

Integrity at work – How Do You Stack Up?

With the business sections of today's papers and magazines reading more and more like a police charge-sheet, "integrity" is fast becoming a hot topic of conversation in boardrooms, around water coolers, and in business best-sellers.

Integrity means walking the talk when it comes to living one's true values - being authentic. Try taking this self-assessment and exploring how you walk your integrity talk when you show up at work.

Integrity is a lot like being pregnant. Either you're pregnant, or you aren't. There's no middle ground. It's the same with integrity. Either you're behaving with integrity, or you're not.

While integrity is not a robe that one can pull on and take off when it's convenient, many day-to-day workplace behaviors suggest that convenience plays a large role in whether people display integrity or not. Who and how people are at work seems to change like the weather, the weather of convenience.

When asked, many folks will say that they act with integrity. But when we look at their day-to-day, minute-by-minute workplace behaviors, this is clearly not the case.

Why? One reason is that folks' basic need for control, recognition and security gets in the way of integrity. So they move away from their authentic self, from their deeper inner values, displaying behaviors that lack integrity.

So do you think, feel and believe that you live your core values at work? Do you behave with integrity at work, when you are alone, when you are in relationship with colleagues?

1. On an integrity scale of 1 (low) to 10 (high), how would you rate yourself when it comes to the following workplace behaviors:

- (a) gossiping
- (b) bullying
- (c) viewing or downloading porn
- (d) stealing physical materials
- (e) stealing intellectual property
- (f) stealing time

- (g) telling the truth
 - (h) taking responsibility for your piece of your team's projects
 - (i) making excuses
 - (j) being direct, open and honest in your communications
 - (k) respecting others
 - (l) living your values
 - (m) keeping an honest set of books and following appropriate accounting principles.
2. Who or what stops you from acting with integrity?
 3. When you're not acting with integrity, what kind of self-talk do you engage in?
 4. Do your needs for control, recognition and security stop you from acting with integrity?
 5. Do you lie to yourself about acting with integrity? If so, why?
 6. Does it matter to you that you are not acting with integrity?
 7. Do you use the same definition to define integrity for yourself as for others? If not, why not?
 8. Do you respond if others act without integrity and their actions directly affect you?
 9. Do you respond if others act without integrity and their actions affect your team, your unit, your department or your organization?
 10. Do you ever excuse, justify or rationalize acting without integrity? If so, when and why?

At the end of the day, integrity isn't just about telling the truth about ourselves, to ourselves and to others – it is also about living this truth.

Many of us are quick to judge and criticize others who act without integrity. But truth be told, many of us are just as prone to separate from our core values when it's convenient in some way. The operative question is: "Why?" What does acting out of integrity get me?

So, how did you do with your self-assessment? Who are you and how are you when it comes to showing up at work with integrity?

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