

Integrity
Michelle Ciurea
Beacon Hill Friends Meeting
First Day School

Lesson 1: Introduction

Welcome children.

We will talk about this fall's curriculum shortly, but first I want to hear about your summer. [informal chat about summer & new school year]

Game

Take turns picking out questions out of a hat. Each child briefly answers the question s/he picked. (all the questions have to do with Integrity in some way)

Discussion

What do these questions have in common? (they all have to do with aspects of integrity)

This fall we will look at Integrity, one of the trickiest of testimonies.

By the way, what are the 5 testimonies? [SPICE - Simplicity, Peace, Integrity, Community, Equality]

What *is* integrity, exactly? [jointly brainstorm definitions/aspects of integrity].

Four aspects:

1. Truth-telling
2. Authenticity (be who you really are)
3. Faithfulness/loyalty to the Truth (conscience)
4. Corporate action (our communal accountability to the Truth)

Questions for the Hat

- Is it ever OK to lie? If no, why not? If yes, under what circumstances?
- True or false: if you met me at school, I would seem different to you than I do here.

- How much would you say you are influenced by advertising? What kind of advertising “hooks” you the most? (e.g. ads for certain products? ads that appeal to a certain characteristic like coolness or fashion or being popular? ads that come by TV versus magazines versus internet?)
- Tell about a time when you had an opinion vastly different than the majority around you. (e.g. your friends, your family, kids at camp, other Quakers). What did you do? Did you broadcast it or keep it to yourself? How did that make you feel?
- Which is creepier: Ronald McDonald or the Burger King?
- Agree or disagree: if people in the news, like celebrities, get attention for “bad” behavior, how bad can it really be?
- Tell us about someone you know who lives their life with great integrity (adult or child). (if you can’t think of someone you know personally, think of a historical figure or a character from a book).
- Did you ever tell a really big lie and get away with it? (describe. Why did you lie?)
- Have you ever pretended to be something you weren’t in order to please someone? (describe)

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Lesson 2: The Cost of Truth

*** This is a “talky” lesson (not physically active). Bring doodling materials to give restless youngsters a diversion!*

Silent worship. Begin with silent worship 5-7 minutes. Use a candle or other object to focus minds. Display a prompting query that kids can use if they need something to think about: “How much is the truth really worth to me?”

“Integrity is the essential Quaker test and undergirds all the other testimonies of Friends.” - Wilmer Cooper, Pendle Hill pamphlet on Integrity

Definitions of Integrity

1. The state of being complete, undiminished, free from damage or defect. E.g. the emperor maintained the integrity of the empire despite many attacks from invaders.
2. An unimpaired condition e.g. the integrity of the stone foundation remained, even though the wood house above it had rotted.
3. Adherence to a code of values. Respecting the truth. E.g. Young Quakers who attend First Day School turn into adults of great integrity.

Given those definitions, what might this mean?

“Jesus said, ‘You shall know the truth, and the truth shall set you free.’”
– John 8:32

We shall study Four Aspects of Integrity

- Truth telling
- Authenticity
- Loyalty to the Truth (conscience)
- Accountability to the group’s sense of the Truth (corporate action)

I. Truth- telling

Quaker historical examples:

Historically, Quakers were known for truthfulness and honesty in their dealings with others. They believed there is a single standard for truth; truth is fixed and unchanging, and it does not vary from circumstance to circumstance. They tried to live as the Scriptures said:

"Above all things, swear not, neither by heaven, neither by earth, neither by any other oath. But let your yea be yea, and your nay, nay..." - James 5:12

This manifested in several ways:

Single price. Quaker merchants were unusual in 17th century England in selling things according to a single price. This set them apart from other shopkeepers who might alter their price depending on the client. Quaker shopkeepers could be trusted to charge the same price for everyone, and this helped them gain a lot of business and often, become very rich.

No oaths. When early Friends were arrested for their religious practices and brought before the judge, they often suffered further persecution and often imprisonment because they refused to take oaths swearing they would tell the truth. Even today, Quakers do not take oaths in a court of law. Why? To do so is to accept that there are two standards for truth, not one: one standard for the courtroom (where you have to tell the truth) and one for everyday life (where presumably you don't). Friends insisted that they told the truth in all circumstances and insisted that being required to sweat to tell the truth in court implied that they might lie if they were not under oath. Even today, Quakers "affirm" the truth rather than "swear" to tell the truth in court.

Read the story below:

OUR WORD IS OUR KEEPER

THOMAS ELLWOOD, a Quaker in the 1600's, was sitting in the growing darkness of Newgate Prison in England, wondering whether the daylight was really gone and if it was time for him to get out the hammock in which he slept and prepare for bed.

"It is hard to know," he said to the man nearest to him, "whether it is more uncomfortable at night or in the daytime."

It was no wonder that he spoke so, for an English prison in 1662 was a very dreadful place. The floors were damp and dirty, even at noontime the room was a gloomy twilight, and today it was so crowded that

the prisoners could scarcely move about. They were all Quakers, sent to Newgate for refusing to take an oath. "The law requires you to swear that your statements are true!" had thundered the officers of the court. "Nay," the Quakers had replied, "a man's word, truthfully given, is as binding as any oath can be, and it is wrong to swear." So they had all been herded into Newgate to spend months of imprisonment for this offence.

"Thomas, thou art taller than I. Canst thou reach the hook yonder to fasten my hammock?" called out an older man.

"Yes, indeed," answered Thomas, "but why not hang it to the post in the middle of the room to-night, in the place where poor James has been. That will be in the middle row, and the air may be better."

"James was a delicate man," replied the other as he acted on Thomas' advice; "it is not surprising that he died in this vile atmosphere, even though we gave him the best place that we could."

Everyone felt very much depressed by the death of this prisoner, and as they began to put up their hammocks, which had to be hung in all directions across the room, and one above the other until they were three rows high, the Friends still talked of him.

Suddenly there was a great noise of voices and tramping of feet outside. A key grated in the lock, and a torch threw a blinding light into the room as the turnkey opened the door and shouted, "Hold, hold! here is the coroner's inquest come to see you!"

A jury had come to inquire the reason for the death of the man. There was scarcely room for them to come in, so they crowded at the door. At last the foreman exclaimed, "What a sight is here! We need not now question how this man came by his death: we may rather wonder that they all are not dead, for this place is enough to breed an infection among them!"

The jury withdrew, and the Quakers thought no more of the affair until the next day. Then a sheriff came and explained that he wished that he could set them all free; but as that was not in his power, he would send a number of them to the old Bridewell Prison, which was less crowded. "This," he said, "will be more comfortable for you, and your removal will give more room to those left behind."

And now a very strange thing happened. The porter, who should have escorted them from one prison to the other, told them that as they knew the way to Bridewell, and as he could trust them, they might as well go there alone, provided they were in before bedtime! So Thomas Ellwood and some thirty more of the Friends made up their packs of clothing, and taking their bundles on their shoulders, walked two and two abreast from Newgate to old Bridewell. Some staggered slightly as from weakness, others stepped firmly as though their feet welcomed the good earth once more. The faces of all were pale from the confinement of the prison. They looked about them calmly, and often smiled to see the blue sky and smell the fresh air. It was the middle of the afternoon and the street was full of people. Shop-keepers stared from their doors and passers-by stopped the little procession to ask who they were and where they were going. They said that they were prisoners, going from one prison to another.

"What!" exclaimed the townsmen. "Without a keeper? Why don't you go home? This is your opportunity!"

"No," Thomas Ellwood answered proudly, "for our word, which we have given, is our keeper."

Discussion:

- What does it cost you to tell the truth?
- What does it cost you to *not* tell the truth?
- Put yourself in Thomas' mind, try to view Truth as he did. How do you think he felt as he made his hammock that night in the new prison?

(write down responses)

"If you tell the truth, then you don't have to remember anything." – Mark Twain

Next time: shades of gray: partial truths.

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Lesson 3: Partial Truths

*** This is an interactive lesson but the interaction is talking. If it's a restless group, have doodling materials on hand. ***

Silent worship. Begin with 5 minutes of silent worship. Use a candle or other object (like the jar of water with sludge slowly sedimenting down) to help kids center down. Display a prompting query that kids can use if they need something to think about: What would my daily life look like if I believed as strongly in Truth as Thomas the Quaker did from last week's story?

Quotes – keep these on display throughout the lesson without comment.

"Integrity is the essential Quaker test." - Wilmer Cooper, Pendle Hill pamphlet on Integrity

"... and the truth shall set you free." – John 8:32

"If you tell the truth, then you don't have to remember anything." – Mark Twain

Review (5-7 minutes, Jeopardy style – quick response, treat for correct answer)

1. Who can remember the definitions of Integrity, and use it in a sentence?
 1. *The state of being complete, undiminished, free from damage or defect.*
 2. *An unimpaired condition*
 3. *Adherence to a code of values. Respecting the truth.*
2. What is the origin of the word 'integrity'? What might its original meaning have to do with its current meaning of 'respecting truth'?

Latin 'integritas' = entire, complete, undiminished.
3. Give two historical examples of Quaker custom that have their roots in the Integrity testimony. What was the reason?

- *No oaths. Quakers did not -- and still don't -- swear oaths, for example in a court of law. (to do so was to admit that there were two standards for truth, in and out of court, and implied that it was ok to lie out of court).*
- *Single price. Quakers sold goods at the same price to everyone (believing that the item had one inherent, 'true' value).*

Last time we read a story of some Quakers from the 1600's who had an extreme allegiance to total truth. They voluntarily moved themselves from one prison to another, without a guard, because they had given their word they would not run away. We talked about the cost of telling the truth, and the cost of not telling the truth.

Underscore that when you are at a difficult crossroad between truth and falsity, there is usually a cost to be borne either way. The point here is to render visible that NOT telling the truth bears a cost too. Is the lie worth it?

Today we talk about partial truths: in a situation, how much of the truth do you decide to tell?

In the heat of the moment, most people's instinct is to act in self-preservation – the temptation to lie is very strong if it saves your skin. The costs of lying aren't the first thing to come to mind – saving your skin is. The costs of lying usually become apparent at a lag – only after you've told the lie (e.g. your conscience bothers you, you get stressed out keeping all your lies straight, etc).

However, by “spiritual training,” you can learn to weigh the costs of truth versus lying quickly, in the heat of the moment, and make the best decision at the time the situation is happening (not after).

Spiritual training – strengthening your “moral muscles” -- is like physical training: the more you do it, the easier it becomes.

Today we will play a game in which you pick a situation out of a hat, and you have 20 seconds to decide how much of the truth you would tell. According to what factors do we decide how much truth to tell? In each case, what are the costs of telling the truth? The costs of lying?

The game below illustrates some reasons (listed below) people might choose to obscure the truth. Do not say them out loud. Play the game first and let the kids come to these themselves.

- *Compassion – not hurting someone’s feelings*
- *Defense – saving someone*
- *Self-preservation – saving oneself (from punishment, shame, etc)*
- *Fun – the pleasure of deception (is it really, at base, about the pleasure of having power over people via deceit?)*

Game (20 minutes):

Each child takes a turn to select a scenario out of a bag, reading it out loud. Everyone has 20 seconds to decide (on their own) how much of the truth they would tell. Then briefly discuss as a group. E.g. why did you decide that? What was the cost of telling the truth in this case? Of telling a partial truth (or lying)? What factors did you take into account in making your decision (e.g. someone might get hurt; the lie might be discovered, etc)

Note: this game can be brief or long (we took two classes to do all the scenarios), depending on how much discussion there is.

A possible variation is to do several “talking” rounds, then have kids work together on a scenario, or act it out.

1. Some kids you really want to be friends with invite you to do something with them. You want to but you’re ashamed of the reason why you can’t (scared, can’t afford it, aren’t very good at it, etc). What do you say?
2. You have just gotten rotten grades. An elderly person who thinks you walk on water asks you how you’re doing in school. What do you say?
3. You see your friend lying to hide something they’re embarrassed about. e.g. friend brags about taking an expensive trip somewhere you know they could never afford. Do you expose the lie?
4. A friend of yours has gotten him/herself in trouble. You really want to help them but it means lying to someone you respect. e.g. friend tells a respected teacher they didn’t get their homework done because they had to help you in a crisis last night. Do you confirm it or do you expose it?
5. Some bullies are chasing a small child. The child hides behind a bush. The bullies come by and ask you if you saw the child. What do you say?
6. Your family’s way of living (car, food, customs, values, etc) is something other kids mock without knowing that’s how you live. When the subject comes up, do you join in mocking that thing? Do you admit your family lives that way?

Do you allow other kids to actually see it (e.g. offer them a ride in the car, invite them home etc)

7. You see a rich person drop several \$50 bills by accident and move on. You remember your neighbor needs some money for something important (food, medical care). You also really want a new video game. Do you tell the person they dropped the money? What if the person does not look rich?
8. You get into a movie for free because the absentminded ticket clerk forgot to charge you. Do you tell them?
9. Your best friend got an awful haircut and asks your opinion. Do you tell him/her? What if the friend just had spinach between his/her teeth?
10. Your aunt gives you a terrible birthday present. What do you say?
11. You have a chance to trick a stranger into thinking you have a life that is totally different than it really is. Do you do it?
12. You are in a class taking a test. The teacher walks out. Some kids cheat. The teacher walks back in and asks did anyone cheat. What do you say?
13. You live in an authoritarian state. The secret police suspect your parents are criticizing the government, which is illegal. They ask you to spy on your parents and report back everything they say. Do you do it?
14. You are working for a wealthy company. You find out your coworker is stealing lots of money from the company. What do you do? What if the person stealing is your boss and could fire you?

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Lesson 4: Partial Truths - Advertising

Silent worship. Begin with 5 minutes of silent worship. Use a candle or other object (like the jar of water with sludge slowly sedimenting down) to help kids center down.

Quotes – keep these on display throughout the lesson without comment.

“Integrity is the essential Quaker test.” - Wilmer Cooper, Pendle Hill pamphlet on Integrity

“... and the truth shall set you free.” – John 8:32

“If you tell the truth, then you don’t have to remember anything.” – Mark Twain

Review (5-7 minutes, Jeopardy style – quick response, treat for correct answer)

Last time we talked about partial truths: in a situation, how much of the truth do you decide to tell? We talked about how hard it can be to weigh the costs of telling the truth versus the costs of not telling the truth in the heat of the moment. The temptation to lie is very strong if it saves your skin. The costs of lying usually become apparent at a lag – only after you’ve told the lie (e.g. your conscience bothers you, you get stressed out keeping all your lies straight, etc).

However, by “spiritual training,” you can learn to weigh the costs of truth versus lying quickly, in the heat of the moment, and make the best decision at the time the situation is happening (not after). Spiritual training – strengthening your “moral muscles” -- is like physical training: the more you do it, the easier it becomes.

Today we will talk about another aspect of Partial Truths – advertising.

What is the purpose of advertising? (*possible answers: to inform, to sell a product*)

What are some ways advertisers get you to buy something? (*group discussion – what are the things advertisers appeal to?*)

Display various ads from magazines etc. Briefly discuss, for each one, what is the basis of their appeal. For example, food ads appeal to a sense of coziness, or satisfaction , or health etc.

Activity: make up your own ad. Let kids choose from a paper bag various objects. They have to make up an ad to sell that item. (can be in form of a skit, or a print ad that they draw). Compare ads and discuss the types of appeals they used.

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Lesson 5: Authenticity

Silent worship. Begin with 5 minutes of silent worship. Use a candle or other object (like the jar of water with sludge slowly sedimenting down) to help kids center down.

Quotes – keep these on display throughout the lesson without comment.

- There is just one life for each of us: our own. ~Euripides, ancient Greek playwright, 500 B.C.
- Once conform, once do what others do because they do it, and a kind of lethargy steals over all the finer senses of the soul. ~Michel de Montaigne, French Renaissance writer, 1590
- "Who you are speaks so loudly I can't hear what you're saying." – Ralph Waldo Emerson, American poet, 1850
- Know thyself. – Socrates, ancient Greek philosopher, 432 B.C.
- The pen that writes your life story must be held in your own hand. ~Irene C. Kassorla, psychologist
- You were born an original. Don't die a copy. ~John Mason, modern American writer

Today we shift our focus from one aspect of Integrity – Truth-telling – to another: Authenticity. We'll talk more about it, but first, here's a story that links the two.

The Emperor and the Seed

by unknown author

Once there was an emperor in the Far East who was growing old and knew it was coming time to choose his successor. Instead of choosing one of his assistants or one of his own children, he decided to do something different.

He called all the young people in the kingdom together one day. He said, "It has come time for me to step down and to choose the next emperor. I have decided to choose one of you." The children were shocked! But the emperor continued. "I am going to give each one of you a seed today. One seed. It is a very special seed. I want you to go home, plant the seed, water it and come back here one year from today with what you have grown from this one seed. I will then judge the plants that you bring to me, and the one I choose will be the next emperor of the kingdom!"

There was one boy named Ling who was there that day and he, like the others, received a seed. He went home and excitedly told his mother the whole story. She helped him get a pot and some planting soil, and he planted the seed and watered it carefully. Every day he would water it and watch to see if it had grown.

After about three weeks, some of the other youths began to talk about their seeds and the plants that were beginning to grow. Ling kept going home and checking his seed, but nothing ever grew. Three weeks, four weeks, five weeks went by. Still nothing.

By now others were talking about their plants but Ling didn't have a plant, and he felt like a failure. Six months went by, still nothing in Ling's pot. He just knew he had killed his seed. Everyone else had trees and tall plants, but he had nothing. Ling didn't say anything to his friends, however. He just kept waiting for his seed to grow.

A year finally went by and all the youths of the kingdom brought their plants to the emperor for inspection. Ling told his mother that he wasn't going to take an empty pot. But she encouraged him to go, and to take his pot, and to be honest about what happened. Ling felt sick to his stomach, but he knew his mother was right. He took his empty pot to the palace.

When Ling arrived, he was amazed at the variety of plants grown by all the other youths. They were beautiful, in all shapes and sizes. Ling put his empty pot on the floor and many of the other kinds laughed at him. A few felt sorry for him and just said, "Hey nice try."

When the emperor arrived, he surveyed the room and greeted the young people. Ling just tried to hide in the back. "My, what great plants, trees and flowers you have grown," said the emperor. "Today, one of you will be appointed the next emperor!"

All of a sudden, the emperor spotted Ling at the back of the room with his empty pot. He ordered his guards to bring him to the front. Ling was terrified. "The emperor knows I'm a failure! Maybe he will have me killed!"

When Ling got to the front, the Emperor asked his name. "My name is Ling," he replied. All the kids were laughing and making fun of him. The emperor asked everyone to quiet down. He looked at Ling, and then announced to the crowd, "Behold your new emperor! His name is Ling!" Ling couldn't believe it. Ling couldn't even grow his seed. How could he be the new emperor?

Then the emperor said, "One year ago today, I gave everyone here a seed. I told you to take the seed, plant it, water it, and bring it back to me today. But I gave you all boiled seeds that would not grow. All of you, except Ling, have brought me trees and plants and flowers. When you found that the seed I gave you would not grow, you substituted another seed for it. Ling was the only one with the courage and honesty to bring me a pot with my seed in it. Therefore, he is the one who will be the new emperor!"

[Discuss] What is this story trying to tell us? What is the truth that Ling dared to face? (*it was a truth about the situation – that his seed didn't grow - but also about himself – that this is who he is, a person who had failed at a challenge*).

In this story, the challenge was different than it appeared. Ling thought the challenge was about growing a plant, but really it was about honesty. Likewise, sometimes you think you know what a situation asks of you, but maybe you're wrong. In that case, the best you can do is Well, to just act true to who you are and hope for the best.

We begin today to explore another aspect of Integrity: Authenticity.

What does it mean to be “authentic”? (*let children brainstorm definitions, then reveal the dictionary definition*)

Authenticity = the quality of being genuine, veritable.

(veritable – from the Latin “*veritas*”, or true)

“Authentic leather” means not fake leather (vinyl). But what does it mean for a person to be “authentic”? (*to be real, to be true to who they really are inside, not to pose as something they’re not*)

What might it mean to “live an authentic life”? (*discuss*)

What are some aspects of “living authentically”?

- Live according to your values
- Follow your heart
- Be yourself

We will explore all of these in the next few weeks. Next time we'll look in depth at what it means to live your values, and to do that we will start by having you write your own eulogies!

So for our next meeting, think about how you would like to be remembered, and we'll see where that takes us!

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Lesson 6: Authenticity - Knowing Your Values – the Measure of Success

Silent worship (5 minutes). Begin with 5 minutes of silent worship. Use a candle or other object (like the jar of water with sludge slowly sedimenting down) to help kids center down. Anyone can give a message but doesn't have to. Adult models this!

Snack. Lay out snack after worship. Available throughout. Popular are popcorn, peanuts, pistachios, fruit, goldfish etc.

Quotes – keep these on display throughout the lesson without comment.

- There is just one life for each of us: our own. ~Euripides, ancient Greek playwright, 500 B.C.
- Once conform, once do what others do because they do it, and a kind of lethargy steals over all the finer senses of the soul. ~Michel de Montaigne, French Renaissance writer, 1590
- Who you are speaks so loudly I can't hear what you're saying.
– Ralph Waldo Emerson, American poet, 1850
- Know thyself. – Socrates, ancient Greek philosopher, 432 B.C.
- The pen that writes your life story must be held in your own hand. ~Irene C. Kassorla, psychologist
- You were born an original. Don't die a copy. ~John Mason, modern American writer

Review of last week (5-10 minutes)

1. Last week we read the story of The Emperor and the Seed. What was it about? (*discuss briefly*)

Punchline: the challenge was different than it appeared. Ling thought the challenge was about growing a plant, but really it was about being honest. Likewise, sometimes you think you know what a situation asks of you, but maybe you're wrong. If you betray yourself to conform to what you think the situation calls for, you might still get it wrong. Best to act true to who you really are! (*do not belabor*)

2. Quickly review the definition of “authenticity” : the quality of being genuine, veritable.

(veritable – from the Latin “*veritas*”, or true)

3. We talked about three aspects of “authenticity” :

- Know your values
- Follow your heart
- Be yourself

Today we turn to the first of these.

Living Your Values – but what ARE your values? (30 mins)

Today we'll look at what it means to live your values. Before you can live them, you have to know what your values are. This is not always as easy as it seems.

If kids seem engaged, discuss why it might be hard to know your true self e.g. your values might be those that you've been told to believe by others, or maybe your values have changed over time, or they've not been tested so you're not really sure how strongly you believe them).

If kids are not engaged, skip the discussion above and get to the game below.

Sometimes we absorb values without even realizing that we've done so. The world rewards certain definitions of success but not others. How success is measured is important because it determines how we act (most of the time we want to be “successful”).

For example, if “success” in school (a good grade) meant standing up straight and keeping our pencils sharp at all times – guess what most of us would do?

Let's see what happens if we play around with some of the common definitions of success.

Game 1: The Measure of Success. Each child pulls a piece of paper out of a bag. On it is written a certain situation in life or a profession. The child (or entire group together) has 30 seconds to list some of the things that are defined as success for that situation. Now, in another 30 seconds, think of another way (or two or three) that success might be measured. Discuss briefly: how would our behavior change if success were measured in the alternative way?

Examples: (*note: only the "situation" column below gets written on the piece of paper. The other columns are examples of what might come up in discussion.*)

Situation	Success is measured by...	Alternative measure of success
Sports coach	# competitions won	# injuries, # kids still playing that sport 20 years later
Heart surgeon	# lives saved	Survivors' quality of life
Student – popularity	# friends	# people who would tell you their deepest secret (or other measure of intimacy)
Salesman	# items sold	# of repeat customers, percent of items returned
University professor	# research articles written	Students' teacher evaluations
Author	# books sold	How profound or original was the book? How deeply did it touch readers?
Others?		

Games below are less well-developed. Would they work? Which one is better?

Game 4A: on a slip of paper, in 30 seconds write down 5 things (values) that are important to you (e.g. be a good friend, do well in school, help other people, etc). Now (2 minutes) estimate how much time a week you spend doing those things. Discuss: how much of your time do you spend doing the things you value?

Game 4B: each child estimate the amount of time per day/week you spend doing certain things. (teacher might develop certain categories of activities to jump-start kids' thinking e.g. be with friends, reading, sports, creative activities, video/electronic games, help mom and dad, etc). Now trade time estimates with someone else. Describe what sort of person they are, based only on what you know about them from the way they spend their time.

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Lesson 7: Authenticity - Knowing Your Values – Majority/Minority Values

Silent worship (5 minutes). Begin with 5 minutes of silent worship. Use a candle or other object (like the jar of water with sludge slowly sedimenting down) to help kids center down. Anyone can give a message but doesn't have to. Adult models this!

Snack. Lay out snack after worship. Available throughout. Popular are popcorn, peanuts, pistachios, fruit, goldfish etc.

Quotes – keep these on display throughout the lesson without comment.

- There is just one life for each of us: our own. ~Euripides, ancient Greek playwright, 500 B.C.
- Once conform, once do what others do because they do it, and a kind of lethargy steals over all the finer senses of the soul. ~Michel de Montaigne, French Renaissance writer, 1590
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- The pen that writes your life story must be held in your own hand. ~Irene C. Kassorla, psychologist
- You were born an original. Don't die a copy. ~John Mason, modern American writer

Review of last week (5-10 minutes)

To help us think about “authenticity”, we have broken it down into three parts:

- Know your values
- Follow your heart
- Be yourself

Last week we spoke about the first of those, “living according to your values.”

Before you can live them, you have to know what your values *are*. This is not always as easy as it seems. The world rewards certain definitions of success but not others. How success is measured is important because it determines how we act (most of the time we want to be “successful”).

Part of living according to your own values is to distinguish your own opinions, independent of what the world may think about them. Last week we played a game that had us thinking about different ways that the world can define “success”—and which of those made sense to us, for example, for a sports coach, or a politician, or an author, etc.

This week we’ll continue to think about the question of “whose values are they, really?” The game we’re playing today is all about sifting out values we hold because everyone else does, versus those that we hold because they are truly our own.

Game: Minority/Majority Values (30 minutes)

Pass out 6 small slips of blank paper per child. In 30 seconds, write down (one per slip of paper) three values you hold that you think most people would agree with (e.g. be kind, etc). Put them all in a bag labeled “majority values.”

Now, again in 30 seconds, do the same but write three values that you think some/most people would likely disagree with (e.g. I think sometimes violence is justified). Put them all in a different bag labeled “minority values” (or somehow mark the papers to keep track of which are “majority” and “minority” values.)

Teacher reads them out loud from each bag. Discuss: are there any ‘minority’ opinions held by a lot of us? How difficult would it be to publicly admit/live by some of the “minority” values? What cost would you pay to do that? What cost would you pay to *not* live by that value?

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Michelle Ciurea
Beacon Hill Friends Meeting
First Day School 2011-12

Lesson 8: Authenticity - Knowing Your Values - Eulogies

Silent worship (5 minutes). Begin with 5 minutes of silent worship. Use a candle or other object (like the jar of water with sludge slowly sedimenting down) to help kids center down. Anyone can give a message but doesn't have to. Adult models this!

Snack. Lay out snack after worship. Available throughout. Popular are popcorn, peanuts, pistachios, fruit, goldfish etc.

Quotes – keep these on display throughout the lesson without comment.

- There is just one life for each of us: our own. ~Euripides, ancient Greek playwright, 500 B.C.
- Once conform, once do what others do because they do it, and a kind of lethargy steals over all the finer senses of the soul. ~Michel de Montaigne, French Renaissance writer, 1590
- Who you are speaks so loudly I can't hear what you're saying.
– Ralph Waldo Emerson, American poet, 1850
- Know thyself. – Socrates, ancient Greek philosopher, 432 B.C.
- The pen that writes your life story must be held in your own hand. ~Irene C. Kassorla, psychologist
- You were born an original. Don't die a copy. ~John Mason, modern American writer

Review of last week (5-10 minutes)

To help us think about “authenticity”, we have broken it down into three parts:

- Know your values
- Follow your heart
- Be yourself

For the last few classes, we've been talking about the first of those, “living according to your values.”

We've spent some time talking about how, before you can live your values, you have to know what your values *are* – and which of the values around you, are really your own (not just those you parrot because you hear them all around you)?

Last class we played a game about which values we hold are “minority” values (that we think few people would hold with us) and which of our values are “majority” values that much of the rest of the world believes in, too. It’s important to think for yourself which of the many values around you are really ones that you really believe in too.

Ask kids to recap some of the most striking values articulated from that game e.g. examples of where values held by class members are different from the majority at large.

This week, on the same general theme of clarifying one’s own values, we’re going to play a game that’s all about how you would like to be remembered when you’re gone.

Game: Eulogies (30 minutes)

In one minute, jot down some things that you would like to be remembered for if you live a long life.

Then, give a speech (3-5 minutes) that is your own eulogy. *Encourage children to invent specific examples of actions that illustrate the trait they'd like to be remembered for e.g. "Chris is well-remembered for his/her kindness shown when". This helps children think for themselves how a desirable personality trait or value can be translated into action.*

Lend some drama and humor to this exercise by setting up a podium, have others play the copiously weeping friends of the dearly departed. Encourage speakers to speak of themselves in the third person for added drama.

Afterward, discuss the process of coming up with the things kids wanted their eulogies to say. Was it hard? How/why did you come up with traits/values that mattered enough to mention ?

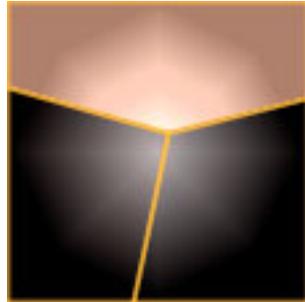
Discuss the content of the eulogies. What does your eulogy say about your true values?

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Personality Tests

Source: <http://www.psicologi-psicoterapeuti.it/test/dynamic.html>

No multiple choice questions. Just choose the pattern which appeals most to you and this test will tell you what you are like. 2 minutes. Or 10 for the indecisive.

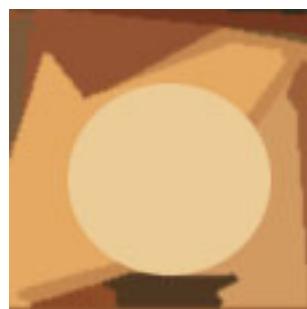




Carefree Playful Cheerful

You love a free and spontaneous life. And you attempt to enjoy it to the fullest, in accordance with the motto: "You only live once."

You are very curious and open about everything new; you thrive on change. Nothing is worse than when you feel tied down. You experience your environment as being versatile and always good for a surprise.



Down to earth Well-Balanced Harmonious

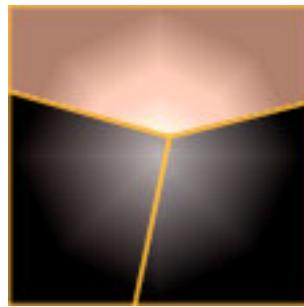
You value a natural style and love that which is uncomplicated. People admire you because you have both feet planted firmly on the ground and they can depend on you. You give those who are close to you security and space. You are perceived as being warm and human. You reject everything that is garish and trite. You tend to be skeptical toward the whims of fashion trends. For you, clothing has to be practical and unobtrusively elegant.



Analytical Trustworthy Self Assured

Your momentary sensitivity represents that which is of high quality and durable. Consequently, you like to surround yourself with little "gems," which you discover wherever they are overlooked by others.

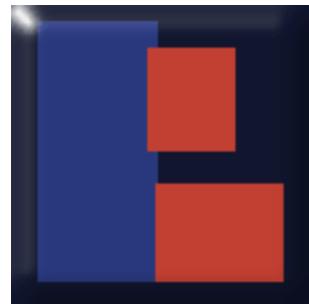
Thus, culture plays a special role in your life. You have found your own personal style, which is elegant and exclusive, free from the whims of fashion. Your ideal, upon which you base your life, is cultured pleasure. You value a certain level of culture on the part of the people with whom you associate



Independent Unconventional Unfettered

You demand a free and unattached life for yourself that allows you to determine your own course. You have an artistic bent in your work or leisure activities. Your urge for freedom sometimes causes you to do exactly the opposite of what expected of you.

Your lifestyle is highly individualistic. You would never blindly imitate what is "in"; on the contrary, you seek to live according to your own ideas and convictions, even if this means swimming against the tide



Professional Pragmatic Self Assured

You take charge of your life, and place less faith in your luck and more in your own deeds. You solve problems in a practical, uncomplicated manner. You take a realistic view of the things in your daily life and tackle them without wavering. You are given a great deal of responsibility at work, because people know that you can be depended upon.

Your pronounced strength of will projects your self-assurance to others. You are never fully satisfied until you have accomplished your ideas.



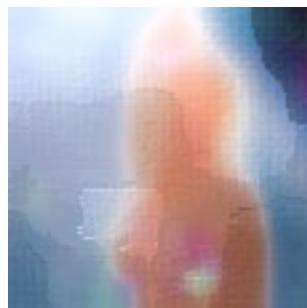
Romantic Dreamy Emotional

You are a very sensitive person. You refuse to view things only from a sober, rational standpoint. What your feelings tell you is just as important to you. In fact, you feel it is important to have dreams in life, too. You reject people who scorn romanticism and are guided only by rationality. You refuse to let anything confine the rich variety of your moods and emotions.



Introspective Sensitive Reflective

You come to grips more frequently and thoroughly with yourself and your environment than do most people. You detest superficiality; you'd rather be alone than have to suffer through small talk. But your relationships with your friends are very strong, which gives you the inner tranquility and harmony that you require. You do not mind being alone for extended periods of time; you rarely become bored.



Peaceful Discreet Non Aggressive

You are easy-going yet discreet. You make friends effortlessly, yet enjoy your privacy and independence. You like to get away from it all and be alone from time to time to contemplate the meaning of life and enjoy yourself. You need space, so you escape to beautiful hideaways, but you are not a loner. You are at peace with yourself and the world, and you appreciate life and what this world has to offer.



Dynamic Active Extroverted

You are quite willing to accept certain risks and to make a strong commitment in exchange for interesting and varied work. Routine, in contrast, tends to have a paralyzing effect on you.

What you like most is to be able to play an active role in events. In doing so, your initiative is highly pronounced.

Source: <http://www.personalitytest.net/funtest/hrdept.htm>

Human resource department

This is a real test given by the human relations department at many of the major corporations today. It's only ten simple questions, so... Grab a pencil and paper and keep track of your answers.

1. When do you feel your best?
 - a. In the morning
 - b. During the afternoon and early evening
 - c. Late at night

2. You usually walk
 - a. Fairly fast, with long steps
 - b. Fairly fast, with short, quick steps
 - c. Less fast, head up, looking the world in the face
 - d. Less fast, head down
 - e. Very slowly

3. When talking to people you
 - a. Stand with your arms folded
 - b. Have your hands clasped
 - c. Have one or both your hands on your hips
 - d. Touch or push the person to whom you are talking
 - e. Play with your ear, touch your chin, or smooth your hair

4. When relaxing, you sit with
 - a. Your knees bent with your legs neatly side by side
 - b. Your legs crossed
 - c. Your legs stretched out or straight
 - d. One leg curled under you

5. When something really amuses you, you react with

- a. A big, appreciative laugh
 b. A laugh, but not a loud one
 c. A quiet chuckle
 d. A sheepish smile
6. When you go to a party or social gathering you
- a. Make a loud entrance so everyone notices you
 b. Make a quiet entrance, looking around for someone you know
 c. Make the quietest entrance, trying to stay unnoticed
7. You're working very hard, concentrating hard, and you're interrupted. Do you..
- a. Welcome the break
 b. Feel extremely irritated
 c. Vary between these two extremes
8. Which of the following colors do you like most?
- a. Red or orange
 b. Black
 c. Yellow or light blue
 d. Green
 e. Dark blue or purple
 f. White
 g. Brown or gray
9. When you are in bed at night, in those last few moments before going to sleep, you lie
- a. Stretched out on your back
 b. Stretched out face down on your stomach
 c. On your side, slightly curled
 d. With your head on one arm
 e. With your head under the covers
10. You often dream that you are
- a. Falling
 b. Fighting or struggling
 c. Searching for something or somebody
 d. Flying or floating
 e. You usually have dreamless sleep
 f. Your dreams are always pleasant

Add up your points using the table below:

	A	B	C	D	E	F	G
1	2	4	6				
2	6	4	7	2	1		
3	4	2	5	7	6		

4	4	6	2	1			
5	6	4	3	5			
6	6	4	2				
7	6	2	4				
8	6	7	5	4	3	2	1
9	7	6	4	2	1		
10	4	2	3	5	6	1	

Analysis

Over 60 points: Others see you as someone they should "handle with care" You're seen as vain, self-centered, and who is extremely dominant. Others may admire you, wishing they could be more like you, but don't always trust you, hesitating to become too deeply involved with you.

51 to 60 points: Others see you as an exciting, highly volatile, rather impulsive personality; a natural leader, who's quick to make decisions, though not always the right ones. They see you as bold and adventuresome, someone who will try anything once; someone who takes chances and enjoys an adventure. They enjoy being in your company because of the excitement you radiate.

41 to 50 points: Others see you as fresh, lively, charming, amusing, practical, and always interesting; someone who's constantly in the center of attention, but sufficiently well-balanced not to let it go to their head. They also see you as kind, considerate, and understanding; someone who'll always cheer them up and help them out.

31 to 40 points: Others see you as sensible, cautious, careful and practical. They see you as clever, gifted, or talented, but modest...Not a person who makes friends too quickly or easily, but someone who's extremely loyal to friends you do make and who expect the same loyalty in return. Those who really get to know you realize it takes a lot to shake your trust in your friends, but equally that it takes you a long time to get over it if that trust is ever broken.

21 to 30 points: Your friends see you as painstaking and fussy. They see you as very cautious, extremely careful, a slow and steady plodder. It would really surprise them if you ever did something impulsively or on the spur of the moment, expecting you to examine everything carefully from every angle and then, usually decide against it. They think this reaction is caused partly by your careful nature.

Under 21 points: People think you are shy, nervous, and indecisive, someone who needs looking after, who always wants someone else to make the decisions and who doesn't want to get involved with anyone or anything. They see you as a worrier who always sees problems that don't exist. Some people think you're boring. Only those who know you well know that you aren't.

The Tibetan Personality Test

1. Put these in the order of which you like...

Horse, Tiger, Cow, Sheep, Pig

2. Describe each one...

Dog- Cat- Coffee- Sea-

3. Think of someone you're close to and give them a color...

Yellow- Red- Orange- White- Green-

-----Answers----

1. Horse= Family, Tiger= Pride, Cow= Money, Sheep= Love, Pig= Career

2. Dog= Your Own Personality, Cat= Your Soulmate's Personality, Coffee= The World, Sea= The way you see yourself

3. Yellow= You'll always remember, Red= Someone you love, Orange= A friend, White= Your twin Soul, Green= You'll never forget

Fun Self-Knowledge Test

<http://www.angelfire.com/psy/relationships/page5.html>

1. You are walking in the woods. You are not alone. With whom are you walking?

2. You continue walking in the woods. You see an animal. What kind of animal is it?

3. What kind of interaction takes place between you and the animal?

4. You walk deeper into the woods. You enter a clearing, and before you is your dream house. What size is it?

5. Does your dream house have a fence?

6. You enter the house. You walk to the dining area and see the dining room table. Describe what you see on the table and around it.

7. You exit the house through the back door. Lying in the grass is a cup. What material is the cup made of?

8. What do you do with the cup?

How to Interpret Answers

1. The person with whom you are walking is the most important person in your life.
2. The size of the animal is representative of your perception of the size of your problems.
3. The severity of the interaction that you have with the animal is representative of how you handle your problems. (i.e. passive or aggressive)
4. The size of your dream house is representative of the size of your ambition to resolve your problems.
5. No fence is indicative of an open personality. People are welcome at all times. The presence of a fence indicates a closed personality. You'd prefer people not to drop by unannounced.
6. If your answer did not include food, people, or flowers, then you are probably generally unhappy.
7. The durability of the material of which the cup is made is representative of the perceived durability of your relationship with the person you named in #1. For example, Styrofoam, plastic and paper are all disposable, while metal, or china are durable.
8. Your disposition of the cup is representative of your attitude toward the person you named in #1.

Authenticity Quiz – Part A

1. Do you always stand by what you believe in?
2. Are you true to yourself in most situations?
3. Do you live in accordance with your values and beliefs?
4. Does your daily behaviour reflect the real you?
5. Are you, right now, doing the things that are right for you?
6. Are you satisfied with the person you are becoming?
7. Do you feel that you are a person of worth?
8. Are you satisfied with your life?
9. Do you know what your values and beliefs are?

If you answered ‘No’ to 3 or more of these questions, proceed to Part B. If you answered ‘Yes’ to 4 or more questions then you are well on your way to living authentically!

Authenticity Quiz - Part B

1. Do you feel out of sync with the real you?
2. Do you often feel you have to hide how you feel inside?
3. Would you like to stop working for the good opinions of others?
4. Are you tired of trying to live up to others expectations?
5. Do you feel pressured to behave in certain ways?
6. Do you feel you always need to do what others expect you to do?
7. Do you wish you had more respect for yourself?
8. Do you ever wonder who you would be if you did not hold back?

If you answered ‘Yes’ to 3 or more to these questions, consider working on these areas with a life coach.

Source: <http://lauraschenck.com/growth-and-strengths/8-ways-to-live-an-authentic-life>

Various experts in the fields of psychology, psychiatry, and academia offer the following suggestions to move toward living an authentic life:

(1) Read novels.

Reading novels is “the best way to figure out what it feels like to be in someone else’s head—and that’s what helps us to distinguish our own identity.” It makes you take a step outside of your own experience and develop empathy for the experiences and emotions of other people. This can have the effect of developing deeper compassion and understanding of your own experience.

(2) Meditate.

Meditation creates moments of happiness that are not contingent on external factors or manipulation of the environment. It enables you to become a curious, accepting, and nonjudgmental observer of your moment-to-moment experience. When you are truly absorbed in and connected to the present moment, there is less attachment to needing certain outcomes or trying to control the way things are. Meditation can lead to developing a greater sense of authenticity by putting things in larger perspective and help you focus on truly living your life.

(3) Be deliberate.

Being deliberate means [slowing down](#) and taking the time to mindfully choose how you wish to respond in your interactions with others and your life choices. A large part of living a truly authentic life involves being mindful of your ability to chart your own course and responsibly choose your behaviors. When you exercise greater intentionality and deliberation on your interactions with yourself and others, you may experience a greater sense of authenticity in your life.

(4) Don't be *too* deliberate.

People often make better decisions when they don't think about them. Go with your gut. Authentic reactions are much more at a gut level. Try to make choices that are in line with your true values and centered within a deep understanding of who you are as a person... this is being authentic.

(5) Cultivate solitude.

Quiet and time for the self are a big plus. There are incredible benefits to taking a bit of quiet reflective time now and then. When you feel bombarded by repeated or intense interactions with other people, taking the time to check back in with yourself through quiet reflection can allow you to tap back in to your inner sense of purpose.

(6) But stay connected.

As with all things, the idea is to find the right balance between reflective solitude and connection with others. Community is an outlook toward life in which you define yourself in relation to the world around you, rather than only in connection with yourself. You can learn a great deal about yourself, your strengths, and your areas for improvement through mindfully examining your interactions and relationships with others. Notice the way that you are perceived by others and use the information that you receive from your interactions to build on your sense of an authentic self.

(7) Play hard.

Whether it's taking an art class, playing basketball, running, or just hanging out with friends, doing something you really enjoy allows you to express who you really are. Use all of your present moment experiences as opportunities to truly throw yourself into the task at hand.

(8) Be willing to lose.

Failure is a part of life. If you're leading a full life, you're going to fail some. Everyone makes mistakes at different moments in life. Try to change the way that you think of [what it means to make mistakes](#) by remembering that failure a wonderful opportunity for growth and improvement. When you truly throw yourself into your work and play with a full heart and an open mind, you are allowing yourself the freedom to make mistakes because you recognize that these are opportunities to learn valuable lessons.

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Michelle Ciurea
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Lesson 10: Authenticity - 'Passing' - Part 1

Silent worship (5 minutes). Begin with 5 minutes of silent worship. Use a candle or other object (like the jar of water with sludge slowly sedimenting down) to help kids center down. Anyone can give a message but doesn't have to. Adult models this!

Snack. Lay out snack after worship. Make it available throughout.

Quotes – keep various integrity quotes on display throughout the lesson without comment.

We have been talking about Living an Authentic Life – that is, living a life that is true to who you really are.

Today, we are going to take a look at an extreme case of someone who did exactly the opposite – lived a life that is false in an important way.

First, who knows what 'passing' is? What are the aspects of themselves that people might try to hide? (*get kids to brainstorm definitions and ideas, write them down systematically*)

Passing is when a person lives as if s/he is a member of a social group than his or her own.

Aspects that someone might want to hide are:

- Race (passing for white)
- Religion (passing as Christian or whatever the majority religion is)
- Sexual orientation (passing as straight)
- Disability (hiding a disability that is 'invisible' such as a hearing, vision or mobility problem)

What do all of these types of 'passing' have in common? They are about someone falsifying himself or herself in order to be like the group that has more social power.

Here is a story of one man who did this under extreme circumstances. His name is Solomon Perel. (*display the photos on the last page!*)

Solomon Perel was born in 1925 in Germany to a Jewish family. He escaped persecution by the Nazis by masquerading as an ethnic German. Like many other Jews, the family was harshly persecuted when the Nazis came to power, and after their shoe shop was pillaged by German Nazi vandals, Solomon's father moved the family to [Poland](#) in when he was 10 years old, in 1935.

Four years later, in 1939, the Germans invade Poland. When Solomon is 14, his parents send him and his older brother Isaak away to the part of Poland occupied by the Soviets (Russians) where they felt they would be safe. (Germany and Soviet Russia were on opposite sides during the war, so if you were in trouble on one side, it made sense to go to the other).

Solomon and Isaak eventually arrive at an organization that helps Jewish refugees. Since he is younger, the organization sends Solomon to an orphanage run by the Russians. At this point he and his brother are separated; his brother remains behind in the German-occupied part of Poland. For two years, until he is about 16, Solomon lives a normal life as a Jewish boy. He is even able to communicate with his family by letters.

However, eventually Hitler invades this part of Poland too, and the orphanage has to be evacuated. In the confusion, Solomon makes the decision to bury his identity papers so there is no proof he is Jewish. He is captured by a German army unit. But since he was born in Germany and speaks perfect German, he is able to convince his captors that he is an ethnic German who happened to be in Poland because the Russians killed his parents and sent him to the orphanage. The Germans believe him. They take him in, and he changes his name to from Solomon Perel to Josef Perjell. He becomes the Russian translator for the German army unit fighting on the front line. 'Josef' proves himself to be such a good German that they decide, since he is still a minor, to send him to Germany to go to a Hitler Youth school.

At school it is even harder to hide his Jewish identity. He lives in constant fear of being discovered because as a Jew, he is circumcised. However, he tries to live as normal a life as possible. He even has a girlfriend by the name of Leni. She is a fervent [Nazi](#), so although Solomon loves her, he dares not tell her that he is Jewish for fear that she would turn him in. Later, Leni's mother discovers Solomon is Jewish and in a moment of anguish he confesses. His enormous good fortune is that she keeps his secret. For four more years, he manages to keep his secret.

Close to the end of the war Solomon is captured by the US Army, but is released the next day. After traveling back to his home town, Solomon learns that his parents and sister had died during the war. But after making dozens of inquiries everywhere he can, he did finally locate his brother Isaak, along with another brother, David, and they are reunited.

In 1948 Perel resettled in the newly-created nation of Israel, where he joined the army to fight in the 1948 Arab-Israeli War. He later left the Israeli army to become a businessman. He is still living today, in Tel Aviv, the capital of Israel.

How did he manage it? In his book, Perel says he played his role so well that at times he almost forgot he was Jewish. But he could never truly forget his roots and waited for the day he could be free and not have to "hide". What kept him going even when he thought he could take no more were his strong determination to live and the memory of his mother's last words to him: "You must stay alive!" (Perel autobiography, p.7). He writes, "I gradually suppressed my true self. Sometimes I even 'forgot' that I was a Jew." (Perel, p.58) . But "I knew that I had to find some solution for my identity problem until these dark times were over...the faith and certainty that I would not be in this place forever sustained me." (Perel, p. 77)

Solomon kept silent about his story for decades. He worried that people wouldn't believe him, and he also felt that since he had not suffered as much as those in concentration camps, he did not have the right to compare himself to others who had suffered more.

What changed his mind was when he was about to go in for an heart operation and worried that if he died during it, "I didn't want to take the story into the grave." So, 50 years after it happened, in 1990, he did eventually write his autobiography called *I Was Hitler Youth Salomon*. That same year a movie was made about his life, based on his book, called *Europa Europa*. It won an award for Best Foreign Film.

Discussion

- What do you think of Solomon's decision? Did he do the right thing to deny his true identity?
- If you think it was OK, what made it so? (*the life-or-death circumstances, the fact that he felt Jewish in his heart, etc*)
- What do you think it cost Solomon (morally) to live such an inauthentic life? How do you think he came to terms with it?
- What are we to make of the fact that he stayed silent for so long? Was this a form of deceit, letting others assume that being a German Jew he had probably spent the war in a concentration camp, when in fact he hadn't? Or was it his way of showing deference to those who had suffered more?

Next week we will look at other stories of 'passing' that are a little morally complicated, a little less black and white than this one!



Salomon Perel (center)



Solomon Perel today





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Michelle Ciurea
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Lesson 11: Authenticity - ‘Passing,’ part 2

Silent worship (5 minutes). *Begin with 5 minutes of silent worship. Use a candle or other object (like the jar of water with sludge slowly sedimenting down) to help kids center down. Anyone can give a message but doesn't have to. Adult models this!*

Snack. *Lay out snack after worship. Make it available throughout.*

Quotes – *keep various integrity quotes on display throughout the lesson without comment.*

Also display the photos at the end of this lesson plan.

Who remembers what “passing” is? (*allowing others to believe you are a member of a social group that you are not really a member of*).

Last week we read a story of a Jewish boy who ‘passed’ for German during WWII in order to save his life. For the most part, we felt that what he did was morally OK because he did it to save his life.

Today we will talk about passing along racial lines. We’ll talk about some stories of blacks whose skin and features are so Caucasian-looking that most people believe they are really white. Some of them do indeed spend their lives pretending they are white. And some of them don’t.

Historical Background

What could be the advantage of passing as white? During slavery, passing could mean freedom. Many fair-skinned slaves posed as white in order to escape. After the Civil War, Southern whites, wanting to keep the white race as pure and powerful as possible, instituted a rule that anyone with "one drop" of black blood was black. Even though the Civil War had ended slavery, the Southern states passed a series of laws called Jim Crow laws that discriminated against blacks in order to keep them on the lower rungs of society. That spurred even more fair-skinned blacks to cross over and pass for white whenever they could.

In modern times, passing meant being able to vote in the South. It meant a job in the office rather than a job cleaning the office. It meant schools with the latest equipment and books, instead of dilapidated buildings and out-of-date textbooks. It often meant better housing. It meant being treated with respect, not disdain.

The peak period for blacks passing as whites was the first half of the 1900's. During that period (in fact, going as far back as the late 1800's) just who was white or black depended upon what state that person was in. Between the 1890s and 1950s, the peak period for blacks passing as white, every state had its own racial definitions. A person could be born white in one state and be designated black in another depending upon the racial laws in that state.

Then there were the people in-between. Before the Civil War, when there was still slavery, there was another race category besides blacks and whites. These were 'free people of color,' who generally had mixed racial heritage and were born free to free parents. Free people of color could be brown with European features, or light-colored with African features and everything in between. "They were not considered either black or white. Society had an in-between place for them. They were generally in the building trade (carpenters). The women were mostly maids. Some were slave owners, others were staunch abolitionists.

An example of 'free people of color' are Louisiana's Creoles. They had ancestors who were European, Native American and African, and they enjoyed a preferred status no matter what color their complexion. Creole is not a race. It is a blended ethnicity and a blended culture. They were accustomed to freedom, not to slavery. They did not relate to African-Americans who were slaves. However, after the "one drop" rule was instituted and Jim Crow became the law of the land in the South, things changed. Creoles were often called "White Negroes" and many of them cut ties with family members, especially the ones who could not pass. Once these laws were [enacted], passing made more sense, and it became more necessary.

Sometimes blacks used their fair complexion not for personal gain but to change things for the better. For example, there is Walter White, famous NAACP chief executive, who worked for civil rights for African-Americans. His light skin allowed him to investigate lynchings and race riots in the 1920s. This gave him credibility he would not have had if he looked black.

In the 1940s, blacks who looked white helped integrate Lewis Place, a neighborhood in St. Louis. Like many cities during this time, Lewis Place had regulations that prevented blacks from buying homes in certain neighborhoods. But in the '40s, fair-skinned blacks would purchase homes on Lewis Street – letting brokers think they were white -- and then transfer ownership to darker-skinned black people who had actually bought them.

People Who Passed

Lavinia Ferguson, a grandmother whose ancestors were German and black, tells a story from the times when there were racial laws on the books. "My mother ... she got an excellent job at the time with the telephone company. She had a beautiful speaking voice. And she won awards and commendations. She was just doing fine. But apparently, someone became aware and made a report. They came in one day and they said, 'Eunice, we've gotten some information here that says you have colored blood. Is this true?' And she said, 'Yes.' And they said, 'Well, you know, in that case, we have to let you go.'"

Until the 1950s and 1960s, Jim Crow laws denied blacks the same jobs, rights and educational opportunities that whites took for granted. But the fair skin that Lavinia's family and others had allowed them to surreptitiously slip across the color borders, or pass. "It was just a way of life," explains Lavinia.

Thelma Marshall from Pittsburgh knows that routine. During the 1950s and early '60s, she did what her mother before her had done, as well as her grandmother and aunts. She passed for white. "One time I told a woman I was black "One time I told a woman I was black, colored in those days," Marshall recalled. "She said, 'You won't get the job unless you pass for white!'" So that's what Marshall did. "I passed for white on lots of jobs," she said. "I had to be white to get the jobs." It's what many fair-skinned blacks did during those times.

Marshall's remarks are without shame or remorse. She felt she did what she had to do. Still, it is a prickly subject, and the 76-year-old woman does not want to offend so she asked that her real name not be used.

Marshall never thought to pass permanently, although she had family members who did. Some fair-skinned blacks with "good hair" and keen features did not pass but did "the next best thing" by marrying others with fair skin. This was a way to keep kinky hair out of the family and light complexion in. "For generations, my mother's side and my father's side married fair so they could get jobs," Marshall said. "My great-grandfather had a barbershop, and he passed for white, and he had only white customers in his shop."

But for many fair-skinned blacks, it was about more than getting jobs. There was a mind-set among some, especially the black middle class, that celebrated and sought to preserve their proximity to whiteness. Some social organizations, fraternities and sororities admitted only fair-skinned blacks or those who could pass the "paper bag test," meaning they could be no darker than a brown paper bag.

To this day, Marshall would have preferred that her children marry white or at least very light-skinned people. She says, "All my children married black, much to my regret. I would have preferred they married white. ... It's still an advantage to be white."

Anatole Broyard is a more famous case of passing. He was the longtime literary critic for The New York Times newspaper. Born black and raised in black neighborhoods in New Orleans and Brooklyn, he passed for white for decades because he did not want to be labeled as a Negro writer, he had said, but simply a writer. For years, Broyard sidestepped rumors of his ancestry and would credit his skin tone to a very distant relative who may have been black. Even in the last days of his life, his body withered by cancer, he denied his wife's request to tell his children of their true heritage. They met Broyard's darker-skinned sister, Shirley, for the first time at his memorial service in 1990.

David Matthews is a 40-year old from Baltimore who is the son of a light-skinned black man and an Israeli mother. Jim Crow laws were long gone by the he was growing up in the 1980s, but he says that in Baltimore, even as a child, he could see that barriers for young blacks were still there.

He says, "You're like 'OK, I can be treated as one of this group, the black kids, who the teachers automatically assume aren't going to do well. They're going to get the minimal amount of attention. But I noticed that the white kids, who are probably only 20-30 percent of the population in the school, got more attention. Teachers assume that they somehow had more on the ball."

Matthews, who walked every day to a school in a primarily white neighborhood, simply chose to be white. "Walking those three blocks, I knew all I needed to know about where I wanted to be. I saw the Volvos as opposed to burned-out Cadillacs [in the driveways in the white end of town]." He began hanging out with friends who were almost all white and Jewish. But when Matthews entered high school, he says girls and their fathers wanted to know his background. "Every girl I dated, the parent's first question was 'What nationality are you?'" Matthews would say his mother was Israeli, but he wouldn't mention his father's race, instead saying he was Presbyterian. He also avoided mentioning which newspaper his dad worked at because he was the editor of the Afro-American newspaper, and that might have given something away.

When his mother returned to her homeland and he was raised by just his dad, things got even more complicated. He couldn't bring most of his friends home. "I think that at that point, I was in such denial," says Matthews. "I didn't know what a treasure I had in my dad. All the things he had been through and the circles he ran in. I mean, my dad was like a star and I didn't know it until I was an adult. I was just in complete denial."

David Matthews' father, Ralph, who is fair-skinned, says he would be highly insulted if anyone suggested he pass as white. "My father's black and my mother was black. That's how they viewed themselves, and I grew up in the black community," says Ralph Matthews. When he discovered his son was passing for white, he says he was puzzled. The father says, "I wasn't going to call him out. And he wasn't, in my view, passing ... He may or may not withhold information. I don't call that passing. I call that, you know, social strategy."

It was not until David Matthews went to the University of Maryland, and a young black movie director named Spike Lee came out with the movie "Do the Right Thing," that Matthews finally realized the rich heritage he was giving up. Matthews, now a 40-year-old screenwriter, describes himself as mixed race.

Some people in the black community may say Matthews was committing cultural betrayal when he chose not to tell society he was black. But Matthews says, "I see it as being efficacious. I did what I had to do in order to get along every day. So, I didn't see it as a betrayal."

Rabbi Joel Alter is an example of a different sort of passing. Alter explains, "There's no question that I was passing at the seminary, because I'm gay and I'm at a seminary that won't knowingly ordain gay or lesbian students. So, yeah, I'm passing." Alter, considered a model student at the conservative rabbinical seminary he attended in New York City, knew that honesty would end any chance of becoming a rabbi. He was learning to be a man of God, but deceiving the very same institution, which he adores, which was uncomfortable. "Every single day for five

years I'm thinking, 'OK, I'm done. I have to leave the program. This is crazy,'" remembers Alter. He stayed, and today he is an ordained rabbi. While he still regrets the deception, Alter believes it is the only way to force open closed doors. Even today, the conservative Jewish movement still does not ordain gay men and women.

People Who Didn't Pass

The young unkempt woman still in her pajamas shuffled into her 8 a.m. college psychology class and sat down next to **Barbara Douglass**. "I'm sure glad there are no [blacks] in this class 'cause I can smell them a mile away," the young woman declared. There must be something wrong with your nose," Douglass replied, "because one's sitting right next to you and you can't smell me."

Although Barbara Douglass never told anyone she was white, people see her porcelain skin and her silky hair and assume she is. But Douglass, who lives in Wilkinsburg, Pennsylvania is a 62-year-old black woman. She could pass for white but she has never tried, she said.

"Growing up, I knew of people who did, and I was even instructed not to say, at that time, that they were colored. In order to get their jobs, they had to say they were white."

Barbara Douglass recalls the difference between going out with her white college friends vs. her black college friends. "We went to a show, about six of us [black students]. The manager came and sat behind us. I asked him 'Why are you sitting behind us?' He said, 'I have to make sure you don't destroy anything!'"

Douglass said she told the manager that he had never sat behind her before. His response was, "You never came with these people before." Douglass, who the manager had assumed was white, encouraged her friends to leave the theater rather than be insulted.

When she was a young child, her parents didn't emphasize racial differences. "I just figured people came in different shades," she said. But when the subject came up in her dance class, the 8-year-old Douglass approached her mother, who explained to her about race and racism.

"We are a child of God first. We are human beings first," Douglass remembered her mother saying.

In fifth grade, she learned that the United States is a melting pot, and she declared to her mother that she would be a melting pot. Her mother decided it was the perfect definition, seeing as how her ancestors were Cherokee, black, Dutch, German and Irish.

Dr. Edward Hale, a retired physician and professor of medicine from Shadyside, PA never sought the advantages of whiteness his complexion could have provided him. Hale, 89, said he followed the example of his father, William J. Hale, founding president of Tennessee State University. Hale had come from a family that had accomplished much by living as black people. His goal was to do the same. "I've always been fond of my dad, loved and adored and respected

my father," Hale said. "He chose to remain black. He got to be a college president." His mother headed up the business department at Tennessee State. She, too, was fair enough to pass, as were his siblings. His sister, who earned a master's in French from Columbia University, married a man who could not pass, Hale said. "But they had a very positive marriage as black, and they lived happily," he added. His brother "used to float back and forth between being white and being black," he said. "He did that for work."

Why didn't Hale? "I chose black because I have a black identity. We had a heritage, and it was something important." His parents emphasized being proud of who he was, excelling at something, making a contribution to society. After getting his bachelor's degree at Tennessee State, he entered Meharry Medical College in Nashville, graduating third in his class in 1945. Two years later, he earned a master's in physiology from the University of Illinois. "As a fair-skinned black, I could pass for white, but you couldn't allow yourself to get to be as outstanding as a white because if you did, people would look into your background," Hale said. When he came to Pittsburgh in 1955 to serve as chief of medicine for the VA Hospital, he knew people would assume he was white. They soon learned differently through his stand on issues and his friendships with other blacks. "I had to make an identity for myself, to let people know who I was," Hale said.

Attorney Wendell Freeland remembers a decade or so ago when he and his wife were reading in the newspaper about the fast career rise of a young man who was white. Freeland's wife noted that her husband was smarter than the young man and should have become just as successful. Freeland recalls his daughter saying to him, "You've got nothing to complain about; you could have [lived as] white but you chose not to." Theoretically, yes. Freeland says he can fool even those black people who swear they can detect another black, no matter how fair. But he never considered it. "I never thought about it," said the 78-year-old attorney. "My family ties were so great."

Freeland, who came to Pittsburgh in 1950, grew up in a segregated community in Baltimore. "I learned by the time I went to Howard [University] that I looked different [from most black people]. But I was not different." As a college student, he encountered blacks from the British West Indies and other places who 'passed' to go to the movies or to shop in places where blacks were not welcome. "That was just casual passing," Freeland said. "I knew people who crossed over." He remembers years ago that a high school friend was visiting Pittsburgh and looked him up. Freeland invited the friend to visit him at his office. But the friend did not want to come by until late evening. "I was a Negro, and he was a Negro, and he was passing for white, and he didn't want to be seen with me," Freeland said. "That probably happens to many Negroes who pass, and I don't know how they can stand it."

As obvious as the European portion of his ancestry is, Freeland said it was never a source of great pride or interest to him. "I'm more proud of my great-great-grandmother's manumission [emancipation] papers than any drop of white blood," he said.

"I have to tell you my complexion has certain advantages. I learn a lot about white people by being the only Negro in my group," Freeland said, "though I make it a general rule in certain places to announce that I'm black today because I don't want to hear any off-color stories. It

doesn't bother me if somebody passed and had a life that was more successful and happy than mine. I'm successful and happy, too."

Discussion Questions

Is ‘passing’ a betrayal, as some have called it, or is it just ‘a social strategy,’ as others have said?

Is ‘passing’ a victimless crime? Does it do harm to anyone? If not ,why would it be wrong?

Some say that it was easy for well-educated light-skinned people to take the high road and maintain their black identity. Poor, uneducated folks with the same complexion faced a different reality. "These were people who used their physical appearances because, in many cases, that's all they had," one historian says. "They weren't wealthy. In many cases, they felt this was their greatest, most valuable resource." Are there some circumstances where ‘passing’ might be morally acceptable? What are they? (for example, is it ok to pass if it's the only way you can get a decent job to support your family?)

Just as in the case of truth-telling, there is a cost to ‘passing’ and a cost to not ‘passing’. What are they?

What are some other ways people can ‘pass?’ (*e.g. Jews passing for gentiles, gays passing for straight, someone of humble origins passing for rich and/or educated*)

What do all of these ways of ‘passing’ have in common? (*they are all a matter of power: the powerless masquerading as someone in the power group, in order to get the advantages this confers*).

Does this suggest that powerlessness breeds duplicity? Is it easier to be ‘authentic’ when you are in a position of power and advantage?

How do people ‘pass’ in your life? (*e.g. sucking up to teachers to get a good grade or a recommendation, pretending to be someone they’re not to get into a certain social clique at school, etc*)

Sources:

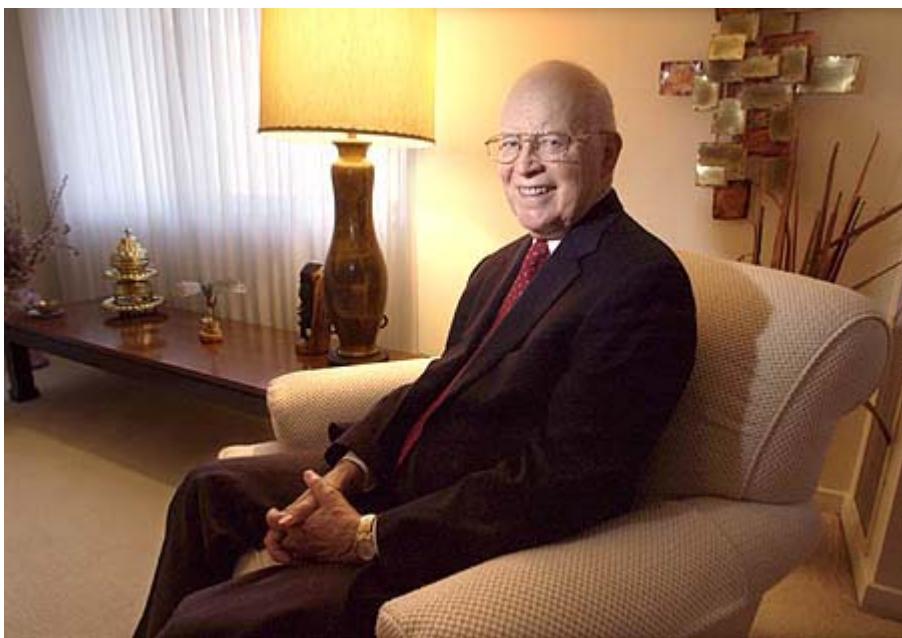
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(note: individuals’ ages were updated to 2012 to reflect generation they were from).



Anatole Broyard, literary critic of the New York Times (featured in story)



Dr. Edward J. Hale, retired physician (featured in story)



Barbara Douglass of Wilkinsburg, PA (featured in story)



Passing as White: Anita Hemmings 1897, Vassar College alumnae



The actress pictured above, Fredi Washington, created a storm in Hollywood and was in the film as a black woman who passes for white in *Imitation of Life*. She was considered too 'white' to play maid roles reserved for black actresses, yet she was seen as too 'black' to be a leading lady against a white actor. Refusing to pass for white, she became involved in the civil rights movement

WHICH IS NEGRO? WHICH IS WHITE?



THESE 16 PHOTOS ANSWERED ON CURRENT PAGE OF EBONY ABOVE

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|---------------|------------|---------------|------------|---------------|------------|---------------|------------|
| A. Negro..... | White..... | B. Negro..... | White..... | C. Negro..... | White..... | D. Negro..... | White..... |
| E. Negro..... | White..... | F. Negro..... | White..... | G. Negro..... | White..... | H. Negro..... | White..... |
| I. Negro..... | White..... | J. Negro..... | White..... | K. Negro..... | White..... | L. Negro..... | White..... |
| M. Negro..... | White..... | N. Negro..... | White..... | O. Negro..... | White..... | P. Negro..... | White..... |

See Current Answers On Page 20

Quiz from *Ebony* magazine, April 1952