

RESPONSIBILITY AND INTEGRITY

SUPPLEMENT FOR ORGANIZING CREATIVITY (3RD ED.)

Version 0.95

Daniel Wessel

TABLE OF CONTENTS

MECHANISM.....3

APPLICABILITY.....4

INTERVENTION VARIABLES6

 Responsibility.....6

 Integrity8

TRIAL DEFINITION..... 11

 Step 1: Map Showing and Shrinking 11

 Step 2: Choose the Trial Type..... 14

 Step 3: Translate into Integration Worksheet Form..... 14

 Example Trials 16

HAND-OFF 18

MORE INFORMATION..... 19

 Poems 19

 Movies 19

APPENDIX.....21

 Responsibility in Emergencies22

 Integrity Quotations24

MECHANISM

If you create something, you introduce something new. You create change. Ideally, that change is mostly positive, but there is no guarantee. Creativity is value-neutral, and because life is a system, the effects can be complex: short-term benefits with long-term costs, intended gains with unexpected side effects, or consequences that only become visible later.

As you want to be recognized for the benefits of your creative work, you are also accountable for its negative effects. That means showing responsibility and integrity: acting in accordance with what you said, including what you said to yourself.

This is a supplement to «*Organizing Creativity*» (3rd edition). It is not included in the book because it is more specific and focused, and therefore not relevant to all readers. If the topic is relevant to you, it provides additional information. It was developed with AI input.

More Information: <https://www.organizingcreativity.com/oc3>

APPLICABILITY

The possible positive and negative effects vary widely by domain, but responsibility and integrity matter in all areas of creativity. They also matter outside creativity, though they are not exactly qualities people reward consistently. Many people and organizations appreciate responsibility and integrity only when they support their own goals or reinforce their legitimacy. When they do not, these qualities become more important for the individual — and often more risky.

Use this worksheet if you want to

- gain more clarity on responsibility and integrity,
- notice where you shrink responsibility too much,
- deal with pressure or manipulation to go along with things you do not agree with, or
- reduce situations in which you later have to take back your words.

When it comes to integrity, the relevant variable is not whether the pressure comes from the left, right, state, market, institution, audience, peer group, or patron. The relevant variable is whether the environment pressures you to say what you do not believe, hide what you know, endorse what you reject, exaggerate what is weak, or abandon responsibility for consequences within your control. Table 1 shows possible pressures.

Even in democracies, there are strong pressures to conform to ideologies and political positions, to validate «the narrative» and «uphold the frame». People in positions of power — sometimes only assumed power — try to apply pressure to science, art, and everyday life. The pressure can be especially insidious when those applying it genuinely think they are the «good guys», that they «do the right thing», or that they are «on the right side of history». Integrity is therefore not only an issue in totalitarian regimes, where the pressures are obvious. It also matters under the softer pressure of ostensibly «good» societies.

«Open your eyes, Captain. Why is the Federation so obsessed with the Maquis? We've never harmed you — and yet we're constantly arrested and charged with terrorism. Starships chase us through the Badlands, and our supporters are harassed and ridiculed. Why? Because we've left the Federation — and that's the one thing you can't accept. Nobody leaves Paradise — everyone should want to be in the Federation. Hell, you even want the Cardassians to join; you're only sending them replicators because one day, they can take their rightful place on the Federation Council. You know, in some ways, you're even worse than the Borg. At least they tell you about their plans for assimilation. You're more insidious; you assimilate people, and they don't even know it.»

Eddington in Star Trek DS9: «For the Cause»

Pressure source	Creativity/integrity failure
Progressive/Political Correctness institutional pressure	Saying approved things rather than true things.
Communist/totalitarian pressure	Repeating obvious lies to survive or belong.
Conservative/religious morality pressure	Removing or avoiding work because it violates purity, family, nation, tradition, or «decency».
Nationalist/authoritarian pressure	Art, journalism, or scholarship subordinated to loyalty.
Corporate/market pressure	Hiding risks, exaggerating claims, optimizing for attention over truth.
Academic/status pressure	Not challenging a fashionable consensus because the career cost is too high.
Audience/fan pressure	Giving the tribe what it wants instead of what the work requires.

Table 1: Pressure sources and creative/integrity failures

The examples I use in the worksheet reflect pressures that are currently especially visible to me. In your own environment, the dominant pressure may come from another source.

INTERVENTION VARIABLES

The variables first cover responsibility, then integrity.

Responsibility

Creativity is value-neutral. Both creating and not creating are choices, so the responsibility for the consequences is yours (see also □ Ethics): creating what should not be created, and not creating what should be created.

This accountability is the price of also being honored for the benefits. Suspending your moral judgment — «I just did my job» — is not an option.

The following aspects might be relevant:

- **Fault vs. Responsibility:** There is a fundamental difference between responsibility and fault. Responsibility means being accountable for what is within your control. Fault means being the cause of the failure in question.

Fault: You caused the situation, e.g., you hit someone with a car. If it was preventable, it should lead to guilt for what you did and usually requires at least an apology (see Box 1: Apologies).

Box 1: Apologies

An honest apology does three things:

1. You honestly say you are sorry.
2. You admit your fault. (Careful with legal responsibility.)
3. You try to make it right. (Careful not to make it worse.)

That requires responsibility and integrity, and it is hard to do. So many people go for **pseudo-apologies**. For example:

- «I am sorry you felt that way.» — the issue becomes the person's reaction, not what was done to them.
- «..., but ...» — the fault is shifted to something else: the environment, bad luck, or sometimes even the harmed person.
- «What can I do to make it right?» — the burden of fixing the issue is pushed onto the person who was affected.

The problem is not only the lack of responsibility. Without honestly saying sorry, admitting fault, and trying to make it right, the issue will likely occur again because the person has learned nothing. That makes a pseudo-apology not only useless to the person who was harmed, but also harmful to future people.

Responsibility: You are part of a situation and able to intervene. You are *not* at fault, but you are accountable for what is within your control.

People who are at fault are usually responsible, while the reverse is not necessarily true. If your colleagues do something wrong, you are not automatically at fault — but you might still be responsible for addressing the issue. Fault must never be attributed when people are merely responsible. Otherwise fault is diffused, and the people who actually caused the harm are less likely to be held accountable. As Hannah Arendt put it: «Where all are guilty, no one is; confessions of collective guilt are the best possible safeguard against the discovery of culprits, and the very magnitude of the crime the best excuse for doing nothing.»

- **Responsibility remains individual even if groups diffuse it subjectively:** Organizations and groups can have «collective responsibility», but responsibility still has to remain anchored in individuals. The presence of other people already reduces the likelihood that someone acts, because responsibility is subjectively diffused across everyone present (see Responsibility in Emergencies on page 22). Given that creative work often happens in teams, there is a real risk that no one takes responsibility. Worse, groups can create a race to the bottom, with people encouraging each other to take less and less responsibility. If you are part of the project, you are also responsible for its effects. Other people can provide social, emotional, cognitive, and organizational support. Just make sure that support does not quietly become «that's not my business».
- **Environment Reactions to Responsibility Vary:** The reaction to taking responsibility depends on the environment. In places with a good error culture (see □ Mistakes and Dealing with Them), taking responsibility can lead to respect. People learn to trust that you will make difficult or unpopular decisions when the situation requires it. In bad error cultures — especially cut-throat environments or bureaucracies that place procedure over principle — taking responsibility can easily backfire. You become the scapegoat. These environments often dislike the person who points out the mistake more than the mistake itself. On an organizational level, you threaten legitimacy, which triggers defensive reactions. That is an argument against these environments, not against responsibility. Whistleblowing is often the only option here, though a highly risky one (see □ Whistleblowing).
- **Shrinking Responsibility:** Because taking responsibility can lead to negative outcomes — even in a good error culture — the natural impulse is often to shrink it. You might face conflict, loss of status, dismissal, legal consequences, or worse. Rationalizations are easy to find: «not my job», «not now», «I need the job». That is where integrity comes in.

- **Limits of Responsibility:** Responsibility is not unbounded. There are limits. You can try to make things right, and apologize if you were also at fault. But nothing justifies destroying your life. There are usually better ways to address the issue and remain capable afterward.

In this sense: take control of your actions and responsibility for what you do.

In dreams begin responsibilities.

WB Yeats

Integrity

Integrity actually means «only» doing what you said you would do — «the distance between your lips and your actions». That includes what you tell yourself, e.g., adhering to your values (see also □ Ethics). It is the disciplined alignment between truth, values, action, and accountability, especially when misalignment would be easier or more profitable. The problem is that it is usually easier to determine the right path and name it than to walk it.

- **Integrity needs Standards:** If integrity means adhering to what you say to others and yourself, you need to define your standards. Which values do you adhere to? What is your aspiration for yourself, your work, and your interactions with others? Make sure these standards do not conflict and are actually achievable. Otherwise you fail so often that they no longer guide action.
- **Integrity is not nice:** Many people fail at showing integrity. Striving for it can make you hated by those people, and that comes with consequences. Integrity requires the ability to sit with being misunderstood, not being praised, and not knowing whether you are right. Over time, these experiences can become ballast — in the positive, stabilizing sense. Once you have been excluded, paid the costs for your values, or lived without approval, you become less afraid of doing so again. Integrity is not «nice», but it can be good. Being good is harder than being nice. Nice avoids conflict. Good has standards and stands by them when tested.
- **Integrity is not Self-Righteousness:** There is a huge temptation to use integrity as a cudgel, to think that just because you are consistent, you are also right. But integrity does not mean you are right. It means you are consistent. Always keep open the possibility that you might be wrong.
- **Integrity is a must if you are eccentric:** If you deviate from the mainstream (see □ Eccentricity and Mischaracterization), you need integrity. Being differ-

ent is already challenging enough for many people; they have even less respect for someone who is not true to himself. Standing by what you do with authenticity and integrity makes you predictable and somewhat safe. Lacking integrity makes you chaotic and a danger.

- **Integrity matters including in small issues:** You should choose your battles, or you will be bogged down fighting ants. Still, integrity has to be shown even in small issues. If you do not stand by your principles when the issue is small, you train yourself out of doing it and become overwhelmed when larger issues are affected (see also □ Saying No). «I will stand by my values once it truly matters» is often just self-rationalizing conformity while integrity corrodes. Worse, gradual exposure desensitizes you, making you accept things you would have rejected if they had happened earlier.
- **Choose your regrets:** People can pay a high price for integrity: less money, perhaps even poverty, stress, declining health. Conformity is easier in the moment. On the other hand, a common regret in palliative care is that people wished they had stood up for what they believed in, now that they can no longer do it. In that sense, you have to choose your regrets. Some choose to shrink. Others decide that being comfortable in life is not enough.
- **Environments can try to undermine Integrity:** Toxic environments, including totalitarian ones, try to undermine integrity actively. They try to get people to repeat obvious lies and do things that are obviously wrong, often with everyone knowing that these things are lies or wrong. Small concessions are used to crack integrity, while fear of ostracism or worse threats pulls the lever. The goal is to humiliate and break the person until he goes along with the toxic system. At its worst, people no longer know what is right.
- **Integrity cannot simply be taken, but it can be pressured, cornered, and traded away by inches.** Even hostile environments cannot automatically make your decisions for you, but they can raise the cost of refusing. That is why integrity needs preparation, support, and low-risk first steps where possible.
- **Integrity is usually lost by inches:** Loss of integrity usually starts with small concessions. They are «no big deal» and easy to justify, because they make things easier, reduce hassle, and seem more efficient. But they move the goalpost. Done repeatedly, actions that would have been clearly out of bounds earlier become justifiable. Creative people are especially dangerous here, because they are creative enough to find reasons to justify their behavior. Understanding this slippery slope helps. Written reminders or trusted people who keep you honest can also help.

- **Hidden Threat: The need to appear good:** Humans are social animals. Ostracism was a death sentence and still carries serious consequences for health, finances, and social impact. So there is a strong pressure to appear good. As someone put it: «The greatest temptation in the world isn't to do evil, but the need to be seen doing good.» The danger is when the integer action does not appear to be «good», e.g., when it is «not nice» or even «harmful» in the short term. If you cannot stand by unpopular decisions, you put the appearance of goodness over the reality of it.
- **Hidden Threat: Integrity as justification:** Integrity sounds positive, but in practice it comes with negative consequences. Worse, it can be used as a justification for stubbornness, martyrdom-seeking, oppositional identity, performative bravery, or a refusal to change. Make sure your integrity is attached to values, not ego.

TRIAL DEFINITION

Responsibility and integrity are heavy topics, so the following guardrails are crucial before you try to change anything:

- **Integrity is not certainty:** You can act with integrity and still be wrong. Make sure the trial design includes evidence, feedback, and the possibility of revision.
- **Responsibility is not omnipotence:** If you take responsibility for everything, you burn yourself out quickly and affect little, if anything. Be highly selective in what you take responsibility for.
- **Not every breach deserves confrontation:** Dramatic confrontation is often the least effective option, even though it sounds heroic and is therefore tempting — especially if you want to be seen doing good. The best kind of integrity is often quiet and hard to dismiss: documentation, clarification, calm boundary-setting, or withdrawal.
- **The environment matters:** Some environments are extremely hostile to actual responsibility and integrity. They claim both on paper, but try to obliterate them in real life when they threaten their position or legitimacy. So do a safety/risk scan: who can retaliate, what documentation exists, what lower-risk first step is available, what support is needed?
- **Responsibility includes Repair:** Responsibility is not only prevention or refusal. It also means correcting, apologizing, compensating, retracting, or making the next version safer (see also Box 1: Apologies).

The aim is not to become more confrontational. The aim is to reduce the gap between what you know, what you say, what you do, and what is actually yours to carry.

Step 1: Map Showing and Shrinking

If you want to address responsibility and integrity, start by assessing how they show up in your creative work. Include both where you show them and where you shrink them. Otherwise the exercise becomes demotivating.

If the issue is consequence management, start with responsibility: «What is within my control here, and what do I owe the situation?» If the issue is alignment between claim and action, start with integrity: «Am I acting in line with what I claim to value or have committed to?» If the issue is over-owning, start with limits: «Am I taking on more than is actually mine, or destroying my ability to continue?»

See Table 2 for examples. Table 3 can be used as a template.

Possible outcomes: run a trial, document only, seek advice, withdraw, or deliberately do nothing.

Situation	Standard at stake	I show responsibility /integrity when...	I shrink it when...	Cost of showing	Cost of shrinking
My creative work	Accuracy about what the work can and cannot do	I name risks, limits, and unknowns	I hide weak parts or overstate value	Slower release, less praise	Lower trust, worse work
Collaboration	Early warning before preventable damage	I speak up about a problem early	I wait until it becomes someone else's issue	Conflict, awkwardness	Resentment, failure
Public claims	Correction of false or misleading statements	I correct myself visibly	I quietly move on	Loss of face	Loss of credibility
Client / employer pressure	Refusal to knowingly mislead	I refuse to make false claims	I comply and rationalize	Career/ social cost	Self-corrosion, harm
Personal standards	Reliability of small commitments	I keep small commitments	I excuse small violations	Less convenience	Drift

Table 2: Responsibility and Integrity Examples

Domain / Situation	Standard at stake	Where I already show responsibility or integrity	Where I shrink, avoid, outsource, or rationalize	What pressure is present?	What is actually within my control?	Candidate trial
Creative work						
Collaboration						
Public claims / communication						
Client / employer / institution						
Personal standards						

Table 3: Trial Table

Step 2: Choose the Trial Type

If you decide to run a trial, choose one row where the cost of shrinking is real, the action is within your control, and the first step can be tested without theatrical escalation. Do not choose a trial because you want to prove you are right. Choose one because shrinking responsibility or integrity is producing observable damage. Prefer the smallest action that changes the pattern. A good trial does not need to be dramatic. It only needs to make shrinking harder to repeat unnoticed.

This means:

- the issue has real consequences,
- the action is within your control,
- the action is proportionate,
- you can remain open to being wrong,
- the trial does not destroy your ability to continue.

Responsibility and integrity can conflict, and different responsibilities can compete: loyalty to a collaborator vs. public accuracy; client confidentiality vs. harm prevention; family duty vs. creative duty; truthfulness vs. unnecessary damage. So check which other responsibility this action might harm.

See Table 4: Trial Types and Example Behaviors for an overview.

Step 3: Translate into Integration Worksheet Form

Use the normal Integration Worksheet logic: observable behavior, bounded duration, success/abort criteria, and a decision point.

- **Reason for Change:** Where does shrinking responsibility or integrity currently create damage, leakage, mistrust, self-corrosion, or avoidable risk?
- **Current Pattern:** What do you currently do instead? Examples: stay silent, soften wording, delay correction, overpromise, hide uncertainty, comply, blame the group, wait for someone else.
- **Goal Behavior:** What would be visibly different? What is the lowest-risk version of showing responsibility/integrity here? Do not write «be more courageous». Write what a camera, document trail, or other person would observe.
- **Change Behavior:** What will remind you of the behavior? What is the initial small step — the start action — and what is the full behavior? If it takes time, what do you drop for it?

Trial Type	Example Behavior
Clarification Trial You avoid naming what you actually think or where your responsibility lies.	In one recurring meeting, ask one clarifying question when a claim/action seems wrong or unclear.
Correction Trial You have made, published, or supported something inaccurate.	Add a correction note, update the document, or tell the affected person directly.
Boundary Trial You are pressured to do or endorse something misaligned.	Use one prepared refusal sentence and record what happens. (See also □ Saying No.)
Early Warning Trial You usually wait until a problem becomes undeniable.	Raise one concrete risk before the next milestone.
Repair Trial Damage has already occurred.	Make one specific repair action: apology, replacement, retraction, documentation, or compensation.
Small Commitment Trial Integrity is eroding through small private exceptions.	Keep one small stated commitment for 14 days, with a visible checkmark log.
Responsibility Limit Trial You over-own what is not yours.	State what you can do, what you cannot do, and who owns the next decision.

Table 4: Trial Types and Example Behaviors

- **Success / Stop Criteria:** Set realistic success criteria. Responsibility and integrity are both hard to show, so small steps might be necessary. To avoid getting caught up in self-righteousness, define what feedback, evidence, or consequence would make you pause or revise. Abort criteria should also catch risks before they manifest, e.g., retaliation. If they are triggered, they give you valuable information about your situation and the next trial. Ambiguity is especially dangerous because self-rationalization can interfere with your behavior.
- **Trial Duration:** Usually 2–4 weeks, or 3–5 relevant situations, whichever comes first.
- **Log Behavior:** Record only: situation, action taken, response, cost, result, next consequence. No self-narration during the trial.
- **Decision:** Keep / Modify / Abort.

- **Reflection:** What did this teach about your standards, environment, fear, leverage, and actual responsibility?

Example Trials

Example 1: Early Responsibility in a Project

- **Reason:** I notice risks in projects but often wait until they become undeniable.
- **Current Pattern:** I mention concerns vaguely or only to safe colleagues.
- **Goal Behavior:** Raise concrete risks early enough that action is still possible.
- **Trigger:** When I notice the same project risk twice.
- **Start Action:** Write it in one sentence: «I think X may cause Y because Z.»
- **Behavior:** Raise the risk in the next relevant meeting or written update, with one proposed next step.
- **Success:** At least 3 concrete risks raised before deadline pressure makes them irreversible.
- **Abort:** Retaliation risk becomes serious; switch to documentation/support-seeking.
- **Ambiguity:** A risk counts only if it names consequence and proposed action.
- **Duration:** 4 weeks or one project phase.
- **Evidence:** Sent message, meeting note, decision log.

Example 2: Integrity in Public Claims

- **Reason:** I sometimes overstate claims because stronger wording gets more attention.
- **Current Pattern:** I publish confident statements even when the evidence is thinner.
- **Goal Behavior:** Match strength of claim to strength of evidence.
- **Trigger:** Before publishing/posting/submitting a claim.
- **Start Action:** Mark each major claim as strong / plausible / speculative.
- **Behavior:** Revise wording so uncertainty is visible where needed.
- **Success:** 10 claims checked; no unsupported strong claims remain.
- **Abort:** Review process becomes so heavy that publishing stops; reduce to top 3 claims only.

- **Duration:** Next 4 outputs.
- **Evidence:** Draft with marked claims and final version.

Example 3: Boundary Under Pressure

(see also □ Saying No)

- **Reason:** I agree to things I do not endorse, then resent the work and myself.
- **Current Pattern:** I say yes in the moment and rationalize later.
- **Goal Behavior:** Create a pause before agreement and refuse one misaligned request.
- **Trigger:** Request conflicts with stated standard or available capacity.
- **Start Action:** Say: «I need to check this against my current commitments before I answer.»
- **Behavior:** Give a yes/no/modified answer within 24 hours.
- **Success:** Pause used in 3 relevant cases; at least one answer modified or refused when appropriate.
- **Abort:** Delay harms others; use immediate limited answer instead.
- **Duration:** 3 weeks.
- **Evidence:** Message log / calendar note.

Example 4: Repair Trial

- **Reason:** I know one piece of work caused confusion, but I have avoided correcting it.
- **Current Pattern:** I move on and hope nobody notices.
- **Goal Behavior:** Correct the artifact and notify affected people. Identify them first.
- **Trigger:** Choose one known issue.
- **Start Action:** Write a plain correction: what was wrong, what is now changed, what remains uncertain.
- **Behavior:** Publish/send correction and update original material.
- **Success:** Correction exists in the same place or reaches the same people as the original, and the affected party or audience is identifiable.
- **Abort:** Legal/employment risk is nontrivial; seek advice first.
- **Duration:** 7 days.
- **Evidence:** Updated artifact, sent message, correction note.

HAND-OFF

Responsibility and integrity do not become real because you agree with them. They become real when they alter what you do under pressure.

Pick one situation from the table above. Not the largest one. Not the most dramatic one. Choose one where:

- something real is at stake,
- your action is within your control,
- shrinking has a cost,
- showing responsibility or integrity is possible without destroying your ability to continue.

Then transfer it to the Integration Worksheet and run it as a bounded trial.

Do not try to become «a person of integrity» in general. Test one behavior:

- name one risk earlier,
- correct one claim,
- refuse one misaligned request,
- repair one piece of damage,
- keep one small commitment,
- stop taking responsibility for what is not yours.

After the trial, decide from evidence. Keep, modify, or abort. Then choose the next situation.

Integrity is not a mood. Responsibility is not a self-image. Both show up in the next action.

MORE INFORMATION

- Baron, R. A., Byrne, D., & Branscombe, N. R. (2006). *Social Psychology* (11th ed.). Pearson Education, Inc.
- Browning, C. R. (1992). *Ordinary Men*. Harper Perennial.
- Dreher, R. (2020). *Live not by Lies. A Manual for Christian Dissidents*. Sentinel.
- Heinlein, R. A. (1940) «*Blowups Happen*»
- Rand, A. (1943). *The Fountainhead*. Berkley.
- Wessel, D., Holtz, J., & König, F. (2021). Practice Report «Smart Disaster Management»—Combining Smart City Data and Citizen Participation to Increase Disaster Resilience. *i-com*, 20(2), 177–193. <https://doi.org/10.1515/icom-2021-0016>.

Poems

- «Horatius on the Bridge», from «Lays Of Ancient Rome», by Lord Macaulay
- «The Hangman» by Maurice Ogden (<https://www.organizingcreativity.com/2026/05/saying-no-the-hangman/>)

Movies

- «High Noon» (movie, compare the marshal and the deputy, <https://www.organizingcreativity.com/2022/08/recommendation-high-noon/>)
- «Outland» (movie)
- «Pan's Labyrinth» (movie)
- «V for Vendetta» (graphic novel/movie)

APPENDIX

Responsibility in Emergencies

As a useful side note: Social psychology has analyzed for a long time why people act or stand by in emergencies (bystander effect; see Baron, Byrne, & Branscombe, 2006). A useful model has five steps.

The person has to:

1. **attend the situation:** Some situations are easy to notice — blood, noise, screams. Others are not salient, especially when people are occupied with screens or in a rush.
2. **interpret the situation correctly:** Even if the person notices the situation, he might not see it as an emergency. Children can scream while playing, not because one of them is in danger. A couple might have an argument, not a fight.
3. **assume responsibility:** This applies even when other people are usually in charge, e.g., a bus driver in a bus. In these cases, the person can take responsibility to 1. inform the person in charge, and 2. intervene himself if this person does not address it (contacting others, assisting directly, etc.).
4. **assess the ability to take action:** Emergencies are unusual, and few people are trained for them. Also, nobody is helped if you become a victim yourself. However, there are usually ways to assist, if only by calling for help.
5. **decide whether to act:** The final step is an assessment based heavily on pros and cons, especially available resources. The person has to decide that assisting is worth the time and does not get him into trouble.

One revealing finding is that the presence of other people usually reduces the likelihood of a prosocial response. Others can interfere with interpreting the situation, because we often use other people's reactions to assess what is happening. If everyone is looking at everyone else and no one dares to make the first move, nobody assists (pluralistic ignorance). Once one person acts and another follows, the dam breaks quickly.

Others can also interfere with assuming responsibility. If only one person can assist, he is responsible. If others are present, that responsibility subjectively diffuses across everyone there. But the others might not have attended the situation or interpreted it correctly. Again, once the first person acts and another assists, the dam breaks.

Thus, in emergencies, it is unfortunately natural that people do not assist, especially in a crowd. If you need assistance, communicate the emergency clearly and address the person you think could act best directly: look at him, use clear markers, e.g., «blue T-Shirt». If you are present in an emergency, ignore that others do not

react and make the first step. This does not mean risking your life. Calling for help is always a valid option.

While the model describes human behavior, it can also be applied to digital products. If you create, e.g., a neighborhood help app, you can use the same model to make it more likely that people assist each other (Wessel, Holtz, & König, 2021).

The silence purred at them as Wonse talked. They avoided one another's faces, for fear of what they might see mirrored there. Each man thought: one of the others is bound to say something soon, some protest, and then I'll murmur agreement, not actually say anything, I'm not as stupid as that, but definitely murmur very firmly, so that the others will be in no doubt that I thoroughly disapprove, because at a time like this it behooves all decent men to nearly stand up and be almost heard ...

But no-one said anything. The cowards, each man thought.

«Guards! Guards!» by Terry Pratchett

Integrity Quotations

«You can be in the middle of a hurricane, or you can be on a calm day, north is still north. You could be in a thunderstorm, north is still north. People can yell at you, north is still north. It doesn't change fundamental things. And in this business, right is still right, even if you stand by yourself.»

Clarence Thomas

«The individual has always had to struggle to keep from being overwhelmed by the tribe. If you try it, you will be lonely often, and sometimes frightened. But no price is too high to pay for the privilege of owning yourself.»

Friedrich Nietzsche

Then out spoke brave Horatius,
the Captain of the Gate:

«To every man upon this earth,
Death cometh soon or late.

And how can man die better,
than facing fearful odds,

For the ashes of his fathers,
and the temple of his Gods!»

Horatius on the Bridge, from «Lays Of Ancient Rome», by Lord Macaulay

«Before I can live with other folks I've got to live with myself. The one thing that doesn't abide by majority rule is a person's conscience.»

«To Kill a Mockingbird» by Harper Lee

«There were times ... I thought none of us would get out alive. Some of us didn't. But, we did everything we said we were gonna do and nobody can take that away from us, or this place.»

Zack to Sheridan in Babylon 5: "Sleeping in Light"

«For what is a man profited, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? Or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?»

Matthew 16:26, King James Version

«We lost everything but kept our integrity.»

Dr. Ryan Cole

«What's the difference between a nice guy and a good man?»

«A nice guy gets along. ... They don't necessarily have discernment or judgment, not sure what they stand for or stand against. ... A good man has ideals that they stand for and they'll stand against, and when they're tested, a good man is not a nice guy. ... Being a good man is a lot harder for good reason. You're not going to be most popular. You're not going to be always most affable. It also doesn't mean you've got to be a dick or an asshole. This means sometimes you're going to go, I believe in this, this is for me, and that is not for me. And because that is not for me, if you do trespass into my space upon me and my family, ... I will do my best to cause consequences. And I'm going to let you know that. I hope that's apparent. Because I'm not going to intrude on you, but if you trespass that, I'm going to stand up for it. And that, we could talk our way out of that? Great. No, it doesn't always work that way. ... A good man's not looking for trouble. ... But if it comes, and if he or something he cares about and loves were susceptible, being trespassed on by trouble, a good man does what he can to do to stop that.»

Chris Williamson and Matthew McConaughey

«Political correctness is communist propaganda writ small. In my study of communist societies, I came to the conclusion that the purpose of communist propaganda was not to persuade or convince, nor to inform, but to humiliate; and therefore, the less it corresponded to reality the better. When people are forced to remain silent when they are being told the most obvious lies, or even worse when they are forced to repeat the lies themselves, they lose once and for all their sense of probity. To assent to obvious lies is to co-operate with evil, and in some small way to become evil oneself. One's standing to resist anything is thus eroded, and even destroyed. A society of emasculated liars is easy to control. I think if you examine political correctness, it has the same effect and is intended to.»

Theodore Dalrymple

«It's naive to think that you wouldn't have taken part in historical atrocities once considered normal if you embrace all the trendy ideas of today.»

Ayishat Akanbi

«Thank you, but I'd rather die behind the chemical sheds.»

Evey in «V for Vendetta»

«There is an old Rabbinical story that's passed down through the ages. And it goes like this: <The people in Noah's day were very wicked, which is why God send the flood. And the people who didn't make it upon the boat, which were many — when the waters rose to their knees, they pulled their children to their waist. When the waters rose to their waist, they put their children in their arms. When the waters rose to their neck, they put their children on their shoulders. But when it rose even further, they put their children under their feet so they could survive.> When the threat of mortality comes down from so many avenues, in over every medium, over every channel, everyone is telling you, [...] you're going to die if you don't take these interventions that we recommend — it does crazy things to society.»

Justin Hart

