

2022 International Essay Contest for Young People

[Youth Category – 3rd Prize]

Ethical codes

(Original)

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Growing up, my mom was the community leader at the time and would always tell us about the importance of doing well and being authentic to ourselves and the community. "It is easy to fool society that you do well, but it is even easier to fool yourself, so better be true and good for all shall return." She taught me that; a man harvests what he sows and that whenever life is guided by lies, the soul gets denied a chance to enjoy the genuine joy."

Most of the people who do well in our community are called Inyangamugayo, a Kinyarwanda word that translates to a person of integrity. Growing up surrounded by people who do well, I heard that word so often, and simply because I could not participate in the conversation of elders I always listened with a keen ear and a genuine desire to know.

Among other people I listened to, there was Pascal, a tall brown man who spoke with firmness. To me, he was a transcendent figure and a good example of what integrity looks like, as a child I admired him. Days later it was said that he escaped the country and was nowhere to be found because he participated in the 1994 Genocide against the Tutsi in Rwanda, when I heard about that I felt first shocked and then confused. How can it be that a man whom I took as an example of integrity has participated in the darkest deed any human can ever imagine? He was the man who preached about integrity yet he was also the man I knew in person, that is said to have killed people. As a child, my mind would not grasp this content no matter the context.

What if Pascal has lived upon the value he always preached? Maybe then I would not be shocked and disappointed.

Sometimes we pretend to be well behaved so that people around us can have a good

impression of us, but what matters the most is the heart behind all our activities, the motives to why we wake up no matter how good feeling the bed might be.

The value of integrity is one of my dearest values, and I learned from Pascal that having a value as just a verbal principle is not enough, day to day I try to put my actions in the line of ethical codes, generally accepted principles that reflect the dignity of human life.

To me, Integrity is not just a mere word that my mouth pronounces fluently but my actions scruple to work upon, but rather daily guidance in each day-to-day action, no matter how tiny the movement might be, I try to move with integrity.

When we have integrity we become honest with ourselves and those around us, we can genuinely communicate what we appreciate and what we don't, And by doing so, we give those around us the permission to say what they don't appreciate about us and together, hand in hand correct what would result into conflict and live in harmony.

With integrity we respect our fellow human beings, we do recognize their dignity, and learn to listen to their worries. When we don't have integrity it is easy to think that, the worries that are not our own are invalid, but the truth is that every fear, anxiety, and burden that affects the joy of human life regardless of whose, are valid, and we can only recognize and work on them when we have integrity.

I dream of a world where the entire human race will be guided by integrity, not just in speeches but rather in daily actions. I hope that one-day diplomacy will be at the core center of World politics and instead of justifying wars, politicians settle issues before the public notices them. Communities in which every people regardless of color, height and age will be heard with a genuine heart and feel understood. A world with no hypocrisy, where honesty is a friend to all, and in which when one has done a mistake will acknowledge it and apologize.