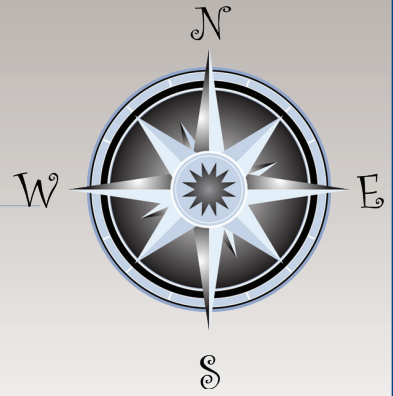


# The Character Principle of **HONESTY**



*“Lies will get any man in trouble, but honesty is its own defense.”*

## PRINCIPLE OF THE WEEK

Webster defines honesty as fair and truthful and being free from deceit. Basically, that describes a person who will not lie, cheat or steal. This includes manipulating people or making misleading statements with the intent to deceive. Honesty is when your words and actions are truthful and you sincerely pursue fairness. It produces a life of integrity because you are transparent – your inner self and your outer self are a mirror image. “What you see is what you get!”

Honesty is the core value of character. It is the stabilizer or governor of the soul. Honesty is more than truth; it also deals with motives and intents. A statement can be literally true but still dishonest if the intention is to deceive or manipulate rather than being transparent and truthful.

Frederic Douglas once said; “The life of the nation is secure only while the nation is honest, truthful, and virtuous.” Dishonesty will bankrupt a person and a nation. It will rob you of your reputation, your respect, your resources and your influence. The founders of our country understood the importance of honesty when they formed our Constitution. “Swearing under oath” meant “to tell the truth, the whole truth and nothing but the truth.” Telling the “whole truth” is a key concept in honesty. Lying by omission or leaving out a part of the story is dishonest. Leaving out some of the truth is usually an attempt to manipulate the situation.

Let’s take a look at what our society would be like if everyone were honest:

- We would not need to lock our doors or have walls or fences around our property.
- The need for police and prisons would decrease because a large portion of our crime

is a result of lying, cheating or stealing.

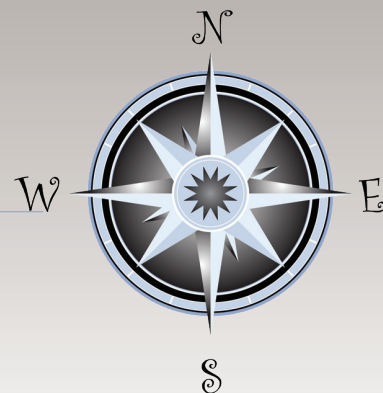
- The divorce rate would go down because people would not consider cheating an option and, instead, would opt to work out their problems.
- Illegal drugs would be abolished and the crime and illness associated with them would be non-existent.
- It would cut down on the need for attorneys and free the courts and taxpayers from the costs of frivolous lawsuits.
- Businesses could run with less management because employees would be honest on the job, with the resources entrusted to them and with their time.
- Taxes could be cut because the money needed to combat dishonesty would not be necessary. Additionally, money would be honestly and responsibly spent.

## Benefits

If you are an honest person, you will experience the following benefits:

- You will be known and respected as a person of integrity. People will want to deal with you because they can trust you.
- You will have a clear conscience. You will not experience the feeling of guilt that comes from being dishonest and will not have to worry about being found out.
- You will simplify your communication with others.
- Your opinions will have weight and your words will hold influence.
- Your relationships will be strong because they are built on trust.

# Action Plan for HONESTY



## Characteristics

If you are an honest person, you possess the following characteristics:

1. You tell the truth even when it is not convenient.
2. You are genuine and transparent. You do not skip over portions of the truth or twist meanings to benefit yourself or manipulate others.
3. You only keep that which belongs to you. You do not cheat or steal to get ahead and you return items that are not yours.
4. You are a good steward of the resources provided to you whatever they may be. This includes your time and talents as well as responsibilities and property that others entrust to you.
5. You value responsibility over rights.

- Be aware that sometimes keeping silent is dishonesty. When you know about a lie and keep quiet, the lie lives on.
- Do not allow yourself to get caught up in “little white lies.” Avoid taking part in cover-ups. Remember, “When somebody lies, somebody loses.” (Stephanie Ericsson)

*Remember... Thoughts become actions. Actions become habits. Habits become our destiny.*

## Steps to Follow

- Make a commitment to tell the truth and honor it.
- Consider your words before you speak them. Be aware of what the “whole truth” is before you give a dishonest answer, explanation or reason. Do not hold back on the truth because you want to please everyone.
- When honestly delivering a tough message, be careful to speak out of concern rather than to “put someone in their place.” “People who are brutally honest get more satisfaction out of the brutality than out of the honesty.” (Richard J. Needham) Being more painful in your honesty than what is necessary will result in alienating those you should be trying to help.
- Conduct yourself with integrity. Be careful not to twist the truth or leave part of the story out in order to manipulate a person or situation.

## Reflect and respond

1. Do others consider you to be an honest person?
2. When do you find it difficult to be honest?
3. Can you recall a situation when someone was dishonest with you and it really hurt or upset you? How did that make you feel?
4. Which of the “Steps to Follow” will you commit to do?

Evaluate yourself from 1 to 10	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Why did you give yourself this rating										
What benefits will you obtain by raising your rating?										
What specific action can you put into practice to test the benefits of this principle?										
Check list for the daily reading of this principle	M	T	W	T	F	S	S			

Completed

Not completed