

“A Career of Integrity”

After examining the medical history, the physical exam, and the tissue sample of a patient, a physician must inform the patient that he or she has a lethal form of cancer. As a physician, financial obligation from the hospital forces this profession to tell this patient that chemotherapy is the only solution for his or her cancer. However, acquired knowledge and instinct cognitively confesses that chemotherapy is perilous to her long-term health and ability to function daily as a parent. Informing the patient that chemotherapy could permanently retard her ability to parent, work, and sustain everyday life would be the act of integrity and honesty. Unfortunately, in today’s financially competitive society this act of integrity may result in the physician losing his or her job.

Three exhausting years ago, my mother was diagnosed with stage 3 breast cancer. After surgically removing her cancer, it never returned following a year of enduring chemotherapy. However, my mother was no longer the active parent she once was; “chemo brain,” intense pain, and fatigue replaced her once energized passion for parenting. As a single mother, she was also too crippled to provide for her family for nearly a year and a half. Additionally, my mother admitted that these debilitating side-effects were never disclosed prior to her committing to chemotherapy.

My mother's battle with cancer and chemotherapy not only changed her life, but also directed my future toward the field of medical research. I find it an act of integrity to pursue a career in discovering something the world needs, rather than simply providing a repetitive good or service for financial gain. Personally, I interpret the many definitions of integrity to be manifested by the ability of one's actions and speech to represent moral beliefs. I implicitly

believe the current healthcare system and our solutions to cancer are lacking creativity. As a medical researcher I can volunteer my energy and curiosity toward changing this belief. Thus, my actions would represent my morals and internal conflicts.

Additionally, in order to act with integrity, one must first discover his or her values and purpose as a human being. Understanding one's personal values and prioritizing these values enables people to live with purpose. Once someone understands his or her purpose as a human being, living with integrity can become a habit.

In life you are usually provided with one chance to choose a profession. My choice of profession would supply the ability to act upon the need of a safer, healthier, and more efficient solution to cancer. This need was inherited by my mother's suffering from chemotherapy, and by fulfilling this inner conflict, I will then find a career of integrity.

In an essence, integrity is depicted as the ability for one's inner conscious and morals to be reflected in everyday actions and living. In a world encompassed by distractions such as money and materials, this essence of integrity diminishes. It is imperative that every citizen of society discovers his or her own values, and then practice self-control in order to uphold these values through actions. In conclusion, only by prioritizing values and solidifying morals, can integrity be maintained in today's competitive society.