

L

MESSAGE

Subtle Slips

"The credibility of the messenger can affect whether or not people will be receptive to the message" – Lee Strobel

Two college professors wanted a sound definition of Integrity so they invited a wise philosopher to come and speak with them. They asked the philosopher 'what is integrity?' He thought for a moment and said "Integrity is how you behave when there is no one there to see you." They then invited in a business man hoping he could add to this. The business man said "Integrity is when you make a deal and shake on it and both parties honour the hand shake." They were pleased so far and then proceeded to invite in a lawyer. They asked the lawyer the same question: 'What is integrity?' He jumps up from his chair, walks over to the door checks there's no one listening in, closes and locks the doors, walks over to the windows, pulls the blinds down and then walked over to where the Professors were sitting, and in a very hushed voice he said "What do you want it to be?" This can NEVER be our view toward what integrity is.

A few years ago an investigative reporter was assigned to dig up the dirt on Billy Graham and write an exposé on him. So he dove in, he interviewed everyone, he searched through the financial records, he sifted through Graham's organization from one end to the other and in conclusion he wrote:

"He is a man without shadows." Character flaws tend to lurk around us like shadows, which would mean that our integrity flaws show up most when we stand before God and he shines his presence into our lives.

Last episode I spoke of how the cracks in our integrity slowly and subtly, yet undeniably appear in our lives. The affect is subtle in that we don't necessarily realise that the cracks are appearing and creeping into our character make up, and therefore we don't see how drastically it can negatively impact the way we lead. In fact often we don't even like to admit that the character flaw is a fundamental weakness we possess. That's why it is always justifiable:

- "Sorry I didn't do that, I've been so busy I just didn't have time."
- "I was going to be there for you, but I had another engagement that came up, that I couldn't miss out on."
- "I know you said no but I thought it would be in your best interests."
- "I know I shouldn't but I just couldn't help myself."
- "I know I can't stand that person, but it's their fault they're that way, so they can deal with it."
- "Sorry I'm late again but it wasn't my fault."

All are excuses for subtly widening crack in our integrity, which we can easily justify and most times completely avoid acknowledging! So if you hear yourself using any of the above statements, or ones similar, then that is the warning sign that there is a weakness in your character that needs to be addressed.

I have used this analogy of the integrity cube to arouse your thinking on this central and vital aspect of leadership. In the coming weeks I'm going to switch metaphors and speak about various character traits (or integrity pitfalls) using the metaphor of the human body. Our bodies comprise of 12 different systems that regulate every aspect of what we do. I'm going to equate these with 12 different integrity systems that regulate the health of our leadership. I trust that as we explore each of these systems it will both renew and encourage you, helping you to seal any leaks that may be appearing in the integrity of the walls of your leadership cube.