



# INTEGRITY

**Integrity means, "I mean what I say and  
I say what I mean!"**

**Integrity means being true to yourself,  
your values and your word.**

## INTEGRITY

**Young students:** I mean what I say and I say what I mean!

**Older students/teens/adults:** Being true to yourself, your values, and your word.

- WEEK 1 Integrity Defined: Right vs wrong, truth vs lies, and our strongest values.
- WEEK 2 Keeping Our Word: Making promises, breaking promises, and consequences.
- WEEK 3 Being our authentic selves: How to honor our choices even when not popular.
- WEEK 4 Leading with integrity: Walking in other's shoes & standing on our own feet.

**POWERFUL  
WORDS**  
CHARACTER DEVELOPMENT

*Dear Family,*

This month we will focus on the character concept, "integrity." Many people mistakenly equate integrity with simply being honest. But integrity is so much more than that. Integrity is about being true to oneself, one's values and principles, one's word, and one's standards and beliefs. It's raw honesty in the deepest regard to oneself and others.

All our character traits must stand on a foundation of integrity. In fact, character and integrity are inextricably linked. Character reflects one's set of values. Integrity is the grit to uphold them. They must work together to have meaning. After all, what good is gratitude when we are not really grateful? What good is concern when the concern is falsified? We want our children to build genuine character- that takes integrity.

Creating a strong foundation of integrity has big advantages as your child grows up to become part of the work force. According to several studies, integrity, along with honesty and humility can predict superior job performance. It's so important that it's been argued this year that such traits predict better job performance even more so than agreeableness and conscientiousness (Journal of Personality and Individual Differences, March 2011).

Beyond teaching our children not to lie, we also need to help children be authentic even when they want to appeal to others who think differently from them. This is when true conviction and integrity must kick in. How can they keep their goals and values in the forefront when peer pressure can be so powerful? How can they express their views without

alienating others?

We'll be talking about these kinds of dilemmas this month along with other integrity-based topics as we continue our mutual quest to inspire leaders with character. Please continue to talk with your children about how integrity can be strengthened or challenged and how you stay true to yourself and others in your own life.

We thank you for your support. You are pivotal in helping to make our school one of the best personal development centers in the world.

Best Regards,  
—Your Motivated and  
Dedicated Instructors

### UPCOMING POWERFUL WORDS

October - Perseverance  
November - Teamwork  
December - Self Reliance

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*Dear Dr. Robyn,*

I want to make sure my daughter doesn't lose herself as she gets older. As a teacher and parent, I see many kids succumb to peer pressure and go along with what their friends say and do. How can I ensure that my child stays true to herself when her friends are doing something that she doesn't want to do?

—Dane T. St. Louis, MO

*Dear Dane,*

You sound like a parent who clearly wants to raise a leader with integrity; someone who is true to herself, her values, and her word. It can be challenging to remain authentic in a world that often seems to celebrate the "unreal" as witnessed in commonplace photoshopping, gratuitous plastic surgery, and "Reality" TV. But that certainly doesn't mean it's not possible.

To build integrity in your children, teach them how to:

**Be assertive:** Teach them to speak up for what they believe and need. Being assertive allows them to honor their choices and their values.

**Listen to their gut:** If they believe that something feels right, teach them to move forward. If they believe that something feels wrong, teach them to pause, take a step back, and reevaluate their next steps.

**Put themselves in other people's shoes:** Integrity takes empathy for others. It signals the voice inside one's head that it's vital to keep one's word and follow through with one's commitments. In other words, help them to see that other people are counting on them!

**Live life according to their inner truth and values:** As author, Clarissa Pinkola Estes, once wrote: "If you live your life trying to please others, half the people will like you and half won't. And if you live your life according to your own truth, half the people will like you and half won't." The underlying question to ask is—which half do you want as friends—those who like you for who you actually are or the person you are pretending to be?

**Identify and express emotion:** Our emotions are part of who we are. Some choose to squelch them, some lie about them, and

## POWERFUL WORDS

CHARACTER DEVELOPMENT

Paraphrased from an email, with permission

still others feel confused by them. When people are able to identify and express their emotions, they have what is called "emotional intelligence." By understanding and honoring their emotions, they stay true to themselves.

Of course, the best thing you can do to help your children stay true to themselves and their word, is to be a role model of integrity yourself.

**Here's to your success!**


