

LESSON 30: INTEGRITY AND BUILDING TRUST

Vocabulary Word:

Integrity - The quality of honesty, having strong moral principles, and adhering to ethical standards in one's actions and decisions.

Lesson Content:

Viktor Frankl exemplified remarkable integrity during his time as a prisoner in German concentration camps during World War II. Despite enduring immense suffering and witnessing unimaginable atrocities, Frankl demonstrated an unwavering commitment to his principles and values, serving as a beacon of integrity in the darkest circumstances.

Officer Wilson passed me a book about Viktor Frankl when I was locked in solitary before sentencing. I had been confined in solitary for several months while I awaited judicial proceedings. Since it was my first experience in prison, the solitude saddened me. When I read the book about Viktor Frankl, a renowned psychiatrist, I remember feeling as if I had a model for how I wanted to emerge from prison—regardless of the sentence length I would receive.

Dr. Frankl refused to compromise his beliefs or distort the truth, even when faced with extreme coercion or threats. His integrity, manifested through his unwavering honesty and authenticity, inspired anyone who read his story. His honesty extended to his interactions with anyone he met. Regardless of what atrocities he endured, he remained steadfast in upholding the dignity and humanity of others, offering support and compassion amidst the dehumanizing conditions.

Dr. Frankl wrote about the importance of developing meaning and purpose in life, regardless of external circumstances. Despite the immense despair and hopelessness surrounding him, he refused to succumb to despair. Instead, he dedicated himself to finding meaning while going through unimaginable suffering. His pursuit of purpose provided solace and encouraged others to hold onto their humanity and strive for something greater.

Dr. Frankl's integrity shone through his resilience and determination to remain faithful to his values. He refused to participate in or condone acts of cruelty, even if it meant endangering his life. In the face of dehumanization and the constant threat of death, he maintained his ethical stance, refusing to compromise his integrity for personal gain or survival.

Understanding the concept of integrity is essential for personal development, particularly for people in prison.

Honesty and Authenticity:

Integrity begins with being honest with oneself and others. It involves living aligned with our values and principles, being true to who we are, and representing ourselves honestly to the world. We build trust and credibility in our interactions by embracing honesty and authenticity.



Dr. Viktor Frankl's writing is one of the reasons we begin our course with the module on defining success—we have to know who we are and what we aspire to become if we want to succeed.

Ethical Decision Making:

Integrity guides ethical decision-making processes. It involves considering the moral implications of our choices and striving to do what is right, even when faced with difficult situations or temptations. Individuals with integrity prioritize ethical behavior and uphold moral standards.

Consistency and Reliability:

We demonstrate integrity through consistency and reliability in our words and actions. As Gandhi wrote, we must keep everything we think, say, and do in harmony. We must follow through on commitments, keep promises, and be dependable. By practicing consistency and reliability, we build a reputation of trustworthiness and earn the respect of others.

Accountability and Responsibility:

Integrity involves taking accountability for our actions and accepting responsibility for the consequences they may bring. It means owning up to mistakes, learning from them, and making amends when necessary. Individuals with integrity understand the impact of their choices and strive to make things right.

Building Trust and Character:

Integrity plays a vital role in building trust and character. It fosters healthy and meaningful relationships, both personally and professionally. By embodying integrity, we inspire others and create an environment of respect, openness, and trust.

Questions and Activities: In one hour, answer as you deem appropriate.

» How do you understand the concept of integrity?



PREPARING FOR SUCCESS AFTER PRISON
BE THE CEO OF YOUR LIFE

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- » What strategies can you employ to cultivate and demonstrate integrity during your imprisonment?

Activity:

- » Reflect on a situation in which you faced a moral dilemma or had to make a difficult decision. Write about how acting with integrity influenced your choices and the outcomes that followed.
- » Discuss the lessons you learned and how they contribute to your personal growth.
- » Identify three personal values that are important to you. Describe how you align your actions with these values to live with integrity. Consider possible challenges and strategies to overcome them.
- » Remember, integrity is the foundation of personal growth and character development. By living with honesty, ethical principles, and accountability, you build trust, strengthen relationships, and pave the way for success. Embrace the power of integrity during your time in prison and carry it as a guiding principle in all areas of your life.



AFTERWORD

Build a Record of Your Progress

On behalf of everyone at Prison Professors Charitable Corporation, thank you for working through this course.

Our nonprofit provides free educational resources to help justice-impacted people prepare for success. We encourage participants to use their time intentionally, develop useful skills, and create a written record of their growth.

During the 26 years I served in federal prison, I learned that personal development becomes more powerful when we document it. I earned academic degrees, wrote books, developed release plans, and preserved evidence of the work I completed. That record helped others understand how I was preparing for success.

You can build a similar record through a free Profile on PrisonProfessors.org.

What to Include in Your Profile

Use your Profile to document:

- » Biography: Describe your background, the lessons you have learned, and how you are preparing for success.
- » Journal Entries: Record the decisions, habits, and actions that demonstrate continued growth.
- » Book Reports: Explain what you learned from each book and how you will apply those lessons.
- » Release Plan: Describe your plans for housing, employment, education, finances, health, family responsibilities, and community support.
- » Accomplishments: Record courses, work assignments, certificates, commendations, and other evidence of progress.



A Profile does not guarantee any particular outcome. It gives you a way to show the work you are doing and the person you are becoming.

How to Create Your Profile

Ask a family member or trusted friend to: Visit PrisonProfessors.org.

Select Profiles.

Follow the instructions to create your Profile.

Save the login information securely.

Add the written work you send to them.

Your family member or trusted contact may update the Profile on your behalf.

Points and Leaderboards

Participants may earn points when they add written work to their Profiles. The leaderboards recognize people who consistently document their progress.

Profile participation is optional. Profile points do not determine First Step Act eligibility or the award of First Step Act time credits. Building a Profile is separate from completing Preparing for Success After Prison under the supervision of an authorized facilitator.

When You Need Assistance

If you do not have a family member or trusted friend who can help, contact our team. Email: Interns@PrisonProfessors.org. Or use the US Post office:

Prison Professors Charitable Corporation

1205 BMC Drive, Suite 706

Cedar Park, TX 78613



When writing, include:

- » Your full name
- » Your registration or identification number
- » Your institution
- » Your return mailing address
- » A clear explanation of the assistance you need

You may also send biography updates, journal entries, book reports, release-plan sections, and other written material for your Profile. Keep copies of everything you send whenever possible.

Continue Building

Your past will always remain part of your story, but it does not have to control your future. The decisions you make today can influence how others perceive you and what opportunities may become available later.

Do not wait for an opportunity before beginning to prepare. Build the record now.

With hope and respect,

Michael Santos

Founder

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