

8 - Honesty

Instructions: To increase your understanding of the character quality of honesty and how to apply it in your life, read the following dilemmas and study “What Is Honesty?” Then read and reflect on the quotations provided. At the end of this section on honesty, you will find reflection questions and goal-setting prompts to help you incorporate this quality into your life and increase your happiness at home and at work.

Dilemmas

Home: Darryl stops by the electronics store on the way home one day and buys a new device he’s been wanting, even though he promised to save his money to buy something his son needs. He convinces a friend to keep the device at his house. Lisa buys some expensive chocolate candy not in the budget and hides it in her desk at work so Darryl won’t know. Even more seriously, Lisa has been avoiding telling Darryl for months that because her ex-husband is threatening her, she has been giving him money.

Work: Sam works for an office supply company. He and his wife also run a home-based business. Before he leaves the office each day, he often puts paper clips, envelopes, pens, paper, tape, staples, and other office items into his briefcase to supply their business at home. He tells himself that no one in the company will miss these items and that because they are a start-up business, they need the help.

Consider how the content below applies to the above scenarios and to situations in your own life.

What Is Honesty?

Honesty is acting and speaking consistently with high and incorruptible moral, ethical, and legal standards.

Someone practices Honesty effectively when he/she:

- Acts according to laws, high standards, and strong values when handling money, property, and matters affecting others
- Learns about himself/herself and speaks clearly and directly

with others about who he/she is and what is important, sharing feelings, thoughts, and other personal information as appropriate

- Provides a safe, confidential environment for others to share who they are, including their feelings, thoughts, and other important personal information as appropriate
- Bases words, actions, and choices upon beliefs and principles; says what he/she means, means what he/she says, and does what he/she promises
- Assesses motives, words, and actions regularly and listens to and responds effectively to appropriate feedback from others
- Apologizes, expresses genuine remorse, and makes amends after doing or saying something hurtful, inappropriate, immoral, unethical, or illegal

Someone needs to strengthen Honesty when he/she:

- Withholds important information about himself/herself and his/her actions, life, or particular situations; keeps secrets inappropriately
- Presents aspects of himself/herself inaccurately; such as, temporarily changing his/her appearance to create a false impression deliberately or putting inaccurate information on a resume or personal profile; allowing others to believe something that is exaggerated or untrue
- Conceals his/her behavior from those who have a legitimate interest in it
- Uses the resources, possessions, or work time of a company or organization for unauthorized personal purposes
- Cheats, steals, takes credit for the work of others, defrauds people, or makes false promises; acts in a corrupt way with responsibilities, using questionable practices such as taking or giving bribes
- Gives into temptation or pressure to act improperly
- Hides his/her true intentions and reasons for actions or participation
- Compromises or hides his/her beliefs and principles
- Acts in ways that differ from his/her words and professed beliefs

Someone misuses the strength of Honesty when he/she:

- Speaks or acts forthrightly but without discretion, wisdom, or consideration of timing; shares confidential information inappropriately with others
- Backbites, gossips, or spreads slander about the character of another person
- Speaks in a blunt, harsh, or cruel way that upsets or hurts others
- Brags about his/her good deeds

Quotations on Honesty

Honesty is more than an emotional need that must be met to sustain love and more than a way to avoid unhappiness. Honesty is absolutely essential if you and your partner will ever come to understand each other. Without honesty, you will never make adjustments crucial to the creation of compatibility in your marriage. Without honesty, your best efforts to resolve conflicts will be wasted because you will not know each other well enough to find mutually acceptable solutions.

~ **Willard F. Harley, Jr.**, *I Promise You: Preparing for a Marriage That Will Last a Lifetime*, p. 100

Dishonesty is a failure to reveal to your partner correct information about your thoughts, feelings, habits, likes and dislikes, personal history, daily activities, and plans for the future. Dishonesty is also leaving your partner with what you know is a false impression.

~ **Willard F. Harley, Jr.**, *Ibid*, p. 68

He who...speaks uprightly, spurns profit from fraudulent dealings, waves away a bribe instead of grasping it, ...shall dwell in lofty security....

~ **Tanakh**, *Nevi'im*, 33:15-16

Absolute honesty is...about doing the right thing for the right reasons. It is recognizing when decisions and actions either are unwise or are not within the bounds of ethical and moral standards—and it's about having the courage to voice your opinions about those decisions so they can be corrected.

~ **Larry Johnson and Bob Phillips**, *Absolute Honesty*, p. 6

Applications of Honesty

Reflection on Dilemmas:

What do you think about the dilemmas presented at the beginning of this section? How would you choose to speak and act? How would you apply honesty in these circumstances?

Home:

Work:

What other quality(ies) could be helpful in these situations, and what might be the outcome if it (they) were applied?

Further Reflection:

1. When have I practiced this quality successfully? What was the outcome?

2. When might practicing this quality have led to a better outcome?

3. What specifically might I do differently another time?

4. In what situations at home might practicing this quality increase our happiness and strengthen our relationship(s)?

5. In what situations at work might practicing this quality increase workplace happiness and productivity?

Goal-Setting Notes:

_____ I think this quality is already one of my strengths.

_____ Others think this quality is one of my strengths (Ask trusted others for feedback, perhaps asking them to rate your practice of the quality on a scale of 1-10, with 10 being the most effective)

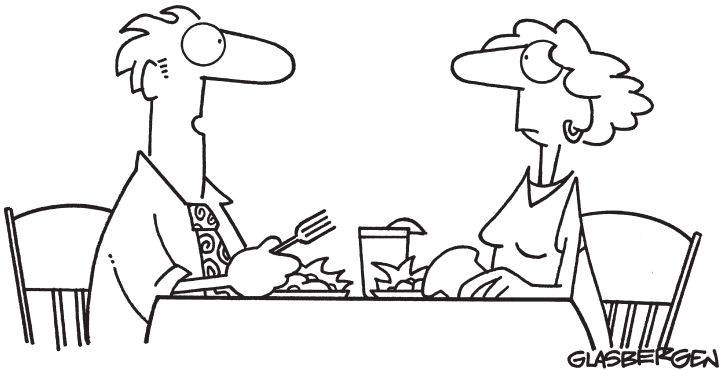
_____ I see benefit in strengthening this quality, but developing it is not high on my priority list at this time.

_____ I will add this to my Character Development Plan worksheet (see Chapter 12, page 58)

Other Development Thoughts:

HA-HA(PPY)! Moment

Copyright 2004 by Randy Glasbergen.
www.glasbergen.com



“I gave a presentation today but I only pretended to know what I was talking about. Fortunately, my audience was only pretending to listen.”