



Honesty and Integrity

Learning Objectives

After completing this chapter, students will be able to:

- explain the difference between honesty and integrity
- identify situations that test our integrity
- explain how integrity shapes character and trust
- choose to act with integrity even when it is costly



Let us Begin

Think about these questions:

- ★ What does it mean to have integrity, and how is it more than honesty?
- ★ Have you ever kept your word even when it was inconvenient? What happened?
- ★ Why do we admire people whose words and actions always match?

Talk about your answers with your friends.



Introduction

Honesty is telling the truth; integrity is living by the truth at all times, so that our words, beliefs and actions are in harmony. A person of integrity is the same in public and in private, keeps their promises, and does the right thing even when no one would ever know. Integrity is the foundation of strong character: it earns deep trust, brings inner peace, and cannot be bought or borrowed — it can only be built, choice by choice.



Understanding the Lesson

- Honesty is telling the truth; integrity is living by it.
- A person of integrity is the same in public and private.
- Integrity means our words and actions match.
- We keep our promises even when it is hard.
- Integrity means doing right even when unseen.
- Character is built through repeated honest choices.
- Integrity earns deep trust and inner peace.



Real-Life Example

Asked to sign a register saying he had completed work he had not finished, a young trainee refused, even though everyone else signed. He completed the work first, then signed. His supervisor quietly marked him as the one employee who could always be trusted.



Story

The Sealed Envelope

Ravi worked as a clerk in a large trading office, where he had earned a quiet reputation for being careful, polite and honest. He was not rich; he lived in a small rented room and sent most of his modest salary home to his ageing parents in the village. Yet he never complained, and his manager, Mr Sharma, often said that Ravi was the kind of man you could trust with your eyes closed. Ravi liked hearing this, but he never thought much about it — to him, honesty was simply the ordinary way a person ought to live.

One busy afternoon, Mr Sharma called Ravi to his desk and handed him a thick sealed envelope. 'This contains the payment for our supplier, Mr Gupta,' he said. 'Take it to his shop across the city and deliver it personally. It is

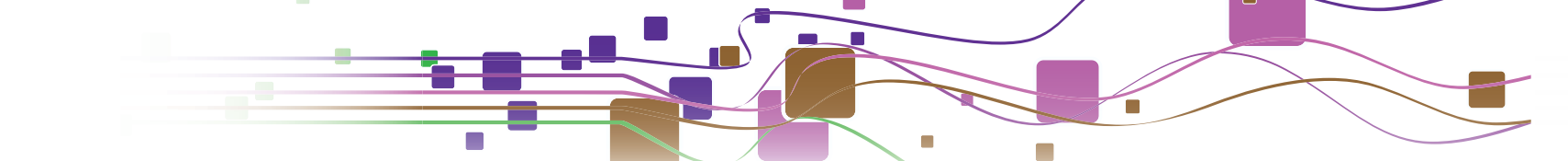
important money, so guard it well.’ Ravi tucked the envelope safely into his bag and set off through the crowded streets, weaving between buses, carts and hurrying people, holding his bag close to his chest the whole way.

When he reached a quiet bus stop to wait, curiosity made him glance inside the loosely sealed flap, just to check the money was safe. To his surprise, the envelope held far more cash than any single supplier’s bill could possibly be. Counting quietly, Ravi realised that Mr Sharma, in his hurry, must have placed two or even three payments into one envelope by mistake. The supplier would have no idea; he was expecting only his own bill, and would never know the rest existed.

Ravi’s heart began to beat fast. A single thought slipped into his mind, unbidden: if he delivered only the correct amount and quietly kept the extra, no one would ever discover it. The money was more than he earned in many months. He thought of his parents, of the leaking roof back home, of the comforts he could finally give them. For a few uneasy moments, he stood frozen, the heavy envelope feeling heavier still in his hands.



But as quickly as the thought had come, Ravi felt ashamed of it. He imagined how he would feel afterwards — unable to look his manager in the eye, unable to feel proud of himself, carrying a secret that would quietly rot inside him. ‘Integrity,’ he remembered his father once saying, ‘is what you do when no one is watching. A man who sells it cheaply has nothing left worth keeping.’ The extra money was not his, and that simple fact settled the matter. He would not become a thief, not for any sum.



Instead of going on to the supplier, Ravi turned around and walked all the way back to the office. He went straight to Mr Sharma and said, 'Sir, I think you placed more than one payment in this envelope by mistake. Please check it before I deliver.' Mr Sharma opened it, counted, and his face went pale, then flooded with relief. He had indeed sealed in two other suppliers payments by accident — money that, if lost, he would have had to repay from his own pocket, and which could have cost him his job.



Mr Sharma looked at Ravi for a long moment. 'Many men would have kept quiet,' he said softly. 'You walked back across the whole city to return money that no one knew you had. That is rarer than you think.' He separated the correct payment and sent Ravi on his way. In the months and years that followed, Mr Sharma gave

Ravi greater and greater responsibility, until Ravi rose to become the trusted head of the office's accounts, handling far larger sums than had ever been in that envelope. Ravi understood, at last, that his honesty in one unseen moment had quietly shaped the entire course of his life.



Moral

Integrity is who we are when no one is watching, and it shapes everything we become.



Key Values

- Integrity
- Honesty

- Trustworthiness
- Conscience



Exercise

A. Knowledge Check (Understanding Basic Concepts)

Fill in the blanks using the given words.

promises, conscience, integrity, honesty

1. _____ means living by our values at all times.
2. _____ is simply telling the truth.
3. A person of integrity keeps their _____.
4. Our inner sense of right is our _____.

Tick (✓) the correct answer.

1. Integrity means being the same in public and _____. (a crowd / private)
2. A person of integrity keeps their _____. (promises / secrets only)
3. Integrity means doing right even when _____. (unseen / praised)
4. Integrity earns deep _____. (wealth / trust)

Write True or False.

1. Honesty and integrity mean exactly the same thing. (_____)
2. A person of integrity is the same in public and private. (_____)
3. Integrity means doing right even when unseen. (_____)
4. Integrity can be bought with money. (_____)

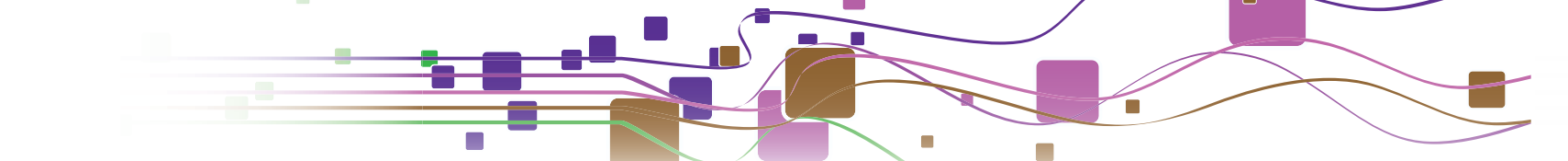
Match the columns.

Column A

1. Integrity
2. Honesty
3. Principle
4. Conscience

Column B

- a. A guiding belief
- b. Our inner sense of right
- c. Living by one's values
- d. Being truthful



B. Understanding and Application

Answer the following questions:

1. What is the difference between integrity and honesty?



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2. Why did Ravi return the extra money?

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3. Describe a situation that would test your integrity.

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4. How is character built through small choices?
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C. Real-Life Situations (Competency-Based Questions)

Read the situations and answer the questions.

Situation-1

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Your teacher praises you for your classmate's work

1. What should you say to your teacher?
2. Why is it important to give credit to the right person?

Situation-2

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You could copy an assignment online and no one would know.

1. What will you choose?
2. How does this test your integrity?

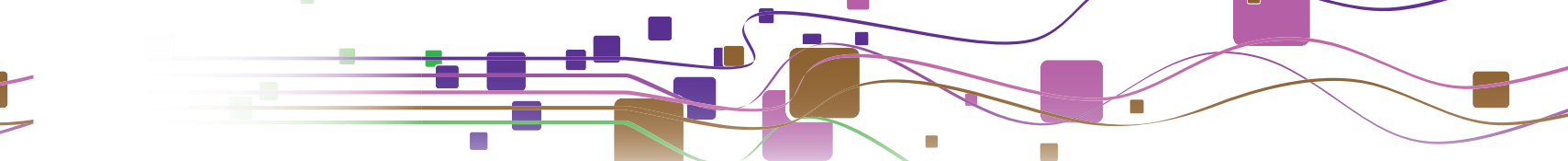
D. Critical Thinking

Think carefully and answer:

1. Why is integrity tested most in private, unseen moments?

2. Can a dishonest success ever bring true peace of mind? Explain.

3. Why do we say character is built choice by choice?



E. Value-Based Activity (Experiential Learning)

Write a personal 'Integrity Pledge' of five principles you will live by. Keep it and review how well you kept it at the end of the month.

F. Group Discussion

Discuss in groups:

Why is integrity considered the foundation of good character?

Write two examples from your discussion:

1. _____
2. _____

G. Project Work (Experiential Learning – NEP Requirement)

Research a leader admired for integrity. Write a short profile of how their integrity shaped their life and legacy, and present it.

H. Self-Assessment (Reflection – NEP Core Component)

Tick (✓) the statements that are true for you.

1. My words and actions match.
2. I am the same person in public and in private.
3. I keep my promises.
4. I do right even when unseen.
5. I listen to my conscience.

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Decide your principles in advance, and let them guide you especially when no one is watching. Integrity, practised in small unseen moments, becomes the bedrock of your character.