

ethikos Volume 34, Number 10. October 01, 2020 Integrity—it's all in the word!

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These days, social distancing allows our thoughts to reach our mind's corners perhaps a bit more than usual. I recently found myself thinking about integrity and what it stands for. Approaching this topic through the lens of a homeschooling activity proved to be instructive as well as fun. Here is my view on what integrity means, letter by letter.

Starting with the first of two *i*'s, business compliance and ethics leaders with strong integrity look to start from a position of strength. Integrity means being inspirational. As compliance leaders, we need to make a good first impression, and we can do that quickly by being inspirational. Share a story, a perspective of success or failure, a good piece of humor. We also look to find inspiration within ourselves by finding the flow of our work, as well as embracing and sharing our passion for doing the right thing as a visible leader. We inspire by being courageous in our conversations and following through with our actions. My first *i* is about getting others to hop on board by being inspirational.

"Nuanced" is a great word to describe us compliance and ethics leaders who have strong integrity. Being nuanced means taking the time to understand an issue, its genesis, and the downstream effects. This requires us to be inquisitive, nonjudgmental, and able to efficiently parse apart the facts to see the forest through the trees. Understanding nuance is understanding how to develop strategy, be a systems thinker, and articulate truisms. Also, it takes a passion for nuance to find good data to drive good decisions. The strongest compliance and ethics leaders know how to ask the right questions and embrace nuance.

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