

Image and Integrity

Two old ladies were walking around a somewhat overcrowded English country churchyard and came upon a tombstone.

The inscription read: "Here lies John Smith, a politician and an honest man."

"Good heavens!" said one lady to the other. "Isn't it awful that they had to put two people in the same grave!"

That little illustration is humorous, but it raises the issue of image versus integrity. Image, of course, is what people think we are. Integrity is what we really are.

Author and speaker John C. Maxwell addresses this subject. Writing in *The Maxwell Daily Reader*, he observes: "All of us have known those who were not the same on the outside as they were inside. Sadly, many who have worked harder on their images than on their integrity don't understand when they suddenly 'fall.' Even friends who thought they knew them are surprised."

Maxwell offers three questions, the answers to which "will determine if you are into image-building instead of integrity-building:"

- Consistency – Are you the same person, no matter whom you are with?
- Choices – Do you make decisions that are best for others when another choice would benefit you?
- Credit – Are you quick to recognize others for their efforts and contributions to your success?

Those are questions that we all should carefully consider.

Thomas Macauley, British poet, essayist and historian, declared, "The measure of a man's real character is what he would do if he would never be found out."

And Maxwell writes: "Life is like a vise; at times it will squeeze us. At those moments of pressure, whatever is inside will be found out. We cannot give what we do not have. Image promises much but produces little. Integrity never disappoints."

In the business we are engaged in at Life Care, Century Park and Life Care at Home, integrity must always be the compass by which we are steered.

– Beecher Hunter