

Unit Eight:

Living With   
Integrity

YGPS (Your Global Positioning System), Workshop Series 2010

Unit 8: Living with Integrity

“Integrity is the essence of everything successful*.*“*-Richard Buckminster Fuller (1895-1983)*

# 1. Introduction: What is integrity?

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| YGPS_activity icon.jpg | Learning Activity 8.1:  What is integrity |

Imagine the following situation happened to you. You are sitting in the classroom about to write your first big Maths test for the term. You've been **struggling all along** in this class, and you know that this test will form a **big part of your final mark**. You feel like you are doing quite well on the test until you come to the last problem. It is worth 20 marks and you just **can't remember** how to solve it. As it happens, the class math whiz is sitting right in front of you and you can see he's just finished it. You are close enough to see how he solved it, and you know that no teacher can see you if you **cheat**.

What would you do?

Here are a couple of options:

1. You decide not to cheat and FAIL the test.
2. You decide not to cheat and manage to PASS the test on your own
3. You decide to cheat, PASS the test and NO ONE ever finds out.
4. You decide to cheat and GET CAUGHT! (now it does not matter if you passed or failed, you are in big trouble)

Take a few minutes to think about the different outcomes listed above and imagine you were in this situation. What would your choice be? To cheat, or not to cheat? Would your choice be different if you knew for certain that you could never, ever be caught? This is an issue of integrity. Let’s start our exploration of living with integrity by considering a short definition of integrity.

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| Integrity can be defined as acting according to a strict moral code. It includes being honest, trustworthy and not being guilty of corruption. Integrity is having the personal inner strength to know the difference between right and wrong and to CHOOSE to do the correct thing, regardless of the cost or the consequences.  (adapted from <http://charactered.net/main/traits.asp>, <http://www.wcpss.net/news/poston/character_education/character_ed_traits.html> & http://www.cameron-brooks.com/TipPDFS/Updated/ProfessionalIntegrity.pdf) |

According to this definition of integrity, the person in the case study above should choose not to cheat (abiding to a moral code) and not even take a small peek (acting on the moral belief) regardless of whether it meant they would fail or pass the test (regardless of the consequences) – even if they knew they could never be caught out.

In this module you are going to investigate what it means to live with integrity. The mission to be accomplished is not only to learn what it is, but to begin to live your everyday life with integrity.

“Have the courage to say no. Have the courage to face the truth. Do the   
right thing because it is right. These are the magic keys to living your life with integrity.”

*- W. Clement Stone (1902-2002)*

In short, integrity is about living out your values or ‘wearing your values in public’ (Heartlines, 2009).

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| YGPS_group activity icon.jpg | Group Activity 8.2: Wearing my values |

In Unit 1 you created a personal profile (turn back to page 18). For this activity you are going to make use of the list of values you noted in your profile. You can take 5 mins to update your list of values, based on what you have learnt so far, if you would like to.

Each person in the class will receive a plain white T-Shirt. Using the coloured markers available, decorate your T-shirt with statements of your values. When completed, we will take a group photograph of everyone wearing their T-shirts. Your T-shirt and the group photograph can serve as a reminder of your commitment to living out your values – to living your life with integrity!

## Learning outcomes

In this unit you will focus on the value of living your life with integrity. More specifically once you have completed the section you should be able to:

* Understand the meaning and value of integrity in your personal life and for society;
* Know how to act as a trustworthy person;
* Be willing to accept responsibility for your own actions, including your mistakes;
* Be conscious of your responsibility towards others;
* Identify the characteristics of a good citizen and act accordingly.

# 2. Does integrity make a difference?

Daily we are faced with many difficult decisions that must be made – often we have to distinguish between what is right and wrong, then we have to act and choose to do what is right. Integrity comes from making many small choices on a daily basis, choosing to do what is right even when the consequences may appear to be insignificant at the time. In the next activity you are going to reflect on the impact that integrity has on individuals and communities.

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| YGPS_group activity icon.jpg | Group Activity 8.3 |

Form a group of 3-5 and discuss the following questions:

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| **Question** | **Notes on group discussion** |
| Why should I live my life with integrity? |  |
| What are the positive consequences for society if people behave with integrity? |  |
| What are the negative consequences for society if you do not behave with integrity? |  |

Now read extract on the next page. This extract was taken from an article in the Mail and Guardian Newspaper about the Xenophobic attacks that took place in South Africa in 2009. The article is reporting on a research study that aimed to try to understand why these attacks took place.

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| “The report slammed local leaders and authorities, saying that “community leaders and the local government did nothing to prevent or stop the violence”. Instead, the study found that some were directly involved in he attacks, while others were reluctant to assist foreigners for fear of losing legitimacy or positions in the 2009 elections.  [Community members] were critical of the police, saying they were delayed and ineffective in dealing with the attacks. Many were convinced that some police officers supported or at least passively tolerated the violence due to their own anti-foreigner sentiments.  The report warms against political leaders making spurious claims about foreigners that incite xenophobic attacks. It highlights the danger of political parties campaigning on an anti-foreigner ticket, which serves only to exacerbate some South African’s prejudice against non-nationals.  Source: Mail & Guardian Online  *Website:* [www.mg.co.za/article/2009-03-11-local-leaders-behind-xenophobic-attacks](http://www.mg.co.za/article/2009-03-11-local-leaders-behind-xenophobic-attacks) |

As you read the extract, consider the following questions (we will discuss them as a class):

1. Do you think the community leaders acted with integrity? Why?

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1. Do you think the community members who were involved in the violence acted with integrity? Why?

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1. If you were a leader in this community, how could you respond in a way that demonstrates your integrity?

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# 3. Have integrity? Be trustworthy!

An essential part of integrity is the ability to be trustworthy. **What does it mean to be trustworthy?**

Write down your answer to this question in the space below.

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Now compare your answer to the definition below. In what ways was your answer the same? In what ways did it differ?

A trustworthy person is someone you can rely on or you can be sure of. When someone is trustworthy they display the following characteristics:

* Tells the truth, does not steal or cheat;
* When told a secret, they keep it;
* When they say they will do something, it gets done;
* When they make a promise, you can be sure they will keep it.

This definition is based on the following resources (<http://www.goodcharacter.com/pp/trustworthiness.html>; <http://www.jerseycharacter.org/downloads/Trustworthiness%20Quotes.pdf>; <http://charactercounts.chaves.nm.us/trustworthiness.htm>)

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| YGPS_activity icon.jpg | Learning Activity 8.4:  Are YOU trustworthy? |

Think about your own life. Consider each of the dimensions of trustworthiness noted in the definition above. Do these characteristics apply to you? For each of the characteristics listed in the table below, make a cross in the box that best reflects you and then make a note of a concrete example explaining your rating of yourself. You do not need to share your responses, so please be honest and use this as an opportunity to challenge yourself to greater levels of trustworthiness and integrity!

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|  | **ALWAYS** | **SOMETIMES** | **NEVER** | **Example from my life** |
| I tell the truth, do not steal or cheat |  |  |  |  |
| When told a secret I keep it |  |  |  |  |
| When I say I will do something I make sure it gets done |  |  |  |  |
| When I make a promise I keep it |  |  |  |  |

In the spaces below write down an example of how you can demonstrate that you are a trustworthy person. Remember to make the behaviours you list as specific as possible.

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| **I can show my parents I am  trustworthy by…** | **I can show my friends that I am  trustworthy by…** |
| **I can show my teachers that I am trustworthy by…** | **I can show my community that I am trustworthy by…** |

You are now going to use the activity you completed above to work in groups on the activity below.

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| YGPS_group activity icon.jpg | Group Activity 8.5:  Trust Graffiti Wall |

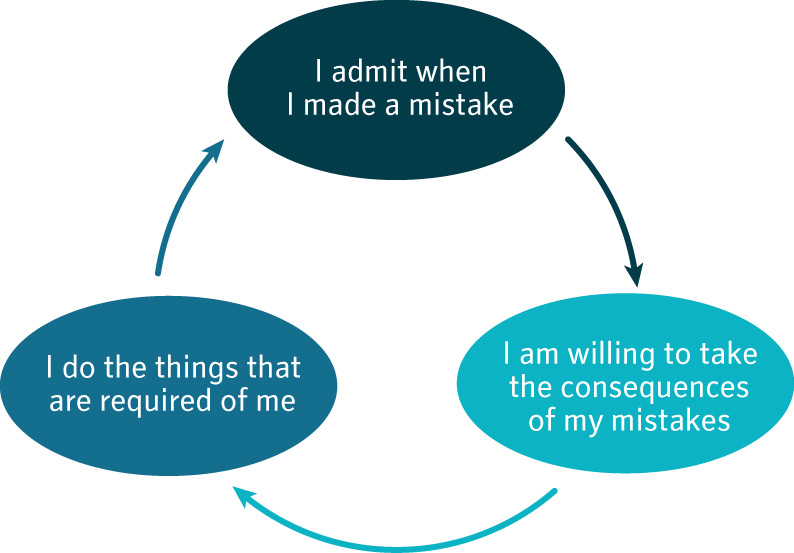
Divide into groups of 4 or 5. Share the different examples you have of how to demonstrate trustworthiness from the exercise above.

Your facilitator will provide your group with a large piece of cardboard on which you are going to create a trust Graffiti Wall. In each “brick”/block write down one of the examples of how you can show you are a trustworthy person.

Your facilitator will make a copy of the trust Graffiti Wall for each student. Challenge yourself to demonstrate each one of these behaviours before the end of the coming term. Each time you live out one of these trustworthy behaviours in your everyday life, sign your name next to the brick on the wall. The goal is to have signed your name next to every trustworthy behaviour before the end of the term.

# 4. Put yourself in the driver’s seat: take responsibility

Responsibility is accepting your duty to make the right decisions, and when you do make a mistake to face the consequences of your actions. By taking responsibility you put yourself in the driver’s seat of your life and you start to influence your life direction positively. Responsible people think in the following manner:



(The above definition is based on the following resources <http://www.charactercountsmidshore.org>; [www.livingvalues.net](http://www.livingvalues.net); <http://www.goodcharacter.com/YCC/BeingResponsible.html>)

Responsibility is all about the way you behave. Take some time to complete the activity below to identify how you can improve your level of responsibility.

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| YGPS_activity icon.jpg | Learning Activity 8.6:  How can I be responsible? |

Use the table below to help you focus your attention on living and acting responsibly in your everyday life. You should complete this activity alone.

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| **RESPONSIBLE PEOPLE DO WHAT THEY ARE SUPPOSED TO.** | |
| *Use the space below to make a list of three things that you know you are supposed to do. This can be related to schoolwork or responsibilities in your home.*  E.g. Do your homework each day before watching TV | **DONE**  *In this column tick off if you have done this in the past week* |
| 1. |  |
| 2. |  |
| 3. |  |
| **RESPONSIBLE PEOPLE ALWAYS GIVE THEIR BEST AT ANY TASK.** | |
| *Use the space below to make a list of three things that you know you are supposed to do. This can be related to schoolwork or responsibilities in your home.*  *E.g. Instead of rushing through the assigned reading for English, I will read thoroughly making sure I understand the text.* | **DONE**  *In this column tick off if you have done this in the past week* |
| 1. |  |
| 2. |  |
| 3. |  |
| **RESPONSILBE PEOPLE CONSIDER THE CONSEQUENCES OF NOT DOING THE RIGHT THING** | |
| *Use the space below to make a list of three things that you know you are supposed to do. This can be related to schoolwork or responsibilities in your home.*  *E.g. when I watch TV and neglect to do my homework, I will be punished at school* | **DONE**  *In this column tick off if you have done this in the past week* |
| 1. |  |
| 2. |  |
| 3. |  |
| **RESPONSIBLE PEOPLE ARE WILLING TO FACE THE CONSEQUENCES OF THEIR ACTIONS, EVEN IF THEY ARE NOT ALWAYS PLEASANT** | |
| *Use the space below to make a list of three things that you know you are supposed to do. This can be related to schoolwork or responsibilities in your home.*  E.g. Even though I did not complete my homework, I will not lie to the teacher about it, rather I will do the extra exercises as punishment. | **DONE**  *In this column tick off if you have done this in the past week* |
| 1. |  |
| 2. |  |
| 3. |  |

It is not always easy to make responsible choices, learning to do so will take some time and practice. In order to help you learn how to think and make decisions, here are 4 steps you can follow each time you are faced with difficult decisions. Read through each step carefully to gain a deeper understanding of responsibility.

1. **STOP:** When you find yourself in a situation where you have to make a tough choice, don’t just jump right into it. Pause your action and realise that you now have a choice to make.
2. **THINK:** What will the consequences be? You must consider the negative consequences and the positive consequences. Motivate yourself to make the right choice by listing the positive consequences, such as, if I act responsibly now and do my homework, I will reap the benefit of getting good grades in my test. Also you must take into consideration that each choice you make affects both you and those around you. What will the consequences be for others?
3. **ACT** Once you have listed the consequences for yourself and for others, it is time to make your decision. Whichever option you choose remember to give your best and follow through with your choice to the end
4. **ACCEPT** the outcome and consequences. Remember each time you make a decision, YOU are responsible for the consequences of that choice. You should avoid blaming others or making excuses!

(Based on http://www.forcharacter.com/parentguide.html)

So far we have only discussed the responsibility you have for yourself, but responsibility does not end with you – it extends to your family, your neighbourhood, your community and your country. When you are willing to take up your responsibility to make the world in which you live a better place, it is known as social responsibility. You will be focussing on social responsibility, also known as good citizenship, in the following section.

# 5. It starts with you!

“Noka e tlatswa ke dinokana”

Do you know what these words mean? I hear they are the words that form the slogan for a social organisation called “The Movement for Good”. But what is the movement for good?

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| YGPS_activity icon.jpg | Learning Activity 8.7:  Noka e tlatswa ke dinokana |

To discover what this slogan means and to learn about the movement for good, log onto the internet and type in the following web address [www.itstartswithyou.co.za](http://www.itstartswithyou.co.za).

Write down the English version of the slogan

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Now read the slogan again and write in your own words in the space provided below what you think the slogan means to you in your everyday life.

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| YGPS_group activity icon.jpg | Group Activity 8.8:  Noka e tlatswa ke dinokana |

Now divide into groups of 5. In your group share how each of the members interpreted the slogan. As a group, make a summary statement that incorporates elements from each individual’s definition. Select a team leader who will be responsible for presenting the summary to the class.

After each group has had a chance to share their interpretation of the slogan, the facilitator will lead the class in a discussion of the topic.

## The South Africa we all want to live in

“The destiny of our country is in our hands, and we all have to take responsibility for   
the future. We encourage every person to become an active citizen, to take action,   
any action, to make South Africa the country we all want to live in.”

*Khathu Mamaila, Editor of City Press (www.itstartswithyou.co.za)*

The idea behind the movement for good is that each person can make an effort wherever they find themselves – if each of us makes a small change, soon it will be a great wave of transformation in our land. Each person has got the capacity to change not only their community or their family, but society as a whole, so that the whole of South Africa can benefit from the sum total of all our small individual actions. The movement for good is a call for all South Africans to take responsibility for being a good citizen and to help create the South Africa we all want to live in.

“It is about personal responsibility. It is about not saying THEY must fix it, but I can fix it”, says Yvonne Johnston on behalf of the International Marketing Council of South Africa (IMC) (<http://www.brandsouthafrica.com/home/index.php>)

## What does it take to be a good citizen?

In the next activity you will get the chance to come up with ways that you can be a part of the movement for good and demonstrate that you are a responsible citizen. You will work in groups for this activity.

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| YGPS_group activity icon.jpg | Group Activity 8.9 |

Listed below is a set of behaviours that characterise responsible citizens. Read through this list on your own. (Note, this is an illustrative list only, it is NOT a complete list of what it means to be a responsible citizen).

Your facilitator will now divide your class into 6 groups. Each group will be assigned a specific aspect of good citizenship by the facilitator.

**TOPICS** Is constructively critical of the world in which they live

* Protects the environment we live in
* Contributes to making their community a safe, crime free place
* Upholds the laws of the land
* Actively fights corruption, including piracy, bribery etc.
* Participates in projects that uplift the community

1. Your first task as a group will be to brainstorm your topic area. List as many ideas as you can as to how you as a South African citizen can take action (big and small) to make South Africa the place we all want to live in.
2. The next task you must complete as a group is to make a poster for your classroom that can teach the students from the other groups how they can begin to make a difference and become responsible citizens in your topic area.

The poster must include pictures and be as creative and colourful as possible. Remember it should be easy to read and give others specific ideas on how they can contribute to society.

You can use the resource list below for some additional ideas.

1. Speak positively about South Africa <http://www.sagoodnews.co.za/fast_facts_and_quick_stats/index.html>
2. Upholds our constitution and the laws of the land <http://www.forgood.co.za/monthly_action/Pages/July5th.aspx>
3. Helps to make our country a safe place to live  
   <http://www.itstartswithyou.co.za/index.php/safety/index.html>   
   <http://www.forgood.co.za/dogood/beingsafe/goodresources/Pages/default.asp>
4. Actively fight corruption, including piracy, bribery etc.  
   <http://www.forgood.co.za/news/july05/Pages/default.aspx>
5. Participate in projects that uplift the community  
   <http://www.forgood.co.za/news/public%20spaces/Pages/default.aspx>
6. Protect the environment we live in  
   <http://www.itstartswithyou.co.za/index.php/environment/index.html>

Be the change you wish to see in the world

*- Mahatma Ghandi (1869-1948)*

# 6. Portfolio Essay: Reflecting on Integrity

Write a 3 page essay on integrity. You must include the following elements:

1. A definition of integrity in your own words;
2. A short reflection on what you have learnt about the following aspects of integrity:
   1. Being trustworthy
   2. Being responsible
   3. Being a good citizen
3. End off your report by describing your own personal strengths and weaknesses related to integrity. You must mention areas where you think you are well developed as a person and highlight areas where you would like to grow.
   1. Take care to mention specific actions you currently do that demonstrate your integrity, and;
   2. Specify actions you intend to start doing that will improve your integrity.

# Tracking my progress

You have reached the end of this section. Check whether you have achieved the learning outcomes for this section.

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| **Learning outcomes** | **✓ I feel confident** | **✓ I still need practice** |
| I understand the meaning of integrity AND I am aware of its value in my own personal life and for society. |  |  |
| I understand what it means to be a trustworthy person |  |  |
| I actively make an effort to practice the principles of trustworthiness in my relationships at home, at school and with my friends. |  |  |
| I am aware of what it means to act responsibly |  |  |
| I recognise that there are always consequences to my actions, for myself and others. |  |  |
| I am willing to face the consequences of my actions, even when I have made poor choices. |  |  |
| I am actively going to do my part to make South Africa the country we all want to live in. |  |  |

What did you like best about this section?

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What did you find most difficult in this section?

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What do you need to improve on? How will you do this?

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