

# Success: Character and Integrity

*Without character, the puzzle of achieving success falls apart.* It is most important of all pieces to life's puzzle. Without character, you can make money. But it will be worthless to you and to those around you. Look out in the world today: drug dealers and con artists have money—but they lack character. If you go to all the work of achieving success, you don't want to mar it with a lack of character that will make people pity you as you age and become less than you were intended to be.

Character equals integrity. Integrity is doing the right thing all the time, even when no one else is watching. You don't have anything to fear when your integrity is in tact, because you have nothing to hide. You experience no guilt and no fear. And without those two traveling companions, it's much easier to climb higher and farther, faster!

What does this mean in a practical sense? It means that you will put the right philosophy (the golden rule) in to practice in all that you do. You will not step on someone else to climb the corporate ladder; you will not stack bodies in order to reach the CEO position that you desire. You will treat people with respect, honesty, and trust. You will behave towards others how you want (and expect) them to behave towards you.

You will be the model of “doing the right thing” in your office, even if it isn't appreciated or understood. Chances are very good that if you're the only one doing the right thing, you won't last where you are, but you will find something better where your integrity is appreciated and applauded.

Character realizes that the most important things in life are not office- or work-based. They are family and a sense of responsibility to that family. Character will not sacrifice your family on the altar of “I've got to finish this project,” nor will it tell you children, “Maybe next time, hon,” when asked to play catch.

Your character will shine through as you put your family before your work, as you purposefully schedule time with them (and then keep those appointments you put in your planner), as you “date” your spouse and remember why it is you got married in the first place, and as you set an example that your spouse and children can be proud of.

The most important thing to remember as you consider character is that your children will grow up to be just like you. John Maxwell once said, “We teach what we know; we reproduce who we are.” So as a person who is full of integrity and character, you will reproduce those same traits in your children as you climb towards success in your life. And isn't that really what it's all about, anyhow?

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