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How to Be True to Yourself

Enis Waitley

My grandparents believed you were either honest or you weren't. There was no in between. They had a simple motto hanging on their living-room wall: "Life is like a field of newly fallen snow; where I choose to walk every step will show." They didn't have to talk about it - they demonstrated the motto by the way they lived.

They understood instinctively that integrity means having a personal standard of morality and ethics that does not sell out to expediency and that is not relative to the situation at hand. Integrity is an inner standard for judging your behavior. Unfortunately, integrity is in short supply today—and getting scarcer. But it is the real bottom line in every area of society. And it is something we must demand of ourselves. A good test for this value is to look at what I call the Integrity Triad(三位一体), which consists of three key principles:

Stand firmly for your convictions in the face of personal pressure. There's a story told about a surgical nurse's first day on the medical team at a well-known hospital. She was responsible for ensuring that all instruments and materials were accounted for during an abdominal operation. The nurse said to the surgeon, "You've only remove 11 sponges, and we need 12. We need to find the last one. "

"I removed them all," the doctor declared. "We'll close now."

"You can't do that, sir," objected the rookie nurse. "Think of the patient."

Smiling, the surgeon lifted his foot and showed the nurse the 12th sponge. "You'll do just fine in this or any other hospital," he told her.

When you know you're right, you can't back down.

Always give others credit that is rightfully theirs. Don't be afraid of those who might have a better idea or who might even be smarter than you are.

David Ogilvy, founder of the advertising firm Ogilvy & Mather, made this point clear of his newly appointed office head by sending each a Russian nesting doll with five progressively smaller figures inside. His message was contained in the smallest doll: "If each of us hires people who are smaller than we are, we shall become a

company of dwarfs. But if each of us hires people who are bigger than we are, Ogilvy & Mather will become a company of giants." And that is precisely that the company became one of the largest and most respected advertising organizations in the world.

Be honest and open about who you really are. People who lack genuine core values rely on external factors - their looks or status in order to feel good about themselves. Inevitably they will do everything they can to preserve this façade, but they will do every little to develop their inner value and personal growth.

So be yourself. Don't engage in a personal cover up of areas that are unpleasing in your life. When it's tough, do it tough. In other words, face reality and be adult in your responses to life's challenges.

Self-respect and a clear conscience are powerful components of integrity and are the basis for enriching your relationships with others.

Integrity means you do what you do because it's right and not just fashionable or politically correct. A life of principle, of not succumbing(屈从) to the seductive(诱惑的) sirens(妖艳女人) of an easy morality, will take you forward into the 21st century without having to check your tracks in a rearview(后视) mirror. My grandparents taught me that.