

Integrity - Living Our Values Everyday

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There are times in our lives when we are shaken to our core. The very foundation of our lives seems to be at risk. It may be triggered by things like political upheaval, health issues or relationship problems.

These situations produce strong emotions. You may feel furious, perplexed, distraught, alarmed or apprehensive. When something you deeply care about is at risk, you experience stress.

When you [positively embrace stress](#), it propels you to take action in alignment with your values. You feel like you must act to maintain your integrity. You can no longer sit back and watch what is happening.

Considering Your Highest Values

What are your deepest held values? If you had to choose your [five most important moral values](#), what would they be?

How important is treating everyone with respect and dignity, being honest, being responsible, and being kind? When you have a strong reaction to an event, it's likely that one of your core values has been challenged.

Your kids will identify your most important values based on how you live your life. Kids are good at ignoring what you say and paying close attention to what you do. What are your kids learning from watching you? How can you help your kids live their values?



Taking Action That Support Your Values

Stress can energize you to take positive action. In her book, [The Upside of Stress](#), Kelly McGonigal explains “The energy you get from stress doesn’t just help your body act; it also fires up your brain. Adrenaline wakes up your senses. Your pupils dilate to let in more light, and your hearing sharpens. The brain processes what you perceive more quickly. Mind-wandering stops, and less important priorities drop away. Stress can create a state of concentrated attention, one that gives you access to more information about your physical environment.”

McGonigal is describing an immediate physical response to a stressful situation. These concepts also apply to prolonged stressful situations.

Stress energizes and focuses you in various ways:

- Your senses are awakened. You are no longer sleepwalking through the situation.
- Your priorities come into sharp focus. Things that are trivial simply fall away.
- Your attention is concentrated on the situation.
- You recognize information that you were previously ignoring.

This focused energy motivates you to act. Ideally the action you choose is in alignment with your highest values.

Harnessing Stress To Do Good

Your moral character is revealed by the actions you choose to take or to avoid. Do you choose to take the high road or the low road?

Most of us fantasize about some low road options. While these options produce temporary feelings of getting some justice or revenge, ultimately they do not serve us well.

Your emotions are always ok – there are not right and wrong emotions. However, how you choose to behave in response to your emotions may or may not be ok.

So what can you do to take the high road? What can you encourage your kids to do with their strong emotions?

Taking action is critical to owning your power and helping your kids own their power. What is one thing you can do to help the given situation? If you are not sure what options are available, try a couple internet searches on your topic. You may want to join a group of like-minded people who you can work together with to create the changes you are seeking.

JoinAForce4Good.org has ideas and examples of taking compassionate action. There are different categories for action including:

- Oppose Injustice
- Heal The Earth
- Help Those In Need
- Embody Compassion

The site states "Envisioned by the Dalai Lama, 'a force for good' is action inspired by a genuine concern for others. When we act with compassion, the seeds we plant today can change the course of our shared tomorrow." Your kids can get ideas and pledge what they will do to be a force for good.

Being shaken to your core is not comfortable. You have entered uncharted territory. How will you navigate these challenging times? Your children need you to shine your light on the direction of hope.

Kathy Slattengren is an internationally recognized, inspirational parent educator and founder of Priceless Parenting, <http://www.PricelessParenting.com>. Priceless Parenting offers online [parenting classes](#), [parenting presentations](#) and [parent coaching](#). Parents learn to effectively handle misbehavior while building loving relationships.

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