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Integrity in all things great and small

In the wise words of Albert Einstein, “whoever is careless with the truth in small matters cannot be trusted in important affairs.” Being truthful is a cornerstone to integrity, but the trait is more than this – it’s doing the right thing consistently, dealing fairly and ethically across the board, taking responsibility, and being accountable for how we act and what we say.

We aren’t born with innate integrity, it’s a behavioral muscle we can develop and strengthen. Making the right decision and doing the right thing won’t always mean taking the simplest route, it won’t always be easy and can have consequences. We all have flaws and it can be easy to rationalize bad behavior or the odd mistruth. Doing what is right in all circumstances takes

courage and it's continuous work, but it's worth it. In business, integrity can solidify relationships with colleagues, clients, and suppliers. They can rely on you to keep your promise and stand up when things go wrong. They can trust you.

Here's my take on living our day-to-day lives with integrity: Be consistent in your decision-making and treat everyone the same, whatever the circumstances. Give credit to those who deserve it, don't take it yourself when it should go to someone else. Don't take advantage of others. Listen and take advice from other people. Own your actions and accept when you're wrong. Try to see the good in people. Keep your word and deliver what you've promised. Be open and transparent and, of course, tell the truth.

And to Einstein's point, if we can't show integrity in the small things in life, what does that mean for the larger issues we deal with, when the stakes are higher? Bending the rules once may bring us a benefit in the short run, but will your colleagues or friends trust you the next time around? It can take years to build up a reputation for integrity but can be very quickly lost. We can't pick and choose when we show integrity - we have it or we don't.

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