

Teaching with Integrity

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INTRODUCTION

The topic of my essay is integrity in teaching, a neglected topic in philosophy of education. It addresses several questions: How should we conceive of integrity? What is gained and what is lost in thinking about this concept in its traditional formulation? What problems does the traditional notion of integrity fail to address adequately? How do the notions of self-deception and self-respect link up with integrity? Finally, what have I learned about my own struggle to achieve integrity?

This essay aims at a broad sweep of a complex topic, thus risking some inadequate argumentation but bringing a more robust conceptual field into view. I identify three central features of the traditional conception of integrity: (1) its concern with moral goodness, especially honesty and decency; (2) its emphasis on a person's being true to her/himself in honoring her/his moral commitments, being unwilling to surrender these commitments even when facing adversity; and (3) its concern with wholeness, completeness, and integration in becoming an undivided self. Then, I explain how this conception can illuminate two features of an individual's effort to define and express who s/he is, namely finding one's authentic voice as a teacher and having the courage to be one's own person. After that, I suggest two serious limitations of this individualistic account of integrity: its failure to account for the challenges of those who are not in privileged social positions of power or status, and its limitations in illuminating how teachers may have to change their preconceived notions of what is appropriate conduct to establish caring, trustworthy relationships with students. I also show how integrity links up with notions of self-respect and self-deception.

Finally, I conclude with a confessional story about myself as a teacher, discussing what I learned: namely that we must remain open to examining how failing to achieve integrity does not diminish what the ideal represents. Failing merely reminds us of the need to remain open to examine and reexamine how our value commitments are always being tested by our existential circumstances and actions, and how, if we really strive for integrity, we must face our own failures honestly.

THE TRADITIONAL CONCEPTION OF INTEGRITY

How should we conceive of integrity? Webster's Dictionary provides the following definition: "an uncompromising adherence to a code of moral, artistic, or other values; utter sincerity, honesty, and candor; avoidance of deception, artificiality, or shallowness of any kind." The Oxford English Dictionary tells us that the word "integrity" comes from the Latin *integri*, which means "whole"; thus integrity denotes "wholeness, entireness, completeness," and "the condition of having no part or element taken away or wanting; undivided or unbroken state." In its moral sense, it is an "unimpaired moral state; freedom from moral corruption, innocence,

sinlessness...soundness of moral principle, the character of uncorrupted virtue, especially in relation to truth and fair dealing; uprightness, honesty, sincerity.” Citing the studies of “moral exemplars” by developmental psychologists Anne Colby and William Damon,¹ Allison Williams informs us that integrity requires “standards of honesty and decency in the methods one uses, even when one’s goals seem in jeopardy.”² For Colby and Damon, a person’s integrity cannot be sustained through deceit or other morally questionable means even when one is pursuing a worthwhile goal. Randall Curren recently writes: “Philosophers have noted the existence of two distinct notions of integrity: *rectitude*, or the sum of honesty, fairness, and other such traits; but also being ‘*true to oneself*’ or true to a coherent set of important commitments.” Curren continues:

We can presume there are persons who are true to themselves without exhibiting rectitude, and some who exhibit rectitude “in-authentically,” but to describe a person without qualification as a “person of integrity” is to attribute integrity in a moral and comprehensive sense. One cannot be a person of integrity without it being the case that one is “true to oneself” in doing the right thing. Integrity in this sense requires fidelity not just to a “core” identity but to a consistent set of important commitments that include the requirements of rectitude or social morality.³

Integrity as wholeness is reflected in the work of Martin Benjamin, Eamonn Callan, and Parker Palmer. Callan writes:

A life of integrity must surely exhibit an inner consistency or unity. In this regard, one might compare such a life to a work of art that dissolves into absurdity in the absence of some overarching unity that makes it more than the sum of its parts. A musical composition cannot be just an assemblage of notes or phrases, a poem is not merely a sequence of words and images, and a life of integrity must be more than a random series of actions and experiences.⁴

Palmer links integrity as wholeness to one’s identity and integrity as a teacher. He puts the connection this way: “in every class I teach, my ability to connect with my students, and to connect them with my subject, depends less upon the methods I use than on the degree to which I know and trust my selfhood — and am willing to make it available and vulnerable in the service of learning.”⁵ Palmer suggests that good teaching is about connecting with students through their hearts, and he means by “heart” what he calls its ancient sense, “the place where intellect and emotion and spirit will converge in the human self.” This is what Palmer means by integrity as wholeness.

By *integrity* I mean whatever wholeness I am able to find within that nexus as its vectors form and re-form the pattern of my life. Integrity requires that I discern what is integral to my selfhood, what fits and what does not — and that I choose life-giving ways of relating to the forces that converge within me. Do I welcome them or fear them, embrace them or reject them, move with them or against them? By choosing integrity, I become more whole, but wholeness does not mean perfection. It means becoming more real by acknowledging the whole of who I am.⁶

To summarize, I have suggested that integrity is associated with a set of moral virtues, in particular honesty and decency, with one’s being true to one’s value commitments, seldom if ever compromising them, and with being whole, integrated, and undivided. Williams calls this the “traditional notion” of integrity (see *TJC*, 11–37).⁷

TWO ADVANTAGES OF THE TRADITIONAL NOTION OF INTEGRITY

What is useful about this traditional set of associations with integrity? Importantly, it allows us to see how integrity is bound up with a certain notion of self-respect and to appreciate how critical self-respect may be to maintaining a healthy stance towards oneself. Thomas Hill provides two notions of self-respect.⁸ In the first, self-respect is a baseline belief in one's fundamental value as a person — a belief associated with the Kantian notion of “respect for persons,” wherein a person is viewed as a subject and not an object, as a free, rational agent seeking to make informed decisions in her/his own interests. If one has self-respect, one understands what being treated with dignity as a person means — that one possesses, along with all other persons, fundamental moral rights. This kind of self-respect is clearly incompatible with an attitude of servility, “a willingness to disavow one's moral status, publicly and systematically, in the absence of any strong reason to do so.”⁹

Hill suggests another sense of self-respect, one not bound up with not devaluing one's basic rights as a human being. Rather, it is tied to having a clear sense of what one values or counts as important, and living a life in accord with these values. Hill asks us to think about a hypothetical neighbor who will not let his house fall into disarray, not let his debts increase beyond a certain point, and not see films he regards as tasteless or obscene even if they arouse his interest. This neighbor does not criticize other people for their housekeeping, their payment or nonpayment of debts, or their preferences in films. What distinguishes the neighbor's self-respect is that he sets certain standards for himself, based on certain values, and he would lower himself in his own eyes if he did not adhere to his own standards or if he dishonored his own values in his day-to-day practice.¹⁰

Hill's second sense of self-respect — a personal, and more subjective notion — clearly connects with the notion of integrity; however, it is not a strictly moral notion because one's values, standards, and ideals may not be restricted to moral ones. What is critical for Hill is that the person's choice of values and standards must be authentic; they must be true to who the person is as a person. Thus, Hill writes, “The sort of personal standards and ideals which one's self-respect depends upon are typically seen as inescapably a part of oneself. Whether one sees them as objective or not, one genuinely takes the attitude that one is, in one's own view, better or worse according to how one measures up to them.” Hill's view is that one has or does not have a sense of one's own worth as a person, and that this sense of worth is not based upon how others view one's achievements or projects; it does not depend upon how one deserves to be seen as a human being entitled to certain kinds of moral treatment. Hill writes that one's sense of self-worth is personal and subjective: “at least part of a sense of one's own worth is having, and living by, personal standards or ideals that one sees, whether objective or not, as an important part of oneself.”¹¹

For many years, I have required preservice teachers in my classes to develop their own philosophy of teaching, spelling out their core value commitments and explaining what these might look like when translated into classroom practice. I require them to examine what concrete obstacles they will likely face in realizing

them, and to consider how they might overcome these obstacles. Clearly, I appreciate the importance of the link between integrity and self-respect. Integrity and self-respect seem naturally joined within a person's life; and this linkage seems critical for people aspiring to be teachers, for I believe teachers must achieve some level of self-respect to establish a sense of their own legitimacy to themselves and to their students. To achieve both self-respect and integrity requires spelling out what we stand for, what we care about, and what matters to us as educators — the constellation of values and commitments representing our personal ideal. To the degree that we seek to live up to our own ideals, values, principles, and commitments, we seek to maintain both our integrity and our self-respect; to the degree that we fail to live up to these values, we risk both our integrity and our self-respect. However, our failures to live up to our integrity provide us with opportunities to reflect on how difficult this ideal is to maintain in our day-to-day lives. Moreover, that openness to examining our failures, I believe, lies at the heart of our quest for integrity.

So, the first advantage of the traditional notion of integrity is that it provides a psychological avenue towards achieving self-respect. The second advantage is its insight into what Palmer calls “the courage to teach who we are.” When we understand and believe in what we care about, when we are unafraid to stand up for what we believe in, when we admit what we feel vulnerable about, Palmer suggests we become “more real” both to ourselves and our students, more authentic, more truly ourselves. In Palmer's view, integrity seems linked again, both conceptually and empirically, to people being unafraid to be true to their deepest value commitments.

Nevertheless, I think this linkage between integrity in its traditional associations and the courage to be oneself, is actualized only rarely; its more severe tests occurs when one's identity-conferring commitments are being tested. For example, recently Barack Obama explained his association with Reverend Jeremiah Wright, his pastor and spiritual guide for twenty years; Obama talked about race in the United States. I viewed Obama's speech as exemplifying true integrity. In it, he defined who he is as a person, stating why he could not disown Reverend Wright while still condemning his more racially divisive statements. Moreover, he was courageously unapologetic about his belief that racism persists. This speech was Obama's attempt to be true to himself and respectful of those with whom he disagrees.¹²

TWO DISADVANTAGES OF THE TRADITIONAL CONCEPTION OF INTEGRITY

In her penetrating analysis of integrity, Williams carefully addresses one central disadvantage of the traditional notion of integrity — its failure to take adequate account of how integrity is experienced by those who are marginalized, oppressed, or socially disadvantaged.¹³ Williams argues that the traditional notion of integrity places different kinds of burdens on those who are not privileged; I take up some of her poignant examples in what follows. First, let's consider the ability not to have to make compromises to preserve one's integrity: those who are black, poor, uneducated, unmarried, homosexual, or single parents — or some combination of these — can much less easily walk away from a job that violates their personal values

than those who are privileged, white, wealthy, and well educated; to do so could easily risk their capacity to support their children or others who depend upon them. Compromises to survive form the fabric of their lives but seldom is this the case for those who are more privileged.

Similarly, while integrity is associated with moral uprightness and complete honesty, Williams, citing bell hooks, notes how the poor are ideologically viewed as “shiftless, mindless, lazy, dishonest, and unworthy” (*TJC*, 135).¹⁴ Racial minorities are often perceived in similar ways. The dominant background culture constantly reminds them that they do not deserve to be viewed as honest or trustworthy. Williams cites the story of a black woman seeking to buy a sweater for her mother in a Benetton store in Soho. To gain access to the store, she had to press an entry buzzer, thus enabling salespersons to screen customers: if a prospective customer is judged safe and desirable, the door is unlocked; otherwise it remains locked. Williams notes that the judgment relies exclusively on outward appearance, and in this particular case, race. When the woman pressed the buzzer, the salesperson stared at her and mouthed the words “We’re closed,” and he even blew a bubble of pink bubble gum in her face. The woman, enraged but powerless, stayed outside watching several white people shopping inside the store; choosing not to make a scene, she went away. Later, writing about her experience she said:

In the flicker of his judgmental grey eyes, that sales child had transformed my brightly sentimental, joy-to-the-world, pre-Christmas spree to a shambles. He snuffed my sense of humanitarian catholicity, and there was nothing I could do to snuff his...he had no compassion, no remorse, no reference to me...he saw me only as one who would take his money and therefore could not conceive that I was there to give him money. (*TJC*, 136–7)

Williams points out that blacks are often expected to justify their honesty against an assumption of their dishonesty: “If one is a member of an oppressed racial group that is presumed to be dishonest, then this will have broad implications for their lives whether they want it to or not” (*TJC*, 142). In this regard, Claudia Card argues that one’s ability to be morally virtuous depends, in part, on the capacity of others to recognize one’s virtue (*TJC*, 142).¹⁵

Williams also notes that if integrity demands a high level of honesty, it may be quite problematic for homosexuals, many of whom live in settings that do not accept their sexual orientation as legitimate. The honesty requirement for integrity thus can place homosexuals in a double bind. If one is honest about one’s sexual orientation, one may run several risks: being rejected by society, losing one’s job, being banished from one’s family or shamed by them, losing one’s friends, and so on. On the other hand, if one is dishonest in order to avoid those risks and maintain one’s life, one may be seen as not having integrity (*TJC*, 144).

Summarizing her views on the disadvantage of traditional notions of integrity for particular group members, Williams writes: “To force certain groups of people to work harder to be recognized for their integrity...is wrong; to penalize particular groups of people for being dishonest when dishonesty may be necessary for survival is...unjust” (*TJC*, 145). I interpret Williams to mean that we must recognize how powerful the gap remains between the idealized conception of integrity and how it

operates in the real lives of those struggling against the social and cultural forces of oppression.

Williams notes the challenges women face as caregivers carrying additional burdens outside the home, and she points out that some members of ethnic cultures also face the demand of living divided lives, having to maintain their traditional cultures at home while being asked to behave differently in the larger society. The notion of integrity as wholeness comes under particular pressure for those torn between incompatible sets of social roles (*TJC*, 147–59). Williams argues forcefully that the traditional view of integrity both obscures and diminishes the challenges that the non-privileged face as they strive to live honest and decent lives, to be true to themselves, and to remain whole, integrated, and undivided.

I now take up the second important disadvantage to the traditional notion of integrity: it does not fully illuminate the often fuzzy, shifting domain of maintaining trust in interpersonal relationships. Let me demonstrate this claim with an example from May Sarton's *The Small Room*.¹⁶ In this novel, first-year teacher Lucy discovers that a gifted but emotionally troubled student, Jane, has plagiarized an essay. Jane appears to be unconsciously trying to escape from being a protégée of a demanding mentor, Carryl. Lucy approaches the plagiarism with an established, but untested, set of value commitments — namely, to maintain a respectful professional distance with one's students and not get too close to them emotionally. If Lucy would adhere to her principles, she would definitely not become involved in the personal problems of Jane but would turn the plagiarism case over immediately to the student court. But Lucy has more than Jane's welfare to consider — she is entangled in a small, tightly knit community, completely enmeshed in a web of personal relationships that she seeks to maintain (for example, she cares deeply about Jane's mentor Carryl, who happens to be lesbian). To turn Jane's case over to the student court would not only mean Jane's expulsion from college, an academic death sentence, but would also mean throwing Carryl "to the wolves" since many faculty members despise her. If Lucy honored her principled commitments to behave as a disinterested professional, focused solely on the student's academic learning, she could not do what she intuitively feels she must do — help the emotionally troubled plagiarist survive academically and emotionally. In other words, Lucy's philosophy of teaching, her preconceived value commitments, does not accommodate personal caring — the kind of caring Nel Noddings writes about. Nevertheless, Lucy listens to her intuition rather than follows her untested philosophy, and she creates a caring relationship with Jane, telling her that she will "always be there for her." She doesn't immediately turn the plagiarism case over to the student court — a decision that precipitates what others consider a cover-up — but she invites Jane to her home over Thanksgiving if Jane agrees to see a psychologist and get help. Ultimately, she does turn the case over to the student court, but she intervenes for Jane, pleads her case, and helps her get a medical leave of absence rather than expulsion from school.

By muddling through a difficult situation, Lucy learns that personal caring may be required — that it is not always helpful to appeal to preestablished principles

without assessing a concrete situation; moreover, she learns that establishing a trusting, caring relationship sometimes requires that we must compromise a legitimate principle — in this case, procedural fairness, which would have required “a quick and speedy trial,” leading, in all probability, to a disastrous outcome.

So, does the traditional notion of integrity illuminate Lucy’s dilemma? Certainly not. We can note several things to support this conclusion: first, we may not easily judge what is required without grasping how complex a particular situation is. Second, guiding principles may need to be revised or compromised if we are to maintain the relationships that really matter to us; acting on principle may not be worth risking the death of a relationship. Finally we can note that being true to ourselves, a key feature of integrity, may not be something static; experience may transform us, enabling us to become new persons, persons who reinterpret who we are and how we relate to others. If we are to be true to ourselves, we must continually reevaluate who we are and who we have become. We may have changed. All of us do — many times, if not continually, as we remain open to examining ourselves in light of how we have acted and must act.

Maintaining integrity, it seems to me, requires that we continually remain open to examining how our actions may sometimes not be aligned with our preexisting value commitments. We remain fallible creatures doing the best we can, sometimes altering our preexisting values, sometimes reflecting on how we have fallen short of realizing them in our day-to-day lives and our struggles to survive.

The traditional notion of integrity emphasizes the preservation of a certain kind of selfhood — an authentic, morally honest, decent principled selfhood; what it does not emphasize, it seems to me, is how our sense of self often changes as we act in ways to preserve our sense of wholeness, to maintain relationships with others that are critical to us, and to make new sense of the existential realities we confront in our day-to-day lives.

WHAT I HAVE LEARNED ABOUT THE STRUGGLE FOR INTEGRITY

In this final section, I briefly discuss one aspect of my own experience as a teacher — self-deception; this leads me to comment on why the struggle for integrity reminds me of one of the most fundamental virtues of a good teacher — humility.

The search for integrity, of necessity, involves confronting the twin demons of hypocrisy — to profess one thing and do another — and self-deception — our unconscious tendency to avoid unpleasant things about ourselves that undermine what we profess to value. As I thought about saying something about hypocrisy here, I remembered reading one of my favorite books years ago: J.D. Salinger’s *Catcher in the Rye*.¹⁷ I read it for a second time as an Amherst College freshman in the spring of 1962 after having just endured a week of rushing for a fraternity and the persuasive efforts of the pledged upperclassmen. The novel had a special appeal to me then as I noticed how quickly the upperclassmen’s friendliness disappeared after fraternity rush week ended. As soon as we ceased to be instrumentally important to them, they no longer had to pretend to be friendly; they returned to their arrogant selves, vastly superior to us mere freshmen. Their phony façade of being interested in us and in

what we cared about had lasted for precisely the one week. So I reread *Catcher in the Rye*, aiming for a new slant on Holden Caulfield's quasi-obsessive preoccupation with the phoniness he finds everywhere.

The story begins as a flashback of sixteen year-old Holden recuperating in a hospital from a mental breakdown; a few months earlier, he had flunked out of Pencey Prep, his fourth private school in three years. What then struck me powerfully was not Holden's extraordinary instincts for detecting phoniness — that had previously made me laugh repeatedly — but how his inability to accept himself made him so very depressed, quite unable to function. It also struck me as sad that Holden had only one teacher he thought he could trust — Mr. Antolini, who allowed him to stay in his New York apartment after he has snuck home to talk to his adored little sister Phoebe. Unfortunately when Holden awoke in Mr. Antolini's flat, he found Mr. Antolini "petting his head"; instantly Holden's trust disintegrated. On the verge of a mental breakdown, Holden had not one adult, not one teacher, that he could really trust. His plight made me wonder how many troubled students face similar conditions — being emotionally distraught without any trustworthy adults to turn to for support.

The person Holden does trust and does turn to is his little sister Phoebe. He knows she will be there for him under any circumstance. In their brief reunion, Phoebe immediately intuits that Holden has flunked out again; that is why he is home three days before Christmas break. After listening to him curse and swear, and put down the people in his recent past, she confronts him with a truth much too painful for him to recognize — that he likes virtually nothing in his experience, especially himself. The following piece of their conversation illustrates how defensively Holden reacts to Phoebe's insightful truth:

[Phoebe:] "You don't like *anything* that's happening."

"Yes I do. Yes I do. Sure I do. Don't say that. Why the hell do you say that?"

"Because you don't. You don't like any schools. You don't like a million things. You don't."

"I do. That's where you're wrong — that's exactly where you're wrong. Why the hell do you have to say that?" I said. Boy was she depressing me.

"Because you don't." she said. "Name one thing."

"One thing? One thing I like?" I said. "Okay."

The trouble was, I couldn't concentrate too hot. Sometimes it's hard to concentrate.¹⁸

The dialogue reveals Holden's absolute resistance to the truth about himself in the way literature usually reveals things, indirectly. Holden simply cannot face this truth, though Phoebe points it out over and over again. Holden resists each time, becoming more and more defensive. But the reader sees the truth that Holden cannot accept — that he really doesn't like anything about his life, with the obvious exception being his love for his sister (and his dead brother). In my rereading, I penetrated further to the novel's core. Holden's unwillingness to accept others and himself proves to be his undoing; it paralyzes him in school and in his relationships with others, causes his deep depression, and ultimately leads to a mental breakdown.

Our ability to accept ourselves with all of our faults is constantly subverted by one of the essential enemies of integrity — self-deception. What does the reader experience as Holden converses with “old Phoebe” (as he affectionately calls her)? Simply, it is Holden’s inability to look honestly at himself and spell out how his not liking anything has caused most of his difficulties — with teachers, classmates, school, life.

Why can’t Holden face the truth? And why do we so often avoid the truth about ourselves? The concept of self-deception contains, in part, the answer to these questions. It helps us explain why we often fail to acknowledge aspects of our character and behavior because they are too painful for us. Herbert Fingarette compared self-deception to how a writer focuses on writing and does not pay attention to the background conditions that lie at the periphery of writing — the way he holds his pen or how his fingers grip it. In describing the way the mind works, Fingarette explains that we can be taking account of something without necessarily focusing our attention on it. He extends the analogy further:

While I am writing, there are noises of passing cars, the neighbor’s lawnmower, the kitchen refrigerator, all coming to my ears. They are irrelevant to my writing, indeed, would disrupt it if I were to focus my attention on them. The fact is, I am simply unconscious of the noises. How can this be? The noises certainly register in my ears. It has to be that I take account of them, recognize their irrelevance to my project at the moment, and therefore do not turn my attention to noises — nor do I even focus attention on the process of adopting and pursuing this aim.¹⁹

If his wife’s car comes into the driveway and he wants to greet her and give her some messages, he has to direct his attention away from his writing and focus it on his wife coming home. So how does this analysis connect, in Fingarette’s view, with the paradox of self-deception where we seem, at one level, to acknowledge what is going on with us, but do not spell out explicitly what this means for ourselves? Fingarette writes,

Suppose, for example, that I have done something shameful. I take account of my conduct and its significance for me. However, just because this particular shame is deeply wounding to me, given my sense of self, I avoid focusing my attention on the event, or at least on its shameful features. I thus damp down the effect on me and avoid a traumatic wound to my self-esteem. There is a price. I lose the opportunity to appraise the conduct with the clarity and the depth that are afforded by close attention. I also have less reliable recall, and can thus rationalize what happened and what I have done about it.²⁰

Fingarette suggests that the way we regularly deceive ourselves is by minimally acknowledging the bare nature of what we have done while protecting our self-respect — thus trying to preserve our sense of integrity — by focusing our attention on some nonshameful conception of its significance.

This account leads me to confess one of the regular ways that I have deceived myself as a university professor in the past several years — and acknowledge the cost to my self-respect. As an ex-English teacher, I prided myself on the quality and depth of the criticism I gave students on their papers, especially the major papers they wrote in my courses. I corrected every grammatical and spelling mistake, and even edited stylistic awkwardness, wordiness, and the like. As the years went by and more

of my students were non-native English speakers, the difficulty of correcting these papers increased — as did my anguish over not being able to improve their writing skills. I also noticed that many students were disinclined to pick up their end-of-semester papers, thus making my painstaking efforts seem futile. Enter self-deception. I began grading papers at the end of the semester and criticizing in depth only those submitted with a self-addressed, stamped envelope for return. I kept the other papers in piles in my office in case a student later asked for one back. I felt bad, but, as Fingarette pointed out with self-deception, I avoided focusing too much attention on my shameful conduct, for it was too destructive of what I believed about myself — that I gave my students what they deserved: thoughtful, caring, fair-minded criticism. Occasionally when I cleaned my office, I would bump into these piles of papers. I felt more shame, but continued to rationalize and deceive myself. Self-deception, as a regular practice, enables us to avoid spelling out for ourselves how we undermine our own integrity; it gives the lie to our own avowed commitments and compromises our own values. I believe Albert Camus was right; self-deception is like the dawn — it is always returning to be with us.

I conclude this essay with what I have learned from my struggle with integrity: that it is difficult but essential to continue working to clarify one's ideals, one's values, and one's commitments, both moral and nonmoral; that it is even harder to spell out for ourselves the ways we often fall short of realizing them in practice; and that it is very hard to examine ourselves critically and admit our shortcomings, but even harder to overcome them. Finally, it is very hard to accept ourselves fully, with all of our failures and shortcomings fully spelled out. Nevertheless if we strive for integrity as teachers and persons, we must do all of these things and do them in the right spirit. The right spirit requires a deep sense of humility about who we are and how we act. Although we may aspire to be moral role models to our students, we will frequently fall short of our own ideals. Some might argue we will necessarily fall short of our ideals, for that is what it means to be human — to be fallible, flawed, continually deceiving ourselves. I argue however, that our ideals are not diminished by our failures to reach them. Failing simply reminds us of what we know about ourselves as persons: that we remain fundamentally fallible creatures, trying to find ways to live honestly with our failures, errors of judgment, and shortcomings. Humility also tells us that we cannot succeed by will power alone, but need to count heavily on others for support. Without caring relationships with others, I believe, the task of striving to be the best person we can be, may, indeed, be a futile one.

1. See Anne Colby and William Damon, *Some Do Care: Contemporary Lives of Moral Commitment* (New York: Free Press, 1992), 3.

2. Allison Williams, "Toward a Just Conception of Integrity" (PhD diss., University of Toronto, 2002), 12–3. This essay draws heavily on Williams's brilliant analysis, both in its conceptual clarification of integrity and its substantive criticism of the traditional notion of integrity in relation to the social location of groups and individuals who experience injustice in society. I am grateful to Dwight Boyd, Allison's main doctoral advisor, for sharing it with me. This work will be cited as *TJC* in the text for all subsequent references.

3. See Randall Curren, "Cardinal Virtues of Academic Administration," *Theory and Research in Education* 6, no. 3 (2008), 337–364. See also Lynne McFall, "Integrity," *Ethics* 98 (1987), 5–20.

4. Eamonn Callan, "Tradition and Integrity in Moral Education," *American Journal of Education* 14, no. 1 (1995), 13 (cited in *TJC*, 14–5). See also Martin Benjamin, *Splitting the Difference: Compromise and Integrity in Ethics and Politics* (Lawrence: University of Kansas Press, 1998).
5. Parker Palmer, *The Courage to Teach: Exploring the Inner Landscape of a Teacher's Life* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1998), 10 (emphasis in original).
6. *Ibid.*, 13.
7. These three notions associated with the traditional concept of integrity are not logically connected either in the term's ordinary usage or how it has to be conceived. My later example from a May Sarton novel suggests that "a concern for wholeness" may lead to abandoning one's preconceived commitments. This point was made forcefully to me by Leonard Waks, and I am grateful to him for it.
8. Thomas Hill, "Servility and Self-Respect," *Monist* 57 (1973); and Hill, "Self-Respect Reconsidered," *Tulane Studies in Philosophy* 31 (1982), both reprinted in Robin Dillon, ed., *Dignity, Character, and Self-Respect* (London: Routledge, 1994). Page references are to the 1994 edition.
9. Hill, "Servility and Self-Respect," 95.
10. Hill, "Self-Respect Reconsidered," 136.
11. *Ibid.*, 122.
12. Barack Obama's inspiring speech on racism, entitled "A More Perfect Union," can be accessed (as of September 2008) at <http://my.barackobama.com/page/content/hisownwords>.
13. My brief comments here, drawn from Williams's analysis in her dissertation (*TJC*), cannot do justice to its depth.
14. bell hooks, *Outlaw Culture* (New York: Routledge, 1994), 167–8.
15. Claudia Card, *The Unnatural Lottery* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1996).
16. May Sarton, *The Small Room* (New York: W.W. Norton and Company, 1961). See also Michael S. Katz, "Teaching about Caring and Fairness: May Sarton's *The Small Room*," in *Justice and Caring: The Search for Common Ground in Education*, eds. Michael S. Katz, Nel Noddings, and Kenneth A. Strike (New York: Teachers College Press, 1999).
17. J.D. Salinger, *Catcher in the Rye* (New York: Back Bay Books, 1979).
18. *Ibid.*, 220.
19. Herbert Fingarette, *Self-Deception* (Berkeley, Calif.: Routledge, 1969), 164–5.
20. *Ibid.*, 169–70.

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