

The Disconnect of Integrity



"God did not give us an "integrity" switch that just turns on one day. It requires daily practice of doing the right things and making the right choices."

There is a total disconnect today between the belief in integrity and the actions that reflect integrity. While 98% of teens think it is important to be a person of good character, 62% admit to cheating on a test and 82% admit to lying to their parents about something significant (parentmap.com). Reality shows and the "real lives" of the famous glamorize the importance of getting whatever you want, whether a million dollars or a date, no matter the cost. How in the world can parents fight for their teen's integrity? The answer to this question really begins with a question, "How did you learn integrity?" God did not give us an "integrity" switch that turns on one day. It requires daily practice of doing the right things and making the right choices. Daily practice begins by defining integrity. A great definition of integrity is, "Who you are when no one else is looking." This definition is a constant lesson for your teen. It means many actions are wrong even if they don't get caught. Daily practice continues by encouraging your teen to spend time with God. The Bible chronicles many men and women and the joys and frustrations that came about from making the right or wrong choices. Stories about David, Job, and Esther are just a few of the stories your teen can read, learn from, and discuss in a family setting. Daily practice is sustained with accountability. Do you keep your teen accountable on where they go, who they hang out with, or what they watch? Is there someone in your teen's life who asks them the hard questions about their struggles and relationship with God? Accountability is a MUST in continuing the fight for your teen. Don't forget God uses your life as an example to your teen. You might be the only example of integrity they see all day.

Suite101.com has put together some great ideas on teaching your teen about integrity...

1. Set an example. If a store clerk gives you incorrect change, give it back. If you dent another car in a parking lot, leave a note to let the owner know. If you make a commitment, keep it, no matter how inconvenient it turns out to be. And let your teen observe you doing these things.

2. Walk them through the steps. Insist they follow through with a date, a volunteer commitment, or an appointment, even when they find better things to do or just change their minds.

3. Tell stories. Tell your teens stories of people living with integrity. Don't be afraid to tell them mistakes you made and how integrity led you to make them right or not and what happened as a result. Talk about people in the Bible and the decisions that affected their lives.

4. Discuss current events. Find examples of community leaders acting with integrity and compare them with those who maybe aren't. Talk about how easy or hard it was for this person to keep his or her word.



Below are some alarming statistics on teens and integrity:

It's important for me to be a person with good character.

56% - Strongly Agree
42% - Agree
1.3% - Disagree
0.7% - Strongly Disagree

(josephsoninstitute.com)

Most adults in my life consistently set a good example of ethics and character.

26% - Strongly Agree
57% - Agree
14% - Disagree
3% - Strongly disagree

(josephsoninstitute.com)

The Parent POV

(point of view)

Do you think you know what choice your teen would make when no one else is looking? Here are some questions to help you gain some valuable insight into the decision-making process of your teen.

1. Do you think it's OK to tell a little white lie? Why or why not?

2. How long does it take to build a "good reputation"? How long does it take to lose it? What kind of reputation do you think you have? Why do you think that? What kind of reputation do you think our family has? Why do you think that?

3. Is there anyone in your life who keeps you accountable for the decisions and choices you make? If so, who is it? If not, is there someone you would consider as an accountability partner?

4. How well do the following people model integrity in front of you...

- * your friends?
- * your parents?
- * your church leaders?
- * your favorite movie or music personality?



Focus on Prayer

Pray that:

1. God will help your teen make the right choice when faced with temptation.
2. God will remind your teen that while something can be hidden from a parent, nothing can be hidden from God.
3. Your teen will desire a high level of accountability in every area of his/her life.
4. Your teen will see the true value of integrity and will stop at nothing to protect his/her character.

Verse of the month

Then the LORD said to Satan, "Have you considered my servant Job? There is no one on earth like him; he is blameless and upright, a man who fears God and shuns evil. And he still maintains his integrity, though you incited me against him to ruin him without any reason." Job 1:8(NIV)

Would it not be amazing to have God say these things about you? Job was stripped of his family, his possessions, and his health, and yet he still held on to his integrity. He could have given up, given in, or given out. He could have listened to his friends. His own wife said, "Are you still holding on to your integrity? Curse God and die!" (Job 1:9) What made Job hold on to his integrity through all of this heartache? He understood what it meant to fear God, to be in awe of His glory. He understood that God was in control. At what cost would you give up your integrity...for a better job, a better grade, or a better "life"? Praise God for Job's example he set for all of us. And may we be "blameless, upright, fear God, and shun evil."



Did you know...

- * Eight in ten (81 percent) students who feel significant pressure to succeed, no matter the cost, think it's going to remain the same or get worse when they join the workforce. (ja.org)
- * By the time teens reach their senior year in high school, over 65% will have had sexual intercourse. Almost 55% will have used some illicit drug. Over 70% of high school students and 54% of middle school students admit to cheating during the prior 12 months. (cpsyu.org)
- * Many (44 percent) say high school students behave unethically, placing them, in their eyes, below doctors, teachers, professional athletes and business leaders. (ja.org)

Music alternative

Hawk Nelson is a pop punk quartet from Peterborough, Ontario. The band played independently for a few years before signing with Tooth and Nail Records. Their popularity on the Christian music scene has increased as they received CCM Magazine's Readers Choice Award for "Favorite New Artist" in 2006. They also won the GMA Canada "Covenant Award" for modern rock/alternative album of the Year" in 2006. The band has made a crossover to mainstream while still maintaining their stance on values. They have made TV and big screen appearances, and have toured the major Christian music festivals. (wikipedia.org)

trends

In a word of mouth survey done by the Keller Fay Group, the five brands with the largest number of "net positive" mentions by teens were the following:

1. iPod
2. American Eagle
3. Dr. Pepper
4. Chevrolet
5. Nintendo

(websitegear.com)

musicspotlight



Albums:

- "Underclass Hero" - 7/2007
- "Go Chuck Yourself" - 3/2006
- "Chuck" - 10/2004

Background: Sum 41, comprised of three members, is a "Juno Award Winning Canadian rock band." Their name comes from the fact that the group was formed out of two rival high school bands on the 41st day of summer in 1996. By 1999, all of the members were in place and in 2000 the group signed with Island Records. Their music is a "complex combination of different musical styles" with a mix of pop punk, punk rock, alternative rock, and heavy metal. One of the original members quit the band over musical differences after being with the band for ten years. The group became a trio and their newest album debuted at #7 in the United States, making it the band's highest chart position to date. Other accomplishments include releasing five studio albums, two live CD's, two live DVD's, over ten singles, sold millions of copies worldwide and has performed more than six hundred times. (wikipedia.org)

What Parents Should Know: Sum 41's most recent album is full of foul language, anger, anti-faith, anti-God, and anti-US government lyrics.

What Sum 41 has to say: About their new album, frontman Whibley states, "I told everyone around me that I was only going to listen to my gut feelings, because they'll never steer you wrong." Q: Who do you listen to with regards to making decisions? Why?



filmwatch

Watch out for some of these new releases.

TITLE	RATING	RED FLAGS	GENRE	STARRING
Hatchet	R	For strong bloody horror violence, sexual content, nudity and language	Horror/comedy	Joel Moore, Deon Richmond, Tamara Feldman
Sydney White	PG-13	For some language, sexual humor, and partying	Comedy	Amanda Bynes, Sara Paxton, Matt Long, John Schneider, Samm Levine
The Brothers Soloman	R	For language and sexual content	Comedy	Will Arnett, Will Forte