

## INTEGRITY- ASPIRATIONAL OR ACHEIVABLE

I remember in early recovery when people would talk about the principles found in the 12 steps – I barely had a passing acquaintance with any of them, heck, I even had to look up some of them to find out what they meant! Integrity was one that seemed completely aspirational – I certainly didn't have any when I got here, and most of the people I had surrounded myself with had as much or less. But as I heard the long-timers talking about these principles, I realized that I needed to somehow acquire some of them if I was going to stay sober AND like my life.

So, what is integrity? Google tells me it means “uprightness of character or action, implies trustworthiness and incorruptibility.” I had nothing remotely similar to that when I got here. Today I have moments where I have all of it, and other moments where I have some, and others where it is lost. I had a lot of runway when I got here, and I have a little less today, but still miles ahead of me to go.

What do I attribute what little progress I've made to? The steps. The fellowship. Erosion. Maturity. Working with others. Repeat. Repeat. Repeat. How did all of that work on me? Step 1 helps me get honest. Step 2 gives me some hope. Step 3 challenges me to make a decision and follow it with action. Step 4 helps me with more honesty, some responsibility, and a lot of awareness. Step 5 helps again with honesty, with connection, and some more hope. Step 6 challenges me to define what is “good” enough. Step 7 reminds me that I need help. Step 8 hits me with another truth bomb about how my behaviors impact those around me. Step 9 tests my willingness to go to any length to own my stuff. Step 10 encourages me to keep digging, to be aware, to observe me, my reactions and my actions throughout the day. Step 11 calls for me to pause and seek, to try to strengthen my relationship with a higher power that I still don't quite understand. Step 12 tells me to work with others and practice those principles.

All the steps work together to cause some sort of rearrangement within me – or as it states in the 2nd Appendix, a profound alteration in my reactions to life. Looking back, I see that the new reactions happened before I even realized it. I wasn't drinking. I was taking suggestions. I was following through. I was asking for help. I was admitting I was wrong. I was being honest. I was slowly moving from being a self-consumed alcoholic into a human being. Over time, things people told me to do, that I had to effort to accomplish (hard stuff like saying hi to a new person, greeting at a meeting, cleaning up after a meeting, you know HARD stuff) was slowly becoming a natural extension of who I was (there's that pesky profound alteration in my reactions to life again). The steps were working on me.

Today I can usually be counted on. People even trust me. I've been given responsibilities that I strive to live up to. I'm more honest than I ever have been. I'm learning to put my wants and desires aside and seek what is best for the group – whether that group is in my home, my office, or in my AA groups. Today I have friends because I have learned how to be a friend. I'm even getting better at being incorruptible (at least in actions, my thought life could use some work!).

I am not the same guy that I was when I got here, so much so that I can say, with all sincerity, that if you had my life, you wouldn't want to drink either. I owe it all to the program of Alcoholics Anonymous – it saved my life, it gave me a life, and it gave me clear cut instructions on how to live it so that I can look myself in the eyes when I'm shaving because the steps, and the principles behind them, continue to work on me.

A grateful alcoholic.



## Daily Reflection:

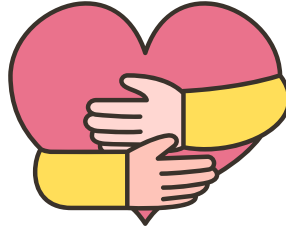
### Respect For Others:

“Such parts of our story we tell to someone who will understand, yet to be unaffected. The rule is we *MUST* be hard on ourselves, but always considerate of others.”

~ *Daily Reflections*. New York: Alcoholics Anonymous World Services, 2016, p. 136.

## Principle 5: INTEGRITY

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## Save the Dates!

May 4th:  
W.S.F.C.

### A TIMELINE ARCHIVES WORKSHOP

Saturday @ 1:30 p.m.  
710 East Ogden Avenue #430  
Zoom: I.D. 7106101935  
P.W: 61035

May 11th:  
FOX VALLEY OPEN

7:00-9:00 p.m.  
Lord of Life Lutheran Church  
40W605 Route 38  
Elburn, IL 60119

May 15th:  
District 43 Business Meeting

7:00-8:00 p.m.  
ZOOM MEETING ID:  
96566590236  
PW: 932879

May 18th:  
Spring Committee Meeting

8:00 a.m (approximately until)  
2:30 p.m.  
Lord of Life Lutheran Church  
40W605 Route 38  
Elburn, IL 60119

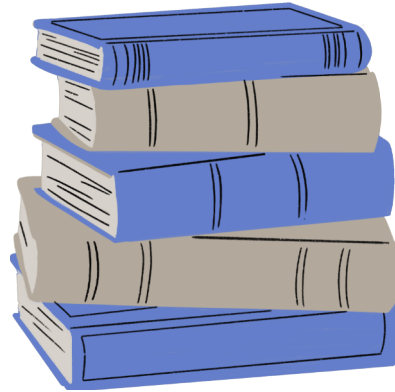
New Meeting!  
Serenity Sisters  
A.A. Women's Discussion Group

8-9 p.m.  
Community UMC 20 Center street  
Naperville, IL  
For more information  
please contact:  
Lisa M. 630-210-6678  
Kat W. 779-279-7389

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

### Fifth Step Prayer

Higher Power, my inventory has showed me who I am, yet I ask for your help. In admitting my wrongs to another person, and admitting them to you. Assure me, and be with me in this step. For without this step I cannot progress my recovery. With your help, I can do this.



Integrity is an intimidating word. It is the “quality of being honest and having strong moral principles.” Those are not qualities that came easily. I spent many years lying, manipulating, mistreating myself and others, and generally living a dishonest existence. The principle of step one is honesty and is the principle that we must practice in order to gain integrity. Throughout my sobriety, I have had the opportunity to lie or to be honest. And more times than not, I have chosen to be honest because I don't want to live the way that I was living. That is what the steps taught me. Being honest is hard and scary and humbling.

What does being honest really look like? It means admitting that I'm wrong as soon as I realize it. It means owning up to hurtful words or actions. It means speaking up in meetings when I have an issue or problem. It means not forgetting the past or wishing to shut the door on it. And being willing to share that past with others.

Have I gained integrity during my sobriety? I think that I have and I hope that those around me would agree. As long as I follow the principle of Step One, I have a good shot.

- Amy P.

# LITTLE STEPS MATTER