

Chantel Sower

Middle School Division 2018

1st Place Winner

Wes-Del Middle School

Eighth Grade- Pamela Meier-Fisher, teacher

“Implementing Indispensable Integrity”

In a world where many of the denizens are immoral and self-centered, it is difficult to exhibit the integrity needed to keep goodness and hope alive for an uncertain future. Dictionary.com defines integrity as, “adherence to moral principles; honesty.” Another website states integrity’s root comes from the Latin word: *integritatem* which means “wholeness” or “soundness.” However, I believe that it is not possible to put integrity into a single definition. Rather, it is based on individual thoughts and actions. Integrity relies upon this person’s respect for himself/herself and others; humility, standing beside choices he/she believes is right even when others think differently while not being a fanatic; staying true to who he/she is, following the same principles even as he/she changes; following his/her own “constitution,” and many other principles. I like to call a person’s morals, principles, and guidelines for life his/her *constitution*. This is a large part of integrity, as adhering to one’s beliefs helps him/her to stay true to who he/she is. Religion is also an important part of integrity as it fits in with the personal constitution concept of staying true to who one is. As you can see, here is no possibility of having a single definition with a set number of rules for a concept with such a wide umbrella of morality. Integrity can build trust, friendships, and a person’s reputation.

Integrity would mean nothing if no one showed it or if it was a dead concept. People in the past have shown such remarkable integrity that we remember them today. Many of these people from history are remembered for a reason: they are peaceful, ethical people who devoted their lives to making the world a better place. Some of the people we remember to this day for their integrity are Abraham Lincoln, Martin Luther King, Jr., Nelson Mandela, Mahatma Gandhi, Chris Long, Rosa Parks, Winston Churchill, Dietrich Bonhoeffer, and many others.

Integrity should be shown by everyone. I have shown integrity by treating people of other races as I would people who are the same race as I am. One of my best friends is Chinese, and I don’t treat her differently because of her race. Another way I show integrity is by trying to adhere to my own constitution and religion. Sticking by my commitments is another way I show integrity. I try to treat people of other religions, races, economic status, etc. as I would treat myself. I can improve my integrity by respecting others’ views more often, staying true to who I am and not changing for acceptance, and

putting others before myself especially when no one is watching. Integrity can be implemented into daily situations. I can help worthy causes, help a neighbor mow the lawn, talk to someone who is lonely, or aid someone in a difficult time. These simple acts can build someone's integrity little by little to a point at which it becomes natural.

Integrity is essential for positive growth in character. If someone has any doubts about how important integrity is, he/she should look at the accomplishments of people who seem to have been the masters of integrity: Philadelphia Eagle Chris Long, who donated the rest of his 2017 salary to a charity for education, Martin Luther King, Jr., who fought with words of truth about equality for all, that all men were created equal, and Winston Churchill, who didn't give in, were all individuals of integrity. We must ask ourselves today who we will be. This just might change us and the world.

590 words

Sources for photos:

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