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Throughout history, our forefathers have been noted for shaping our world around us today. They didn't just theorize; they had the integrity and bravery to back up the words they said and morals they stood for. Integrity is important, not merely for its moral value, but because it builds credibility. People around someone begin to trust and look up to him the more his strong morals are displayed in his life. Integrity's definition and importance remain the same from decade to decade. Today, integrity is a congruency of actions structured upon strong moral principles.

Integrity requires consistency. Whatever is said should be acted out and displayed in our lives. Don't just talk about our faith, live it. We should act out our words. During World War II, Winston Churchill once said, "we shall never surrender." Knowing that their opponents outnumbered them in every aspect, he still kept his word. His unbreakable spirit led them to victory. Churchill wrote many books. Though strongly opposed by society, he was determined and kept writing and making speeches. The principles and morals of a person's life should be carried out in his life like Churchill. Integrity is all about principle centered living.

The centered living is based on unshakeable character. Consisting of honesty, good judgment, sincerity, uprightness, and honorability. Abraham Lincoln, also known as Honest Abe, had a deep love for reading, thanks to his mother. He borrowed a book from a neighbor one day, and that night, after reading it, stuffed it between two logs in the house. That night it rained, ruining the book. Abe worked to pay back the neighbor for his book. He could have returned the book that way, or not have returned it at all because of the damage, but Abe's character shone through. He took the honest road and wanted to do what was right even if it required confessing and paying back. That type of moral principle shone through the rest of his life as a lawyer and later president. Taking only cases he knew were right to support, he stood up against slavery and made a difference.

Making a difference takes courage. "Have the courage to say no. Have the courage to face the truth. Do the right thing because it is right. These are the magic keys to living your life with integrity.<sup>1</sup>" We need to commit to making integrity a part of our moral principles. We need to free ourselves from ridicule and rejection and do what is right. We need to lose the fear of being different. It strengthens self-confidence and produces an exhilaration of pushing against the waves and making it to the other shore. When we gain self-respect, others will begin to respect and look up to us as well. As a nation, we need to take the principles of our forefathers and lead our lives with the integrity that our faith demands. Our leaders need to follow through, using the strong morals our nation, created under God, is based on. When what we think, say, promise, and do all coincide, we have integrity.

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<sup>1</sup> W. Clement Stone