

Middle School Division Winner

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Integrity the Most Important Value in Life

There are so many amazing things in our world today, and integrity is one of them. It's a value, an ethic; it's doing whatever it takes to accomplish something honestly. It's also a way to be truthful with yourself and others, a foundation of character, and so much more. I believe that you must have integrity to take control of your life. It is especially important when trying to accomplish something. According to the Merriam-Webster dictionary, it defines integrity as a "firm act to a code of especially moral or artistic values." When I read this definition, it makes it very clear to me that we must have integrity to do something, to set goals and achieve them. We have to be honest with ourselves to set goals that are realistic for us and that can be accomplished. I think that people with high integrity strive to do their best in everything, whether it be doing homework at school or even playing a competitive sport. Also, they realize that everything they do is a statement that reflects who they are as a person and it also makes them a better individual.

There is a quote that states, "To be nobody-but-yourself in a world which is doing its best, night and day, to make you everybody else, means to fight the hardest battle which any human being can fight; and never stop fighting!" (E. E. Cummings) I love how Cummings says, "...which is doing its best night and day..." because during the day, I personally have to feel honest and fulfilled with what I have done. If I did something wrong or I wasn't honest about something, it will bother me when I go to bed and I must fix it. I can remember many times when I have practiced hard and I didn't feel fulfilled with how I performed. I learned that when I am not consistently practicing hard, I lose my integrity and it is harder to reach my goals. I'm a go-getter type of person. And I believe in striving to always do better. When I don't use integrity, I don't feel fulfilled with what I have done and I am not being honest with myself. One time at soccer practice, I decided that I was going to use integrity and work harder than I ever have before. After an exhausting practice, I felt great inside because I knew that I fulfilled my goal. I ended up having the best game of my life the next day. It showed me that when I work hard and stick to my goals, integrity can help me do anything.

When I read the article "Integrity and Character" by Karol Feld, I loved how she included in the article "The word INTEGRITY comes from the same Latin root as "integer," or whole number. Like a whole number, a person of integrity is undivided and complete. This means that the ethical person acts according to her beliefs, not according to expediency." This statement is very encouraging; it makes me believe that by showing integrity I can feel complete with the goals I set. They make me feel whole. We are not strong just because of our physical abilities, we are strong from our values, good character, and

integrity. People need integrity to feel complete. We need to understand that with good character and integrity, we can happily achieve anything that we set our minds to.