

"We know what a person thinks not when he tells us what he thinks, but by his actions." - Isaac Bashevis Singer



What is Sincerity?

Sincerity comes from the Latin words "sine cere" - without wax. Because Roman clay pots were made of inferior materials so that they cracked when fired, the potters often hid the cracks with wax. It was only when they were heated that the crack was discovered as the wax melted.

To be sincere means to have nothing hidden. When there is heat (pressure and stress), does our true, hidden nature come out? Is it quite different from our usual presentation of ourselves? The goal in this character quality is to become consistent in our words, actions, motives, and responses.

To be sincere, a person must be willing to take responsibility for his faults, admitting them openly and working to change them. An insincere person will merely gloss over his faults and give lengthy explanations for his behavior.

True sincerity does not mean venting freely one's thoughts and feelings, but it is balanced with discretion and sensitivity to others. Sincerity is possible only when a person chooses to do what is right and acts upon that choice, regardless of the opinion of others.

It is best summed up with the old saying, "Mean what you say and say what you mean."

"This above all, to thine own self be true, and it must follow, as the night the day, thou canst not then be false to any man."

--William Shakespeare



The Pearl-Symbol of Sincerity

The difference between a real pearl and a cultured pearl is a grain of sand and time. When a bit of sand invades an oyster's shell, it puts layers of a substance called nacre around the sand to protect its tender flesh. Over the years the layers of nacre build up to create a beautiful and genuine pearl.

A cultured pearl, on the other hand, is formed when a person places a round plastic ball in the oyster. Again the oyster builds up layers of nacre around the ball, but the pearls are harvested before very many layers are formed. Cultured pearls may scratch easily to reveal the false center placed there for commercial "pearl farming."

"What you seem to be, be really."

--Ben Franklin

Featuring this month~

Sincerity

vs. hypocrisy

"Eagerly doing what is right with transparent motives."

I will:

- ◆ be all that I can be.
- ◆ take responsibility for my own actions.
- ◆ respect other's opinions.
- ◆ always mean what I say.
- ◆ not take advantage of other people.

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Talk about Sincerity

1. How does the culture we live in encourage insincerity?
2. Are sincere people always appreciated? Give examples.
3. How do you usually recognize insincerity in others?
4. If we lived in a culture where sincerity was the norm, how would things be different?
5. What discourages sincerity in the workplace or home?
6. Discuss how a pearl is made. Name some irritations in life. Describe the genuine character that can grow from them.



The Real McCoy

Elijah McCoy was the son of a couple who escaped to the North from slavery. He became an engineer and invented an automatic lubricating system for steam engines, preventing the need to stop every 30 miles for lubrication.

Others later manufactured similar lubricators, but his invention was so superior that machinists insisted on having "the real McCoy." His good name was always associated with consistently good quality.

Building Sincerity

- ◆ Learn to use words precisely, avoiding ambiguity, and exaggerated words.
- ◆ Be in touch with your own feelings and motives and line them up with what is right.
- ◆ Don't make commitments unless you can fulfill them.
- ◆ Learn when and how to state your opinion, with tact and proper timing.
- ◆ Let irritations show you your own character flaws, much like a mirror. Your first reaction will often reveal your true motives.
- ◆ Don't give a false impression of your abilities. Be honest about your short-comings, but show a willingness to learn.
- ◆ Don't default to manipulation, intimidation, and exaggeration to get ahead. Rather, trust in integrity.