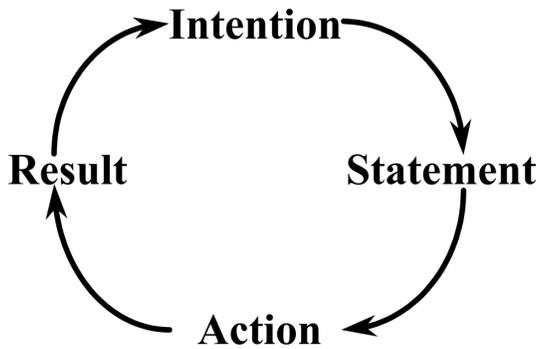
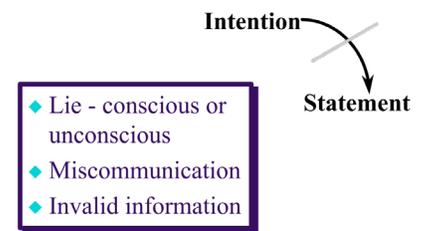


Integrity—A Working Definition



A useful definition of integrity states that we are in integrity when our *thought* equals our *word* equals *what we do* equals *what we create*. The “Integrity Circle” at left shows that we have an intention to do something, we tell someone else (or ourselves) we will do it or make an agreement, we take the action necessary to do it, and we end up with a result. If we are in integrity, then when we can compare our final result with our original intention, they will be congruent.

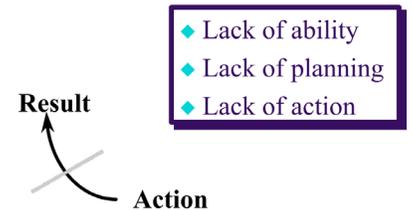
However, integrity can break down in four places on the Integrity Circle. In Breakdown 1 there is a disconnect between intention and statement. This can be due to a lie, either conscious or subconscious. A conscious lie could be “I can’t get the report done on time, but I can’t tell *her* that!” A subconscious lie occurs when we lie to ourselves about our own capabilities—thinking I *can* get the report done when I am not able. A breakdown here can also be due to miscommunication or invalid information.



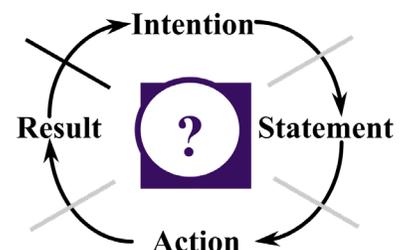
A breakdown between statement and action is due to our procrastinating, factors external to ourselves like a flat tire, or over-committing our time or resources.



A breakdown between action and result can be due to a lack of ability (pushing a building and being unable to move it), lack of a realistic plan, and lack of action or follow-through.



When the final results don’t match with the original intention, it is necessary to look at the other three areas listed above and find out where the breakdown occurred. It is possible that the original intention changed along the way. If you find that your intention has changed while in the middle of this process, it is important to go back to the beginning, and change any agreements you have with yourself or others about what the final results will look like.



Accountability

Accountability is the ability to account for what happened, to be responsible for what one did, and/or didn't, do. One's sense of honor is dependent upon one's ability to be responsible for one's actions or inaction, to account for one's mistakes and to repair the relationship with one's self or others.

Why people don't want to be accountable.....

- revenge
- fear of success
- covert control
- rebellion
- lying
- fear of failure
- over-commitment
- other?????

Why people don't ask others to be accountable.....

- to avoid being accountable ourselves
- we think we can get away with being out of integrity & fool others
- attempting to maintain an image or save face
- because we feel we don't deserve to get what we want
- we have more covert ways of getting what we want that we think are more satisfying
- fear that they will try to get even with us, or get angry with us
- feeling guilty for all the times we didn't do what we said we would
- revenge or resistance

How people intimidate others to avoid being accountable...

- crying
- getting aggressive
- leaving
- remorse
- defensiveness
- bringing up the past
- denial
- authority
- threatening
- blackmail
- helplessness
- confusion
- better than
- getting sick
- make them guilty
- power
- blaming others
- distract w/side issues
- "I forgot"
- silent treatment
- playing ignorant
- "I don't understand"
- obligation
- martyrdom
- quickly own "my piece" so I don't have to listen to you

When people aren't accountable or don't ask others to be accountable, we...

- feel like getting even/revenge
- feel like a victim
- feel helpless
- feel resentful
- get angry and blame others
- support complaints instead of results
- don't look at ways we feel inadequate
- give up
- lose self-respect and our sense of self-worth

Steps to Restoring Accountability

1. Acknowledge what happened in the situation.
 - Use *grounded observations* (which is what 12 unbiased people all looking at the situation would agree the results were).
 - Frame the situation in terms of what worked and what didn't, as opposed to what was done right and what was done wrong.
2. Ask the person to account for what happened, to be responsible for what they did, and/or didn't, do. It is useful here to ask "how" instead of "why" questions. "How" asks for facts; "why" looks for blame.
3. Ask for a repair to the relationship. Remember the goal—to help the individual restore his/her integrity. You can either ask for a specific amend (action to repair), or ask the individual to devise one. An amend is an investment of time, money or energy that allows everyone to leave the situation feeling good. There is no place for punishment in an effective amend. Accountability is *not* making others "wrong, bad or guilty" for their errors and broken agreements. It is assisting them in restoring their honor and integrity for the long-term benefit of the relationship.
4. Ask for what will work next time. Ask the individual to commit to changing his/her behavior so the situation will work next time.

When we are accountable and ask others to be accountable, we...

- Build trust in our relationships
- Increase our self-efficacy (confidence in our ability to produce results)
- Increase our self-worth (confidence in our personal value in life)
- Empower others to act (without fear)
- Support results instead of complaints
- Are encouraged to risk and grow

Amends/Repairs

—Mending Breaks in Integrity

One aspect of integrity that can be daunting to individuals is the mistaken belief that once integrity is broken it cannot be mended. This absolute view is not accurate—it *is* possible to leave a situation with people feeling good, and whole.

What happens when we have a break in integrity?

Along with the observable results of a break in integrity—a missed appointment, late report, or broken promise—there are more subtle results that take the form of damage to relationships. When we break integrity with someone the message *received* by the other person is that we believe the relationship with this person is not important, and thus the *person* is not important. While this may not be our intention, it is the message subjectively received to one degree or another by the individual.

While damage may be done by the observed result of the break, the more important, more lasting damage is to the relationship with others involved.

Mend the relationship and you mend your integrity

The most important thing we can do when we break our word is to mend the relationship. This is called an “amend”. The desired result of an amend is that everyone leaves the situation feeling good about themselves and the relationship. The basic message you want to send is, “You are important to me” or “I care about you,” depending upon the type of relationship. These messages mitigate the damage done by the break.

An amend is an expenditure of at *least* one of the three:

Time - Energy - Money

For instance, if I am late for a coffee date, I can apologize and offer to buy the coffee or meal. Choose something that is *fun* or *enjoyable* to all involved. Remember: the goal is for everyone leave feeling good. If you are not sure what to do for a amend, ask! Also, it is important to *want* to do the amend. Doing an amend because “I should” does more damage than doing nothing at all. If you are unsure you want to do the amend, first consider how important this relationship is to you. If you still don’t want to, consider whether you ever intended to do what you originally promised at all!

A note about guilt and apologies:

One attribute that does **not** work in an amend is guilt. While guilt can be positive when it keeps us from doing something we would later regret, beyond this it is a useless emotion that wastes our energy. Instead of *losing* energy to guilt, we can *increase* our energy and the health of our relationships through amends. This is not to say we should not feel sad or apologize for a break; indeed, one of the best things to do is apologize first.

Also, be very aware of how you apologize. Think very literally about what you are saying. While we throw around the phrase “I’m sorry,” keep in mind that it literally means, “I am sorrow-ful.” Are you? If so, say it; if not, say something like, “I apologize.” Mean what you say and say what you mean.