



Character is doing the right thing when nobody's looking. There are too many people who think that the only thing that's right is to get by, and the only thing that's wrong is to get caught. J.C. Watts

Exercise A: Within 10 seconds, identify five people in Nigeria that you would consider to be icons of Integrity- was that a struggle? Please read on.

ICONS OF INTEGRITY- WHERE ARE THEY?

It may seem that the straight answer to this question is- they don't exist anymore! Really while our eyes and minds are constantly assaulted with our 'heroes' failing the integrity test, we ask ourselves, especially the youth, who would mentor us? This is not to cast aspersion on any individual, like we all are quick to do.

Let's start from the basics, who qualifies to be a person of Integrity? In our search for the various definitions of integrity, we came across some apt definitions that best suits the objective of this piece. **Integrity is commonly said to be the quality of being honest and morally upright. It is a skill that has to be developed and learned over time.** Closely related to this is to see integrity as a guideline, a benchmark, a point of reference or a goal that is used to make decisions that rely on truth and honesty. All things are related to this point of reference and judged accordingly. To maintain Integrity, you must remember to refer to truth and honesty in ALL decisions, thoughts, actions and reactions. That is not an option if you have to maintain integrity.

From these definitions, Integrity seems to encapsulate our true and inner self- the being nobody sees but us. It is not the one we struggle to show to the world! If you don't have it, you tend to struggle with it, but if it is really who you are, no pretenses and all, it becomes a culture, a way of life and it flows from your inner being. Some of us think that it is impossible to live a life of Integrity, not with all the ethical dilemmas that we are faced with on a daily basis. But it is indeed possible. We can start with baby steps towards ensuring that we start to live our lives worthy of emulation. How do we start? We start with a resolve to act honestly in all our undertakings, where do we start? We start from our circles of influence, our families, homes, offices, religious institutions, we start with ME. We think that it's time for us to move away from the name calling and the stone throwing and look inwards to making ourselves the heroes that we fail to see.

Exercise B: In a second, would you consider Integrity to be a virtue you would be remembered for in your generation?

Upcoming Events

Promoting Ethics and Transparency in Business Transactions in Nigeria- Lagos- May 14th, 2009
Expert Group Meetings- Lagos- May 18-21, 2009

Focus Group Discussions

Lagos- June 3rd, 2009
Port-Harcourt- June 9th, 2009
Kano- June 11th, 2009
Abuja- June 16th, 2009

We would be willing to hear from you, please share your thoughts with us.