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INTEGRITY

WHAT'S IT TO YOU?

Back in the Middle Ages (1200-1600 A.D.) a great cathedral was being built by many skilled labourers. One day a strange man came to town and asked each of the men what they were doing. One man answered, "I have to lay this brick to feed my nagging wife and my many ungrateful children." Another answered by saying, "just trying to pass the time until I die and at the same time keep myself afloat." Another man said, "I'm following my father's footsteps and doing what I'm told." An old man answered, "I am a mason, this is what I do." Yet another man was heard saying, "I do this because I have many debts to pay." Then the stranger saw a young man laying brick who was working feverishly unlike the other workers. Intrigued, the stranger questioned this young man next. After being questioned, the young brick layer stopped, stared at the yet unfinished building and answered by saying, "I'm taking part in the greatest building project in history. A cathedral unlike any other in the world. One of surpassing beauty and size. This cathedral will be the greatest the world has ever seen. I'm only laying the block, but my efforts will help this great cathedral to stand the test of time so future generations can marvel at and appreciate its awesome beauty."

This story is all about integrity. Have you ever thought about what integrity means to you personally? Many of us would agree that integrity includes an element of not just being, but do-ing. In other words, keeping one's word—doing what you say are going to do, or even when. Many of us have been conditioned and trained to define integrity in that way. We've learned to associate honesty with integrity. But there is a lot more to this picture than just one's word.

Integrity is also about, amongst other things, character. Character is what you carry with you all the time, no matter what you are doing in this life. In a practical sense, being in integrity and in line with your character is what you do when nobody is watching you, when you're not accountable to someone like a coach, teacher, employer, parent, etc. So having character also includes an element of discipline as well. You may wonder what discipline has to do with integrity? Well, because character is how people truly are, or what they do when nobody is watching, then their only accountability is to themselves. And that means that you



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better be doing something on your own when no one is watching.

The underlying three pieces of integrity that all of us live with, are: **self-respect**, **self-esteem**, and **self-confidence**. I will give you a real-life example of how being out of integrity impacts all of these “selves”.

Clients A&B are \$60,000 in debt, and have been working for the last seven months on a debt elimination program. Recently, they received a phone call from a respected company offering a “great” real estate coaching program, and decided on the spur of the moment to buy into this course for \$15,000—all on credit. The story they told themselves to justify the purchase, was that getting into real estate was their big dream and would result in loads of money, and, it *just* seemed like too great an opportunity to pass up. The money made in real estate would come back to them very soon, they decided.

Well here’s the reality. Whether it was a weak moment or a moment of impulse, they got themselves into more debt and essentially wiped themselves out with a lack of discipline and integrity because they told themselves seven months previously that they wouldn’t get any deeper into the credit card black hole (they went against their word in the face of an unexpected circumstance). Buying something that they knew they couldn’t afford also impacted their self-respect and self-esteem because having respect for oneself includes respect for your words, actions, and thoughts all together. Dis-respecting oneself eventually affects self-esteem, ultimately showing up in negative self-talk such as “I can’t do it.”, “I’m not good enough.”, “I’m not smart enough.” And so on. Eventually that will erode self-confidence as well.

So of all the labourers of the Great Cathedral, which one do you think had high self-respect, esteem and confidence, and which ones didn’t? Therefore, which was living and not just doing, in integrity?

I challenge you all to think about this.

What exactly does integrity mean to you?

Are you in line with everything that it *does* mean?

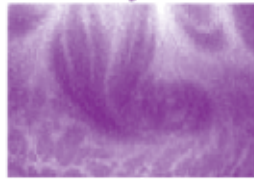
Do your actions, words and thoughts all fit into place, or are you out of step with any of them?

Do you do something because you have to, or think you have to, rather than looking at the quality of how you really are all the time?

That is food for thought indeed.

Olena Gill is a life coach in Errington, BC. For more information on workshops, coaching or sessions, please visit <http://www.indigocrystalcoach.com> - see ad page 44

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