

What Makes A Hero? The Impact of Integrity on Admiration and Interpersonal Judgment

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ABSTRACT Principled and expedient ideologies affect self-regulation and guide people along divergent ethical paths. A more principled ideology, indicative of higher claimed integrity, involves a greater personal commitment to ethical beliefs, standards, and self-schemas that facilitate positive social activities and help resist the temptation of illicit activities. Two studies showed that differences in reported integrity are related to people's preferences for and judgments of others. Those higher in integrity spontaneously described their heroes as more principled, honest, spiritual, and benevolently oriented toward others (Study 1). In addition, integrity was related to people's evaluations of characters who made ethical or unethical career decisions (Study 2). The judgments of those higher in integrity were greatly influenced by whether or not the decision was ethical but were largely unaffected by the consequences (career success or failure), whereas those lower in integrity were less influenced by whether the decision was ethical and more influenced by the career consequences.

Ethical dilemmas pit principles against expediency. Doing the right thing is a basis for acts of heroism and laudable accomplishment but often involves personal sacrifice. Doing the expedient thing is a basis for acts of self-indulgence and opportunism but often at a cost to others. How people resolve the tension between principles and expediency tests an individual's character and a society's ability to function effectively. Each path has a certain appeal—the principled

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path for its integrity and the expedient path for its profits. Informative glimpses may be gained into the values, aspirations, and ideologies of individuals and societies by examining whom they admire and regard as a hero and what criteria they use to praise and condemn others. The present studies examined individual differences in whom people regard as their heroes, why they regard them as heroes, and how they judge others based on how those others resolve conflicts between principles and expediency.

Principled and Expedient Ideologies: Commitment to Integrity

An *ethical ideology* is an integrated system of beliefs, values, standards, and self-definitions that define an individual's orientation toward matters of right and wrong or good and evil (Schlenker, 2007). It provides a moral schema for evaluating events and a moral identity that describes one's ethical character. *Principled ideologies* contain the ideas that ethical principles have a trans-situational quality, these principles should be followed regardless of personal consequences or self-serving justifications, and integrity is inherently valuable and a defining quality of one's identity. In contrast, *expedient ideologies* involve the ideas that moral principles can be flexible, that it is important to take advantage of profitable opportunities and foolish to fail to do so, and that what might seem to be deviations from principles can usually be justified.

Schlenker (2007) proposed that personal commitment to a principled ideology determines the strength of the relationship between ethical principles and behavior. Personal commitment links the self-system to the ethical principles, producing an accompanying sense of obligation to perform consistently with those principles and a sense of responsibility for relevant actions (Schlenker, 2007; see also Schlenker, 1997; Schlenker, Pontari, & Christopher, 2001). There is then greater difficulty explaining inconsistent conduct and less perceived flexibility to pursue unprincipled alternatives. This analysis is consistent with arguments, from several theoretical perspectives, that people's moral self-conceptions guide conduct across a range of situations (Aquino & Reed, 2002; Blasi, 1980, 1983; Narvaez, Lapsley, Hagele, & Lasky, 2005; Peterson & Seligman, 2004).

Individual differences in reports of principled commitment can be assessed with the Integrity Scale (Schlenker, 2007). Principled ideologies characterize people who regard themselves as having high

integrity. The first dictionary meaning of *integrity* is the “steadfast adherence to a strict moral or ethical code” (*American Heritage Dictionary*, 2000), and synonyms include being honest, upright, and incorruptible. The 18-item scale (see Appendix) focuses on the strength of people’s claims of being principled (as opposed to expedient), and items assess the inherent value of principled conduct, the steadfast commitment to principles despite costs or temptations, and the unwillingness to rationalize violations of principles. Although some items include references to truthfulness, lying, and cheating, which are inherent to definitions of integrity, participants are left to define *principles* and *right* versus *wrong* for themselves.

Higher scores reflect stronger endorsement of a principled ideology and the claim that one is a principled person with integrity, whereas lower scores reflect a more expedient orientation. People’s ethical ideologies may or may not coincide with their behavior, of course, so it is an empirical question whether those who express a commitment to principles actually behave in a principled fashion.

The scale demonstrates acceptable internal-consistency reliability (Cronbach’s α ranged from .84 to .90 across 6 samples) and test-retest reliability ($r = .82$ over 2–5 weeks; Schlenker, 2007). Confirmatory factor analyses supported the view that a single latent integrity dimension, which appears to reflect the principled-expedient continuum, along with measurement effects from direct- and reverse-scored items, underlies responses (Johnson & Schlenker, 2007). Social desirability bias, which is a substantial problem with measures of overt integrity (i.e., honesty testing) used in business (Sackett & Wanek, 1996), is small and accounts for under 3% of the common variance (r s ranged from .05 to .17 in 5 samples; Schlenker, 2007).

Given the conceptual rationale for the scale, integrity scores should be related to respondents’ moral identities and their pro-social versus antisocial orientations toward others, and research shows that they are. In the personality realm, integrity scores are positively related to scores on measures of the purpose and meaning in life, authenticity, empathy, trust, and self-esteem and negatively related to scores on Machiavellianism, self-monitoring, cynicism, narcissism, alienation, and the tendency to rationalize antisocial and illegal conduct. Integrity scores are unrelated to measures of dogmatism and the need for closure, indicating that the scale is not simply assessing closed-mindedness (Schlenker, 2007). Further, integrity predicts reported helping and volunteering even after controlling for

empathy, as well as antisocial behavior, including lying, cheating, stealing, and other undesirable behaviors (Schlenker, 2007).

People's levels of integrity are accurately perceived by their friends, as evidenced by significant correlations between respondents' own integrity scores and their friends' appraisals of their integrity (Miller & Schlenker, 2007). Higher scorers also prefer to interact with others to see them as being high in integrity, whereas those who score lower equally prefer evaluations of being principled or expedient (Miller & Schlenker, 2007). It is worth noting that virtually no one claims to be *unprincipled*. Instead, those who score lower express more of a balance between principles and expediency, whereas those who score higher express a stronger commitment to principles and greater aversion to expediency (e.g., compromising principles for profit).

Prior research has not examined how integrity is related to social judgment, particularly to admiration for others. The present studies addressed evaluative social judgments.

Integrity and Heroes

Why Study Heroes?

Heroes can play important roles in people's lives. Like any significant audience or reference group, heroes provide reference points for goals, standards, and ways to behave. People's perceptions of their heroes' values, standards, and behavioral tendencies are integrated into cognitive schemas, and these serve as mental templates for desirable ways to act in various social situations. As such, heroes function as exemplars or models for desirable conduct as imagined judges of conduct and as social comparison targets. Although comparing oneself to heroes can produce a contrast effect and negative self-evaluations, it can also serve as inspiration to motivate self-improvement, produce the glow of basking in their accomplishments, and even enhance self-evaluation through assimilation (Collins, 1996). Indeed, college students became either more or less likely to volunteer to help others depending on whether superheroes were primed in ways that produced assimilation or contrast (Nelson & Norton, 2005).

People identify with their heroes and try to become more like them, in their own minds and through their actions. Performance on a Stroop-like self-description task is affected by whether people

judge their heroes or comparable nonheroes, suggesting that people incorporate aspects of their heroes' qualities into their own self-conceptions (Sullivan & Venter, 2005). Watching heroes who confront challenging situations can have powerful emotional consequences, producing not only shifts in mood and self-esteem but also physiological changes. For example, men who watched their favorite sports teams win or lose showed increases or decreases, respectively, in testosterone (Bernhardt, Dabbs, Fielden, & Lutter, 1998). Thus, heroes can have an impact on people's self-concepts, emotional well-being, and self-regulation.

What Is a Hero?

Heroes are known for their laudable achievements and praiseworthy personal qualities. According to dictionary usage, the qualities of heroes involve (1) "great nobility of purpose" and "sacrifice for others," (2) "great courage or strength" and being "celebrated for bold exploits," or (3) unusual "special achievements" in a field (e.g., heroes of sports or science) (*American Heritage Dictionary*, 2000). People with such qualities contribute disproportionately to groups, perhaps increasing the chances of a group's survival and prosperity. It is worth noting that these qualities are not invariably associated with morality. They vary from those that have clear moral relevance (nobility, self-sacrifice) to those that do not (courage, strength, special achievements), even though the latter may have implications for morality under some conditions (e.g., acting on moral convictions requires courage in the face of adversity).

A Harris Poll (2001) showed that people cite many reasons for naming someone as a hero. The reasons named by three-fourths or more of respondents involved "not giving up until the goal is accomplished" (86%), "doing what's right regardless of personal consequences" (85%), "doing more than what other people expect of them" (81%), "staying level-headed in a crisis" (79%), "overcoming adversity" (79%), and "changing society for the better" (77%). Other frequently listed reasons included the "willingness to risk personal safety to help others" (72%) and "not expecting personal recognition" (68%). These popular reasons again range from those that are highly moral (e.g., doing what's right, willingness to sacrifice for others) to those that are morally neutral (e.g., perseverance, staying level-headed).

The Role of Integrity in Selecting Heroes

Although there have been numerous surveys describing whom people list as their heroes and the qualities they admire in them, there has been little research on individual differences in the selection of heroes. Why do different people identify with different heroes? We propose that people's integrity is a key predictor of the qualities they prefer in their heroes.

A principled ideology consists of important moral schemas about oneself and the world. Important schemas are more likely to be accessible in memory, to guide social judgment, and to lead to consistent behavior, and this is especially the case when important self-schemas are involved (Brown, 1998; Markus & Wurf, 1987; Moskowitz, 2005). When evaluating others, people tend to use constructs that are contained in their own self-schemas, both as social judgment standards and to organize information about others (Dunning, Krueger, & Alicke, 2005; Moskowitz, 2005). People also are attracted to others who have personal qualities that are similar to those they themselves possess (LaPrelle, Hoyle, Insko, & Bernthal, 1990).

As such, those who view themselves as more principled will be more likely to notice, remember, and admire people who exemplify high integrity. When asked about their heroes, they will be more likely to think about people who exemplify integrity, and when asked to list the qualities possessed by their heroes, they will be more likely to list characteristics associated with integrity. We predicted that they would describe their heroes as exemplifying moral conviction, honesty, authenticity, and the concern for others. Based on research indicating that integrity is negatively related to materialism and positively related to spirituality and intrinsic religiosity (Schlenker, 2007) we also predicted that people who scored higher in integrity would be more likely to describe their heroes as being spiritual and religious as compared to materialistic. In contrast, those who score lower in integrity see themselves as having a more balanced mixture of qualities reflecting principles and expediency (Miller & Schlenker, 2007) and therefore will prefer such a mixture in others. Their heroes will have a variety of special achievements but without a comparable moral tone.

Study 1 tests these hypotheses by asking participants to describe their heroes and the qualities they admire in them. Study 2 uses a different methodology—evaluating hypothetical characters whose

actions vary in ethicality and in success—to examine the same fundamental issue: Will those higher in integrity admire people who exemplify principled instead of expedient conduct? The method in Study 1 allows us to address the question in the context of people's spontaneous descriptions of those admire; that of Study 2 allows us to address it by controlling the conduct of characters to determine how variations in their behavior are related to evaluations.

STUDY 1

Method

Participants

One hundred fifty students (108 females, 42 males) enrolled in a journalism course at the University of Florida participated for extra credit in their class. The average age of participants was 20.3 years ($SD = 1.10$), with a range from 18 to 24.

Heroes Survey

The booklet asked participants to list and describe people they regarded as heroes, with heroes defined broadly. The instructions indicated that heroes come in many forms and can be real or fictional, living or dead, and known or unknown to the participants. Heroes were to be people whom participants admired and regarded as exemplars. It was also noted that heroes can be influential in helping people deal with a variety of issues, including the type of person they want to become, the kinds of values they consider important, and the different strategies they might use to pursue their goals and dreams or handle specific situations. Participants were asked to “list as many or as few heroes as you think appropriate, since some people have many heroes and others have fewer. For each hero, list the qualities you admire in this person.”

Next, participants were asked to “select the hero who has been the most influential for you personally, that is, the hero who has had the greatest impact on you.” They were to write the person's name followed by a brief description of the person in the event his or her name was unfamiliar (e.g., movie star, politician, businessperson, musician, policeman, relative, friend). They then rated this individual on closed-ended adjective scales.

Finally, they completed Rokeach's (1973) Value Survey, in which they rank-ordered 18 terminal values, or values that are important ends in themselves (e.g., freedom, happiness, pleasure) and 18 instrumental values,

or values that are important means to other ends (e.g., ambitious, helpful, honest). The value data from 8 participants were unusable (they failed to complete the items or did not follow the instructions to rank items).

Procedure

On separate days about 2 weeks apart, participants completed (1) the Heroes Survey and the Value Survey and (2) a copy of the Integrity Scale (Schlenker, 2007) plus a short version of the Crowne-Marlowe Social Desirability Scale (Reynolds, 1982). Participants were asked to take the questionnaires home, complete them in a quiet place where they would not be bothered or distracted, and return them at their next class. To ensure anonymity, participants used a code name of their own choosing to identify their questionnaires.

Dependent Measures: Spontaneous Listing

Coding scheme. A coding scheme was developed to assess important qualities that might be possessed by heroes. Six categories reflected qualities associated in the literature with moral identity and character, including being *committed to principles, honest, impartial, beneficent* (e.g., caring toward others), *determined*, and *spiritual*. Studies examining people's everyday conceptions of morality suggest moral character is organized as a distinct prototype (Aquino & Reed, 2002; Lapsley & Lasky, 2001; Walker & Hennig, 2004; Walker & Pitts, 1998). Although some of the specific attributes can vary by culture, historical period, and individual, at the core it includes the qualities of being principled and having moral convictions, being honest, and being fair; these are three distinguishable dimensions in naturalistic conceptions of morality (Walker & Hennig, 2004). Moral prototypes also can include the three virtues of being caring toward others (caring, kind, compassionate, loving, unselfish), dependable (dependable, reliable, responsible, hardworking, determined), and spiritual or religious (Aquino & Reed, 2002; Walker & Pitts, 1998). It is worth noting that scores on the Integrity Scale are positively correlated with scores on measures of being caring, helpful toward others, and intrinsically religious (Schlenker, 2007).

Three additional categories reflected fundamental interpersonal qualities that are not uniquely related to moral prototypes but appear in most personality and group rating schemes: *intelligence, social skills*, and *power*. Perusal of the qualities spontaneously listed by respondents produced three additional categories: having a *positive attitude* or outlook, being *forgiving*, and being *materialistically successful*. Finally, an *other* category includes attributes that did not fit elsewhere and appeared infrequently enough so as to not warrant creation of a new category. Table 1 presents these 13 categories and examples of the qualities that were coded in each.

Table 1
Study 1: Categories Used for Coding the Spontaneous Descriptions

Category	Description and Examples
Commitment to principles	References to being morally principled: “principled,” “fought for her/his beliefs,” “stands up for what she believes,” “strong convictions,” “true to morals,” “strong moral values,” “morals to live by,” “moral”
Honesty	References to truth-telling: “honest,” “truthful,” “sincere”
Spirituality	References to spirituality, religion, and faith: “spiritual,” “strong faith in God,” “religious”
Impartiality	References to being impartial: “unbiased,” “fair”
Beneficence	References to altruism, concern for others, and a lack of self-absorption: “caring,” “helpful,” “supportive,” “considerate,” “devoted to family,” “loyal,” “unselfish,” “selfless,” “humble,” “puts others before self,” “thinks of others before self”
Determination	References to resoluteness, dedication, commitment to unnamed goals, and perseverance to goals: “dedicated,” “committed,” “goal oriented,” “determined,” “hard working,” “persevered,” “overcame obstacles,” “never-say-die attitude”
Intellectual skill	References to wisdom and intelligence: “smart,” “wise,” “creative,” “genius”
Social skill	References to social attributes that make interactions easier: “outgoing,” “extraverted,” “good listener,” “funny,” “good sense of humor”
Power	References to strength, leadership skills, and the ability to motivate others: “leader,” “in control,” “calm,” “brave,” “inspirational,” “strong”
Positive attitude	References to being optimistic and confident: “optimistic,” “upbeat,” “confident”
Forgiveness	References to forgiveness: “forgiving”
Materialistic success	References to materialism: “materialistic,” “wealthy,” “successful”
Other	References to qualities not included in the above: “speedy” described Superman, “soft” described Audrey Hepburn, “stylish,” “hot,” and “emotional” described other heroes

Interrater reliability. One of the authors coded all of the respondents' descriptions of the heroes into the categories. To calculate reliability, another trained judge randomly selected 20 of the original booklets and independently coded them. Intraclass correlations (which assumed the same raters did the coding, were the entire population of raters, and the ratings were not averaged, see Shrout & Fleiss, 1979) showed acceptable interrater reliability for the 13 categories (reliabilities $> .75$ for all categories except materialistic success, which was $.65$). There were no significant differences between the judges' ratings on any of the 13 categories (all $ps > .16$). All of the categories were thus deemed to have acceptable reliability.

Dependent Measures: Closed-Ended Ratings

Respondents were asked to identify the hero who was most influential to them and then rate this main hero on 7-point evaluative scales with labeled end points. Ratings were averaged into groupings that largely corresponded with the spontaneous-listing categories. A *principled* grouping reflected ethical versus unethical conduct (Cronbach's $\alpha = .73$; 7 dimensions, e.g., being principled, high in integrity, moral, trustworthy, honest, valuing principled conduct [versus valuing personal gratification]); items assessing honesty and commitment to principles were combined rather than kept separate because they were highly correlated and showed the same patterns. An *authenticity* or true-to-self grouping ($\alpha = .60$; 3 dimensions: follows own conscience, is true to own self, speaks own mind) was included to test hypotheses about the relationship between principled commitment and authenticity (discussed shortly). A *beneficence* grouping reflected items dealing with concerns for others as opposed to oneself ($\alpha = .70$; 6 dimensions, e.g., caring for others, altruistic, generous, humble). An *effectiveness* grouping reflected determination and power ($\alpha = .77$; 9 dimensions, e.g., effective, persevering, determined, powerful, strong, capable, successful); items assessing effectiveness and power were combined because they were highly correlated and showed the same patterns. A *likableness* grouping included two items ($\alpha = .65$; likable, would want as a friend). Finally, single items assessed *spirituality* (spiritual-materialistic), *intellectual skill* (wise-foolish), and *similarity to self* (similar to me-different from me).

Results

Integrity Scores and Analyses

The mean integrity score for the sample was 64.9 ($SD = 9.2$). Consistent with prior research (Schlenker, 2007), females scored

higher than males, $F(1, 148) = 7.38, p = .007, \eta^2 = .04$ (Females: $M = 66.1, SD = 8.29$; Males: $M = 61.7, SD = 10.63$).

Unless otherwise noted, analyses of the dependent measures were conducted using the General Linear Model (GLM) procedure in SAS, with integrity (centered, continuous), sex (effects coded), and their interaction as predictors. Standard regression, using the same predictors and coding, was used to calculate the beta weights for effects (when coded identically, as done here, GLM and standard regression produce identical common statistics). None of the reported effects were qualified by sex, which will not be discussed further.

Types of Heroes

Participants named an average of 3.2 heroes ($SD = 1.38$). Most of the heroes were real people (90.8% were classified as real, 4.2% were fictional, and 5.4% could not be classified) who were personally known by the respondents (59.2% were personally known, 28.7% could not have been known personally, and 12.4% could not be unequivocally classified). The largest single category consisted of family members (46.2% of all heroes were members of one's family), especially one's mother or father. Friends, star athletes, and religious or spiritual figures (e.g., Jesus, the Pope, Billy Graham, Mother Theresa, a pastor) each comprised 5% or more of the respondents' heroes.

Integrity scores were unrelated to the total number of heroes who were named ($F < 1, p = .52$) but were related to types of hero. Higher integrity was associated with naming a greater number of spiritual or religious figures as heroes, $F(1, 146) = 12.97, p = .0004, \beta = .29$. To ensure that a few people did not simply name a large number of such figures, chi-squares were calculated on whether low versus high integrity respondents, defined by median split, named none versus one or more spiritual/religious figures; this measure provides an indication of whether the category itself is spontaneously salient regardless of number of such heroes named. One or more religious figures were named by only 4.2% of those who scored below the median on integrity but by 26.6% of those who scored above the median in integrity, $\chi^2(1, N = 150) = 13.91, p < .0002$. Given that the total number of heroes was comparable for those high versus low in integrity, one would expect a compensating difference for other types of heroes. Although no other effects reached $p < .05$, there was a

marginal negative relationship between integrity and selecting athletes as heroes, $F(1, 146) = 2.81, p = .10, \beta = -.13$. One or more athletes were named by 18.3% of those below the median in integrity but by 8.9% of those above the median, $\chi^2(1, N = 150) = 2.89, p < .09$. Those higher in integrity display a clear preference for morally notable heroes, whereas those lower in integrity seem to have a slight preference for those noted for impressive personal achievements.

Spontaneous Descriptions of Heroes

Respondents spontaneously described the qualities they admired in each of their heroes. An average of 2.82 qualities were listed per hero, or 9.12 qualities ($SD = 5.16$) possessed by the average set of heroes.

A dichotomous measure of whether or not respondents listed a category of qualities to describe one or more of their heroes was calculated, and chi square analyses were conducted to see if those high versus low in integrity (median split) used different categories. As shown in Table 2, participants who were high rather than low in integrity were more likely to describe their heroes using the categories of honesty, principled conduct, spirituality, and beneficence. In fact, more than twice as many respondents who scored high rather than low in integrity used the categories of honesty, commitment to principles, and spirituality, and nearly all of those high in integrity referenced the beneficence of their heroes. There were no other significant differences involving integrity on the dichotomous measures.

GLM analyses were also conducted on the frequencies with which respondents used each of the categories. These analyses provided information about the number of times each category was used (which can include multiple instances of a category across heroes or for a specific hero, e.g., helpful, caring, and unselfish reflect three instances of beneficence), instead of information about whether a category was used (as in the chi square analyses). Identical results were obtained, with significant main effects of integrity on references to honesty, principles, spirituality, and beneficence (all $Fs(1, 146) > 4.02, ps < .05$). No other main effects of integrity or interactions of integrity and sex of respondent were significant. These results show that those who score higher in integrity are more likely to access these qualities in memory when thinking about their heroes

Table 2
 Study 1: Integrity and the Percentage of Respondents Who Used Each Category to Describe Their Heroes

Attribute	X^2 (150)	$p =$	Percentage Using Category	
			Low Integrity	High Integrity
Principled	6.42	.01	11.3%	27.9%
Honest	9.66	.002	22.5%	46.8%
Spiritual	6.03	.014	5.6%	19.0%
Beneficent	14.86	.0001	71.8%	94.9%
Determined	0.01	.91	66.2%	67.1%
Intellectually skilled	1.69	.19	45.1%	55.7%
Socially skilled	0.05	.83	22.5%	24.1%
Powerful	0.89	.85	73.2%	79.8%
Attitudinally positive	2.59	.11	12.7%	22.8%
Forgiving	0.23	.63	5.6%	7.6%
Materialistically successful	0.00	.96	9.9%	10.1%
Impartial	0.33	.57	4.2%	3.3%
Other	0.41	.52	19.7%	24.1%

Note: Integrity scores were dichotomized (median splits) to form low and high integrity groups.

(chi square analyses) as well as to apply these qualities repeatedly to their heroes (GLM analyses).

Closed-Ended Ratings of the Main Hero

As shown in Table 3, those higher in integrity evaluated their main hero as more principled, authentic, beneficent, spiritual, and (marginally) effective. Integrity was unrelated to how likable, similar to self, and wise the main hero was perceived to be. These patterns are consistent with those found on the spontaneous descriptions and with prior research on personal qualities associated with integrity (Schlenker, 2007). The qualities that those who score higher in integrity seem to possess are also admired in their heroes.

Authenticity, or being true to self, is often regarded as a facet of integrity (Peterson & Seligman, 2004). Although being true to self does not have identical implications as being committed to ethical principles (e.g., a serial killer acts consistently with personal

Table 3
 Study 1: Evaluations of Heroes on the Closed-Ended Items

Attribute	Integrity Main Effects		
	$F(1, 146)$	$p =$	β
Principled	5.26	.02	.19
Authentic	7.31	.008	.23
Beneficent	4.21	.04	.17
Effective	3.16	.08	.15
Likable	< 1	.40	-.09
Spiritual	4.08	.05	.17
Intelligent	< 1	.48	.06
Similar to oneself	< 1	.52	-.06

preferences but quite immorally), these constructs are conceptually and empirically related (Schlenker, 2007). As such, closed-ended items were selected to assess both the commitment to principles and authenticity. These groupings were modestly correlated ($r = .25$, $p = .002$) and positively related to scores on the Integrity Scale. Unfortunately, comparable groupings could not be distinguished in the spontaneous listings (qualities like “fought for his beliefs,” “stands up for what she believes,” and “strong convictions” can reflect both principled commitment and authenticity). When these concepts are distinguished, as in the closed-ended items, both the adherence to principles and authenticity are directly related to integrity scores. Further, authenticity, perhaps because it centers on the self, has weaker implications for concerns about others than does principled commitment. Ratings of beneficence were highly correlated with the commitment to principles ($r = .62$, $p < .0001$) but modestly correlated with authenticity ($r = .25$, $p = .002$); these correlations differ in magnitude ($p < .05$). The pattern suggests that principled commitment subjectively implies concerns for others, at least in the United States.

Values

On Rokeach’s Value Scale (1973), those who scored higher in integrity ranked higher (closer to 1) the instrumental values honest, $F(1, 138) = 5.30$, $p = .02$, $\beta = -.19$, and helpful, $F(1, 138) = 8.72$,

$p = .004$, $\beta = -.25$, and the terminal value salvation, $F(1, 138) = 4.57$, $p = .03$, $\beta = -.19$. Conversely, those higher in integrity ranked lower (closer to 18) the instrumental values self-controlled, $F(1, 137) = 12.22$, $p = .006$, $\beta = .29$, and polite, $F(1, 137) = 7.97$, $p = .006$, $\beta = .23$, and the terminal values a comfortable life, $F(1, 137) = 9.49$, $p = .003$, $\beta = .25$, and self-respect (self-esteem), $F(1, 137) = 5.27$, $p = .02$, $\beta = .20$. High integrity themes of honesty, helpfulness, genuine feelings for others, and salvation run consistently through the data. Further, their lower ranking of a comfortable life and self-esteem may reflect a disdain those with higher integrity have for materialism and self-absorption and/or a preference for these qualities in people who are more expedient. The relationships thus form converging patterns.

Social Desirability

Consistent with prior findings (Schlenker, 2007), integrity and social desirability showed only a small, insignificant relationship ($r = .14$, $p = .08$). Analyses that included social desirability revealed only one main effect (i.e., those higher in social desirability rated their heroes as more likeable on the closed-ended scales, $p = .03$) and no interactions that qualified any of the effects reported.

It is reasonable to ask why the relationship between integrity scores and social desirability is not larger. Being principled is an inherently desirable quality, yet so is being flexible, adapting to circumstances, and taking care of oneself. During scale development, attempts were made to reduce social desirability bias by selecting items that presented expediency in a more palatable light (e.g., "Lying is sometimes necessary to accomplish important, worthwhile goals") and pairing principled conduct with less desirable concepts (e.g., "Being inflexible and refusing to compromise are good if it means standing up for what is right"). Although social desirability bias probably can never be eliminated in self-report measures dealing with principles and integrity, the small amount of shared variance (usually less than 3%) suggests this attempt was at least somewhat successful.

Discussion

Personal integrity predicted respondents' heroes. Those higher in integrity spontaneously described their heroes as more principled,

honest, spiritual, and benevolently oriented toward others. Further, on closed-ended scales, they evaluated their main hero as more principled, authentic, spiritual (as compared to materialistic), and benevolent (as compared to selfish and egotistical). On qualities such as likableness, similarity to oneself, and intelligence, which might be associated with any hero regardless of morality, there were no integrity differences. The qualities that were differentially endorsed by those with higher integrity—principled commitment, authenticity, beneficence toward others and non-self-absorption, and spirituality are qualities that people associate with moral exemplars (Aquino & Reed, 2002; Lapsley & Lasky, 2001; Walker & Hennig, 2004) and that people with high integrity are more likely to possess (Schlenker, 2007).

The strong preference for religious or spiritual heroes (e.g., the Pope, a pastor, Jesus) by those higher in integrity probably reflects several considerations. First, although the Integrity Scale does not contain any items that refer to religion, integrity scores are positively correlated with intrinsic religiosity (Schlenker, 2007). The association may be due to the fact that most religions emphasize adherence to moral laws and personal integrity. Given religious convictions, people may look to religion for their heroes. Second, religious figures are generally regarded as exemplars of high integrity, so those for whom moral exemplarity is a highly valued quality are likely to select them as heroes.

Further, the category of religious heroes is the only one in which the prototypic figure is likely to be seen as highly principled. Within the category of family members, for example, some respondents may have parents who are exemplars for morality whereas others may not. Those high versus low in integrity select a parent with equal frequency, but their choices may be based on different criteria, with those high in integrity focusing on a parent's morality and those low in integrity focusing on a parent's business success or nurturance. The pattern of ratings is strongly consistent with such preferences. For example, those higher in integrity rated their heroes as spiritual rather than materialistic and tended to select fewer sports figures as heroes. Sports heroes exemplify stellar personal achievement but are often noted for materialistic excesses rather than moral excellence. Study 2 will examine integrity differences in selection criteria by manipulating the principled or expedient nature of a character's conduct, thereby testing directly whether those higher in integrity show greater admiration for moral principles over expediency.

STUDY 2

People high in integrity differ from lows in at least three important ways: (1) they have a relatively coherent code or set of standards for right and wrong to which they are personally committed, (2) these standards are accessible in memory and a chronic input to their choice considerations, and (3) they believe that these standards are binding, so self-serving rationalizations are unacceptable as ways to avoid the emotional (e.g., guilty, stress) and social (e.g., condemnation, disrespect) costs of violations. The fact that integrity predicted people's heroes suggests that those who are higher versus lower in integrity use different criteria and standards to evaluate the actions of others and to decide whom to admire. It is difficult to argue, given these patterns, that those who differ in integrity merely perceive different qualities in precisely the same person regardless of his or her behavior. However, a stronger, more definitive test of whether different criteria and standards are used is to manipulate the principled or expedient conduct of a character and then assess judgments. Such a test will also permit conclusions to be drawn about the roles played by ethics versus outcomes during social judgment. If the same patterns are found after controlling the principled or expedient properties of the character's behavior, then the converging data would confirm the importance of the principled versus expedient dimension for social judgment and the important role that is played by integrity in moderating the qualities people admire.

In Study 2, participants judged an individual who confronted an ethical dilemma while pursuing an important career goal. This character had to choose between an unprincipled route that seemed to boost in the chances of personal success and a principled route that did not. It was hypothesized that integrity will be directly related to the strength of the preference of principles over expediency. The critical comparison—which directly contrasts principles and outcomes—will be between characters who take the ethical route and fail versus those who take the unethical route and succeed. As compared to those higher in integrity, those lower will evaluate an unprincipled but successful character as more of a winner and as savvier (more effective, intelligent), whereas an unsuccessful but ethical character will be seen as nice (likable) but ineffective (“Nice guys finish last”), lacking the “street smarts” to realize that it is necessary to bend the rules to be successful. In contrast, those higher in

integrity should more strongly admire a character who upholds high moral standards, even if it means personal loss, and more strongly disparage a character who violates ethical standards to accomplish selfish goals.

Method

Participants

One hundred sixty-two students (115 females, 47 males) enrolled in a journalism course at the University of Florida participated for extra credit in their class. The average age of participants was 20.3 years ($SD = 1.14$), with a range of 18 to 24.

Scenario Booklet

The study was described as examining reactions to people who make important decisions related to their careers. A short passage described a situation faced by a decision maker, the decision that was made, and the outcome that followed. Participants were asked to read and give careful thought to the situation described in the booklet, and then answer the questions that followed.

The scenarios described a situation in which the central character could engage in unethical behavior and thereby increase the likelihood of gaining a desirable career outcome. Participants were randomly assigned to read one of three behavior-outcome combinations: (a) the central character took the unethical route and succeeded, (b) the central character took the ethical route but failed, and (c) the central character took the ethical route and succeeded. The critical comparison for examining integrity differences was between the ethical-failure condition and the unethical-success condition, because these pit a preference for principled conduct against a preference for expediency. The ethical-success condition provided a relevant baseline for comparison to see how each group shifted when compared to this optimally desirable behavior-outcome combination. An unethical-failure combination was not included because it was expected that this combination would be universally condemned and would not distinguish those who score high versus low in integrity (those high in integrity would condemn the unethical behavior and those low in integrity would condemn the ineffectiveness). After reading the scenario, participants were asked to evaluate the behavior, outcome, and actor on 7-point attribute scales with labeled end points.

To increase generalizability, two scenarios were created and participants were randomly assigned to read one of them. One scenario described a businessman who is up for promotion to a desirable executive

position in his company, with attendant pay and status increases. The promotion will go to either the central character or a rival about whom the central character knows some personal gossip. Although the gossip is irrelevant to the rival's qualifications for the promotion, the central character knows that if the company's board of directors learns the gossip, the rival will probably be removed from consideration and the promotion will go to the central character. The central character then decides either not to spread the gossip, and then gets the position (ethical/success) or does not (ethical/failure), or to spread the gossip and gets the position (unethical/success). Another scenario described a young actress in Hollywood who dreams of being a star. A more experienced actress suggested that to get a break she will need to "sleep" with important people, such as producers and directors, in the film business. The central character then decides either to ignore this advice, and then becomes a star (ethical/success) or does not get any desirable roles (ethical/failure), or decides to follow the advice and becomes a star (unethical/success). Although these scenario types involve ethical decision making and important career choices, they differ on a variety of dimensions (e.g., nature of the act, type of career, sex of central character) and therefore provide a reasonable test of generalizability.¹

Procedure

Participants completed (a) the Scenario Booklet, (b) a copy of the Integrity Scale (Schlenker, 2007), and (c) a short version of the Social Desirability Scale (Reynolds, 1982).² They took the materials home, were asked to complete them in a quiet place where they would not be bothered or distracted, and returned them at their next class. To ensure anonymity, participants used a code name of their own choosing to identify their questionnaires.

1. An attempt was made to manipulate the desirability of the goal (e.g., a promotion at a smaller company or a Fortune 500 company), but manipulation checks indicated that the goal was seen comparably in both conditions (e.g., as equally difficult to achieve). All analyses therefore collapsed across this variable.

2. Preliminary analyses included social desirability as a predictor along with integrity, event, sex, and their interactions. There were no main effects of social desirability on any of the dependent variables and fewer interactions than would be expected by chance, with no consistent or interesting patterns and no qualifications of any of the reported effects. As in Study 1, social desirability did not aid in interpreting the results. Social desirability scores again showed only a small relationship with integrity ($r = .16$, $p = .04$), accounting for 2.6% of the common variance.

Dependent Measures

Participants evaluated the central character and the event on bipolar scales (1 to 7 with labeled endpoints). Evaluations of the central character were averaged into the categories used in Study 1. These included assessments of the extent to which the central character was *principled* (Cronbach's $\alpha = .95$; 7 items, e.g., principled, high integrity, moral, honest, trustworthy); *authentic* ($\alpha = .92$; 4 items, e.g., true to own self, follows own conscience); *beneficent* ($\alpha = .88$; 4 items, e.g., cares for others, altruistic, generous); *likable* ($\alpha = .88$; 4 items, e.g., likable, would want as a friend); *intelligent* ($\alpha = .85$; 4 items, e.g., wise, knowledgeable, street smart); and *effective* ($\alpha = .90$; 9 items, e.g., effective, persevering, determined, successful, strong, powerful). Also as in Study 1, two items assessed the extent to which the central character was judged to be *spiritual* and *similar to oneself*. In addition, items assessed the *character's retrospective reactions* looking back on the decision ($\alpha = .89$; 5 items: e.g., pleased, proud, satisfied). As checks of the ethical event manipulations, respondents evaluated the *valence of the outcome* for the central character's career-related goals ($\alpha = .94$; 3 items: good, desirable, a dream) and the *ethicality of the decision* ($\alpha = .90$; 2 items: moral, good).

We expected that those higher in integrity would show more admiration for the ethical-failure, and more condemnation of the unethical-success, than those lower in integrity. Those low as compared to high in integrity would regard the unethical-success as more effective, intelligent, likable and even moral and the ethical-failure as less effective, intelligent, and likable. By including the different categories, we could discover if effects generalized or were related only to specific dimensions (e.g., morality or effectiveness, which correspond to the ethics and consequences of the manipulations).

Results

Analyses

There were no effects of the scenario event on integrity scores, so integrity ($M = 64.9$, $SD = 9.3$) was used as a predictor in the major analyses. Females scored higher than males, $F(1, 158) = 10.63$, $p = .001$, $\eta^2 = .06$ ($M_s = 66.5$ and 61.1 , $SD_s = 8.2$ and 10.6). Analyses were conducted using the SAS GLM procedure; the predictors in the model were *integrity* (continuous, centered variable), *ethical event* (three levels: ethical decision and successful outcome, ethical decision and unsuccessful outcome, and unethical decision and successful outcome), *sex* of respondent (effects coded), and all

Table 4
Study 2: Integrity by Event Interactions on Evaluations

Dependent Variable	Act Main Effect		Integrity by Act Interaction		Interaction Contrast of Integrity by Ethical Failure/Unethical Success	
	<i>F</i>	<i>p</i>	<i>F</i>	<i>p</i>	<i>F</i>	<i>p</i>
Principled	263.83	<.0001	16.52	<.0001	29.05	<.0001
Authentic	80.23	<.0001	3.28	.04	6.40	.01
Beneficent	86.17	<.0001	5.60	.005	6.60	.01
Likable	60.99	<.0001	13.02	<.0001	19.62	<.0001
Effective	32.49	<.0001	5.53	.005	7.29	.008
Intelligent	46.18	<.0001	3.95	.02	3.80	.05
Spiritual	97.31	<.0001	8.83	.0002	4.12	.04
Similar to self	83.53	<.0001	13.70	<.0001	16.40	<.0001
Characters' retrospective reactions	59.83	<.0001	4.23	.02	8.29	.005
Ethical evaluations of the act	374.04	<.0001	10.58	.0001	20.61	.0001

Note: Tests of overall effects have 2 and 150 *df* except for spiritual (2, 148) and similar (2, 148); interaction contrasts of integrity by ethical failure/unethical success have 1 and 150 *df* except for spiritual (1, 148) and similar (1, 148).

interactions. The same significant overall effects and patterns described shortly were obtained if integrity was entered as a dichotomous variable (median split). None of the reported effects were qualified by sex.

The major dependent measures are presented in Tables 4 and 5, which show *F* and *p* values for effects and GLM estimates of condition values, respectively. High and low levels of integrity were defined as 1 *SD* above and below the mean (see Cohen, Cohen, West, & Aiken, 2003). Initial analyses also included scenario type (businessman or actress) and its interactions. The major results were not qualified by scenario type, so it was dropped.

Table 5
Study 2: Integrity by Event Interactions on Evaluations

Dependent Measure and Integrity Level	Event Means		
	Ethical Act/ Failure	Unethical Act/ Success	Ethical Act/ Success
Principled			
Low integrity	5.54a	2.95	5.93ac
High integrity	6.30b	1.98	6.30bc
Authentic			
Low integrity	5.44a	3.26d	6.00ac
High integrity	6.29b	2.91d	6.29bc
Beneficent			
Low integrity	5.17ad	3.11	5.17ac
High integrity	5.53bd	2.37	5.77bc
Likable			
Low integrity	4.69	3.75	5.44
High integrity	5.71a	2.90	6.41a
Effective			
Low integrity	5.14	4.54a	5.77
High integrity	5.80	4.16a	6.56
Intelligent			
Low integrity	5.14ad	3.75	5.45ac
High integrity	5.47bd	3.21	6.18bc
Spiritual (vs. Materialistic)			
Low integrity	4.50ab	2.20	4.32a
High integrity	4.61b	1.43	5.48
Similar to Self			
Low integrity	4.98ac	2.89	4.95c
High integrity	5.72ab	1.54	6.14b
Characters' Retrospective Reactions			
Low integrity	4.22c	4.24bc	6.66a
High integrity	5.00a	3.80b	6.85a
Ethical Evaluations of the Act			
Low integrity	6.11	2.60	6.78a
High integrity	6.76b	1.73	6.77ab

Note: Integrity was entered in the analyses as a centered, continuous variable. Numbers represent GLM estimates of the values of the low ($-1 SD$) and high ($+1 SD$) integrity within each of the ethical event conditions. Means without a common letter subscript differ significantly, $p < .05$. Differences between high and low levels of integrity were based on tests of simple slopes. Within rows, differences between ethical events within low and high levels of integrity were based on tests of planned contrasts.

Manipulation Checks

The outcome and ethicality manipulations were successful. Only a main effect of condition was found on ratings of success in accomplishing career-related goals, $F(2, 150) = 67.71$, $p < .0001$ ($M_s = 2.94, 5.84$, and 6.48 for the ethical-failure, unethical-success, and ethical-success conditions; each success condition differed significantly from the failure condition, $p_s < .001$, and marginally from one another, $p = .06$, as the unethical nature of a success may have tarnished the outcome). A main effect of condition and an interaction of integrity and condition were found on the ethicality of the conduct (Table 4). The conduct was seen as unethical when it involved unethical-success ($M = 2.17$) and ethical when it involved either an ethical-failure or ethical-success ($M_s = 6.44$ and 6.77 , respectively; both differ from the unethical-success condition but not from one another). Those high in integrity evaluated the ethical-success and ethical-failure equally positively without regard to consequences, whereas those low in integrity took consequences into account and preferred the ethical-success to the ethical-failure (Table 5). Those high in integrity also were more negative toward the unethical-success and more positive toward the ethical-failure than those low in integrity.

Evaluations of the Central Character

Consistent patterns emerged on evaluations of the central character. Overall, the central character was evaluated more positively after an ethical act that failed than an unethical success, but this distinction was more pronounced for respondents high rather than low in integrity. As shown in Tables 4 and 5, the interaction of integrity by event, and more specifically the key interaction contrast of integrity by ethical-failure/unethical-success, was significant on all evaluative ratings. Those higher in integrity showed a stronger preference for an ethical act that failed over an unethical one that succeeded.

Comparisons of the ethical-success and ethical-failure conditions provide another way of gauging the impact of the consequences of the decision on judgments. Those high in integrity generally rated the central character comparably regardless of whether an ethical act produced a success or failure. For those high in integrity, the two ethical-outcome conditions did not differ significantly on any of the

evaluative dimensions except effectiveness and materialism; the latter realistically acknowledged the success. In contrast, those low in integrity found the successful ethical character more likable and effective than the unsuccessful ethical character and also evaluated the conduct itself as ethically better. These patterns support the hypothesis that those high in integrity will emphasize the adherence to principles and largely ignore the consequences of the act, while those low in integrity take consequences more into account. When ethics and outcomes conflict, those high in integrity expressed preferences that primarily reflected ethics whereas those low in integrity reflected a mix of ethics and expediency.

In the context of an unethical success, being true to self may reflect getting what one wants regardless of the means, and this should be an example of a situation in which principles and authenticity diverge. In support, correlations between ratings of the characters' commitment to principles and authenticity were insignificant in the unethical-failure condition ($r = .17$, $p = .21$) but were quite significant in the ethical-success and ethical-failure conditions ($r_s = .62$ and $.68$, respectively, $ps < .0001$; the latter correlations differ significantly from the former, $ps < .001$). Although principles and authenticity often go together, they become dissociated when people pursue personal goals that conflict with ethical principles.

Retrospective Reactions of the Central Character

Participants projected their personal evaluations of the conduct onto the characters. Those high in integrity believed that when the central characters looked back on the decision, they would be more satisfied with the ethical-failure than the unethical-success conditions, whereas those low in integrity believed the character would be equally satisfied regardless (see Tables 4 and 5).

Discussion

When conduct was both ethical and successful, people usually evaluated it similarly regardless of their own level of integrity, at least on measures most relevant to morals. However, when principles and outcomes were opposed, those higher in integrity were guided by principles regardless of the outcome. Those lower in integrity were consistently influenced by the outcome, showing less condemnation of an unethical act that succeeded, less praise for an ethical act that

failed, and a smaller distinction between unethical-success and ethical-failure conditions as compared to those higher in integrity. These patterns show that integrity is not simply associated with more or less favorable evaluations across the board. Instead, when actions are relevant to ethical decision making, those higher in integrity are more admiring of those who behave ethically and more condemning of those who behave unethically regardless the outcome.

People who score lower on the Integrity Scale do not regard themselves as unprincipled or unscrupulous (Miller & Schlenker, 2007; Schlenker, 2007). Instead, they describe themselves as generally principled but are readily able to provide self-serving rationalizations for violating ethical and legal codes. They are willing to excuse and justify a wider range of unethical and illegal behavior (e.g., lying, stealing, cheating on one's taxes or one's spouse) to deflect morally the blame for transgressions from themselves and to cheat to perform well on a test even when there are no obvious incentives for so doing (Schlenker, 2007). In short, they lack the degree of commitment to ethical principles, with its attendant rejection of deviations and rationalizations, shown by those who score higher. In Study 2, those low in integrity did not disregard ethics because they generally preferred an ethical act that failed to an unethical one that succeeded; they were just more willing to allow expediency to play a role in their assessments.

GENERAL DISCUSSION

People's ethical ideologies play an important role in self-regulation. People who profess greater commitment to ethical principles have a more stringent set of standards for right and wrong, chronically access this information in memory and use it in their choices, and believe that these standards are binding, and so excuses and justifications become unacceptable ways to avoid the negative repercussions of transgressions. The present findings show that integrity successfully predicts the selection of heroes and the judgment of others who resolve ethical dilemmas by taking the principled versus expedient road. These results add to a growing list of studies documenting integrity's usefulness in predicting behaviors that are considered virtues and vices.

Ethical ideologies and heroes go hand in hand and probably reciprocally influence each other. The heroes people admire can affect their own ethical ideologies, as people identify with their heroes' perceived personal qualities and try to emulate their conduct. As models, heroes play important roles in the development of attitudes and identity. Social learning theory (Bandura, 1986) and psychoanalytic theory (Hogan, 1982) document the importance of significant reference others for forming attitudes and self-schemas. Lickona (2004) argued that the development of character is accomplished through positive models who value and exemplify integrity, responsibility, self-discipline, and other-oriented virtues such as respect, compassion, and cooperation. Consistent with these lines of theory and research, one of the stronger predictors of helping in the real world is having a parent who served as a model for altruism and instilled the value of doing the right thing (Oliner & Oliner, 1988).

Concomitantly, once ethical ideologies form, they influence the subsequent selection of new heroes and reactions to old ones. We hypothesize that people will add or even change heroes based on whether those heroes live up to their standards. A national survey of adults indicated that 25% of Americans had dropped someone from their list of heroes because of that individual's unethical conduct and self-absorption (Harris Poll, 2001). For those higher in integrity, qualities related to integrity should be vital for admiring someone as a hero.

The concept of principled commitment, as assessed via the Integrity Scale, converges with the existing literature on moral identity. Beginning with Blasi's (1980, 1983) seminal writings, theorists have focused on moral identity as a link between moral beliefs and behavior (Aquino & Reed, 2002; Hardy & Carlo, 2005; Lapsley & Lasky, 2001). In contrast to earlier cognitive development models that focused on moral reasoning as a determinant of moral behavior (Kohlberg, 1969), these approaches emphasize the internalization of moral goals, codes, and traits into the self-concept. Damon and Hart (1992) proposed, "there are both theoretical and empirical reasons to believe that the centrality of morality to self may be the single most powerful determiner of concordance between moral judgment and conduct" (p. 455). Hardy and Carlo (2005) reviewed evidence suggesting that people who are highly committed to moral causes are more likely to describe themselves in moral terms, to regard moral values as more important to their sense of self, to have greater

alignment between their personal (self) goals and moral goals, and to engage in moral behavior.

Broadly, commitment reflects a pledging or binding of the self to something else, such as a goal (e.g., get a college degree), a set of ideas (e.g., a political policy or ideology), another person (e.g., a marriage partner), or a group (e.g., an organization). To say that people have a commitment means they have selected a particular set of prescriptions to follow and these prescriptions can be used to evaluate and sanction their conduct, both by themselves and others who are aware of the commitment. At the same time, they have rejected or downgraded alternative prescriptions that accomplish different goals, take them along different paths, and offer justifications for their different conduct.

The psychological impact of a moral commitment should be similar to the impact of commitment on other attitudes and identity images. Commitment crystallizes and strengthens corresponding attitudes, making them more accessible in memory, resistant to subsequent change, and likely to guide future behavior (Kiesler, 1971; Schlenker, Dlugolecki, & Doherty, 1994; Scholl, 1981). Once people claim to “be” a particular type of person with specific beliefs, they have an obligation to behave commensurately. The socialization process continually emphasizes that people must be who they claim to be or risk serious interpersonal repercussions.

This view of commitment can be placed in the broader context of the triangle model of responsibility, which was developed to explain when and why the self-system becomes engaged by tasks, as well as how it can be disengaged from undesired events through a variety of strategic activities and accounts such as excuses and justifications (Schlenker, 1997; Schlenker, Britt, Pennington, Murphy, & Doherty, 1994; Schlenker et al., 2001; Schlenker, Weigold, & Doherty, 1991). According to the triangle model, the self-system becomes engaged when (a) a clear, well-defined set of prescriptions is seen as applicable in the situation (*prescription clarity*), (b) the actor is perceived to be bound by the prescriptions (*personal commitment*), and (c) the actor appears to have control over relevant events (*personal control*). It can be disengaged when confronting undesirable events by attenuating one or more of the three elements (e.g., claiming unclear or conflicting prescriptions, claiming not to be bound by the specific prescriptions, claiming external control of outcomes), with weaker elements reduced first.

Despite different conceptual origins, this view of commitment complements analyses of moral identity and moral development (Blasi, 1980, 1983; Colby & Damon, 1992; Hardy & Carlo, 2005). Colby and Damon (1992), for example, argue that self-goals and moral goals become fused during the development of moral identity, such that moral exemplars regard ethical conduct as expressing identity rather than following external moral rules. For those with high integrity, there is a strong linkage between identity and the moral prescriptions, and it is implied that the prescriptions are generally clear and well defined. The triangle model adds the element of perceived personal control to bring about the desired moral outcomes and additional specific hypotheses about self-engagement and disengagement.

The concept of principled commitment is also germane to the organizational behavior literature. Honesty testing, usually called *integrity testing*, focuses on identifying attitudes and personality characteristics that predict desirable employee conduct. Organizational researchers have identified measures that predict undesirable job behaviors (e.g., theft, disciplinary actions, absenteeism), good organizational citizenship, and job performance (Ones, Viswesvaran, & Schmidt, 1993; Sackett & Wanek, 1996). These include self-reports of honesty, past inappropriate conduct (e.g., stealing), and attitudes that justify theft, as well as personality traits relating to the Big Five clusters of conscientiousness and agreeableness. Although a review is beyond the scope of the present article, this research tradition converges on qualities related to moral identity and principled commitment. The Integrity Scale may be able to contribute to theory and research in this tradition because it predicts a range of pro-social and antisocial activities and, unlike some of the scales currently used (Sackett & Wanek, 1996), it is not proprietary, is short and can be readily incorporated into research, is not context bound for use only in the workplace, and is not as highly correlated with measures of social desirability.

The idea of principled versus expedient ideologies also brings to mind research on self-monitoring and the principled versus pragmatic self. Snyder (1987) proposed that high self-monitors are pragmatic in their interpersonal orientation, being willing and able to modify their behavior to obtain social rewards, whereas low self-monitors are principled, displaying greater consistency between their attitudes and behaviors. The self-monitoring scale consists of

components that assess self-reported *public performing*, e.g., acting ability, and *other directedness*, e.g., being different things to different people (Gangestad & Snyder, 2000). The former dimension is irrelevant to ethical ideology, and the latter dimension is conceptually closer to authenticity (being true to self) than to integrity (being committed to moral principles). Indeed, items that assess self-monitoring are generally neutral with respect to morality. Interestingly, it has been suggested that low self-monitors want to establish identities as people who are genuine and act on their beliefs (Gangestad & Snyder, 2000; Schlenker & Weigold, 1990); this goal may contribute to some convergence between constructs. As might be expected, then, self-monitoring and integrity scores show a significant but modest negative relationship, $r(164) = -.22, p = .004$ (Schlenker, 2007).

In conclusion, individual differences in integrity are related to how people perceive and respond to ethical dilemmas. Study 1 established the association between integrity and heroes. Study 2 showed that integrity predicted evaluations of characters who behaved in ethically admirable or condemnable ways. Those high in integrity prefer evidence of doing the right thing even if it means failure in a materialistic sense, whereas those low in integrity are more torn between the right thing and the successful thing. Penn State football coach Joe Paterno stated, "Success without honor is an unseasoned dish. It will satisfy your hunger, but it won't taste good." Paterno appears to be more correct when describing those of higher integrity; the unseasoned dish seems to taste better for those of lower integrity.

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APPENDIX

Items in the Integrity Scale

- 1 It is foolish to tell the truth when big profits can be made by lying. (R)
- 2 No matter how much money one makes, life is unsatisfactory without a strong sense of duty and character.
- 3 Regardless of concerns about principles, in today's world you have to be practical, adapt to opportunities, and do what is most advantageous for you. (R)
- 4 Being inflexible and refusing to compromise are good if it means standing up for what is right.
- 5 The reason it is important to tell the truth is because of what others will do to you if you don't, not because of any issue of right and wrong. (R)
- 6 The true test of character is a willingness to stand by one's principles, no matter what price one has to pay.
- 7 There are no principles worth dying for. (R)
- 8 It is important to me to feel that I have not compromised my principles.
- 9 If one believes something is right, one must stand by it, even if it means losing friends or missing out on profitable opportunities.
- 10 Compromising one's principles is always wrong, regardless of the circumstances or the amount that can be personally gained.

(Continued)

APPENDIX (CONT.)

- 11 Universal ethical principles exist and should be applied under all circumstances, with no exceptions.
 - 12 Lying is sometimes necessary to accomplish important, worthwhile goals. (R)
 - 13 Integrity is more important than financial gain.
 - 14 It is important to fulfill one's obligations at all times, even when nobody will know if one doesn't.
 - 15 If done for the right reasons, even lying or cheating is OK. (R)
 - 16 Some actions are wrong no matter what the consequences or justification.
 - 17 One's principles should not be compromised regardless of the possible gain.
 - 18 Some transgressions are wrong and cannot be legitimately justified or defended regardless of how much one tries.
-

Note: Respondents are asked to read each of the statements and indicate the extent of their agreement or disagreement where 1 = *strongly disagree*, 2 = *disagree*, 3 = *neither disagree nor agree*, 4 = *agree*, and 5 = *strongly agree*. Items marked (R) are reverse scored. Integrity Scale © Barry R. Schlenker, 2006.

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