

Character and Integrity

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When Martin Luther King said he looked forward to the day when all Americans would be judged solely" by the content of their Character," he was talking about the most important desired human quality. Of course, the content of Character applies to all people in the world.

Seeing Swami Vivekananda in his traditional Safron colour turban and Angarakha dress, one Britisher said to him,"You need to wear proper clothes to be a gentleman." Swami Vivekananda replied back," In your culture dress makes a gentleman in you whereas in our culture it is Character that is what that makes us a gentleman !!

Character is what that defines you. It's what people see in you. It's what people will say about you. In fact Character is one of the most important things you have ever possessed. Character is something that you hold fast to inside, and that people see in you on the outside. More importantly, it is something that God sees in you always. You can fool men many times with your character but you can't fool God.

Intelligence + Character = True education.

Where,

Intelligence = Knowledge + Skills

Character = Trustworthiness + Respect + Responsibility + Fairness + Caring + Citizenship

Academics in schools and colleges are given so much importance these days since it is the gateway to prepare students for the future and provide security, comfort and luxury; but little or nothing is being done to improve their Character. Knowledge without Character is a sin says Mahatma Gandhi. He also said," Education which does not mould character is absolutely useless". That's why it is so important to lead a life sticking to good morals and ethics inside the house and be the role models to our children for they are the future citizens of the world. There is nothing the father of the nation can do if the father inside the house is not okay !!

Character and Integrity are both important, but they are not synonymous. Character is one's mental, moral and ethical code the combination of qualities that distinguishes one person from the other. Integrity means that one lives according to that code. .. For example, if someone has a moral code that says it's alright to say lies and they continue to say lies they are, by definition living with integrity. Unsettling isn't it?! Similarly if someone has a moral code that says they should not inflict injury to fellow human

beings in thought, word or deed and they follow their moral code they are living with integrity. In fact integrity without the right character can spell trouble !!

Also, on the other hand, if an individual has a strong moral and ethical code but compromises what is right when it comes to achieve personal gain they are not living with integrity. So, that's why it is important that the good Character on the inside has to match the integrity on the outside and there should not be a split. Very great evolved people have good morals and ethical code and live by that to perfection. So, if you want to emulate such great people set moral values and ethical codes and stick to that, the result will be that, you will Feel Good. You will be at Peace. People will revere you. When you feel good you will always be attracting all the best things in life.

An interesting story..

In ancient China there were many provinces and in one of the province Lin was the local administrator. Lin was young, smart and had done well to get this post which is similar to our VAO today. One day when he was at work he received summons from the Capital; he was called by the Minister. Lin packed his bags for the long journey and set off for the Capital. He managed to reach the place on the appointed date and went to the gates of the Palace. He showed the summons from the Minister, to the person in the gate. This way please, said the gatekeeper we have been waiting for you. Lin with a lot of curiosity asked the gatekeeper the reason for summons. The gatekeeper said that the post of "Assistant Minister" is vacant and so the Minister has sent the summons. He also added that there were many candidates from many provinces and so your chances of getting selected is remote." That is how it should be," Lin said humbly; such a powerful post, the incumbent who would directly report to the Emperor should be for the best contender. Anyway, that i am also a candidate in the reckoning, i feel good. Saying this he went into a huge hall where a number of contenders for the same post were sitting. He saw them and recognized a few as really good for the post and weighed his prospect of getting the coveted post plummet...

One by one the candidates were filing into the Ministers chambers for the interview. Lin's turn came. The Minister was hard at work with several assistants on either side were compiling, sorting, writing, filing and very busy. The Minister saw Lin, waved him to a chair. Lin sat down and was waiting for the Minister. The Minister looked up after keeping the papers neatly to the corner of the table looked at Lin and suddenly he blurted out in joy !! My God, is that you, I have been waiting for you for more than an year. You saved my daughter when she was about to get drowned in the lake. You saved her from getting drowned and silently left the place before we could even thank you. At last here you are, am i so glad? Lin calmly said to the Minister," Sir, there is a mistake. I am not the one who saved your daughter. The minister emphatically said, no, i am very sure. It's just because you are so modest you are not taking the credit. No sir, said Lin. I don't tell lies. It was not me. The Minister looked at his clerk and said, "look at Lin." Isn't he the one who saved my daughter. You were also with me that day. The clerk said," your memory is as strong as ever." Lin was the one who saved your daughter. Lin said, "Sir, I am terribly sorry to offend you. It was not me. The Minister

thought about it paused for a long while and said, maybe it was coincidence of the highest order. Your face matches the rescuer. If you say yes, then we can forget the whole thing and get back to work. Lin said, I am so sorry. I am not the one. The minister said well, we will talk about the work in hand. He then proceeded to ask Lin about the work being carried out in his province. After a while the Minister walked with him to the door and said, " we will get back to you." Lin knew that his chances of getting the coveted post just disappeared under his feet. With an upright posture and a satisfied heart he left the Palace thinking that he would never return. But internally he was happy for doing the right thing.

Getting back to his Province and the regular grind of work one day he received a letter addressed to The Assistant Minister. He was surprised whether the letter was for him but then he saw his name he was astonished that it was for him and he had become the Assistant Minister. On the appointed date he joined duty in the Capital and as was expected of him started doing his duty diligently. After a few months he saw the clerk outside the palace who confirmed that he was the rescuer of the Minister's daughter during the interview. After exchanging pleasantries Lin asked the clerk if the Minister was able to find his daughter's rescuer. The clerk replied, " Oh Yes, indeed we found 8 rescuers the same day when we conducted the interview !! And for your kind information, the Minister is so engrossed with his work decided not to get married and so does not have any children !! Lin had Integrity to back up his Character.

Do the Right Thing... Let your intentions be noble. Existence will take care of the rest.