

Integrity Through My Eyes

I believe that having integrity is necessary to success because it helps develop trust.

Integrity guides one to decipher right from wrong, and integrity is a large component in decision making. As a student, integrity is something I value and recognize in myself, my peers, and my educators. Becker defined integrity as “the principle of being principled, practicing what one preaches regardless of emotional or social pressure, and not allowing any irrational consideration to overwhelm one’s rational convictions” (157). Integrity shapes character, affects how I choose to spend my time, and helps discipline me in my education.

Integrity guides actions, which in turn, reflects character. One of the best examples of this is the Golden Rule. How I decide to treat others and how I decide to spend my time is something that is important to me because I know what I am involved with demonstrates my character; this demonstrates integrity. I take pleasure in the volunteer opportunities available to me. On a recent break from school, I volunteered at the Ball Memorial Hospital. I knew that doing volunteer work would benefit me; I volunteered in the distribution area. Volunteering had a positive effect on my character. Volunteering helped me learn about fairness, trustworthiness, and dependability. While volunteering at the hospital is what first sparked my interest to begin helping in my community, it also helps reflect who I am as a person; it demonstrates my integrity -- my being principled.

This past semester in school, I had an opportunity to explore ways to give back through a school project. The volunteer projects I chose to work on were volunteering at an assisted living home, making dog biscuits for the Muncie Animal Shelter, and helping with the Feed My Sheep donations on Thanksgiving morning. Being able to give back, even in small ways, made me feel

as if I was making a difference in others lives. Community involvement is something that many people claim is important; however, many do not make the time to be involved. Demonstrating integrity would demand that my actions match the words I speak.

Another volunteer opportunity I enjoy is one in which I am able to combine my love for music with the joy I receive from volunteering. I am privileged to be able to help the Cowan Elementary Choir during rehearsals. When I was in elementary school, I participated in the choir. I remember that I looked up to the high school students who would come over and help. Those students took time out of their busy schedules to come and work with us. Now that I am a high school student, I enjoy going back to the elementary to be the high school student who invests in the elementary-aged choir members. I find it interesting that I am able to incorporate something that I enjoy, while helping others. By volunteering in this manner, I am showing others how much I enjoy music and volunteering, and staying true to my convictions. This demonstrates integrity.

One of the most important places to have integrity is in the school or work atmosphere. A primary reason for this is that my actions will influence those of my peers. Leading by example is a crucial part of integrity. "Greater representation and involvement of students in integrity processes will help to create a culture where integrity is the norm and misconduct an exception or taboo" (James in Atkinson, Nau, Symons 204). I practice academic integrity by not plagiarizing or cheating. I know that these are not good practices to get involved with. These practices will only do damage to those who participate in them. I also hold myself accountable to maintain a good academic standard.

Another part of maintaining academic integrity is respecting my teachers. I exercise respect for my teachers by always turning in my work on time, remaining present during class, practicing good manners, and trying to be helpful whenever I can. "The key factor for developing and maintaining integrity throughout life is a sense of self or identity in which ethical values are central. To support academic integrity, this must include a strong sense of oneself as honest and trustworthy" (Colby and Sullivan 26). I make education my priority and realize that what I am doing now will impact my future. I keep in mind that my teachers' goals are to help me succeed.

Educationally, I am also the student director of my school play. My English teacher asked me to team up with her on this project a few weeks ago. I think this leadership role, due to the sensitivity of some of the information she will ask me to work with, will help to build my integrity. Working on the play thus far, I have already been strengthening some of my skills, such as, time management, communication, and feedback. I know that taking on this position is something that I will look back at as being extremely valuable. I am very grateful that I was given this opportunity. Incorporating this project into my life demonstrates the important component that I think integrity should be.

In my life, integrity always has a place. Integrity means many things to me and is a valuable character trait that I will always strive for. My personal integrity cannot be changed by anyone but myself, and I will not allow it to be. Integrity defines my character and guides my moral compass. I have become more aware of what it takes to have integrity in my life. My challenge now is to set an example for others around me.

929 Words

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