

INTEGRITY



**"Above all- to thine own self be true,
And it must follow, as the night the day,
Thou canst not then be false to any man."**

So advises Polonius, father to Laertes and Ophelia in Shakespeare's 'Hamlet'.

in-teg-ri-ty noun

1. the quality of being honest and having strong moral principles; moral uprightness.
2. the state of being whole and undivided.

To be true to one's self, to know what that Self is and then what thoughts and actions align with one's own true self is a life time's work. How have we each learned the lesson of 'integrity'? Has it been taught to us by our parents, by our grandparents, by our friends or our culture? Where

do we seek integrity? Ophelia wants to believe Hamlet's sweet love talk. Horatio wants to protect her honour. Polonius wants to protect what is precious in each of his children from the agendas' of other's. His advice is both wise and self-serving, for we cannot ever know what lies in the heart of others. If we choose only to please others, or believe only in the good intentions of others, and not listen to our own sense of what is true for ourselves, we risk losing the one thing that we have the right and responsibility to possess, our integrity.

This month you have the opportunity to reflect on the meaning of integrity. I invite you to deepen your understanding of integrity by living into the questions below and by taking up one of the spiritual practices suggested. You are welcome to join one of the Soul Matters groups to explore this theme in community. *Warmly Rev Debra*

Questions to Live Into

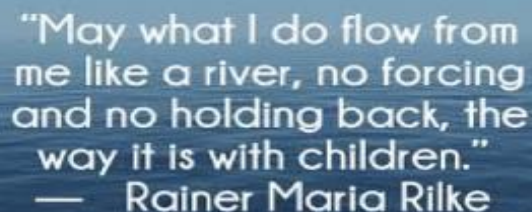
May Sarton writes, "Now I become myself. It's taken time, many years and places; I have been dissolved and shaken, worn other people's faces..." **How are you becoming yourself today? What is pleasurable? What is uncomfortable?**

Parker Palmer writes, "I now know myself to be a person of weakness and strength, liability and giftedness, darkness and light. I now know that to be whole means to reject none of it but to embrace all of it." **What one thing could you embrace right now to feel more whole?**

How is your workplace (or home life) a place of integrity? If it is not, how have you learned to stay true to yourself in the midst of those pressures to do otherwise?

<https://www.mindtools.com/pages/article/integrity.htm>

"There are times in this harum-scarum world when figuring out the right thing to do is quite simple, but doing the right thing is simply impossible." (Lemony Snicket (from *Horseshoe: Bitter Truths You Can't Avoid*) **Are you facing such a situation right now? As you struggle, how do you support yourself?**



"May what I do flow from
me like a river, no forcing
and no holding back, the
way it is with children."
— Rainer Maria Rilke

Spiritual Practices

✚ Spend this month figuring out the role **lies** play in your life. Monitor when you use them. See what patterns emerge. Do you lie to yourself or to others? How does lying help you and how does it complicate your life? Do they serve your sense of integrity or betray it?

✚ With conscious awareness, live into the experience of being the age you are. What are the losses and the gains of being the age you are? Take note of the physical, emotional, mental, spiritual, individual and community experiences of being the age you are. Each day this month reflect on a moment of 'wholeness' or 'integrity'. Keep a journal of these moments.

Quotes

Before we can even embrace the notion of integrity, we need to develop the ability to intellectually wrestle with the urge to rationalize away our underlying faults and the related consequences. — Eric Kail

I'm an Obliger, for sure! I do really well when other people are expecting me to do something, when I have a commitment with someone else ... but I tend to let myself off the hook if it's 'only' a commitment to myself. — Leo Babauta



“You are only afraid if you are not in harmony with yourself.” — Hermann Hesse

Cowardice asks the question, is it safe?
Expediency ask the question, is it politic?
Vanity asks the question, is it popular?
But, conscience ask the question, is it right?
And there comes a time when we must take a position that is neither safe, nor politic, nor popular, but one must take it because it is right.
— Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.

CHILDREN'S STORIES

My Secret Bully—Trudy Ludwig
The Story of Ruby Bridges—Robert Coles
The Tiger Rising—Kate DiCamillo
You are Stardust – Elin Kelsey
Clara and Davie, The true story of young Clara Barton, founder of the American Red Cross, by Patricia Polacco
The Day the Crayons Quit by Drew Daywalt
Ruthie and the (Not So) Teeny Tiny Lie by Laura Rankin
Wonder by R.J. Palacio

CHILDREN'S MOVIES

Willy Wonka and the Chocolate Factory / *Brave* / *Frozen*
Mary Poppins / *The Miracle Worker*



*Return to the most human, nothing less
Will nourish the torn spirit, the bewildered heart,
The angry mind: and from the ultimate duress,
Pierced with the breath of anguish, speak for love.*
— May Sarton (“Santos: New Mexico”)

In the quietness of this place, surrounded by the all-pervading Presence of God, my heart whispers: Keep fresh before me the moments of my High Resolve, that in fair weather or in foul, in good times or in tempests, in the days when the darkness and the foe are nameless or familiar, I may not forget that to which my life is committed. -Howard Thurman, UU Minister (1899-1981)



Adult Movies

Milk, dir. Gus Van Sant
The Mission, dir. Roland Joffé
Dead Poets Society, dir. Peter Weir
Thank You for Smoking, dir. Jason Reitman
The Singing Revolution, dir. James Tusty, Maureen

Videos & Online

Ash Beckham: When to Take a Stand When to Let It Go,
https://www.ted.com/talks/ash_beacham_when_to_take_a_stand_and_when_to_let_it_go
Parker J. Palmer: What Is a Divided Life?
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?t=14&v=gCvIZpMo8aY>
The Calm Within
<http://www.karmatube.org/videos.php?id=2568> One man's journey to reclaim his life and hold on to his integrity against all odds.
A Christopher Hitchens Memorial
<http://www.upworthy.com/people-were-outraged-by-what-he-said-his-entirelife-but-right-before-he-died-he-was-still-at-it?c=recon2>
Margaret Atwood Interview
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fqahhKuoet4>

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