

Blind Spots Holding You Back from Success:

#4 Living in Integrity

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#4

Blind Spots Living in Integrity

What is Integrity?

According to the Webster's dictionary integrity is the quality of being honest and having strong moral principles; moral uprightness. Or the state of being whole and undivided. This definition doesn't fully define integrity.

Integrity is doing what you say and committing to what you said. It's being congruent in your messages, being congruent in your values, staying true to yourself no matter the situation. It is also being true to what you committed to and having people in relationships with you, who are congruent to that integrity as well.

Integrity is the foundation for a successful employee-employer relationship. It promotes a culture where individuals can depend on one another because they treat each other with respect. As a result, people are typically more productive and motivated at work.

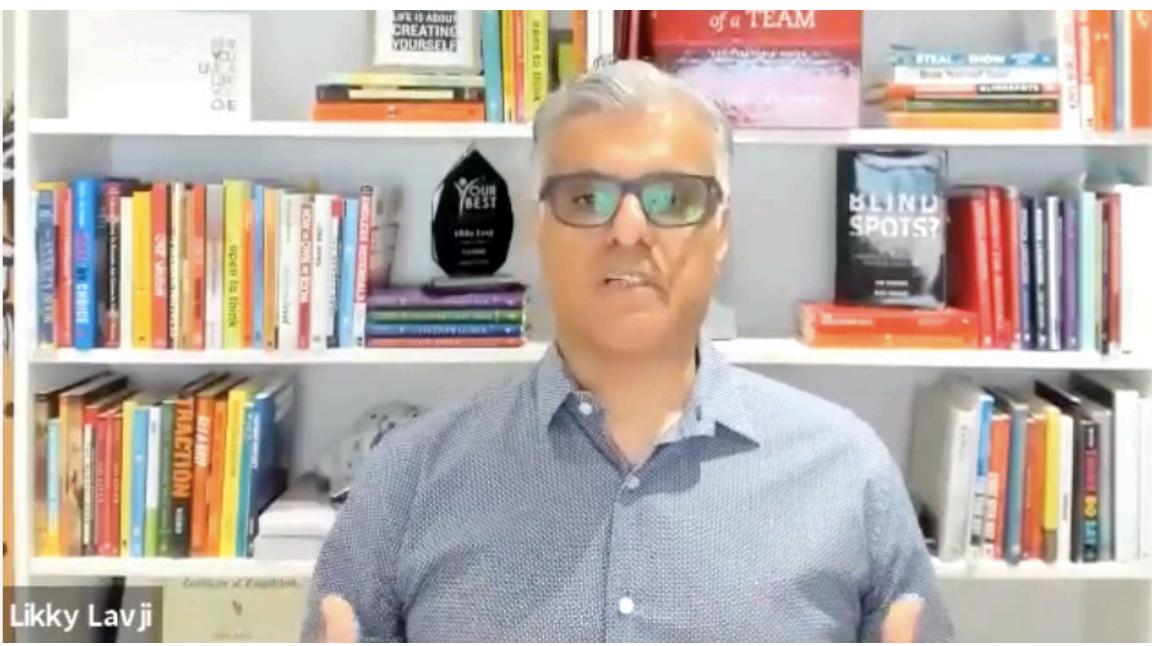
"It's not whether you have integrity or not. Integrity is a habit you're always striving for."



My Story

If I think about integrity, I think about holding people accountable to their words and actions. I used to have Monday meetings at Matrix, my IT company, at noon every week. It was an hour and a half long meeting about life by design and people hated it until they started realizing why we were doing it. One guy would always show up late. I wouldn't have a conversation with him about his tardiness because I didn't want to have a conflict and he was such a good employee. I didn't want to lose him because I knew he didn't like the meeting and wanted to rock the boat. I didn't push him. He kept on showing up late and then one day I said, "Listen, you know you are showing up 10 minutes late and there are 10 of us in this meeting. That's one hundred people minutes you waste each week and I can't afford for you to not showing up on time. You need to show up on time." The next week, he showed up late again. So, I told him go home.

After that, he always showed up on time.



I had to make showing up on time important to him and everyone on the team. This was a few years ago. He messaged me a couple days ago saying, "I wanted to reach out and let you know that you had a massive impact on my life. My time at matrix turned a lot of things right for me. It led me to where I am today and I couldn't be more thankful. I often think about how different things would have been if you guys had not brought me on the team." I didn't think he got it, but he got it.

I believed in integrity and following up.

If you say you're going to show up – show up. If you can't do it, give ample notice that you can't make it. Don't call in five minutes before saying I'm running late. You're not running late. You didn't think. You didn't plan and you didn't communicate. I'm very particular about time.

I used to have a saying in my in my IT company, I have zero tolerance for not being excellent. That means we push hard. We give it all we got, we do everything we need to based on our core values, based on who we are, and based on why we do things. We give it 110%. It's not perfection, it's effort. It's not saying "Well, whatever,



we'll get through it. We'll just get it done." No, it's about getting it done so the people feel that they got so much value from you. They feel your excellence.

Most people know what Ritz stands for. Excellent, excellent service. I had the opportunity of staying there one night through a vendor, and I couldn't believe they knew my name when I walked up to the front desk. The staff had a print-out of a profile, including a picture, on me before I went in. They find you and now they have Google glasses to do facial recognition. It's not, "Hi, how are you?" It's "Hi, Mr. Lavji, Welcome to the Ritz Carlton. I hope your travels from Vancouver was good." It's an extra personal service.

There was a story about Ritz Carlton where a couple who went out one night were going on a cruise the next morning. The wife's heel broke on their way back to the hotel late at night. When they passed the concierge hobbling, he says, "Can I have your broken shoe? I'll have it resolved for you before you leave tomorrow morning on your cruise." He knew exactly who they were and that they were leaving the next morning on a cruise. He got the shoe fixed and dropped off at the room nicely wrapped and said, "Enjoy your trip." That is excellent service.

That's a different level and when we get to that level, we can achieve excellence all the time. But what's stopping us from getting there? What blind spot is stopping you from living in integrity and being excellent?



Behaviours

Your blind spots affect every aspect of your life, how you show up in relationships, and how you react to others. Every single one of your actions causes either a positive or negative impact on others, who then react either positively or negatively towards you. This cycle can cause an issue to escalate out of control or an emotionally charged situation to explode. In a professional environment these reactions can impact a person's future opportunities for advancement and the team's effectiveness to succeed. As a leader, you will need the tools to understand the situation and how to defuse any negative emotional build up.

**What does living without Integrity
in an organization look like?**



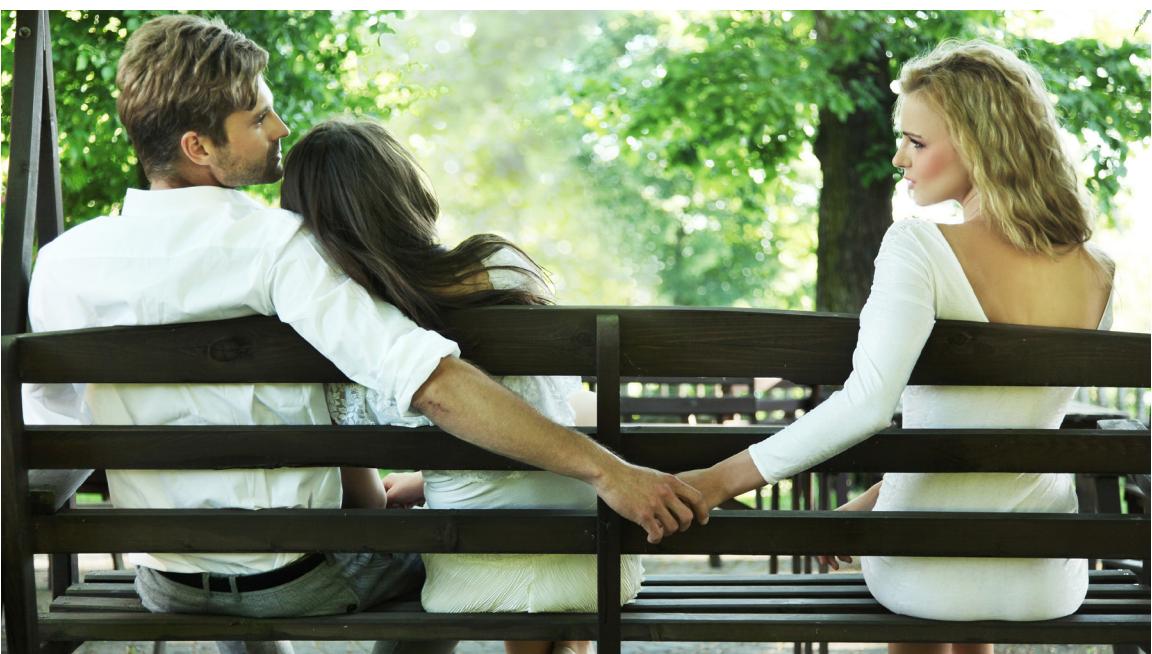
Living outside of Integrity

We behave in certain ways when we don't live in integrity, which affects our ability to succeed. Leaders who don't have integrity will create teams which feel they do not need to be held accountable. Here are some telltale behaviours of people who don't live in integrity.

In Sales:

We have all experienced the salesperson who promises us the moon and can't deliver the stratosphere, we call this over promising and under delivering. In some cases, the problem is with the support processes and operations of the company more than the salesperson and the company is not living in integrity.

If the salesperson does not have integrity, they will say anything to get the sale, even if they know the company cannot deliver on the salesperson's promises. They do not care that the product or service you received is less than they promised, they only care about the commission and ignores any problems which come up, unless it affects their commission.



In Leadership:

Leaders who don't act with integrity will stretch the truth, spin the story, and pass the blame on to others. They will tell investors one story, while telling sales departments another, and service departments a third story. They make promises they know they cannot meet in order to get what they want and expect their teams to fix any issues which come up.

In Service:

How often have you called a service department of a large corporation to find out the company has no integrity because the person on the other end of the phone no power to fix the issue? You find yourself lost in the call centre lottery over and over, hoping the next voice will have the power to help you. When a company structures its service department around making it difficult for customers to receive a resolution, the whole company is living outside of integrity.

When a service staff member is not living in integrity, they will promise anything, and say anything, to get you off the phone with no intention of doing the work to solve the problem. They will say they will call you at a certain time and you never hear from them again. They can fix the problem but it takes too much effort or they forget to do it.

We've all been late. It doesn't mean we don't have integrity. It means at that moment, we were not living in it.
We can always strive to live in integrity.

Living in Integrity

When we live in integrity, it shows and everyone wins because the environment is one of collaboration, productivity, and accountability. Leaders who lead with integrity are supportive, transparent, and trustworthy. Opportunity flows to those teams with integrity because they work together to get the job done.

In Sales:

When we live in integrity we do what we say and we say what we know we can do. We create an environment where others feel they can ask for what they want because they believe we will deliver on our promises.

A salesperson who lives in integrity is more concerned with the relationship and wants to provide clients with solutions to meet their needs. They are more concerned with the customer's happiness than they are about the commission. If something goes wrong and their promise isn't being met, they will bend over backwards to solve the problem, even if it affects their commission. Doing what is right matters more to them than the pay cheque.



If you want to be a repected leader, you have to have the integrity to do what you say and to live up to your promises, no matter what.

In Leadership:

When leaders act with integrity, they have open communication, treat their teams with respect, and are consistent in their messaging with all departments and stakeholders. They understand the limits of their teams and work to help them find the resources they need to complete promises. Leaders who live in integrity are mindful of every word they say and ensure their behaviours match their words and their value systems.

In Service:

If the serviceperson has integrity, they will do whatever they can to find out what happened and what solution they can provide. They will call you back because they said they would and if the company does not allow them to provide a satisfactory solution, they will offer to pass the issue on to someone who can fix it. Then they will follow up with that person to make sure the customer is being taken care of. Most large service call centres do not enable their service people to act in integrity, which results in terrible service all around.

Living outside of Integrity Checklist

- Meetings start late
- Deadlines are being pushed back due to uncompleted work
- Don't trust team members to complete tasks
- Blame others, circumstances, and processes for failures
- Don't know where team members are in the project
- Fail to keep your promises, agreements and commitments
- Micromanage and resist delegating.
- Inconsistency between what you say and how you behave
- Scapegoating others
- Gossip to others about people on your team
- Promise something you aren't sure you can do
- Hope problems will go away if ignored
- Refuse to be held accountable by your colleagues.
- Use personal misfortune to gain favours at work
- Cheat - taxes, diet, marriage, cards, etc
- Don't ask colleagues for help
- Scared of employee reviews
- Refuse to follow through on decisions
- Secret back-door negotiations to create alliances
- Refuse to apologize

Integrity Checklist

- You are always on time or 10 min early
- Loyal to your spouse, friends, and team members
- Are striving to be a better version of yourself
- Understands failures are part of the process not a fault
- Is a resource of information for others to go to
- Can count on them to get the job done
- Enables teammates to do their job
- What you see is what you get
- Takes responsibility for actions
- Willing to fix problems
- Are transparent with intentions
- Say what you mean and mean what you say
- Mediates conflict
- Shares appropriate personal stories
- Have nothing to hide, welcome the tax audit
- Asks for help
- Focused on solutions not problems
- Apologizes for mistakes
- Rarely miss a deadline
- People trust them

Which List has the Most Checks?

If there are more checks on the first list than the second, you might have issues with integrity on your team. Living outside of integrity breeds distrust and will lead to obstacles and delays on projects.

Ask yourself.

Does your team consistently meet project deadlines?

When you think of integrity in a team, what words come to mind?

Is your team performing to their potential?

Do others constantly come to you to get a job done?

Are there secrets, gossip, or rumours being spread by your team?

Are fear, doubt and anxiety a large part of your team?

Do you generally feel your team does what it promises?

Why is integrity easy or difficult for you?



Integrity

We've all heard the saying, "Integrity is doing the right thing when no one is watching." This is only one aspect of integrity. Integrity is something people claim to possess or value in their lives, however, at times their actions do not align with their words. They are late for meetings. They do not follow through with projects or they forget tasks they promised they would do. These things may be seen as small and unimportant on their own, however, over time the disconnect between our behaviours and our words results in a blind spot which affects our success.

If you are consistently late for meetings or production deadlines, your co-workers, managers, and customers will begin to see you as unreliable. It does not matter that you finally finished the project, if it's a month overdue and affected the productivity of other team members or teams. When they need someone to complete another project you may not be the person they choose because they do not trust you to complete the project in a timely manner.



Think about a time when someone told you they would do something and they didn't. They might have forgotten, got too busy, or started to do but then abandoned the task as 'good enough.' When this happens how do you feel?

Integrity is a habit.

To live in integrity you must be mindful of what you say and take action to ensure what you say is what you do. If you cannot keep your word on the daily things, others will not trust you work on the important things.

Think about the people in your life. Do you know someone who is known for always being late? What about a person who promises the moon and then disappears when it comes time to put in the work? How often has someone oversold you on a product or service and then under delivered?

The second part of integrity is delivering at the best of your ability regardless of circumstances. It means not cutting corners, or doing a half-assed job. It is about delivering consistent results which people can rely on.



We are human.

There are times when we fall and fail in our integrity for one reason or another. We are not perfect, nor should we expect perfection from others. We all make mistakes, it is what we do afterwards which will determine if we continue to live in integrity or not.

Think about a time someone made a mistake which affected you negatively. How did they react? Did they fix the situation or did they pass blame onto someone else? Were you left holding the bag or did they provide you with a solution you could live with?

Integrity happens when you take responsibility for your actions and work to fix the situation. It is about making sure others are not negatively affected by our mistakes because we step up. Making mistakes is not a bad thing, it is how we learn and grow. We can stay in integrity by communicating what went wrong and how we are going to fix it - Then doing just that.

Tools to help us

If upon reflection you discover a disconnect between your words and your actions, you will need to find the tools to help you live in integrity. If you are always late for meetings, figure out why you are late. Do you get distracted by something and lose track of the time? Do you forget to check your daily calendar to see what appointments you have that day? Are constantly rushing from one appointment to the next with no idea why you are always late?

We all make mistakes. What matters is what we do after the mistake which determines our level of integrity

Discover the reason you cannot live in integrity and seek out tools to help you to arrive early. Do you need to set an alarm on your phone so you know what time it is? Do you need a better calendar system which is more in tune with your working style? Do you need to understand how long it will take to get from one place to the next and then double the travel time into your calendar to account for traffic? Perhaps you need to learn how to say "No, that time doesn't work, how about this one?" Instead of always agreeing to other's timetables and ending up double booked.

There are lots of systems and tools available to help you manage your schedule and stay on track so, you can arrive early to meetings. Once you know the reason you behaviours and words are disconnected, you can then find the tool which will work best for your working style.

Integrity is a choice not a value. It is the consistent choosing to do the right thing when no one is watching, to do what we say we are going to do, to deliver our best efforts, and to take responsibility for fixing our mistakes. Integrity is about choosing to be and do better than we did before.





Likky helps leaders find their Blind spots to gain control of their businesses and relationships. He is a sought after key-note speaker and corporate leadership coach.

For businesses to excel they need to search for organizational and personal blind spots because they are why we fail to have authentic connections with people. They are the reason we struggle to find our purpose and passion in life and why we don't have a clear focus to get the outcomes we want in our work and our lives.

Getting to the source of what's driving our behaviors requires vulnerability and a willingness to accept how we show up to others, which can be uncomfortable. Especially, if we are not ready to accept our flaws and faults.

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