

Do the Right Thing

In September 2006, Matt Atkinson's three friends told him they were plotting a Columbine-style attack on their school.

They would ignite bombs near bathrooms, set fire to exits, then shoot any of the 1,500 students and staff at East High School in Green Bay, Wisconsin, they didn't like.

Atkinson was torn. Although his friends' threats sounded serious, he wasn't certain they were genuine. Could he risk getting his friends into major trouble over what might turn out to be a joke? That night, he talked to his mother.

The following morning – one day before his friends had scheduled their attack – Atkinson followed his mother's advice and talked to the school's assistant principal. Law enforcement officials immediately intervened.

After taking the three would-be attackers into custody, police searched their homes. They found shocking confirmation of the intended assault: suicide notes, a large cache of weapons, ammunition, camouflage clothing, helmets and gas masks.

When news of the failed attack became public, Atkinson was lauded as a hero.

"Do the right thing," he said, downplaying the incident. "That's all I can say: do the right thing. There's no harm in telling somebody about it. I didn't do it for fame. I had fear for the life of my fellow students and staff at East High School."



Atkinson, wearing a red T-shirt emblazoned with his school's name at a press conference, described the three teens arrested as friends and said he came forward in part because he wanted to get them help. "If it wasn't true ... at least they'd get the help that they needed," he said. "If I didn't go and they were serious, I couldn't live with that on my conscience."

Atkinson did the right thing because he had a proper view of the consequences of his inaction.

The overarching structure of Life Care Centers of America is the commitment to do the right thing, and it is woven throughout the company's *Code of Conduct* materials.

In the front of the *Code of Conduct* booklet is a letter from Forrest L. Preston, our founder and chairman. His last paragraph concludes:

(more)

“We trust each of you as a valuable member of our Life Care team. Our commitment, the provision of services based upon integrity, assures that we move beyond merely being in compliance. We ask each of you to work together in assisting our organization in supporting the values and principles that are necessary to achieve our mission. Thank you for your commitment to *doing the right thing.*”

Such a practice always pays – in our personal *and* professional lives.

To him who knows to do good and does not do it, to him it is sin (James 4:17 NKJV).

– Beecher Hunter