

## Integrity versus loyalty

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By integrity I mean the personal integrity of the individual towards himself. You stand uncompromisingly behind everything that you personally regard as good and right. To stay true to oneself requires perseverance and sometimes a lot of courage, because personal integrity is indivisible.

Loyalty, on the other hand, is loyalty to a team or a group. It's a more difficult business because you're just part of a whole. Loyalty can be divided in many ways or reduced to sub-areas; because unlike personal integrity, loyalty is divisible.

The most important areas are the common objectives, which ideally all - or at least the majority - actively work towards. A leader should only be a coordinator and therefore relatively unimportant. To the extent that he becomes the driving force and thus demands loyalty to his person, it becomes critical. It is high time to take a close look.

Here are three examples of what you can do:

- A Complying and being ganged up
- B Talk to each other, promote your ideals
- C Refusing to follow the leader

So far equals have in a hierarchy of first degree, in which one determines everything, nothing more to report. This is the moment when, in principle, everyone would have to get out. As soon as the self-appointed leader refines the hierarchy by establishing control structures to consolidate his power, the internal conflict of the individual is compounded by the external pressure of the group majority belonging to the leader.

Due to misunderstood group loyalty and a despotic internal elite, the danger of indoctrination arises:

World view and goals, and which of them are objectively right or wrong, are adopted thoughtlessly. There is an increasing conflict between personal integrity and loyalty to the group. At some point you don't even dare to think for yourself anymore.

At this moment a clear positioning would be obligatory; but at the moment one has recognized this, it is usually too late to do so.

The power of the individual is based on the fact that it can hold its own position vis-à-vis the group. Personal integrity, i.e. standing by one's own view of things and one's own values, is therefore more important than loyalty to the group.

But you have to differentiate:

There can be group goals with which one agrees and which one consciously wants to strive for together. But if the group is everything, if it acts "like a single body", and if the single individual within the group goes down - if you have become almost totally effective - something goes very wrong.

### An example from politics

Because of great **personal integrity** a whistleblower is committed to the truth and through his activity he consciously is risking personal disadvantages.

A denunciator, on the other hand, is a traitor who through his **loyalty** to the enemy hopes for personal advantages.

In their attitude which could not be more opposing, these two extreme positions can be easily distinguished.

*(All this is **not** a question of boy scout or team player – but ethics!)*

Already all the historical examples that have become known prove the potentially very explosive nature of group dynamics!