

INTEGRITY

Integrity can be defined as the state of being whole. Integrity is the first step towards reaching a state where your body, heart, mind, and soul are all in harmony with each other.

When a person breaks one of their own personal rules they feel they should live by, whether they are consciously aware of the rule or not, they are weakened and no longer in a state of integrity. The person feels less deserving of the good things in life, less worthy, and less confident in even the littlest matters. It shakes their self esteem and makes them feel uncomfortable about who they really are. They become confused about what they know and what they believe. When a person is weakened like this, they can be easily influenced by the ideas and opinions of others, and are therefore less sovereign.

Statistics show that for almost all of us, the lowest point of our self esteem in our entire lifetime is when we are in our teens. During our teenage years most of us wish to have friends, be part of the group, be popular, and be accepted. In our desire for acceptance we seem to lose ourselves. It is not uncommon for people, especially teenagers, to be very cruel to a group member who is different or unusual. This scenario strengthens the idea that individual personality traits and different beliefs must be concealed. We try to become like the rest of the people in our crowd. When someone does conceal their individuality and unique beliefs, they start creating a synthetic identity, a false identity which fits the ideas of the group. After a period of time, the person forgets they are creating this fake personality, and the synthetic identity runs on automatic. So whatever the group is into, such as rap music, stealing, drinking, drugs, or whatever, the person will be into also. Thus the hopes and dreams they had as a child become hidden behind their synthetic personality. However, since the persons dreams are still there, every time that person does something which violates those dreams and ideals, they suffer a further shattering of their inner self.

This synthetic identity usually attracts a like synthetic identity and neither person really sees the other person. This is particularly fatal in marriages. The couple never actually meet, only their facades connect. Neither person will feel seen, heard or understood. The relationship is not satisfying because the love and acceptance does not reach the inner Being.

It is useful to examine our ideas and beliefs, and in so doing we can sort out our own beliefs from external influences and negative past experiences, allowing us to find our true self. Possibly the best way to do this is to choose a subject you have continually had trouble dealing with. Examples may include going deeper and deeper into debt, not getting enough exercise, or keeping a boyfriend. Then write down all of the people who have had some influence on your thinking in the chosen subject. After that, select the person on this list that you feel the most emotional about.

For example, if the subject you continually have trouble dealing with is keeping a boyfriend (they keep leaving for whatever reason) and Susan is the person you feel most emotional about, ask yourself: Regarding boyfriends, what influence from Susan was acceptable? Write down your answer. Next ask yourself: Regarding boyfriends, what influence from Susan was unacceptable? Write down your answer. Keep going back and forth between these two

questions until you have sorted out what you really believe from what others have influenced you to believe.

This exercise helps sort out who we really are from what we have allowed ourselves to become. Since we create ourselves from our beliefs, this exercise can be extremely effective, no matter where we are in life. What is really nice is that this procedure can be used as often as you wish and with as many subjects as you like.