



# Community of Character

## Integrity

**March 2007  
Integrity**

### Character Qualities

- Responsibility
- Respect
- Thankfulness
- Caring
- Perseverance
- Unity
- Integrity
- Service
- Moral Courage
- Citizenship
- Fairness
- Self Control

**“Real integrity is not what we talk about having, but how we respond honestly to our daily decisions, 100% of the time.”**

*Anonymous*

City of Mission Viejo  
200 Civic Center  
Mission Viejo, CA 92691  
Orange County

Integrity is the cornerstone of good character. It is the quality of being honest, having consistently high moral standards, and the actions to match those principles. “Integrity” comes from the word “integer,” which means “one” or “wholeness.” This means that there should be no divisions in an ethical person’s life—no differences in how decisions are made from situation to situation, and no difference in the way one acts at work, at home, in public, or alone. Without Integrity, an individual will fall short of realizing his or her full potential. A person of Integrity is truthful, sincere, fair, and has the desire and the courage to do what is right.

Every day our own character is challenged by the situations we face, and our actions or our decisions in handling these circumstances reveal our Integrity. In the Stephen Covey book, First Things First, he talks about the MOMENT OF CHOICE or the moment of truth, and how Integrity has to fit quickly between a stimulus and a response. In this short pause, an individual has to think about the position he will take. With a good character base, we increase our ability to act quickly with Integrity and courage. It is easy to think of courage in connection with a very dramatic event like running into a burning house to save a child. But some great acts of everyday courage are found in this pause between stimulus and response in our everyday decisions in life, in which we must decide to act with Integrity. It takes courage to stop transmitting negative tendencies and to choose to act on principles of human dignity and respect. It takes courage to be self-honest, to examine your motives, to live with Integrity and let go of excuses. It takes courage to make choices that may not be popular or understood by others but that keep your Integrity whole. It takes courage to live with Integrity rather than to live with your moods. The challenge is to develop the character necessary to

act with Integrity and courage in this **MOMENT OF CHOICE.**

Parents are the primary moral educators of children, but character education in the schools is also important. Research has proven character education to be a positive force in reducing disruptive behavior, alcohol and drug abuse, and teen pregnancy. Character education contributes to parental and community involvement, safe and orderly schools, reduced discipline problems, greater academic achievement, and higher student and staff morale.

### BOOKS OF CHARACTER At The Mission Viejo Library

#### Fiction

A Big Fat Enormous Lie  
By Marjorie Sharmat  
Preschool to Second Grade

The Indian Cinderella  
By Cyrus Macmillan  
Preschool to Second Grade

I Smell Like Ham  
By Betty Hicks  
Grades Fourth to Sixth

Number the Stars  
By Lois Lowry  
Grades Fourth to Sixth

#### Nonfiction

Learning About Honesty From the Life of Abraham Lincoln  
By Kiki Mosher

I Am Honest  
By Sarah Schuette

Honesty  
By Kathryn Kyle

Raising Children With Character: Parents, Trust, and the Development of Personal Integrity  
By Elizabeth Berger

## What is Integrity?

- Standing up for high morals.
- Doing “the right thing.”
- Keeping another person’s trust.
- Not compromising your beliefs or standards.
- Being honest, loyal, fair, and respectful.
- Doing what you say you will do.

## How do you practice Integrity?

- Always do what is right even if it is costly and difficult.
- Don’t compromise good morals by giving in to temptations.
- Be honest to yourself and to others.
- Practice and role model good character.
- Refuse to listen to negative talk or gossip about others.
- Tell the truth and be trustworthy.
- Keep all of your promises.
- Judge a person on an individual level, rather than a group level.
- Admit it when you make mistakes and learn from them.

## How would you show Integrity if:

- You were asked to tell someone something that is not true?
- You knew your friends would be angry with you if you made a decision that you knew was “the right thing to do?”
- A classmate at school has a copy of the science test with the answers on it, and offers to give it to you?

## **Ethical Scenarios Examples**

For Adults and Older Teens

1. You are talking on the phone with one of your best friends and she tells you an exciting secret. After you hang up, your other friend who was in the room asks you to tell her the secret. Not wanting to be unfair, should you tell the secret?

## **Quotes**

“Character is how you act when no one is watching.” *Michael Josephson*

“Real integrity stays in place whether the test is adversity or prosperity.” *Charles Swindoll*

“Rather fail with honor than succeed by fraud.” *Sophocles*

“In looking for people to hire, look for three qualities: integrity, intelligence and energy. If they don't have the first, the other two will kill you.” *Warren Buffet*

“To make your children capable of honesty is the beginning of education.” *John Ruskin*

“What lies behind us and what lies before us are tiny matters compared to what lies within us.” *Ralph Waldo Emerson*

“If you tell the truth, you don't have to remember anything.” *Mark Twain*

“The time is always right to do what is right.” *Martin Luther King Jr.*

2. Your boss comes into your office and asks you to write up an article. You are swamped with work so you ask your assistant to write it. Your boss loved the article and gave you credit for it. Should you tell your boss that you didn’t write the article?
3. You are at the grocery store and the clerk gives you too much change. What would you do?
4. You know that in order to get into a top college, you must have a very high GPA. You also know that many students cheat to receive good grades. Your friend has offered to tell you the questions that will be on tomorrow’s English final. What would you do?

thing” to their children. They are watching you!

- “Live so that when your children think of fairness and integrity, they think of you.” *H. Jackson Brown*
- Teach your children right from wrong. This is as important as teaching spelling or math!

## **Personal commitments to Integrity:**

- I will not be self-centered.
- I will not profit at the expense of others.
- I will not cheat in order to receive a higher grade.
- I will be honest, sincere, caring and respectful to others.
- I will not hurt others in order for me to succeed.
- I will look at situations clearly before making judgments.
- I will not be deceitful.

Coming Events in Mission Viejo:

- April 7 Bunny Days
- April 28 Artes de la Vida (formerly Tierra Nativa)
- May 19-20 Fun With Chalk
- June 23-24 Relay for Life

## **Applying Integrity**

Integrity in the home includes:

- Follow the rules of the house.
- Be honest with your parents and brothers and sisters.
- Play fairly with your siblings.
- Speak kindly about others.
- Parents should role model honesty and “doing the right