

## Integrity in My Daily Life

“If you have integrity, nothing else matters. If you don’t have integrity, nothing else matters.” These are the words of Harvey Mackay – business man, author of seven *New York Times* bestselling books, weekly column writer whose inspiring career advice is published in over one hundred newspapers, and member of the National Speakers Association Council of Peers Award for Excellence Hall of Fame. His words ring true; integrity is of utmost importance to have a successful life. This quality can be displayed regardless of where you are, no matter how old you are, and despite your position of leadership. I can display integrity by doing what is right even if no one is watching, by being true to my word, and by being an upright leader.

I can display integrity by doing what is right, even if no one is around to see it. Integrity starts in the heart, and no one can fake true integrity. If I were to cheat on a test, even if I had no way of being caught, and get away with it, and then proceed to talk about how we should all do right even though no one is watching, I would not have integrity. Even though I didn’t get caught and no one knew that I cheated, my standards still don’t match up with my actions. “Integrity is making sure that the things you say and the things you do are in alignment,” said author and keynote speaker Katrina Mayer. We can’t expect integrity out of others if we are content with sinning in private and then preaching the opposite. Even if we think no one is watching, there is usually someone who is. We set examples for others wherever we go, whether we like it or not. This especially is true in school settings. I hear my classmates and peers complain

about the morals and the behavior of other students, but who are we to judge them if we don't display the integrity we want everyone else to? Like the Bible says in Matthew 7:5, you must get the log out of your own eye before you confront others on the issue. Doing right in private is the ultimate test of integrity – we have the opportunity to sin without being punished on earth. If I make an effort to do right away from others, it will become easier to do right around others.

Another way I can display character and integrity in my everyday experiences is by being true to my word. Motivational speaker Les Brown says this: "Honor your commitments with integrity." A large part of integrity is being reliable and proving yourself trustworthy. Don't be afraid to offer help and be involved, but make sure to follow through and do the best job you can, or all your efforts will be in vain. Empty promises get a leader nowhere, and people eventually will stop believing them and disregarding that leader. There is a saying that goes, "Walk your talk and talk your walk." It's hypocritical of me to expect integrity from my peers if I'm not even willing to display it myself. Hypocrisy discredits everything I say, and people will not listen to me. In order to be a leader of integrity, I must be the person I say I am, inside and out.

The most important way I can show integrity to others in my life is by being an upright leader. Integrity is the all-encompassing, most important quality for leadership. It's where the rubber meets the road. "The supreme quality for leadership is unquestionably integrity. Without it, no real success is possible, no matter whether it is on a section gang, a football field, in an army, or in an office." This quote by Dwight D.

Eisenhower not only emphasizes the importance of integrity to leadership, but also describes just a few of the areas one can display integrity. We are all leaders in some sense. To our siblings, to our teammates and classmates, and especially to those younger than us. Even if we aren't outspoken and bold, like the world tends to describe a leader, we still have an influence on others. We can inspire others to have integrity just through our actions – no words are needed. American icon Hillary Ziglar, an author, salesman, and motivational speaker, says "It is true that integrity alone won't make you a leader, but without integrity you will never be one." This way to display integrity is the hardest and also requires the other two ways. In order to be a good leader, you must have a heart of integrity, and you must fulfill what you promise people. No good person wants to follow a leader who is corrupt. Do we want to be remembered as crooked and hypocritical, or do we want to leave a legacy of integrity and goodness?

Integrity is a rare quality in today's society that is full of corrupt politicians, leaders, and friends, but there are plenty of people who shine bright with integrity. They all have one thing in common – they did what was right (even when it seemed like it wouldn't matter), they were true to their word, and because of that, they were good leaders. They all started right where I am—in high school, displaying integrity in their everyday lives, no matter how trivial they thought things were. Integrity starts with me, just like it started with them, and hopefully by being a good example, I can change the future and give the next generation a legacy to learn from.

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