

Application Guide

INTEGRITY IN THE LIFE OF A LEADER



BOTTOM LINE:

Integrity: Doing what you ought to even if it costs you.

KEY TAKEAWAYS

- I. Integrity: doing what you ought to, even when it costs you.
 - A. Integrity is a personal decision, but as a leader people depend on you for their jobs and their livelihoods. Therefore, your *irresponsibility* quickly becomes someone else's *responsibility*.
 - B. One failure of personal integrity has the power to cancel or cast a shadow over a lifetime of good decisions.
- II. Compromised integrity leads to a dangerous sequence of more compromised integrity.
 - A. The first integrity breach makes the second breach easier.
 - B. The second breach of integrity creates a pattern.
 - C. A pattern creates a direction.
 - D. Direction, not intention, determines our destination and our legacy.
- III. Those in leadership for the long haul will have their integrity tested in four primary areas.
 - A. **Money**: Leaders will have to say no to opportunities for income that while legal, may not be moral.
 - B. **Liberty** (i.e. freedoms): Leaders will have to say no to certain liberties that everyone around them might be taking.
 - C. **Recognition**: Leaders will have to say no to entitlements they might deserve.
 - D. **Pleasure**: Leaders will have to say no to pleasures they crave.
- IV. What will you do when you know doing what you ought to will cost you?
 - A. The answer to this question depends on what is most important to you.
 - B. How you answer this question reveals if your integrity is disposable, if it's a means to or end, or if it is actually *the* end.
 1. Integrity is *the* end when the supreme value you hold is knowing you did the right thing.
- V. Leaders must value their integrity more than the thing they *might* gain from sacrificing their integrity.
 - A. When we sacrifice our integrity, it is often for an imagined outcome. In reality, the only certainty is that integrity has been compromised. Additionally, unanticipated outcomes arise:
 1. Being in conflict with yourself
 2. Carrying around secrets
 3. Feeling insecure because you're out of balance with yourself
 - B. Sacrificing integrity leads to getting stuck. And the only way to get unstuck is to go public with something you never should have done in the first place.

QUESTIONS FOR REFLECTION OR TEAM DISCUSSION

1. Describe a time when you were faced with a decision where doing the right thing would cost you something. How did you handle the situation?

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2. Where do you feel the most external pressure to compromise?
3. In which of the four primary areas listed (money, liberty, recognition, pleasure) do you find it hardest to say no? What can you do to hold yourself accountable in this area?
4. Practically, what would it look like to throw up your hands and say, “Regardless of this outcome, I will still choose to do what I know I ought to”?

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