

Be In Integrity: It's about Being Honest with Yourself

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Have you ever tucked a hotel towel in your suitcase? Tut, tut! It's not an uncommon act. Regularly, we hear reports of millions of dollars worth of company property stolen by employees. Little violations happen very day like disappearing packages of paper, boxes of paper clips, file folders, and the occasional stapler and hole punch.

Then there are the major breaches of public trust. Sherron Watkins was applauded on the cover of Time for whistle-blowing Enron's big scam. What do people tell themselves that allows them to violate our civilized principles such as honesty, fairness, respect for self and others? They often give in to urges of greed, envy, anger or revenge.

Most us have violated what we consider decent human behavior; driving over the speed limit, not correcting a bill that was in our favor, fudging an expense, letting another take the blame for an error, pretending not to see someone in distress or treating ourselves disrespectfully—smoking, guttoning with food, couch potatoing, not asking for what we want, expressing out-of-control anger rather than sharing our hurt. There are endless ways we let ourselves and other down in little and Big Mac ways. However, we can always get back on the virtue track.

Whether we make promises to ourselves at New Years or to others we need those commitments to be in alignment with our values and morals. If not, they will tumble like a tower of flimsy playing cards. The definition of integrity from www.dictionary.com is: “adherence to moral and ethical principles; soundness of moral character; honesty.” We need to respect ourselves and have a plan of self care and discipline to follow through lest we allow negative peer pressure, fads, a weak moment or poor habits to influence our choices.

In 1932 Herbert J. Taylor, who eventually became the president of Rotarians International, developed four simple questions as ethical guide posts. *The 4-Way Test* stands true no matter your culture, age, religion, sex or job title. Before speaking or acting ask yourself:

1. Is it the **truth**?
2. Is it **fair** to all concerned?
3. Will it build **goodwill** and **better friendships**?

4. Will it **benefit all concerned**?

Just as your car tires need to be put back into alignment now and then sometimes we need to do a personal check. Here are some tips to get back on the virtue track.

Ten Tips for Detecting Out-of-Integrity Moments

“Oh! My gosh? What was I thinking?”

1. You gave into peer pressure.
2. You spoke or acted with poor intentions driven by urges of greed, pride, envy, revenge or deception.
3. You had disturbing flashbacks and nightmares of what you said or did.
4. You stood by or hid when harm occurred to your self, others or the environment.
5. You felt guilt or regret.
6. You felt a sickness or sinking in your stomach.
7. You noticed critical self talk yelling at you internally.
8. You received little or no support from those you trust for wisdom, compassion and thoughtful discernment.
9. You were glad that children or those you respect were not present.
10. You concluded you could bounce back to yourself by making amends.

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