

Integrity is the Best Policy and What We Need Today – Part 1

No one lives a life of absolute integrity. Rather, it is an ideal for which to strive, including those who consistently display integrity can be overwhelmed by what is left over — what wasn't acted upon and what wasn't met with integrity.

Case in point: In the operating room of a great hospital a young nurse had her first day of confronting responsibility at work.

"You've removed eleven sponges, doctor," she said to the surgeon. "We used twelve."

"I've removed them all," the doctor declared. "We'll close the incision now."

"No," the nurse objected. "We used twelve."

"I'll take the responsibility," the surgeon said grimly. "Suture!"

"You can't do that!" blazed the nurse. "Think of the patient!"

The doctor smiled, lifted his foot, and showed the nurse the twelfth sponge.

"You'll do," he said.

The doctor had been testing her for integrity — and she had it.

This story, related more than 60 years ago by noted editor and author Arthur Gordon, illustrates a key component of integrity: having the courage of your convictions — sticking to your guns, doing what you believe is right, and not fearing to speak out.

Such actions are needed in the world today, at a time when looking good, showing up well, and garnering favorable press predominate. At the root of our existence is the need for the re-emergence of integrity as a common element in the collective character of humankind.

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By: J. Davidson for *AccountingWEB*