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Lesson:

# Integrity:

Online and Everywhere



## BACKGROUND

The idea of **integrity** can sometimes seem hard to understand, especially for children. What does this word mean? Integrity is the quality of being **honest** and having strong moral principles. When we teach our children to have integrity, we give them courage to do what they know is right. This is an important skill to have, both in real life and online!

Although “doing what is right” sounds straightforward, this concept can be complicated. Different individuals and families may have different ideas about what is ‘right’ and ‘wrong.’ When teaching children about integrity, it is important to simplify. First figure out what your child believes and what you believe. Then work with them to help them understand the ‘**code of ethics**,’ or ‘foundations of belief’ that are expected in your home and online.

## PREPARATION

- Read through the objective of the lesson, and understand why teaching your child about integrity is important.
- Make sure you can talk through the different points associated with each part of this workshop.
- Anticipate what your child is ready to learn, and what questions they are going to have.
- Familiarize yourself with the glossary terms and be prepared to answer questions.

## OBJECTIVE

Teach your child to understand right and wrong. Help them to create their own moral principles. Help them learn how to apply these principles in real life and online. Take the time to help them talk through their thoughts.

**To understand integrity, children must understand that their actions have meaning.**

Make sure you are relating thoughts to them in a way that they understand. Speak from their world experiences, not your own. We have the power to help our kids understand how their actions can shape the world.

## LESSON

Integrity is often accompanied by choices. For instance, a child might choose to play with a particular friend, steal a toy, send a mean text, help a neighbor, or make the bed because someone is asking them to. During childhood, each small choice is helping to lay the foundation for the kind of adults our children will become later in life. Integrity is a key factor in this process because it involves **deliberately** made choices in response to one's belief system.

## DISCUSSION:

Develop a **code of ethics** together as a family. What does your family believe? How do you want your family system to be run? How will your actions reflect integrity both in real life and online? Define your own thoughts and feelings and compromise with each other until you all have a system of beliefs that represents all members of the family.

## ADDITIONAL DISCUSSION FOR OLDER KIDS

Sometimes it can be tempting to say or do things online that we would not do in person. Does this show integrity? We always need to remember that there is a real person on the other side of the computer screen.

## OTHER POINTS TO MAKE

- Integrity is a pattern of thought and behavior, but what does it look like? We show integrity every day by being honest with the people around us, ourselves, our parents and our teachers. Can you think of some real-life examples?
- When we have integrity, we are deliberate with our actions. We choose to be kind, thoughtful and careful with our behaviors. How can we be kind every day?
- Integrity comes when we consciously choose who we want to be. By choosing our actions carefully--both in real life and online--we develop into the people we want to become. Do our everyday choices affect us and others?
- Having integrity online involves being honest about what is really happening in our lives. Do we strive to be **authentic** when we are online?

## QUESTIONS TO ASK YOUR CHILD

- What are some choices we made today?
- What do our choices tell others about us? About who we really are?
- What are some choices that are right? What are some choices that are wrong?
- How would you define honesty?
- How can we show integrity every day?

## ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS FOR OLDER KIDS

- Is it okay to bash someone online who has different ideas than you do?
- If your friends are going an inappropriate movie and invite you to come, what will you tell them?
- Should you follow different rules at home than at your friend's house?
- Are you the same person in real life as you are online?

## ACTIVITY

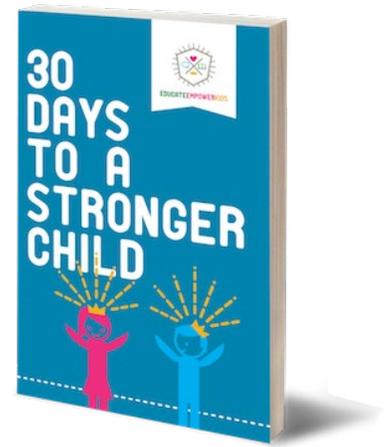
Once a month, set aside a time to meet together to talk about how your family feels about the code of ethics that you have put together. Have they changed? Anything you want to add? Keep updating and working together as your family changes.

## FOLLOW UP

Review your family's code of ethics together. Does everyone feel good about the current version of the code? Does it help you to know yourselves better as individuals and as a unit? Are you striving to be authentic in real life and online?

Ask your child if they have begun to notice times when they strongly disagree or agree with someone, or even if they are just uncomfortable. Have they taken the time to understand why those feelings are happening and what personal belief is behind them?

Help your child find confidence with lessons from [\*30 Days to a Stronger Child\*](#). This book helps children to understand their own feelings in a variety of social and emotional settings and enables them to know the choices they want to make!



## GLOSSARY

**Authentic:** Being true to one's own self: not false, genuine.

**Code of Ethics:** A set of rules and guidelines created to reflect the values and beliefs of a family.

**Degrade:** To treat with contempt or disrespect.

**Deliberate:** Acting in a careful or unhurried way.

**Honesty:** Truth, not meant to deceive.

**Integrity:** Being honest and having strong moral principles; moral uprightness.

**Uncomfortable:** Feeling or causing discomfort or unease; disquieting