

Doing the Right Thing: The Little Things Are Just as Important

Integrity is not a common word one hears nowadays when describing a person. A person with integrity is commonly known for his or her honesty and moral beliefs, and when I think of society today that doesn't quickly come to mind. When people think of integrity, they think of the grand stories of Gandhi, Rosa Parks, and Martin Luther King Jr. Yes, all have showed great integrity, but to have and carry out integrity does not require some large scale event. I believe for myself and the world today, integrity can most frequently be found in the little encounters and decisions that happen in daily life.

For me, showing integrity is not a once in a lifetime thing; it is an everyday occurrence. I hold myself to a certain standard in how I treat myself and others. Small decisions made with integrity flow out in my interactions with those around me. My thoughts, the words I say, and actions I carry out all show integrity because I expect nothing less than that of myself. If I am not true to myself, why would I be true to people around me? The little daily occurrences that are embraced with integrity may seem irrelevant and too small to make a difference, but I firmly believe that these actions lead to big movements. It's like throwing a pebble in the water. It makes a wave and potentially can set the sea into motion. If I practice integrity in daily life, soon it will no longer become a choice but a natural habit. People seem to think that integrity has disappeared in today's world, and maybe it has, but I believe that people are distracted by looking for some monumental leader or event and in doing so are missing all the smaller things people around them are doing.

In our society, doing the little things can be tough at times. Society constantly tells us to do what makes ourselves better, no matter if it is morally right or wrong. For me, high school is a time to challenge myself not only in my academics but also in how I treat others and myself. Being honest with both myself and others is a characteristic I aspire to establish and apply not only throughout teenage years but in adulthood as well.

For example, a large temptation for me, as a high school student especially, is gossiping. Gossiping is so easy to do and is a terribly slippery slope. In my everyday life, there is always an opportunity to join the gossip. The right thing to do is to avoid it, even better, to stop it. When I am faced with this decision, two options come to mind. One, add my comment to the topic, or two, separate myself from the majority and end the conversation. Making these kinds of decisions are tough, but they greatly influence how people perceive me. Whether that perception is positive or negative, that is up to them, but doing the right thing will always be rewarding in that it speaks to who I am.

Executing the little things in life can sometimes show the greatest integrity. Showing integrity in these smaller things is intricate work that requires consistency and effort. In today's society, this is where we see integrity the most. I challenge everyone to first recognize the little opportunities in life to show integrity. Once they are recognized, carry out integrity in those actions and try to establish a routine of practice.