

Jake Bordeaux
Mona Shores High School
10th Grade

Where Did The Heart Go?

Look around. Everywhere in the world, there are people cheating, lying and going behind their best friends' backs just to get ahead. A lot of people don't even know what integrity is or what it means to have it. To have integrity, there has to be that sense inside that is screaming at you, telling you to be honest and do your work the way it should be done. "It is impossible for a man to be cheated by anyone but himself," said Ralph Waldo Emerson, lecturer and orator who led the Transcendentalist movement of the 19th century. Hard work must be embraced if we ever want to feel the joy of honest success and that starts with honesty, hard, honest work, and determination.

"Integrity is telling myself the truth. And honesty is telling the truth to other people," said Spencer Johnson, who is known for the motivational book Who Moved My Cheese? Modern society is built on lies and backstabbers. New scandals and lies emerge everyday, and it is embarrassing to our nation. Success means absolutely nothing if it is obtained through lies, and many people are so wrapped up in their lies that they are not sure of what is the truth anymore. As Johnson said, to be honest to others, we have to first be honest with ourselves. If you are able to look yourself in the mirror at the end of the day and know that today you did not lie, cheat or steal, then you have succeeded at being an honest, respectable person.

Hard, honest work is the root of integrity. To dig deep and give everything left inside is what brings the best success. "The difference between a successful person and others is not a lack of strength, not a lack of knowledge, but rather in a lack of will," said Vince Lombardi, legendary football coach of the Green Bay Packers. Some of the most naturally gifted people on the planet choose to waste their gift and quit at the first sign of hardship. To really be successful, when we see the hardship, we must smile at it and keep working through it.

However, the hard work we do is worth nothing if we do not have the determination to continue to do it and do it correctly and honestly. "Success is not final, failure is not fatal: it is the courage to continue that counts," said Winston Churchill, British Prime Minister during World War II. Even if we fail, we have to have the determination to keep fighting through it and make sure that we never resort to cheating and lying. Without the determination to keep moving forward, hard work will fail, and honesty will be worthless.

If we are able to do all of these things and continue to do them, then there is hope that the world can change. It will be much more difficult to live a life of integrity, but in the end, it will be worth it. The satisfaction from living a good, honest, hard-working life will outweigh the struggles of work and failure, and that is integrity.