

Maintaining Integrity in Chaotic Times

By
June Fabre MBA RNC

Are you faced with the dilemma of maintaining your integrity while constantly adapting to change? It's hard to know what to change and what to preserve.

Sometimes it takes a crisis to differentiate between those who choose honesty as a core value from others who think of it merely as a public relations convenience. Integrity is an antidote to chaos because it increases self-respect. High self-respect creates order in your life because it is the one constant that you can depend on when everything around you is in turmoil.

Integrity has practical advantages because it saves you time and energy. According to M. Scott Peck in *The Road Less Traveled*, People "don't have to construct new lies to cover old ones. They need waste no effort covering tracks or maintaining disguises. And ultimately they find that the energy required for the self discipline of honesty is far less than the energy required for secretiveness." Thomas J. Stanley in his book, *The Millionaire Mind*, interviewed 733 self made millionaires and asked them to rate their most important secrets to success. Honesty was rated number one.

Integrity empowers you. In *The Seat of the Soul*, Gary Zukav states, "When we align our thoughts, emotions and actions with the highest part of ourselves, we are filled with enthusiasm, purpose and meaning....This is the experience of authentic power." You can then use the almost unlimited energy of your higher self to achieve difficult goals. Think of a difficult job that you did well. Feel your pride. Don't you feel a surge of motivation and energy to use in new situations?

Integrity is a sign of personal strength. Weak people are the ones

most likely to resort to unscrupulous actions. Weak people realize that their inadequate abilities don't measure up, and that they can't compete by being smarter than the competition. So they try to achieve their goals with dishonesty instead. Great harm is done to any industry where they operate.

Adopting honesty and integrity requires commitment. Some like the idea of integrity but discard it during tough times. Others can maintain their integrity through even the most turbulent times. Why? Because they have adopted certain habits. These habits enable you to not only survive but actually thrive during chaotic times.

Pick your battles

Focus on what is important. We live in a diverse society, which means that others behave according to many different styles. Without adequate understanding, these styles can seem threatening.

Learn to differentiate between basic value differences and just differences in style.

With style differences, go with the flow but stand firm with values conflicts. You will get burned out if you let every minor difference upset you. Prioritize and decide what issues are most important to you.

Assess the motivation of others. If someone behaves in a questionable way, ask yourself if inadequate education was the cause or was there malicious intent. Suppose someone neglected to report information to a physician. It makes a difference whether it was an oversight due to poor organizational skills or if the information was deliberately withheld. Each circumstance requires a different response.

Develop patience and persistence

Be patient and persistent with yourself as well as with others. It takes time for people to change so you need a long-term approach.

Two ways to support change are giving specific directions and being generous with praise.

Be specific and clarify exactly what you would like changed. If you want to change something about yourself, define your goal and create an action plan. If you want other people to change, ask them to summarize the request in their own words to be sure that they understand. Expect some mistakes at first and be willing to be a coach.

Remember to praise yourself as well as others because we all enjoy approval. People usually respond to praise by renewing their efforts even with difficult tasks.

Learn multiple styles of response

Using different approaches for different people is a smart interpersonal practice. When you have the capacity to use multiple styles of response, you can pick the most appropriate style for the occasion just as you pick different ways to dress for different events. Using multiple styles doesn't change your basic identity any more than changing clothes does, and people appreciate the individual attention.

Use your intuition

You have developed extensive intuition by accumulating both knowledge and experience. It's your inner wisdom. Use it. In his book *The Confident Decision-Maker*, Roger Dawson says, "Use logic as a tool, but to be a great decision maker, you must blend in the magic of intuition." One of his suggestions is to write down five major decisions. First decide if they were good decisions or bad. Then analyze whether you used mainly intuition or logic. When I did the exercise, I discovered that my best decisions were mainly intuitive. When you have enough time, it is perfectly acceptable to have an intuitive feeling and put the decision on the back burner to have time to reflect. As time goes on you can decide whether you made an accurate decision.

Cultivate a network of good people

Few people thrive in isolation because most of us need supportive people around us. Spend as much time as possible around other people who have integrity. You not only motivate and support each other, but also will have a dependable group of people to call upon. It's nice to have a reliable network already in place when new opportunities become available.

When you have integrity, you become real. You solidify your self-respect, which is the basic ingredient of self-confidence. It grounds you. The consistent thread of integrity throughout all of your activities strengthens everything that you do.

June Fabre, RNC, MBA, is a healthcare consultant, workshop leader, and speaker specializing in innovative healthcare strategies for nurses, managers, and CEO's. Contact her at phone (888) 844-8004, e-mail info@junefabre.com, or write to 18 Nichols Rd, Amherst, NH 03031.