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INTEGRITY: A POSITIVE MODEL THAT INCORPORATES THE NORMATIVE PHENOMENA OF MORALITY, ETHICS, AND LEGALITY – ABRIDGED

Werner H. Erhard
Independent
werhard@ssrn.com

Michael C. Jensen
Jesse Isidor Straus Professor of Business Administration Emeritus, Harvard Business School
mjensen@hbs.edu

Steve Zaffron
CEO, Vanto Group
Senior Program Leader, Landmark Worldwide LLC
szaffron@vantogroup.com

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In creating this abridged version we drew from the full paper referenced above; however we have re-arranged the order of some sections and in some cases added or dropped headings or sub-headings and in some cases added new text.

Some of the material presented in this course/paper is based on or derived from the consulting and program material of the Vanto Group, and from material presented in the Landmark Forum and other programs offered by Landmark Worldwide LLC. The ideas and the methodology created by Werner Erhard underlie much of the material.

Abstract and Summary

This paper is an abridged version of our much longer paper of the same title, available at: http://ssrn.com/abstract=920625.

This abridged version of the paper does not include all aspects dealt with in this Abstract and Summary of the full paper, and is written under the assumption that the reader has read the following 6-page document that lays out the basic structure of our model and analysis. It is available at: http://ssrn.com/abstract=1511274

We present a positive model of integrity that, as we distinguish and define integrity, provides powerful access to increased performance for individuals, groups, organizations, and societies. Our model reveals the causal link between integrity and increased performance, in whatever way one chooses to define performance (for example, quality of life, or value-creation for all entities), and provides access to that causal link. Integrity is thus a factor of production as important as knowledge and technology. Yet the major role of integrity in productivity and performance has been largely hidden or unnoticed, or even ignored by economists and others.

Virtually all of us explain many of the difficulties and problems facing us as individuals, and facing our families, groups, organizations, societies, and nations, as being caused by other individuals, families, groups, organizations, societies, or nations, who act to make themselves better off at our expense. Or alternatively, we explain our difficulties and problems as resulting from nothing more than external circumstances beyond our control. In this treatment of integrity we argue that a significant proportion of all of the difficulties and problems we face are the result of our own out-of-integrity behavior – our out-of-integrity behavior as individuals, families, groups, organizations, societies, or nations.

However, because of the way *integrity*, *morality*, *ethics*, and *legality* are currently understood and related to, the fact that we ourselves are often the source of these difficulties and problems is invisible to us. And therefore, we have no access to eliminating them.

The philosophical discourse, and common usage as reflected in dictionary definitions, leave an overlap and confusion among the four phenomena of integrity, morality, ethics, and legality. This overlap and confusion confounds the four phenomena so that the efficacy and potential power of each is seriously diminished.

In this new model of integrity, we provide our readers straightforward actionable access to resolving these difficulties and problems, or better yet not causing them in the first place. We do this by distinguishing all four phenomena – integrity, morality, ethics, and legality – as existing within two separate realms. Integrity exists in a *positive* realm devoid of normative content. Integrity is thus not about good or bad, or right or wrong, or what should or should not be. Morality, ethics and legality exist in a *normative* realm of virtues (that is, they *are* about good and bad, right and wrong, or what should or should not be). Furthermore, within their respective realms, each of the four phenomena is distinguished as belonging to a distinct and separate domain, and the definition of each as a term is made clear, unambiguous, and non-overlapping.

We distinguish the *domain* of integrity as the objective state or condition of an object, system, person, group, or organizational entity, and, consistent with the first two of the three definitions in

Webster's dictionary, *define* integrity as a state or condition of being whole, complete, unbroken, unimpaired, sound, perfect condition.

We assert that integrity (the condition of being whole and complete) is a necessary condition for workability, and that the resultant level of workability determines for an individual, group, or organization the available opportunity set for performance. Hence, the way we treat integrity in our model provides an unambiguous and actionable access to the opportunity for superior performance, no matter how one defines performance.

For an individual we distinguish integrity as a matter of that person's word being whole and complete. For a group or organizational entity we define integrity as that group's or organization's word being whole and complete. A group's or organization's word consists of what is said between the people in that group or organization, and what is said by or on behalf of the group or organization. In the context of integrity being a matter of a human entity's word being whole and complete, we define integrity for an individual, group, or organization as: honoring one's word.

Oversimplifying somewhat, "honoring your word", as we define it, means you either keep your word, or as soon as you know that you will not, you say that you will not be keeping your word to those who were counting on your word and clean up any mess you caused by not keeping your word. By "keeping your word" we mean doing what you said you would do and by the time you said you would do it.

Honoring your word is also the route to creating whole and complete social and working relationships. In addition, it provides an actionable pathway to earning the trust of others. Perhaps most importantly, it provides an actionable pathway to being whole and complete with oneself, or in other words to being an integrated person.

We demonstrate that applying cost-benefit analysis to *honoring* your word guarantees that you will be untrustworthy. And that, with one arcane exception, you will not be a person of integrity, thereby reducing both the workability of your life and your opportunity for performance. The one arcane exception to this conclusion is the following: if when giving your word you announce that you will apply cost-benefit analysis to honoring your word you will maintain your integrity, but you also will have announced that you are an unmitigated opportunist. The virtually automatic application of cost-benefit analysis to one's integrity (an inherent tendency in most of us) lies at the heart of much out-of-integrity and untrustworthy behavior in modern life.

Regarding the relation between integrity and the three virtue phenomena of morality, ethics and legality, this new model: 1) encompasses all four terms in one consistent theory, 2) makes clear and unambiguous the "moral compasses" potentially available in each of the three virtue phenomena, and 3) by revealing the relation between honoring the standards of the three virtue phenomena and performance (including being complete as a person and the quality of life), raises the likelihood that the now clear moral compasses can actually shape human behavior. This all falls out primarily from the unique treatment of integrity in our model as a purely positive phenomenon, independent of normative value judgments.

In summary, we show that defining integrity as honoring one's word (as we have defined "honoring one's word"): 1) provides an unambiguous and actionable access to the opportunity for superior performance and competitive advantage at the individual, organizational and social levels, and 2) empowers the three virtue phenomena of morality, ethics and legality.

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1. A NEW MODEL OF INTEGRITY

A. INTEGRITY: PROLOGUE

What follows is our new model of integrity. We began our effort to clarify the nature of integrity by researching its common usage as it appears in dictionaries, and by examining the philosophical discussion on integrity. In both cases, as we will later show, we found confusion and

* This paper is based on ideas and materials originally developed by Werner Erhard in 1975 (cf. his presentations on Integrity January 1, 1975 San Francisco, CA, and on Responsibility, Integrity, Happiness February 25, 1976 Denver, Colorado). Those ideas have also been part of the consulting services of the Vanto Group (formerly known as Landmark Education Business Development) and part of the programs of Landmark Worldwide, LLC. Many people have contributed to our thoughts and ideas on this topic and to the execution of this paper – too many to name completely. But we do wish to acknowledge the support, comments and suggestions of Chris Argyris, Lucian Bebchuk, Carl Bergstrom, Frances Cairncross, Sandra Carr, John Clippinger, Anne Coughlin, Xavier Casterner, Josh Cohen, Miriam Diesendruck, Joe DiMaggio, Oliver Goodenough, Kari Granger, Ron Heifetz, Bruce Gregory, Brian Hall, Rakesh Khurana, Tony Mayo, Kate Parrot, Hillary Putnam, Allan Scherr, Gonneke Spits, Elaine Sternberg, Sue Strober, Karen Wruck, Richard Zeckhauser, Mark Zupan, and especially Michael Zimmerman.

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confounding between *integrity*, *morality*, and *ethics*. We chose first to see if it was possible to eliminate the confusion and confounding amongst those three terms, while accounting for the essence of the common usage definitions and the important elements of what philosophy says about integrity. At the same time we avoided inventing any new definitions.

Our aim in settling on our definitions of each of the three terms was to honor the general common usage and philosophical meaning of each of the terms, while at the same time eliminating the confusion and confounding amongst them.

In defining integrity in our model, we honor common usage by using the first two definitions that appear in Webster's Dictionary[1]. We eliminate the third and final definition that includes "morality" and therefore generates the confusion and confounding between integrity and the virtue terms of morality and ethics ("ethics" being found in the definition of "morality"). However, in our new model we have honored the commonly held philosophical idea reflected in common usage that morality and ethics are somehow related to integrity by showing exactly how the virtue phenomena of morality and ethics are related to integrity as a positive phenomenon.

What we mean by the term "virtue" in the phrases "virtue concepts" and "virtue phenomena" are concepts and phenomena that deal with the normative standards of right and wrong, desirable and undesirable, and good and bad.

A fundamental basis for this new model is the assignment of appropriate *realms* for each of the four phenomena (integrity, morality, ethics, and legality). For us the appropriate realms are those that make them effective tools for understanding and affecting human behavior. We assign each of the four phenomena to one of two realms, namely a *normative realm* of virtues, and a *positive realm* devoid of normative values. In our model, morality, ethics and legality exist in the normative virtue realm, whereas integrity exists in the positive realm.[2]

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1 Webster's, Webster's New World Dictionary on PowerCD version 2.1, based on Webster's New World Dictionary®, Third College Edition 1994

2 Drawing on *Webster's New World Dictionary* we use the following definitions of morality, ethics and legality: In this new model of integrity, "morality" exists in the normative realm, and within that realm morality is in the ***social*** *virtue domain*, and within that domain we define morality as a term as: *In a given society, in a given era of that society, morality is the generally accepted standards of what is desirable and undesirable; of right and wrong conduct, and what is considered by that society as good behavior and what is considered bad behavior of a person, group, or entity.*

In this new model of integrity, "ethics" exists in the normative realm, and within that realm ethics is in the ***group*** *virtue domain* (where a group is defined as a subclass of a given entity), and within that domain we define ethics as a term as: *In a given group (the benefits of inclusion in which group a person, sub-group, or entity enjoys), ethics is the agreed on standards of what is desirable and undesirable; of right and wrong conduct; of what is considered by that*

B. INTEGRITY AS A POSITIVE MODEL

For those who may be unfamiliar with the term "positive" in the way it is used here, *positive* does not mean the opposite of *negative*; that is, by "positive theory" we don't mean a theory of what is good or right as contrasted with what is bad or wrong. By "positive theory" we mean a model that describes the way the world "behaves" – that is, the way the world actually is and how it operates independent of any value judgments about its desirability or undesirability, and a theory that is empirically testable (falsifiable in the Popperian sense, (Popper 1959)).

Positive in the way it is used here contrasts with *normative*, where "normative" means establishing, relating to, or deriving from a human standard or norm that indicates what is considered to be good and right, or bad and wrong. Or more specifically, "normative" means what is considered desirable or undesirable in conduct or behavior – that is, a value judgment about what should be or should not be.[3] In short, *positive* as it is used here is about "what is", while *normative* is about what human beings think "ought to be".

Note that when fully developed this new theory ultimately transforms the normative *concepts* of integrity, morality, ethics, and legality into positive *phenomena*. *Concept* is defined in *Webster's New World Dictionary* (2008)[4] as "an idea or thought, esp. a generalized idea of a thing or class of things; abstract notion". *Concept* sharply contrasts with *phenomenon*, which is defined as "any event, circumstance, or experience that is apparent to the senses and that can be scientifically described or appraised".

Consequently, when integrity, morality, ethics, and legality are taken to be normative virtues, they fit the definition of *concept*, but when in this new theory they are shown to be positive entities they fit the definition of *phenomenon*. Consistent with this difference, when we are

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group as good and bad behavior of a person, sub-group, or entity that is a member of the group, and may include defined bases for discipline, including exclusion.

In this new model of integrity, "legality" exists in the normative realm, and within that realm legality is in the ***governmental*** *virtue domain*, and within that domain we define legality as a term as: *the system of laws and regulations of right and wrong behavior that are enforceable by the state (federal, state, or local governmental body in the U.S.) through the exercise of its policing powers and judicial process, with the threat and use of penalties, including its monopoly on the right to use physical violence.*

3 See Keynes (1891, pp. 34-35, and p. 46) *The Scope and Method of Political Economy*; and Friedman, (1996, p. 3) "The Methodology of Positive Economics", in *Essays in Positive Economics*.

4 This is the dictionary we use throughout the full document and this abridged version, in which dictionary the definitions are generally consistent with other dictionaries.

speaking about integrity, morality, ethics, and legality in their *normative* sense we use the term "concepts" (as in, normative concepts). In contrast, when we are speaking about integrity, morality, ethics, and legality in their *positive* sense, as they are revealed by this new theory, we use the term "phenomena" (as in, positive phenomena).

C. INTEGRITY: DEFINITION

In *Webster's New World Dictionary* "integrity" is defined as: "1. the quality or state of being complete; unbroken condition; wholeness; entirety; 2. the quality or state of being unimpaired; perfect condition; soundness; and 3. the quality or state of being of sound moral principle; uprightness, honesty, and sincerity".

As with the definitions of morality and ethics, including "sound moral principle in the definition of integrity (definition 3 in *Webster's* definition above) confounds and confuses the distinction between each of these three. In our new model, the definition of integrity specifically does not include Webster's definition 3, "the quality or state of being of sound moral principle; uprightness, honesty, and sincerity". While the virtue concepts mentioned in definition 3 are not included in our definition of integrity, the way integrity is treated in our new model does take account of morality, ethics and legality by making these standards part of one's word unless one has publicly announced one's refusal to abide by one or more of those standards and agrees to accept any consequences for such refusal.

As we have said, in our new model the three phenomena of morality, ethics, and legality are normative virtue phenomena, and integrity is not. Integrity as we distinguish it is a purely positive phenomenon, independent of normative value judgments. Integrity is thus not about good or bad, or right or wrong, or even about what should be or what should not be.

In this new model of integrity, "integrity" exists in the positive realm, and within that realm its *domain* is one of the ***objective state or condition***, and within that domain we define "integrity" as: *a state or condition of being whole, complete, unbroken, unimpaired, sound, perfect condition.*

Hereafter we sometimes use the term "whole and complete" to represent this entire definition.

2. THE INTEGRITY OF OBJECTS AND SYSTEMS, AND THE UNIVERSAL CONSEQUENCES OF DIMINISHED INTEGRITY

A. INTEGRITY OF AN OBJECT

In this new model, we distinguish integrity for objects and systems as being a matter of the components that make up the object or system and the relationship between those components, and their design, the implementation of the design, and the use to which they are put. For an object or system to have integrity all of the foregoing must fit our definition of integrity (be whole, complete, unbroken, unimpaired, sound, perfect condition).

Consider a bicycle wheel as an example of an object and its integrity. As we remove spokes from the bicycle wheel, the wheel is no longer whole and complete. Because the wheel is no longer whole and complete, the integrity of the wheel is diminished.

B. WORKABILITY

As a consequence of the diminution of the integrity of the wheel (a diminution of whole and complete), there is an obvious corresponding diminution in the workability of the wheel. The Oxford Dictionary defines workable as: "Capable of producing the desired effect or result."[5]

I. *WORKABILITY - DEFINITION:*

In this new model of integrity, we define workability as: *the state or condition that determines the available opportunity for performance (the "opportunity set").*

As we remove spokes from the wheel, integrity is more and more diminished, and as integrity is more and more diminished, the wheel becomes less and less workable. Indeed, when we have removed enough spokes the wheel has no integrity and therefore the wheel collapses into complete failure and will not work at all.

5 Oxford American Dictionaries, 2005, Dictionary and Thesaurus, Version 1.0.1: Apple Computer, Inc.

In short we assert the following simple, general rule: As integrity declines, workability declines, and when workability declines the opportunity for performance (the opportunity set) declines.

C. PERFORMANCE

We mean the word "performance"[6] in its broadest sense and leave the choice of definition and measures of performance up to individuals or organizational entities – for example for organizations: profits or value creation; or for societies: concerns about environment, peace, or quality of life; or for individuals: being whole and complete as a person, the quality of one's life, happiness, or the welfare of one's children.

In effect, integrity as we distinguish and define it is an important factor of production (using the language of economists) comparable to knowledge and technology. Our model reveals the causal link between integrity and the available opportunity for performance (the opportunity set) for individuals, groups and organizations. And, our model provides actionable access to that causal link to individuals, families, executives, economists, philosophers, policy makers, leaders, and legal and governmental authorities. Revealing the causal link between integrity and performance makes clear what is currently obscured, namely, as integrity declines the available opportunity for performance declines – however one wishes to define performance[7]. As we will see below, this is an empirically testable proposition.

I. *THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN INTEGRITY AND PERFORMANCE:*

We can now extend and thereby complete our definition of workability to include the definition of "performance" (the final word used in the definition of workability). We define

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6 The relevant entries in the *Encarta Dictionary* (Encarta, 2004, Microsoft® Encarta® Reference Library 2004: Microsoft Corporation) define performance as: "the manner in which something or somebody functions, operates, or behaves; the effectiveness of the way somebody does his or her job".

7 It should be noted that operating with integrity increases the available opportunity set for performance without regard to the objective of one's performance. This leads to the uncomfortable conclusion that behaving with integrity will allow one to more effectively accomplish ends that others may consider inappropriate or undesirable. However, given the relation between integrity and the virtue elements of morality, ethics, and legality, this holds only if one is acting morally, ethically, and legally. This last requires a broader discussion. For example, does the context of the morals, ethics and legality of a larger group trump the context of the morals, ethics and legality of a significantly smaller or less powerful group?

"workability" as: *the state or condition that constitutes the available opportunity for something or somebody or a group or an organization to function, operate or behave to produce an intended outcome, i.e., to be effective; or the state or condition that determines the opportunity set from which someone or a group or an organization can choose outcomes, or design or construct for outcomes.*

In our bicycle wheel example, we saw that as a consequence of the diminution of integrity there is a diminution in the workability of the wheel. Now we see that as a consequence of the diminution of the workability of the wheel, there is a corresponding diminution in the opportunity for performance. As spokes are removed the integrity of the wheel is diminished. And, as the integrity of the wheel is diminished the workability of the wheel is diminished. And, as the workability of the wheel is diminished, the opportunity for performance is diminished.

Thus, there is a cascade beginning with integrity, flowing to workability, and from workability to performance. As a result of this cascade, any diminution of whole and complete (a diminution of integrity) is a diminution of workability, and any diminution of workability is a diminution in the opportunity for performance. Integrity is thus a requisite condition for maximum performance.

There is a clear and unambiguous relationship between integrity and performance. It is not that performance is caused by integrity, rather integrity is a necessary condition for performance. More rigorously, as integrity declines so too does the opportunity set for performance available to the actor or decision maker. Hence we speak about the *available opportunity set* for performance. Integrity is thus a necessary (although not sufficient) condition for performance. Some level of integrity is required for any level of performance. For example, as we said, when enough spokes are removed from the bicycle wheel, the wheel collapses and there is no opportunity for performance.

In short, we assert the following simple, general rule: *ceteris paribus* (all other things held constant), as integrity declines, the opportunity for performance declines.

As is the case with the physical laws of nature (such as gravity), integrity as we have distinguished and defined it operates as it does regardless of whether one likes it or not (the question regarding how one might know something is whole and complete or not is entirely separable from its being so or not, and separable from the impact on performance of its being so or not.) Something is objectively whole, complete, unbroken, sound, perfect condition, or it is not. If it is, it has

maximum workability. If it is not, to the degree that it is not, workability is diminished. And, to the degree that workability is diminished, the opportunity for performance is diminished. This yields what we have termed:

> "THE ONTOLOGICAL LAW OF INTEGRITY": *To the degree that integrity is diminished, the opportunity for performance (the opportunity set) is diminished.*

And this includes the opportunity for being whole and complete as a person, thus enriching the quality of one's life.

In order to reach the standard of being a law, a proposition must describe the workings or behavior of something, the stated workings or behavior of which are observed with unvarying uniformity under the same conditions. We believe that our Ontological Law of Integrity meets this standard, while recognizing that the required formal empirical evidence has yet to be generated.

We include in the domain of objects, objects that are wholly human, for example a person's body. If the condition of a person's body is less than whole, complete, unbroken, unimpaired, sound, perfect condition, then that person's body is diminished in physical integrity. As a body, this individual will have a diminished available opportunity for performance. However, the person, while diminished in physical integrity and therefore diminished in the available opportunity for physical performance, may at the same time be in full integrity as a person, as we will see in the unique way we distinguish integrity for a person.[8]

D. SYSTEMS

All of the foregoing is also true for systems. The opportunity for performance of a system to any standard of performance for which the system is designed diminishes as the integrity of any component, or relationship between components, necessary to the designed standard of performance is diminished, i.e., is less than whole and complete. We see a repeat of the cascade from integrity to performance. When the integrity of any necessary component or necessary relationship between components of a system diminishes (that is, becomes less whole and complete, including being absent entirely), the workability of the system diminishes, and as the workability of the system

[8] Of course there are certain physical components required for a human body to be whole and complete. If these are lacking, there is no opportunity for full integrity for that human body.

diminishes, the opportunity for performance to the designed standard of performance of that system diminishes. Thus again we see that, *ceteris paribus*, as the integrity of a system declines, the available opportunity for performance of that system declines – an empirically testable proposition.

Other ways that the integrity of a system (or object) can be compromised and thereby result in diminished performance is when the design itself (integrity-of-design) or the implementation (integrity-of-implementation) of the design lacks integrity. When the design of a system or the implementation of the design lacks any component, or relationship between components, required to perform at the designed-for available opportunity for performance, the design or its implementation is less than whole and complete and that violates the definition of integrity.

Finally, the integrity of a system (or object) can be compromised and thereby result in diminished performance when the operation (use) of the system by the user lacks integrity (integrity-of-use). When a system is used to produce performance where the design does not allow for such performance, the system is being used other than as it is meant to be used and such use is unsound, and that leaves the use of the system out of integrity.[9] We note that the likelihood of an out-of-integrity use of a system rises in proportion to the degree that the user of the system is out of integrity as a person.

Our model says nothing about the standard of performance to which a system is designed; that definition is left totally to the discretion of the designer or to the design standard specified by, or agreed to by the user (be it a person, group or organization).

We include in the domain of systems (including what we have said about the integrity of systems), 1) aspects of systems that are used by people (for example operating instructions or manufacturing protocols), 2) systems that impact people (for example corporate human resource strategies), and 3) systems that utilize people (for example business processes and manufacturing processes). As with human objects, if such systems that include people in some way are less than whole, complete, unbroken, unimpaired, sound, perfect condition, then that human-including-system is diminished in integrity. As a system, the system will have a diminished available opportunity for performance. However, the person (or persons) using the system, or impacted by the

[9] For example, if a man of 300 pounds attempts to save his life with a life preserver flotation device designed to be used by a child of 50 pounds, he will drown unless he can swim. In addition, if he were to use a life preserver flotation device designed to be used by a man of 300 pounds, but he ties it around his ankles, the user's operation of the system is unsound, he will die.

system, or utilized by the system, while confronted with a system diminished in system integrity and therefore diminished in the available opportunity for system performance, may at the same time be in full integrity as persons --- as will be clear in the way we distinguish integrity for persons, groups, and organizational entities. Conversely, if the entire system is otherwise in integrity, but one or more humans who are a part of the system are personally out of integrity the system is likely to be out of integrity as well.

In summary, the available opportunity set for performance of a system is conditional on the integrity of the components and relationship between components necessary to the designed standard of performance, and the integrity-of-design, and the integrity-of-use.

3. INTEGRITY FOR A PERSON

A. INTEGRITY FOR PERSONS, GROUPS AND ORGANIZATIONS

We distinguish integrity for an individual as being solely a matter of that person's word, and for a group or organizational entity as being comprised solely of what is said by or on behalf of the group or organization (the group or organization's word). (In the body of the paper below we define explicitly and completely what constitutes "one's word.") For a person, group or organizational entity to have integrity, the word of the person, group or organizational entity must be whole, complete, unbroken, unimpaired, sound, perfect condition. In our new model this is achieved by: *honoring one's word*.

B. INTEGRITY FOR A PERSON IS A MATTER OF THAT PERSON'S WORD

In this new model, integrity for a person is a matter of that person's word, nothing more and nothing less. Be it my word to myself (e.g., making a promise to myself, or a comment to myself about myself), or my word to others, in fact it is my word through which I *define* and *express* myself, both for myself and for others.

Even in the case where my "actions speak louder than words", it is what is *said* by my actions (the *speaking* of the actions, rather than the actions per se) that constitutes and expresses me, for myself and for others. It is as my word that others encounter me. And, while less obvious, it is also as my word (to others as well as to myself) that I encounter myself.[10] Indeed, in this new model, who I *am* is my word, at least in the matter of integrity. Because of its importance we discuss this proposition in some detail.

C. ONE'S WORD DEFINED

In this new model of integrity, we define a person's word as consisting of each of the following:

Word-1. **What You Said:** Whatever you have said you will do or will not do, and in the case of do, by when you said you would do it.

> Note A – Requests Of You Become Your Word Unless You Have Timely Responded To Them: When you have received a request, you may accept, decline, make a counter offer, or promise to respond at some specific later time. If you do not timely respond to a request with a decline, counter offer, or promise to respond at some specific later time (which promise you timely honor), you have in effect accepted (given your word to) that request. If when you receive a request you do not timely respond to that request with one of the four legitimate responses, you have in effect accepted (given your word to) that request. That is to say, that request is part of your word (What You Said: Word 1).
>
> Note B – In Contrast, Your Requests Of Others Do Not For You Become Their Word When They Have Not Responded In A Timely Fashion: The efficacy (workability) of the asymmetry between Note A and this Note B is explained below in Section D, Clarification of One's "Word-3 Note".

[10] I encounter myself either authentically or inauthentically. If you believe Chris Argyris (as we do), we human beings almost universally encounter ourselves in many respects inauthentically, that is ". . . people consistently act inconsistently, unaware of the contradiction . . . between the way they think they are acting and the way they really act" (Argyris, "Teaching Smart People How to Learn",). When we encounter ourselves inauthentically we are not whole and complete and thus are out of integrity.

Word-2. **What You Know:** Whatever you know to do or know not to do, and in the case of do, doing it as you know it is meant to be done and doing it on time, unless you have explicitly said to the contrary.

Word-3. **What Is Expected:** Whatever you are expected to do or not do (even when not explicitly expressed), and in the case of do, doing it on time, unless you have explicitly said to the contrary.

> Note – In Contrast, Your Expectations Of Others Are Not For You The Word Of Others: What you expect of others and have not explicitly expressed to them is not part of their word as defined in this new model. Only those expectations you have of others that you have made clear to them by a request is part of their word (unless they decline or counter-propose your request).

Word-4. **What You Say Is So:** Whenever you have given your word to others as to the existence of some thing or some state of the world, your word includes being willing to be held accountable that the others would find your evidence for what you have asserted also makes what you have asserted valid for themselves.[11]

Word-5. **What You Stand For:** What you stand for is fundamental to who you are for yourself and who you are for others. What you stand for is a declaration constituted by 1) who you hold yourself to be for yourself as that for which you can be counted on from yourself (whether specifically articulated by you or not), and 2) who you hold yourself out to be for others as that for which you can be counted on by others (or have allowed others to believe as that for which you can be counted on). The importance of this aspect of one's word in the matter of integrity is pointed to by Cox et al in the Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy who devote an entire section to "Integrity as Standing for Something".

Word-6. **Moral, Ethical And Legal Standards:** The *social moral standards*, the *group ethical standards* and the *governmental legal standards* of right and wrong, good and bad behavior, in the society, groups and state in which one enjoys the benefits of membership are also part of one's word (what one is expected to do) unless a)

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11 See: Searle, 1969, Speech Acts: An Essay in the Philosophy of Language, Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, especially for his discussion of assertions.

one has explicitly and publicly expressed an intention to not keep one or more of these standards, and b) one is willing to bear the costs of refusing to conform to these standards (the rules of the game one is in).

Note that what we have defined here is what constitutes a "*person's word*" – not what constitutes integrity for a person, which is explicitly defined below.

ASSIGNMENT: We request you come to class on the first day with the following six aspects of your word memorized:

1. What I said I would do, or not do
2. What I know to do, or not do
3. What is expected of me by others (even if they haven't said so)
4. What I say is so (assert)
5. What I stand for
6. Moral, ethical and legal standards of the societies, groups, and governmental entities in which I enjoy membership

D. CLARIFICATIONS OF "ONE'S WORD" AS DEFINED ABOVE

Word-1. Most people will not have a problem with Word-1 (*their word being constituted by that to which they have given their word*).

> Many people will have a problem in Word-1 with Note B: Your Requests Of Others Do Not For You Become Their Word When They Have Not Responded In A Timely Fashion. Assuming that the non-response of another to your request is an acceptance on their part invites a breakdown in workability and a consequential decline in the opportunity for performance. Where another has not timely responded to your request, you avoid the chance of such a breakdown if you hold yourself accountable for obtaining a response. Note that integrity is a matter of being whole and complete as to one's word, integrity is not an issue of fairness.

Word-2. Some people may have a problem with Word-2 (their word also being constituted by what they *know to do and doing it as it was meant to be done)*, because there might be situations in which they don't know what to do, or may not know how it is meant to be done. If one does not know what to do, and one *does not know* that one does not know what to do, that does not fit the definition of one's word as stated in Word-2, (*doing what you know to do)*. However, if one does not know what to do and one *knows* that one does not know, that does fit the definition of one's Word-2, and explicitly saying that one does not know what to do would be a part of one's word, otherwise the other would be left with the belief that one does know what to do. Likewise with knowing how it is meant to be done.

Word-3. Many people will have a problem with their word being constituted by Word-3 (*whatever is expected of them unless they have said to the contrary*). Of course if someone has an expectation of me and has then expressed that expectation in the form of a request, I can accept, decline or counteroffer that request – no problem with that. It is being obligated by expectations of me that have not been expressed explicitly, and certainly those about which one is unaware (unexpressed requests), with which many people will have a problem. When these are also considered as

being part of one's word, it occurs for many as wrongful that one should be burdened by the unexpressed expectations (unexpressed requests) that others have of one. There are six points to be considered.

a. Suppose someone has an expectation (unexpressed request) of another. Even if one is unaware of the expectation, if that expectation is not met, like it or not, the outcome is much the same as having given one's word and not kept that word; specifically, workability declines, and consequently the opportunity for performance declines.

b. For better or for worse, what is expected of one is expected of one; in life there is no escaping expectations (unexpressed requests). And if there is an expectation (even if you are unaware of that expectation), and you do not either meet that expectation or uncover it and explicitly declare that you will not meet it, there will be a breakdown and workability will decline. As with an object or system, when a relationship is less than whole and complete, workability declines, and consequently the opportunity for performance declines.

c. The notion of it being wrong or right (or bad or good, or unfair or fair) that you are affected by the unannounced expectations (unexpressed requests) of others is a normative value judgment, and in this new model of integrity, integrity is devoid of such normative value judgments. Whether you like it or not is irrelevant from the standpoint of integrity, workability, and performance. Given the obvious impact of unmet expectations on the workability of relationships, when you recognize that the expectations of others matter and you take all expectations of those *with whom you desire to have a workable relationship* as part of your word unless you have explicitly declared you will not meet them, your integrity will increase, the workability of your life will increase, and your opportunity for performance (however defined) will be greater. It all follows, willy-nilly (i.e. willingly or unwillingly).

d. In light of the above three points, it follows that for a person's word to be whole and complete and to thereby create a life with high workability and high performance, one has to be "cause in the matter" of what is expected of one. By taking the position (a declaration, not an assertion[12]) that I am cause in the matter of what people expect of me, I am then led to be highly sensitive, and motivated to ferret out those expectations and to take action to manage them. And if I am straight with those who have expectations of me that I will not fulfill, my integrity will increase, the workability of my life will increase, and my performance (however defined) will be greater.

e. While we are still defining a person's word and have not yet gotten to defining integrity for a person, as you will see below when we do, when declining an expectation (unexpressed request) of you, you do not have to deal with any mess that arises as a result of your decline, given that expectations of you are your word only if you have failed to decline them. Note that there may well be a mess as a

12 See: Ibid.

result of your decline. You may well choose to do something to deal with the mess that results from the decline but this is not a matter of keeping your word whole and complete and is therefore not a matter of your integrity to do so.

f. In summary, one's word as we have defined it in this new model is not a matter of being obligated or not (or even of being willing or not willing) to fulfill the expectations of others; if there is an expectation (unexpressed request), there is an expectation, and if you do not fulfill the expectation and have not said that you will not fulfill the expectation the consequence on workability and performance is the same as that to which you have explicitly given your word. And this is true even though you do have a justification for not fulfilling the expectation. For example, like it or not a person's performance is often judged against expectations (unexpressed requests), even if that person has never agreed to, or was not even aware of, those expectations. Thus, to create workability with those with whom you desire to have a relationship you must clean up any mess created in their lives that result from their expectations of you that you do not meet and that you have not explicitly declined. This is what it means to take yourself to be cause in the matter of expectations of you.

Word-3 Note. There is an asymmetry here in Word-3 (*your expectations, unexpressed requests, of others are not the word of others*). As we said above, your word *includes* the unexpressed expectations of others unless you formally decline them; yet *your* unexpressed expectations are *not* the word of others. Thus you cannot hold others accountable for fulfilling your unexpressed expectations. Indeed, holding others accountable for fulfilling your unexpressed expectations will result in a diminution of workability and performance, a consequence of your being out of integrity. This asymmetry – in effect an instance of "what's good for the goose is not good for the gander" – is required to be whole and complete with oneself and with others.

Word-4. With respect to Word-4 (*what you say is so*), some people will have a problem that one's word as to the existence of some thing or some state of the world includes being accountable that the other would find valid for themselves the evidence that one had for asserting something to be the case. Of course there are times when one says that this or that is so, or not so, but one would not be willing to be held to account for having evidence that the other would find valid. In such cases, one's word would include acknowledging that, and perhaps saying what level of evidence one does have: for example when one assumes that something is the case.

Word-5. With respect to Word-5 (*what you stand for*), it is important to be aware that what you stand for is essentially a matter of who you say you can be counted on to be for yourself (whether specifically articulated by you or not), and who you say that others can count on you to be for them (whether specifically declared or not). The explicit content of what you stand for is not a matter of your integrity. However, the impact on who you are for yourself and the impact on who you are for others is determined by the nature of what you stand for, and the integrity with which you

handle it. And, to a large extent the magnitude of what you stand for determines your opportunity set for performance in the world, with others, and with yourself.

Word-6. With respect to Word-6 (*moral, ethical and legal standards*), in Section 7.B. of the full document we explicate in detail the arguments that lead to the proposition that moral, ethical and legal standards are a part of one's word. It suffices here to recognize that Word-6 re-contextualizes the moral, ethical and legal standards of the society, group and governmental entities in which one enjoys membership from something inflicted on me – someone else's will or in the language of this new model "someone else's word" – to *my word*, thus, leaving me with the power to honor my word, either by keeping it, or saying I will not and accepting the consequences.

E. INTEGRITY IS HONORING ONE'S WORD

In this new model of integrity, we define integrity for a person as: *honoring one's word* (as one's word is defined in the preceding sections).

Notice that we did not say that integrity is a matter of *keeping* one's word; we said that integrity is *honoring* one's word.

In this new model of integrity we define honoring your word as:

1. Keeping your word (and on time).

And, whenever you will not be keeping your word:

2. Just as soon as you become aware that you will not be keeping your word (including not keeping your word on time) saying to everyone impacted

   a. that you will not be keeping your word, and

   b. that you will keep that word in the future, and by when, or that you won't be keeping that word at all, and

   c. what you will do to deal with the impact on others of the failure to keep your word (or to keep it on time).

Notice that "honoring your word" includes two conditions, where the second condition comes into play whenever the first condition is not met. Integrity is an *"and"* proposition. In other words, to be a person of integrity all you have to do is "honor your word", which means you keep your word (1 above), *and* when you will not, then you say you will not and clean up any consequences (2. a, b and c above).

However, we have found it useful for discussions regarding the impact of integrity to sometimes use "honoring your word" in another way. While we want to emphasize that strictly speaking integrity for human entities is honoring their word as specified above, when speaking about the consequences of integrity we will sometimes speak as though integrity is an *"either/or"* proposition where you *either* "keep your word" (1 above), *or* you "honor your word" (2. a, b and c above). We have not yet found a situation, where in context, the way we are using "honor your word" is ambiguous.

F. THE IMPOSSIBILITY OF ALWAYS KEEPING ONE'S WORD

A person who always keeps their word is almost certainly living a life that is too small. Thus, unless you are playing a small game in life, you will not always ***keep*** your word. However, it is always possible to ***honor*** your word. Integrity is ***honoring*** your word.

While always keeping your word may not be possible, honoring your word as we have defined *honoring* in our new model of integrity is always possible. Therefore, it is always possible to have integrity, that is, to be whole and complete as a person. Having integrity is a simple although not always easy matter of honoring your word.

The state of being whole, complete, unbroken, unimpaired, sound, perfect condition is our definition of integrity, but that definition says nothing about the pathway, or what one can or must do to create, maintain or restore integrity. Because honoring your word is the pathway to integrity it gives us access to integrity; it is actionable. In other words, you can't "do" whole and complete, you can "do" honor your word, and honoring your word leaves you whole and complete. This is what we mean when we say a proposition is "actionable".

It is worth repeating that integrity, as distinguished in this new model, is independent of normative value judgments. While one can have a normative value judgment regarding whether or not one likes integrity as distinguished in this new model (as one can have a normative value judgment about whether or not one likes gravity), the effect of integrity on performance is a positive (empirical) proposition. And to emphasize the point, the purely positive nature of integrity is independent of whether you believe honoring your word is a good or a bad thing. That is, the consequences of honoring or not honoring your word are independent of whether you believe it is a

good or bad thing. We mean by this, that *ceteris paribus*, the closer a person, group, or entity is to full integrity, the larger will be the opportunity set for performance available to the entity. Moreover, since we have said nothing about how performance is defined or measured, our model of integrity is free of value judgments regarding what performance is. Integrity has no virtue value as we are defining it. Indeed, some might choose to give their word to what we might judge to be dishonorable activities or goals – "honor amongst thieves" for example.

The integrity mountain has no top, so you better learn to love climbing. Doing so makes it OK for each of us to recognize that we are not always a person of "integrity".

Our proposition is that whatever it is you are committed to, you maximize the opportunity for success if you honor your word. We have also found that honoring your word is privately optimal in the sense that it requires no cooperation from anyone else. Even if everyone else is out of integrity, it is in your personal best interest to be a man or woman of integrity. Do not naively assume that everyone you are dealing with in life is a person of integrity;deal with them as they actually act. If you behave with integrity in your interactions with them, they will come to trust you and that is valuable to you. As we said above, deal with these others exactly as they act (that is, as lacking integrity and therefore untrustworthy).

In the full document, we emphasize the fact that in this new model of integrity, your word includes the ethical, moral and legal standards of the groups or entities in which you enjoy the benefits of membership (unless you have already publicly expressed that you will not keep one or more of these standards, and you willingly bear the consequences of not doing so). And, we discuss how treating integrity as a positive phenomenon increases the likelihood that individuals will honor their word regarding the standards of the virtue phenomena. Thus, individuals' efforts to behave with integrity (as we distinguish integrity in this new model) support morality, ethics and legality in their lives.

G. MAINTAINING ONE'S INTEGRITY WHEN NOT KEEPING ONE'S WORD – PARADOX RESOLVED

Unless we give our word to virtually nothing, it is impossible in practice to always be able to keep our word, and certainly to keep our word on time. If integrity is understood to be *keeping*

one's word (as it often is), this creates a paradox for a person of integrity when confronted with instances where it is impossible or inappropriate for that person to keep his or her word. Faced with this paradox even people committed to integrity often wind up engaging in out-of-integrity behavior such as avoiding the issue, or engaging in long-winded explanations in an attempt to somehow counter-balance not keeping their word. And such efforts sometimes extend to what turns out to be highly counter productive out-of-integrity behavior, e.g., lying, covering up, or laying the blame on others.

There is a high personal cost to oneself from such out-of-integrity behavior – that is, the cost of being less than whole and complete as a person (a disintegration of self) – combined with an inevitable decline in quality of life, not to mention the loss of trust in oneself by others. However, that the out-of-integrity behavior is the source of this cost is inevitably hidden. In Section 8 of the full document we define and discuss at length what we term the "veil of invisibility"[13] that conceals the impact of virtually all out-of-integrity behavior and the costs it imposes on individuals, groups, organizations, and societies. We summarize that discussion in Appendix A below.

By defining integrity for persons, groups and entities as honoring one's word, the paradox associated with taking integrity as keeping one's word (as is so often recommended by those who do not perceive the damage caused by taking integrity to be *keeping* one's word) is resolved, and a pathway is established for handling not keeping one's word with integrity.

In the full document we discuss the situation in which it was impossible for Johnson and Johnson to keep its word (as we define an organization's word) that its products were safe. Because cyanide had been put in some Tylenol capsules and then replaced on retailer's shelves, it was impossible for J&J to keep its word that its Tylenol capsules were safe. In fact, a number of Tylenol consumers died. By simply honoring its word when it could not keep its word, J&J was able to maintain its integrity and thereby maintain its customers' trust in J&J and Tylenol. As a consequence it resurrected Tylenol as a leading pain killer in a remarkably short period of time, and did so under circumstances in which experts predicted it could not be done.

There will also be cases where an entity will *choose* not to keep its word. For example, one of the functions of a governmental authority in a well-developed society is to maintain a monopoly

[13] To use a variant of the term "veil of ignorance" originally used by John Rawls, A Theory Of Justice, Harvard University Press, 1971, Chapter 3

over the legitimate use of violence to protect the rights of citizens, in particular to protect them from violent acts by their fellow citizens – including bodily harm or theft of or damage to their property. The commitment to use the government's monopoly on violence to maintain peace by preventing the private use of violence by citizens on each other can be understood as the state's word. Yet, in some cases it pays both the state and its citizens for the state to use its monopoly on violence on citizens in cases where violence of others is not being prevented. Consider cases like mad cow and avian flu diseases where it is considered appropriate for the governmental authority to use its powers to destroy herds or flocks in order to stamp out local infections so as to prevent the spread of disease and the loss of human life. In some, but not all, cases the rules of the game will provide for compensation for the loss of property by such actions (as for example in cases of eminent domain where a public taking is ruled to be in the overall public interest).

There will also be cases in which we simply make a choice to not keep our word. For example, in a situation where when it comes time to keep our word, we are faced with two conflicting commitments and must choose one over the other. In such cases, whether as an individual, group or organizational entity, maintaining integrity always requires one to clean up the mess one has caused for those depending on one's word by honoring one's word.

The above examples help us see that a great deal of the mischief that surrounds integrity is a product of the paradox created by limiting the definition of integrity to *keeping* one's word in a reality in which it is not possible or even appropriate to always keep one's word. By defining integrity for individuals, groups and organizations as honoring one's word we resolve this paradox that undermines the power of integrity. Honoring our word provides the opportunity to maintain our integrity when it is not possible or appropriate to keep our word, or we simply choose not to keep our word.[14]

In his early insightful work Simons (1999) quite rightly emphasizes "behavioral integrity" as "… the perceived degree of congruence between the values expressed by words and those expressed through action," (p. 90) and points to the importance of what he terms "word-action" misfit. Simons' paper ". . . proposes that the divergence between words and deeds has profound costs as it

[14] There is a useful parallel/application of this principle in the law. Lucian Bebchuk pointed out to us in a private communication that "The idea that integrity does not require keeping one's word no matter what relates to Oliver Wendell Holmes' notion that a contract is not a promise to execute it no matter what, but rather to execute it or bear the financial consequences stipulated by the law".

renders managers untrustworthy and undermines their credibility and their ability to use their words to influence the actions of their subordinates." (p. 89).[15] We agree, and find his statement a clear illustration of what we said earlier, namely, that as the integrity of one's word declines, the available opportunity for performance declines.

Simons points at the critical distinction that integrity for a person is a matter of that person's word. However, as an example of the almost universal treatment of integrity, Simons defines integrity as *keeping* one's word, but our model does not. In order for "… the perceived degree of congruence between the values expressed by words and those expressed through action,"[16] to be an effective model of integrity, the model *must* provide an opportunity to maintain one's integrity in situations in which one cannot keep one's word or makes a choice to not keep one's word (a condition that Simons also implies is necessary but does not state in his discussion). As we said above, there are cases where because of the complexities of the situation or external factors, it is not always optimal or appropriate for managers (indeed all individuals) to *keep* their word.

Our definition of integrity as Honoring One's Word provides a complete model that includes a way to maintain integrity when one is for any reason not going to keep one's word. When one honors one's word exactly as we define it in the sections above, (including dealing with the consequences to others of not keeping one's word) there are none of the "profound costs" that Simons rightly associates with not being able to keep one's word.

In fact failing to keep one's word but fully honoring that word can generate substantial benefits in that such behavior provides a vivid signal to others that one takes one's word seriously. In their *Journal of Marketing* study of favorable and unfavorable incidents in service encounters in the airline, restaurant and hotel businesses, Bitner, Booms, and Tetreault (1990, pp. 80-81) were surprised to find, (using our language) the power of honoring one's word when one does not keep one's word. Their study revealed that 23.3% of the

> " . . . 'memorable satisfactory encounters' involve difficulties attributable to failures in core service delivery. . . From a management perspective, this finding is striking. It suggests that even service delivery system *failures* can be remembered as highly satisfactory encounters if they are handled properly. . . One might expect that dissatisfaction could be mitigated in failure situations if employees

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15 See also Simons, 2002, "Behavioral Integrity: The Perceived Alignment Between Manager's Words and Deeds as a Research Focus", Organization Science, V. 13, No. 1: pp. 18-35

16 Simons, 1999, "Behavioral Integrity as a Critical Ingredient for Transformational Leadership", Journal of Organizational Change Management, V. 12, No. 2: pp. 89-104, p. 90.

> are trained to respond, but the fact that such incidents can be remembered as very satisfactory is somewhat surprising." (Italics in original.)

We are not surprised by the favorable response of customers to such "properly handled" service failures; in fact, from the perspective of our new model such outcomes are predictable. While apparently counter intuitive, customers are frequently surprised and delighted when individuals or organizations honor their word when they have failed to keep their word. Indeed, such occasions are often viewed by customers as extraordinary performance. In fact, when the failure is newsworthy, the actions the organization takes to honor its word are also newsworthy. Thus, the results of the Bitner, Booms, and Tetreault study illustrate our postulated relation between integrity and performance – in this case performance as viewed by the organization's customers. And the results imply (counter to the arguments of Simons and others) that one will create trust by others more quickly when one fails to *keep* one's word, but *honors* one's word.

H. INTEGRITY AS THE INTEGRATION OF SELF

In the Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy, Cox, La Caze and Levine (2005)[17] point out that "integrity is primarily a formal relation one has to oneself". This is an important theme that runs through the philosophical discourse on integrity, and it relates to integrity [directly through what] as we characterize it, as "being whole and complete as a person". We extract the various following phrases that relate to being personally whole and complete from a much longer quotation in the Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy:

- "… 'integrity' refers to the wholeness, intactness or purity of a thing – meanings that are sometimes … applied to people."
- "… maintains its integrity as long as it remains uncorrupted …"
- "… the most important of them being: (i) integrity as the integration of self; (ii) integrity as maintenance of identity; (iii) integrity as standing for something …"
- " … Integrity as Self –Integration …"

[17] Cox, La Caze and Levine, Integrity. The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy (Fall 2005 Edition), Edward N. Zalta (ed.) Accessed April 9, 2006 http://plato.stanford.edu/archives/fall2005/entries/integrity/

The ideas pointed to by the quotes above are represented in this paper by our phrase "being personally whole and complete" or "being whole and complete as a person".

We now deal directly with how integrity creates being whole and complete as a person and how being whole and complete as a person relates to the quality of one's life.

I. *THE ROLE OF ONE'S BODY*

While in everyday speaking we might say that a person identifies with their body, on closer examination it is not their body per se with which they identify, that is, it is not their body per se that they are for themselves. Rather it is what they say to themselves and to others about their body, their interpretation of their body, with which they identify.

For example, two different people lose both legs. One of the two says to herself, "I am less of a person", and as a result may contemplate suicide, or perhaps experience depression. The other of the two says to herself "I have lost my legs, but I am no less of a person", and as a result goes on to live a productive and fulfilled life, and does so despite having an impaired body. It is what I say, i.e., my word, with which I identify, rather than my body per se.

Indeed, to emphasize the point, it is never one's body per se that one is for oneself; rather, it is what one says about one's body – one's judgments, evaluations, e.g., the pride or shame about one's body with which one identifies. This further clarifies why in Section 3.H.I we made the distinction between the integrity of a person and the integrity of that person's body. As we said, at least for purposes of integrity, we treat a person's body as an object or system, and distinguish a person's body from the person. The integrity of a person's body has to do with the wholeness and completeness of that person's body. The integrity of a person has to do with the wholeness and completeness of that person's word.

II. *THE ROLE OF ONE'S FEELINGS*

Similarly, some of us think we are our feelings, i.e., we identify with our feelings. However, with a deeper examination of ourselves it becomes clear that it is not our feelings per se (what is happening in our brain and endocrine system, or even any resultant sensations or feelings about which we become aware) that we are for ourselves. Rather it is what I say I am feeling, and what I

say about what I am feeling (that is to say, my interpretation of those sensations and feelings) that I am for myself.

If you experience an emotion, let's say annoyance, that you interpret as inappropriate to the circumstances in which you find yourself, with incredulity you might say, "Why am I feeling annoyed?" In your questioning of the appropriateness of the feeling, you have identified your self with what you say about the feeling (your interpretation of the feeling), not with the feeling itself. On the other hand, if you experience annoyance that you interpret as appropriate to the circumstances, with definiteness you might say, "I am annoyed!" In your conclusion of the appropriateness of the feeling, again, you have identified your self with what you say about the feeling (your interpretation), not with the feeling itself. Moreover, unless one is in some way mentally deficient, one acts consistent with one's interpretation, rather than acting consistent with the emotion itself.[18]

III. *THE ROLE OF ONE'S THINKING*

Finally, some might argue that we identify with our thinking. If we pay attention to our thought process, it is clear that we have different kinds of thinking.

In one kind of thinking, a good many of our thoughts are thoughts that we just *have*. That is, many thoughts just seem to come into mind willy-nilly. In fact, we sometimes reject the thought that we just had as being inaccurate or inappropriate to the situation, rather than identifying with it. Again, as with the emotions we experience, it is our interpretation of the thoughts we *have* – that is, what we say to ourselves about those thoughts – with which we identify.

Another kind of thinking is when we generate thoughts intentionally, when we *are* thinking rather than *having* thoughts. This includes when we think creatively; commonly we call this "having a new idea about something". In this creative thinking, we are speaking to ourselves about something – in words or symbols or images. We also go on to speak to ourselves about our new idea – that is, what we said when we were thinking creatively. In this speaking to ourselves about

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[18] For the human animal the action (or inaction) response to emotion is mediated by interpretation which occurs in language. For an animal without language, the animal's action (or inaction) response to emotion is not mediated by interpretation. (That animal's brain may sort through stored neuronal patterns in "selecting" the particular action or inaction it triggers in reaction to the emotion. An observer might ascribe interpretation to such selecting, but the selecting of the stored neuronal pattern is triggered by the emotion, not by any interpretation.) For an animal without language, there is nothing present like the interpretation experienced by the human animal.

our new idea, we reject certain statements we made in the new idea, modify others and accept yet others. Whether it be what we say to ourselves in formulating the original idea, or what we say to ourselves about the original idea, it is what we say to ourselves with which we identify.

Of course we have all experienced situations in which we later discover that what we said in our interpretation was in fact erroneous or was inappropriate to the situation. Nevertheless, accurate or inaccurate, it is with what we say in our interpretations at the time that we identify. And, this includes when we discover an error in an earlier statement of interpretation that leads to a new interpretation.

IV. *ONE'S WORD TO ONESELF: THE FOUNDATION OF INTEGRITY*

Being a person of integrity begins with my word to myself that *I am* a person of integrity. If I attempt to start with my word to others to be a person of integrity without having given my word to myself to be a person of integrity, I am almost certain to fail to be a person of integrity. Once I have given my word to myself that I am a person of integrity, I am more likely to notice opportunities to act with integrity regarding my word to others. (In addition, one is likely to act with more caution and care in giving one's word to others.) If in this process one does not practice dealing with one's word to one's self with integrity, one will fail to be a person of integrity. Ultimately, when one's word to one's self is whole, complete, unbroken, unimpaired, sound, perfect condition, it serves as a foundation on which one is likely to deal with one's word to others with integrity.

In the end it is honoring what I say to myself when I say I am a person of integrity that is the beginning and end of being a person of integrity.

When giving our word to others, one would think that it would be obvious to us that we have in fact given our word (although later we will argue that for most people even when giving their word to others they are often unaware that they have given their word). At the same time, when we give our word to ourselves, we seldom recognize that we have in fact given our word. For an example of this failure, think of occasions when the issue of self-discipline comes up, and the ease with which we often dismiss it – of course, always "just this one time." In such self-discipline cases, we fail to recognize that we are not honoring our word to ourselves; and, that in doing so, we have undermined ourselves as a person of integrity.

As we have said, integrity for a person is a matter of that person's word, nothing more and nothing less; and one's word to one's self is a critical part of one's word. By not being serious when we give our word to ourselves, we forfeit the opportunity to maintain our integrity by honoring our word to ourselves. We take the conversations we have with ourselves as merely "thinking". And when in those conversations we give our word, giving our word occurs to us as just more thinking, rather than having just committed ourselves (given our word) to ourselves. For example, thinking to myself that I will exercise tomorrow. But, when tomorrow comes, I have either simply forgotten my word to myself, or if remembered, I easily dismiss my word as nothing more than a thought (a good idea) I had yesterday. What it costs not to treat your word to yourself with integrity is that you become less powerful as a person, and with less power you will find yourself using force to deal with the world (guile, anger, bossiness, subterfuge, righteousness, defensiveness, manipulation, and the like – or at the other end of the spectrum but still a matter of force, playing the victim, helplessness and the like).

An important aspect of my word to myself is my word to others. For example, when I give my word to someone to meet them at a given time tomorrow, in effect I have also given my word to myself to be there tomorrow at the appointed time and place. Likewise with any time I give my word to others, I have also given my word to myself to be good for my word.

If I hold myself up as a person of integrity and do not honor my word to myself, it is highly unlikely that I will be able to be in integrity with others.

Most of us hold ourselves to be a "man of integrity" or a "woman of integrity", but if one does not treat one's word to oneself as a matter of integrity, being a person of integrity is simply not possible. Unfortunately, most of us human beings believe that we are people of integrity, but as Chris Argyris concludes after 40 years of studying human beings, we humans consistently act inconsistently with our view of ourselves. More specifically, and said in the language of our model, we consistently hold ourselves up as people of integrity but do not honor our word to ourselves, and moreover are blind to this contradiction.

Referring back to what was said at the beginning of Section 3.H. about the philosophical discourse of integrity's relation to being whole and complete as a person – "integrity as the integration of self," "quality of character," "uncorrupted," "exhibiting integrity throughout life,"

"maintenance of identity" – one's word to oneself can be said to be central in being personally whole and complete.

When I am not serious about my word to myself, it will show up consistently as various problems and difficulties in my life, the actual source of which I will obscure with various explanations and justifications. Moreover, I will show up for others variously as inconsistent, unfocused, scattered, unreliable, undependable, unpredictable, and generally unsatisfied as a person.

In conclusion, honoring your word to yourself provides a solid foundation for self discipline. When an occasion for self-discipline shows up for you as an occasion for honoring your word to yourself, and you see that as a way to maintain yourself whole and complete as a person, that empowers you to deal with the matter with integrity.

V. *SUMMARY*

Whether it be one's body, or one's emotions, or one's thoughts, it is our interpretation, (what we say to ourselves, our word to ourselves) that ultimately defines who we are for ourselves. Who one is in the matter of integrity is one's word – nothing more, nothing less.

I. ONE'S RELATIONSHIPS ARE CONSTITUTED BY ONE'S WORD

In Section [3.E.] we looked at a person's integrity from the perspective of what it takes for that person to be whole and complete, and now we look at integrity from the perspective of what it takes for the relationship created by the person's word to be whole and complete.

The power of taking one's self to be constituted by one's word becomes even clearer when examined in light of the fact that giving one's word to another creates a relationship (or a new aspect of an existing relationship). When I give my word, I have a new relationship not only to the other, but, less obviously, with myself as well. Therefore it is important to hold one's word in a context that includes both one's word as itself and the relationships that it creates.

Simply put, when I give my word to another, that act creates various conditions of "counting on" or "reliance on", in the relationship between me and the other. Given that one's word creates the relationship, it follows that when one's word is whole and complete, the aspect of the

relationship it creates is whole and complete. In a critical sense, who I am for another *is* my word,[19] i.e., my expression of my self. For a relationship to have integrity (to be whole and complete), one's word must be whole and complete. As Shakespeare said, "This above all: to thine own self be true, it must follow, as the night the day, Thou cans't not be false to any man."[20] When one is true to one's word (which is being true to one's self), one cannot be but true to any man.

Of course, there are at least two sides to a relationship. If one side has integrity and the other does not (the word of the other is not whole and complete) there is a diminution of integrity in the relationship resulting in a diminution of the available opportunity for performance in (or resulting from) the relationship – however performance is defined. Nevertheless, when the other person in a relationship is out-of-integrity and therefore diminishes the workability of that relationship, your being in-integrity allows you to continue to be effective in the relationship and also to contribute positively to the workability of that relationship. And therefore, in spite of the other being out-of-integrity you personally benefit. Your being in-integrity leaves you whole and complete both *outside* of the relationship and *inside* the relationship. Thus, as we said earlier, integrity is privately optimal; it does not require the cooperation of the other. You benefit even though the other is out-of-integrity.

J. CONCLUSION: AN ACTIONABLE PATHWAY

In conclusion, in our new model, the way in which integrity is distinguished and defined for individuals, groups and organizations reveals the impact of integrity on workability and trustworthiness, and consequently on performance. Even more importantly, our new model provides

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19 My word is constituted not only literally in words, but in the "speaking" of my actions (including facial countenance, body language, and the like), i.e., what these actions say to others. To be clear, "my word" includes what my word literally says in words and what my actions say. Therefore, my word includes what I say literally in words and what my actions say. Of course, as is the case with what I say in words, what is said by my actions will often be interpreted by the other. And, therefore who I ultimately am for the other is a product of my word including what is said by my actions, as the other interprets my word. Being aware of this opens up the opportunity to do something to ensure that the other has not misinterpreted my word, including what is said by my actions.

20 Shakespeare, Hamlet, Act II. (Underlining added for emphasis.)

an actionable pathway (that is, direct access[21]) to integrity and therefore to workability and trustworthiness, and, consequently, to elevating performance itself.

4. APPENDIX A

There are eleven factors contributing to what we term the "veil of invisibility" that conceals the impact of out-of-integrity behavior on individuals, groups, organizations, and societies (dealt with in detail in Section 8 of the full document).

A. ELEVEN FACTORS OF THE "VEIL OF INVISIBILITY" THAT CONCEAL THE EFFECTS OF OUT-OF-INTEGRITY BEHAVIOR

1. Not seeing that <u>who you are as a person</u> is your word

That is, thinking that who you are as a person is anything other than your word. For example, thinking that who you are is your body, or what is going on with you internally (your mental/emotional state, your thoughts/thought processes and your bodily sensations), or anything else you identify with such as your title or position in life, or your possessions, etc… leaves you unable to see that when your word is less than whole and complete you are diminished as a person.

A person is constituted in language. As such, when a person's word is less than whole and complete they are diminished as a person.

2. Living as if my Word is only What I Said (Word 1) and What I Assert Is True (Word 4)

Even if we are clear that in the matter of integrity our word exists in six distinct ways, most of us actually function as if our word consists only of *what I said* or *what I assert is true*. This guarantees that we cannot be men or women of integrity. For us, Words 2, 3, 5, and 6 are invisible as our word:

- Word-2: What You Know to do or not to do
- Word-3: What Is Expected of you by those with whom you wish to have a workable relationship (unless you have explicitly declined those unexpressed requests)
- Word-5: What You Stand For

[21] What Chris Argyris defines as "actionable research". See Argyris, 1993, Knowledge for Action: A Guide to Overcoming Barriers to Organizational Change, San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass, Inc.

- Word-6: Moral, Ethical and Legal Standards of each society, group, and governmental entity of which I am a member

When we live (function in life) as though our word is limited to Word 1: What I Said and Word 4: What I say is so, we are virtually certain to be out of integrity with regard to our word as constituted in Words 2, 3, 5 and 6. In such cases, all the instances of our word (be it the word of an individual or organization) that are not spoken or otherwise communicated explicitly are simply invisible as our word to such individuals or organizations. In our lives, all the instances of our Words 2, 3, 5 and 6 simply do not show up (occur) for us as our having given our word.

3. **"Integrity is a virtue"**

For most people and organizations, integrity exists as a *virtue* rather than as a *necessary condition for performance*. When held as a virtue rather than as a factor of production, integrity is easily sacrificed when it appears that a person or organization must do so to succeed. For many people, virtue is valued only to the degree that it engenders the admiration of others, and as such it is easily sacrificed especially when it would not be noticed or can be rationalized. Sacrificing integrity as a virtue seems no different than sacrificing courteousness, or new sinks in the men's room.

4. **Self Deception about being out-of-integrity**

People are mostly unaware that they have not kept their word. All they see is the 'reason', rationalization or excuse for not keeping their word. In fact, people systematically deceive (lie to) themselves about who they have been and what they have done. As Chris Argyris concludes: "Put simply, people consistently act inconsistently, unaware of the contradiction between their espoused theory and their theory-in-use, between the way they think they are acting and the way they really act."[22]

And if you think this is not you, you are fooling yourself about fooling yourself.

Because people cannot see their out-of-integrity behavior, it is impossible for them to see the cause of the unworkability in their lives and organizations – the direct result of their own attempts to violate the Law of Integrity.

5. **Integrity is keeping one's word**

The belief that integrity is keeping one's word – period – leaves no way to maintain integrity when this is not possible, or when it is inappropriate, or when one simply

[22] Argyris, Chris. 1991. *Teaching Smart People How to Learn*. Harvard Business Review: May-June.

chooses not to keep one's word. This leads to concealing not keeping one's word, which adds to the veil of invisibility about the impact of violations of the Law of Integrity.

6. **Fear of acknowledging you are not going to keep your word**

When maintaining your integrity (i.e., acknowledging that you are not going to keep your word and cleaning up the mess that results) appears to you as a threat to be avoided (like it was when you were a child) rather than simply a challenge to be dealt with, you will find it difficult to maintain your integrity. When not keeping their word, most people choose the apparent short-term gain of hiding that they will not keep their word. Thus out of fear we are blinded to (and therefore mistakenly forfeit) the power and respect that accrues from acknowledging that one will not keep one's word or that one has not kept one's word.

7. **Integrity is not seen as a factor of production**

This leads people to make up false causes and unfounded rationalizations as the source(s) of failure, which in turn conceals the violations of the Law of Integrity as the source of the reduction of the opportunity for performance that results in failure.

8. ***Not*** **doing a cost/benefit analysis on *giving* one's word**

When giving their word, most people do not consider fully what it will take to *keep* that word. That is, people do not do a cost/benefit analysis on giving their word. In effect, when giving their word, most people are merely sincere (well-meaning) or placating someone, and don't even think about what it will take to keep their word. Simply put, this failure to do a cost/benefit analysis on giving one's word is irresponsible. Irresponsible giving of one's word is a major source of the mess left in the lives of people and organizations. People generally do not see the giving of their word as: "I *am* going to *make* this happen," but if you are not doing this you will be out-of-integrity. Generally people give their word *intending* to keep it. That is, they are merely sincere. If anything makes it difficult to deliver, then they provide *reasons* instead of results.

9. ***Doing*** **a cost/benefit analysis on *honoring* one's word**

People almost universally apply cost/benefit analysis to *honoring* their word. Treating integrity as a matter of cost/ benefit analysis guarantees you will not be a trustworthy person, or with a small exception, a person of integrity.

If I apply cost/benefit analysis to honoring my word, I am either out of integrity to start with because I have not stated the cost/benefit contingency that is in fact part of my word (I lied), or to have integrity when I give my word, I must say something like the following:

"I will honor my word when it comes time for me to honor my word if the costs of doing so are less than the benefits."

Such a statement, while leaving me with integrity will not engender trust. In fact it says that my word is meaningless.

10. Integrity is a Mountain with No Top

People systematically believe that they are in integrity, or if by chance they are at the moment aware of being out of integrity, they believe that they will soon get back into integrity.

In fact integrity is a mountain with no top. However, the combination of 1) generally not seeing our own out-of-integrity behavior, 2) believing that we are persons of integrity, and 3) even when we get a glimpse of our own out-of-integrity behavior, assuaging ourselves with the notion that we will soon restore ourselves to being a person of integrity keeps us from seeing that in fact integrity is a mountain with no top. To be a person of integrity requires that we recognize this and "learn to enjoy climbing".

11. Not having your word in existence when it comes time to keep your word

People say "Talk is cheap" because most people do not honor their word when it comes time to keep their word. A major source of people not honoring their word, is that when it comes time for them to do so, their word does not exist for them in a way that gives them a reliable opportunity to honor their word.

Most people have never given any thought to keeping their word in existence so that when it comes time for them to keep their word there is a reliable opportunity for them to honor their word. This is a major source of out-of-integrity behavior for individuals, groups and organizations.

In order to honor your word, you will need an extraordinarily powerful answer to the question, "Where Is My Word When It Comes Time For Me To Keep My Word?" If you don't have a way for your word to be powerfully present for you in the moment or moments that it is time for you to take action to honor your word, then you can forget about being a person of integrity, much less a leader.

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