

DEFINING MOMENTS

Process Tool

Integrity: Cultivating Character

Summary

Ministry leaders value integrity in themselves and in those around them, but many underestimate the far-reaching effects of integrity — or the lack of it. Integrity is more than honesty or ethical behavior. In his book *Integrity: The Courage to Meet the Demands of Reality*, Dr. Henry Cloud proposes that a person of integrity possesses six key traits. In June 2007 issue of *Defining Moments*, Henry joined Bill Hybels and host Nancy Beach to explore four of those traits and their impact on a leader's success. In this issue, Henry discusses the remaining two traits and their role in cultivating character.

Outline

- I. The Need for Character Growth
 - A. Many believe that character cannot be changed.
 - B. Leaders should recruit people with good character, but they should also expect them to grow.
 - C. Although character is fixed, it is not unchangeable.
 - D. Change does not occur unless people feel a need to change.
 - E. Problems and crises stretch a person beyond their current character, creating the need for change.
 - F. When a staff member has a character issue, it may be that the person cannot do the work of character rebuilding while still doing the work of the church.
 1. When character rebuilding is going to be all-consuming for that person, it's best that they step down for a time.
 2. Like remodeling a house, some areas of the person will be inaccessible during character rebuilding, but there may be other areas that are still functional.
 3. Sometimes, although a person could continue in a role, it may not be the best thing for the church.
- II. The Traits of Integrity: To Be Oriented Toward Growth
 - A. Anything that's alive is growing.
 - B. Leaders should invest in stretching experiences.
 - C. Some leaders are so afraid of criticism or failure that they are not able to get out of their comfort zone.
 - D. Leaders need to be able to:
 1. Take risks, not gambles.
 2. Metabolize a period of chaos.
 3. Delay gratification.
 4. Swallow their pride.
 5. Go back to being a learner when necessary.
 - E. Age plays a role in growth.
 1. When people are young, they have a natural hunger for growth.
 2. As they get older, they may become so beaten down or wounded that they're no longer investing in growth.
 3. Even so, the physical and psychological potential for growth is still there.
 - F. A leader's personal growth enables them to grow an organization.

- G. Leaders cannot delegate their own personal growth.
 - 1. "You are the toughest person you will ever have to lead."
 - 2. Leaders can find it difficult to focus on their own personal growth because they invest so much in the people that they lead.
 - 3. Leaders should remind themselves that when a leader grows, everyone wins.
 - 4. Although no one can do the work of growth for them, leaders can find people and structures to keep them accountable for growth.
 - H. Include a line item in the budget for leadership development.
 - I. Every leader has a wake.
 - 1. A captain can tell how the ship is doing by looking at the wake.
 - 2. As a leader moves through an organization, he or she leaves a wake.
 - a. Part of the wake concerns the task: Was the mission accomplished?
 - b. The other part of the wake concerns the relationships: Are the people in your wake skiing or bleeding?
 - 3. Create feedback mechanisms to assess your wake.
 - 4. Ask yourself, "If I were called elsewhere, would I leave behind accomplishments of substance?"
 - 5. Consider, "Would the people I'm leading want to sign up again?"
 - 6. Ask those around you, "Are you still having fun?"
 - J. Leaders won't grow without attempting to do things that they are currently unable to do.
 - 1. Some leaders never try anything new, while others try to do too much.
 - 2. Grow in incremental steps.
 - K. Character thrives on feedback that is focused and used well.
 - 1. The leader needs to be intentional about seeking feedback.
 - 2. If a leader is not proactive, the only way the leader will get feedback is through failures.
 - 3. Leaders need feedback that is objective, structured, and measurable.
- III. The Traits of Integrity: To Be Oriented Toward Transcendence
- A. Leaders can begin to act like God.
 - B. Transcendence means acknowledging that there are things larger than oneself and realizing one's proper place in relation to the larger things.
 - 1. Values can come into conflict with what may be easier at the time, but transcendence always keeps the bigger, long-term picture in mind.
 - 2. Problems erupt when small things try to make larger things serve them.
 - 3. Humility is how people ascend to greatness, because they find their small roles in the bigger purposes of what God is doing.
 - C. Pastors who teach the Bible and lead can have an easier time right-sizing themselves in God's reality.
 - D. Ego can take down a ministry leader, although it doesn't happen as often as some think.
 - 1. People with big egos tend to prefer industries that inflate them more naturally than ministry does.
 - 2. Still, the celebrity-crazed aspect of the culture does infect the church.
 - E. In addition to ego-maniacs, servant codependents have problems with transcendence, feeling like they have the responsibility to keep everyone happy, to be everywhere at once, and to know how to do everything.
 - F. Self-awareness and self-correction are vital in the life of a ministry leader.
 - 1. Discipline comes from the outside, but ultimately it needs to be internalized so that leaders are aware of their own gaps.
 - 2. Leaders should create environments in their teams where everyone can provide honest feedback to each other.
 - 3. Eventually, the other-awareness fostered in the team environment is internalized to become self-awareness.

- IV. The Importance of Integrity
- A. Integrity comes from integration, and God made people to be integrated.
 - B. God has many names, all pointing to a different part of his character, but He has integrated all those parts.
 - C. Working on one area of character has a ripple effect into other areas, which enables growth.
 - D. Character is what produces the results.
 - E. Only invest in character.
 - F. A bad tree cannot produce good fruit, and a good tree cannot produce bad fruit.
 - G. The focus on character, growth, and integration will ultimately be what produces the integration and wholeness of the mission itself.

Process Questions

1. Leaders should recruit people with good character, but they should also expect their team members to grow. Use the chart below to help you reflect on the aspects of character that your team members might need to cultivate.

- In the first column, write down the first names of each of those who report to you. (Copy the chart onto an additional sheet of paper if necessary.)
- In the middle column, write down your thoughts on the areas where they may need to grow. Their growth area may be one of the traits of integrity discussed in this and last month's *Defining Moments* (listed in the box to the right).
- Reflecting back on what you heard during this issue, write down one or two ideas for next steps that you could take to help them pursue character growth in that area. Remember that change will not occur unless they themselves feel the need for change.
- Note: As you go through this exercise, you may identify a serious character issue in one of your team members. Plan to dedicate additional time in the next week to reflect on whether or not they can do the work of character rebuilding while still doing the work of the church, and arrange to meet with them one-on-one to discuss the options.

- Traits of Integrity**
1. Connecting authentically
 2. Being oriented toward the truth
 3. Getting results
 4. Embracing negative realities
 5. Being oriented toward growth
 6. Being oriented toward transcendence

Team Member	Potential Area of Growth	Next Steps

2. Spend five minutes reflecting on your commitment to your own personal character growth. Journal your thoughts below, and use the questions in the box to help stimulate your thinking.

- Does your fear of criticism or failure hold you back from leaving your comfort zone?
- Are you too busy investing in your team to focus on your own growth?
- Do you have people and structures to keep you accountable for growth?
- Do you need to validate the growth process by including leadership development in your budget?
- Do you try to do too much or too little?
- Is there one skill of growth that you need to focus on developing?
 - Take risks, not gambles.
 - Metabolize a period of chaos.
 - Delay gratification.
 - Swallow their pride.
 - Go back to being a learner when necessary.

3. Evaluate your leadership work by circling the appropriate number below. It may help to think of two or three specific projects or initiatives that you led recently.

	<i>This is not usually true of my leadership.</i>		<i>This is sometimes true of my leadership.</i>		<i>This is almost always true of my leadership.</i>
	1	2	3	4	5
I give appropriate consideration to both the mission of a project and the relationships involved.	1	2	3	4	5
When I lead, the mission is accomplished.	1	2	3	4	5
Those I lead would be excited to sign up again with me.	1	2	3	4	5
When I leave a leadership position, I leave accomplishments of substance behind me.	1	2	3	4	5
I'm still having fun.	1	2	3	4	5

Next, pick one or two of the areas that you found were less true of your leadership. Write down one action you will take to begin to improve in this area, based on what you heard during this issue.

4. If leaders do not proactively seek feedback, they usually don't receive it until it's too late to prevent a failure.

a. Circle the words below that describe the feedback that you usually receive on your leadership.

Infrequent	Raw	Structured	Meaningful	Overwhelming
Biased	Focused	Honest	Timely	Objective
Measurable	Insightful	Subjective	Unhelpful	Sugar-coated

b. What are two or three areas of your leadership where you would benefit from improved feedback? Write them below.

c. What are structures that you could put into place to improve the quality of the feedback that you receive in those areas? Write at least one idea below.

5. Pastors can be so service-oriented that they end up trying to be God — keeping everyone happy, being everywhere at once, and knowing how to do everything. Spend five minutes reflecting on your heart for service, and ask yourself whether it ever leads you to violate transcendence by doing too much. Use this time to help you focus on the magnitude of God and the small role He has given you to play. Journal your thoughts below.

6. Leaders should create environments in their teams where everyone can provide honest feedback to each other, which will eventually lead to better self-awareness for each individual. Below, write down steps that you could take in your next team meeting to begin to encourage greater honesty and other-awareness in your team meetings.

Steps to take in our next team meeting: