing speeded up. He'd patiently wait for the proper time. Sadly, he was a man who didn't know many officials in his time. His only connections to government offices were through his former students who, out of respect for their old teacher, would immediately process whatever papers he needed. He also approached former neighbors and old friends when the need arose. But I never saw him lay down money to entice fixers and gofers. My mom's practically the same. When she goes to market, she is able to get outrageous discounts from her former students that have become vendors.

Sometimes, I wish I could go to this or that official on the merits of my parents' "connections". But by and large, I am really glad my parents were just simple folk who valued their integrity and good name above all. In the end, it's not who you know anymore, although the opposite is completely true in the here and now. But eventually, it's how you have decided to live your life that matters. People will remember you not for the amount of money you have given out to have your way, but by the number of lives you've touched with your honesty, good works, and genuine kindness.

## QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION:

1. What comprises integrity, in your opinion?
2. Why should teachers epitomize living with integrity?
3. How can young people be taught about integrity? Be as specific as needed.
4. Is it useful to have "connections"? Be able to justify your answer.
5. What other career/s need/s integrity as a primary qualification?



## Living a life with Integrity

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Integrity cannot be bought or sold. This is a concept which is thought in various schools and institutions. But, the question that we have to face now is what is integrity and why is it important? Integrity consists of values and principles which are measured through its outcomes. It is our truthfulness and honesty as human beings. It is to be truthful to everything we do and to not follow the lines of hypocrisy. Integrity is one of the common virtues that people who follow. Without integrity, a person is untrustworthy and not honest with his thoughts and emotions.

Integrity came from the Latin word integer, which means complete. This means that integrity is an idea of wholeness, deriving from one's actions and character. A person filled with integrity is a person with values and beliefs. If you have heard of integrity, used in various materials, it is a word which also describes one's strength as a whole. For instance, most captains measure their ship's integrity first before they set sail. The word integrity is also used to measure one's stability and worthiness.

In terms of ethics, the term integrity can be found in the both morality and behavior. Moralists consider the concept of integrity as pure virtue which is based on clean actions and a clear set of principles. Integrity is known to be deeply rooted in core group values. Some of the virtues which are considered to have an effect of one's integrity are moral responsibility and accountability. This means that a person who does not have accountability and the concept of moral responsibility will not have integrity.

So what is accountability? It is the notion that everyone is responsible to someone else. It is the value of being responsible to one's actions and activities. Accountability is based on one's willingness to adjust several expectations in order to reach a certain outcome. For instance, a father leaves his vices in order to take care of his family. Most writers consider integrity as loyalty to one's rational principles rather than being accountable to the expectations of others. This means that being accountable to what is important is the right way to accountability while doing things because of the expectations of others is the wrong way.

What about moral responsibility? This value is based on being responsible to one's moral acts. It means that what we sow is what we harvest or what we have done is our responsibility. For instance, if we have cheated in an exam then we are responsible for the punishment and we should accept it wholeheartedly.

So in conclusion, is integrity important? Yes, R. Buckminster Fuller mentioned that Integrity is the basis for everything successful. In order to be successful in life, we should live one which is based on integrity. Malcolm X also mentioned that if we do not stand for something then we will surely fail in everything.

### Questions:

- 1) What is moral responsibility?
- 2) What is accountability? Give an example?
- 3) Why is integrity important?
- 4) Who mentioned that integrity is the basis for success?
- 5) What is the Latin word for integrity and what does it mean?



## THAT'S INTEGRITY!

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People nowadays withhold the truth and do the wrong thing, but when you do and say the right thing, that's integrity! Needless to say, when you feel like struggling in whatever consequences of being honest that may bring, your integrity should be intact! That should hold true even to the point of being hurt or not having a viable outcome, you should still maintain integrity. We should always stay true, strong-willed and full of integrity at all times to be able to maintain our composure and self-respect.

Every individual has tread crossroads in his life and has chosen the right path, that is, a path made of principle that leads to character. This is very true with leaders, who would not sell anybody out just to buy his future. Well, truly I can say to you my friend that, that's integrity and may be called also as courage. The question is how many of these leaders do we find at present? Your guess is as good as mine, for there are only few of this kind of leaders that we could see. That's the stuff that leaders should have made of.

A man of integrity is a person who keeps his words and stands up for truth and justice whatever the cost maybe. He does not indulge himself in scandals, hypocrisy and shady business practices. He is impervious to the wiles of the devil and doesn't give in easily to wrongdoings. He cannot be enticed with anything and wouldn't exchange his word of honor for anything else. That my friend is integrity!

When you follow through what you say you will do and be, meaning you hold great values and have true commitment, that's integrity. When we honor our promises to ourselves and to others too, that's integrity! When someone is truthful in whatever circumstances he maybe, that's integrity! When you complete your task even when nobody is watching that's integrity! That only means that you are a person whom one can rely on and be trusted.

When a person doesn't feel envious or jealous of other's success, that's integrity! When you are not being hypocritical and have low self-esteem, that's integrity! When you prefer to suffer the insult rather than responding to the flesh and is not easily provoked, that's integrity! A man of integrity does not partake in any way in gossip, backbiting and the likes. He always lives up to his words no matter what happens.

We could talk of a lot of meanings and perspectives about integrity and anything that is associated with this word but it all boils down to honoring your word and yourself. Like what Abraham Lincoln once said, "We must not promise what we ought not, lest we be called on to perform what we cannot." Let us always be objective and have that positive attribute of being a man who has a word of honor and do whatever he says or promises.....that's integrity!

Questions for discussion:

1. How can you tell if a person has integrity? Explain your answer.
2. Do you find yourself in a fix situation and try to justify whenever your flaws are seen to the point of compromising your integrity? How did you free yourself of that kind of situation?
3. How can you apply integrity? Justify your answer.
4. Can you still see people with integrity nowadays? Cite an example.
5. Have you experienced compromising your integrity? How did you deal with it?



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