Ways to Show Integrity and Loving-Kindness

David Richo

1. I am caring for my body by a healthy lifestyle. I am caring for my mind and spirit by psychological work on myself when needed and by faithfulness to spiritual practices too.
2. I do my best to keep my word, honor commitments, and follow through on the tasks I agree to do.
3. I am making every effort to abide by standards of rigorous honesty, courtesy, and respect in all my dealings no matter how others act toward me.
4. I forego taking advantage of anyone because of his or her ignorance, misfortune, or financial straits. My question is not "What can I get away with?" but "What is the right thing to do?" If I fall down in this, I can admit it, make amends, and resolve to act differently next time. Now I apologize more easily and willingly when necessary.
5. I keep examining my conscience with true candor. I take searching inventories not only about how I may have harmed others, but also about how I may not have activated my potentials or shared my gifts, how I may still be holding on to prejudices or the need to retaliate, how I may still not be as loving, inclusive, and open as I can be.
6. I appreciate positive feedback. I also welcome any well-intentioned critique that shows me where I might be less caring, less tolerant, less open than I can be. When I am shown up as a pretender or confronted about being mean or inauthentic, I am not defensive but take it as information about what I have to work on.
7. I am letting go of the need to keep up appearances or to project a false or overly-impressive self-image. Now I want to appear as I am, without pretense and no matter how unflattering.
8. I do not want to use any charms of body, word, or mind to trick or deceive others. I am not trying to ingratiate myself with anyone in order to get on his or her good side. Being loved for who I am has become more important—and more interesting—than upholding or advancing the ever-shaky status of my ego.
9. As I say yes to the reality of who I am, with pride in my gifts and unabashed awareness of my limits, I notice that I can love myself and that I become more lovable too.
10. I now measure my success by how much steadfast love I have, not by how much I have in the bank, how much I achieve in business, how much status I have attained, or how much power I have over others. The central—and most exhilarating—focus of my life is to show my love in the style that is uniquely mine, in every way I can, here and now, always and everywhere, no one excluded.

11. I am learning to trust others when the record shows they can be trusted while I, nonetheless, commit myself to being trustworthy regardless of what others may do. I am always open to rebuilding trust when it has been broken, if the other person is willing.
12. I remain open to reconciling with others after conflict. At the same time, I am learning to release—with love and without blame—those who show themselves to be unwilling to relate to me respectfully. I accept the given of sudden unexplained silence, absence, or rejection by others and will not use that style myself.
13. I am learning to be assertive by asking for what I need without fear or inhibition. I ask without demand, expectation, manipulation, or a sense of entitlement. I show respect for the timing and choices of others by being able to take no for an answer.
14. If people occasionally hurt me, I can say "Ouch!" and ask to open a dialogue. I may ask for amends but I can drop the topic if they are not forthcoming. No matter what, I do not choose to get even, hold grudges, keep a record of wrongs, or hate anyone. "What goes around comes around" has become "May what goes around come around in a way that helps him or her learn and grow." I am thereby hoping for the transformation of others rather than retribution against them.
15. I do not let others abuse me and, internally, I want to interpret their harshness as coming from their own pain and as a sadly confused way of letting me know they need connection but don't know how to ask for it in healthy ways. I recognize this with concern not with censure or scorn. I do not gloat over the sufferings or defeats of those who have hurt me. "It serves them right!" has changed to: "May this serve to help them evolve."
16. I do not knowingly hurt or intend to offend others. I act kindly toward others not to impress them, win their approval, or obligate them but because I really am kind—or working on it. If others fail to thank me or to return my kindness, that does not have to stop me from behaving lovingly nonetheless.
17. I am practicing ways to express my anger against unfairness directly and nonviolently rather than in abusive, bullying, threatening, blaming, out-of-control, or passive ways.
18. I have a sense of humor but not at the expense of others. I want to use humor to poke fun at human foibles, especially my own. I do not engage in ridicule, mocking, put-downs, digs, barbs, snide, catty or bigoted remarks, sarcasm or "comebacks." When others use hurtful humor toward me I want to feel the pain in both of us and look for ways to bring more mutual respect into our communication.
19. I do not hold anyone in contempt. I do not laugh at people for their mistakes and misfortunes but look for ways to be understanding and supportive.
20. I do not try to embarrass someone by shaming or making him or her look bad in front of other people.

21. I am less concerned with being right or in insisting on my own point of view in a conversation or group project. I am now more apt to listen to and appreciate the contributions of others, while also sharing my own view in a collaborative dialogue.
22. I notice how there are people who are excluded from the in-group. Rather than be comforted that I am still safely an insider, especially by joining in gossiping about them, I want to sense the pain in being an outsider. Then I can reach out and include everyone in my circle of love, compassion, and respect.
23. In a group situation, when someone is shamed, humiliated, or harshly criticized, I do not want to be glad that the finger was not pointed at me. I want to support the victim of aggression by asking for a respectful tone in the dialogue. I know that standing up for the victim may turn the bully's fury on me so I am continually working on building up my courage.
24. I look at other people and their choices with intelligent discernment but without censure. I still notice the shortcomings of others and myself, but now I am beginning to see them as facts to deal with rather than flaws to be criticized or be ashamed of. Accepting others as they are has become more important than whether they are what I want them to be.
25. I avoid criticizing, interfering, or giving advice that is not specifically asked for. I take care of myself by staying away from those who use this intrusive approach toward me, while still holding them in my spiritual circle of loving-kindness.
26. I never give up on believing that everyone has an innate goodness and that being loved by me can contribute to bringing it out.
27. I am willing to participate in the harmless conventions and social rituals that make others happy, for example, family dinners or acknowledgment of birthdays. If a social or family situation becomes toxic, I excuse myself politely.
28. I am less and less competitive in relationships at home and work and find happiness in cooperation and community. I shun situations in which my winning means that others lose in a humiliating way.
29. In intimate bonds, I honor equality, keep agreements, work on problems, and act in respectful and trustworthy ways. My goal is not to use a relationship to gratify my ego but to dispossess myself of ego to gratify the relationship.
30. My partner—or prospective partner—and I can contemplate this list together. These commitments can become the groundrules of our relationship. Then we have found the path to trusting one another.
31. I want my sexual style to adhere to the same standards of integrity and loving-kindness that apply in all areas of my life. More and more, my sexuality expresses love, passion, and joyful playfulness. I also remain committed to a responsible adult style of relating and enjoying.
32. Confronted with the suffering in the world, I do not turn my eyes away, nor do I get stuck in blaming God or humanity but simply ask: "What then shall *I* do? What is the opportunity in this for my practice of loving-kindness?" I keep

finding ways to respond even if they have to be minimal: "It is better to light one candle than to curse the darkness."

33. I feel a caring concern for the world around me. I look for ways to work for justice and commit myself to nonviolence. I support restorative rather than retributive justice. I feel myself called to action by violations of human rights, nuclear armaments, economic oppression, racial injustice, and ecological exploitation. I keep educating myself on these issues.
34. With planetary consciousness, I tread with care on the earth with what St. Bonaventure called, "a courtesy toward natural things."
35. I appreciate that whatever love or wisdom I may have or show comes not *from* me but *through* me. I give thanks for these encouraging graces and say yes to the stirring call to live up to them.
36. These ideals are becoming my personal standards. I feel they are pathways to psychological and spiritual maturity. I see how they increase my integrity and expand my loving-kindness. All this makes me feel so good about myself that I am no longer so triggered by what others do or say to me.
37. I am not hard on myself when I fail to live up to these ideals. I just keep practicing earnestly. The sincerity of my intention and my ongoing efforts feel like the equivalent of success. I am letting go of perfectionism and of guilt about not being perfect.
38. I do not think I am above other people because I honor this list. Nor do I demand that others follow it.
39. I am sharing this list with those who are open to it.
40. I keep placing the intention—or praying—that someday these commitments can become the style not only of individuals but of groups in the world community: corporate, political, religious.

May I show all the love I have
In any way I can
Today and everyday,
To everything and everyone, including me,
Since love is what I'm here to give and be.
Now nothing matters to me more than love
Or gives me greater joy.

This list is from my book: *Coming Home to Who You Are*

(Shambhala, 2012)

You are welcome to copy and share this list.

It can also be downloaded from my website: davericho.com