

10 Characteristics of a Man of Integrity

One of the best definitions of character we've ever heard goes something like this: "Character is what you do when no one else is looking."

This is one reason golf is such a great life-lesson game. It's the only professional sport where the participants call penalties on themselves.

But men of integrity value what is honest, true, noble, trustworthy, kind and right ahead of personal gain. Once integrated into our foundational operating system, integrity ceases to be optional or "add on" but instead becomes a way of life.

Here are some suggestions that will help once we decide to make integrity a foundational value:

1. Root yourself in a moral foundation. It's been said that everyone has a god; the question is only "What god do we choose?" But many of us fail to even address the issue. Once considered, this question can give us a firm place to anchor.

2. Look for the positive. Load your consciousness in a positive direction by scanning the news for examples of integrity. Then talk about those with friends and family rather than the latest scandal. Make endorsing integrity a stronger value in your life than criticism and scorn.

3. Resist the temptation to compartmentalize your life. Too many of us are different people in different places. Determine to be a man of integrity; then practice at home, at work, at play—wherever you are.

4. Determine to live for others ahead of yourself. The root

enemy of integrity is selfishness. The “Golden Rule” requires treating others the way we would like to be treated. It is impossible to follow the Golden Rule without a boost to personal integrity.

5. Participate in an active accountability group. There’s a great story about the great leader Moses when his friends Aaron and Hur stood with him to hold his arms up high until the battle was won. We all need friends to hold our arms up, to help keep us strong.

6. Partner with a friend where you need to make progress. Take accountability to the next level by asking another man to hold your feet to the fire where necessary. This can be a mutual arrangement. We know a man who asks his friend to call several times a week and ask point-blank if he’s been looking at porn. The promise of a pointed question can help any area of weakness.

7. Be in the habit of sharing everything with your wife. When we don’t keep any secrets from our spouse, it tends to have an impact on who we are.

8. Practice the habit of imagining the presence of someone whose opinion you value. What if my father was present at this business meeting? I wonder how Grandpa would enjoy being part of this foursome? Would I tell this joke in the presence of my wife? How would my kids feel if they listened in on this conversation?

9. Hold your children accountable. It’s cliché to say that “to teach is to learn.” But the truth is, every lesson we bring to our children is something we need to hear too.

10. Practice having a “principle of the week.” Elaborate the teaching equation to highlight a “principle of the week” at home. Have a week devoted to conversations about honesty, another week highlighting trust, then a week where everyone in the family pledges one act of selflessness per day and then

shares over dinner.

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