

# **Eight Common-Sense Principles to Lead a Successful Life**

More

**I'm Quick! I'm Sharp!  
I'm Bright! I'm Smart!  
I'm Rich and Good Lookin'  
And a Major Blessing!**

**Jim Edwards**

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The Edwardians

also

Student Bodies and Faculty of  
Francis Howell School District  
Fort Zumwalt School District

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# **The Beginning**

## **Eight Common-Sense Principles to Lead a Successful Life**

Thanks for taking the time to read this short book meant specifically for **you**. My earlier volume Mr. Edwards' Motto – 17 Words Can Change Your Life, explained exactly who you are, not what others say about you.

This motto is to remind you to annul all the negative junk you hear including, all degrading, cynical, cutting, and belittling comments. Those comments usually come from the insecure and self-absorbed. Being short-sighted, they fail to recognize each person's incredible value. Here again is who you are!

**I'm Quick! I'm Sharp!  
I'm Bright! I'm Smart!  
I'm Rich and Good Lookin'  
And a Major Blessing!**  
(That's Really You!)

As a supplement to my earlier eBook, these Eight Common-Sense Principles combine encouragement with some key strategies and observations to help you prosper in life. It was written to help you avoid serious pitfalls while handling life's challenges. Not nearly complete, it includes ideas and stories dealing with some typical negative situations people, like you, battle in "real" life.

These accounts have been shared sparingly in schools as time permitted or situations dictated. When acted upon, they have helped many deal with the negativity and realities and in their lives - including mine.

Over my 28-years teaching, my goal has always been to leave students richer. I want to help motivate you toward a better, happier life, no matter your background, I.Q., or physical condition. It is my hope continued use of my adopted motto combined with what is shared in this eBook will direct, encourage, and inspire you to life's greatest blessings.

# **Eight Common-Sense Principles to Lead a Successful Life**

## **I. You are Awesome and Unique**

Wonderful news, there **IS** a great plan for your life. Really! It is specific to you and your future! Each plan is different, so yours can't be compared to anyone else's. It has been crafted only for you and **IT IS SPECTACULAR!** In your lifetime you can make a huge difference in many other's lives.

Sorry, here's sad news. Gentlemen: Probably, you will never be homecoming queen! Ladies, no matter how you train, you'll never be the starting defensive tackle on your school's football team. Instead, let's concentrate on your exciting individualized future.

Please don't compare yourself or your unique plan to anyone else's. You are the sum of your experiences! Don't try to be something or someone else. Your plan is far greater than you can imagine. Instead, live your life to the fullest. Great things are coming your way.

Keep saying, "I'm Quick! I'm Sharp! I'm Bright! I'm Smart! I'm Rich and Good Lookin' and A Major Blessing! That's You! *Never say anything negative!* Watch your mouth! What comes out of it **IS** what you **WILL** obtain in life!

## **Be Respectful of Everyone**

I warn students often: Don't bully easy targets, even if you think they are "less-cool." Someday, you may have to go to them for a job or a loan! It happens!

A piano student told me about a suburban, St. Louis, high school classmate who was unmercifully picked on. Recently, many years later, he just retired as CEO of the largest corporation (\$100 billion) in Missouri. No student ever had a hint of what he would become.

**The most unlikely person you know may be able to help you in very significant ways!**

## **II. Never Give Up!**

Lousy things happen to ALL of us in life. (Some are our fault.) I don't pretend to know what bad things have/are/or will happen to you. But when you're going through it, don't despair. It WILL get better. Don't dwell on the negative. Look forward to your future. It is bright! *Seriously, it IS bright!*

You might not understand, but we are all either going through a difficult time; just went through one; or about to go through one. Someone once said, *"If you're going through Hell, Don't Stop!"* Good advice! Keep going!

### **Physical Pain**

Recently, it seemed like a piece of meat was stuck under my tooth. Wrong. It developed into a full-fledged toothache. I had a hard time sleeping that night. Friday, the tooth really started to hurt! My terrific dentist Dr. Dalin was out of town at a convention, so I had no hope of relief for days. I was up most of Friday night with this horrible, throbbing, all-consuming pain. Then I had this stupid thought – "If I wasn't alive, I wouldn't have this pain." Yes, I was considering the unthinkable.

The next morning, still in pain, my dentist called. He decided to come back early and wanted me to come in! Wahoo! He stopped the pain and I've felt terrific ever since! The point is: I got through the night. You'll get through your situation. Someday, it will just be an old, ordinary memory!

### **Mental Pain**

After graduating and teaching a few years, I met my dream lady. She was beautiful, a ballerina, spoke several languages, thought the same politically and belonged to a prestigious sorority. Who could be more perfect? Impulsively, I asked her to marry me. Soon after we were married, I learned she was cheating on me. I was devastated! Feeling I was a failure, we got divorced. I vowed never to get married again.

You may have had or will have a similar situation with someone you desperately love. Don't give up! Someone much better is in your future!

Then I met Diane! She's beautiful, smart, loving, wonderful, young, charming, amazing, gentle, and . . . and . . . We got married. She turned out not only to be an amazing wife and mother but ALSO to be an incredible baker and cook! (Our son called her "a good bake.")

(Imagine a 4-layer chocolate cake with each layer having raspberry jam with chocolate mousse with pieces of red raspberries inside, then chocolate ganache topped off with more chocolate frosting, and whole fresh raspberries on top and oooo- it's a heart attack on a plate, and then the lemon dessert, and apple pancakes, and . . . )

My first wife? I wish her well but NEVER, EVER think about her. I got through the hurt and received a more beautiful, wonderful, amazing, perfect wife. She was designed specifically for me! We've been married 45 years with 4 incredible children and 10 of the funniest, smartest grandchildren!

### **You may be in the Midst of a Miracle**

As part of his responsibilities, a youth pastor was assigned to provide transportation and tend to the needs of guest speakers, each for a weekend. At the airport, the youth pastor asked the well-known guest speaker "How are you?" He was met with "*I'm in the Midst of a Miracle!*"

The youth minister acknowledged the comment, then took him to a restaurant for lunch. Before long, the visiting speaker looked up from his meal and again said, "*I'm in the Midst of a Miracle!*" Later, during the weekend, he said, "*I'm in the Midst of a Miracle*" several more times.

After the weekend the youth minister learned why the minister kept saying "I'm in the Midst of a Miracle." He was being voted out by his church. Yes, the church he loved, gave his heart to, and his untiring

dedication and support. They had kicked him out. He was now out of a job, a home, and had zero income!

Instead of complaining to everybody like many of us do. The guest speaker would only repeatedly say, *“I’m in the Midst of a Miracle!”*

He didn’t say it and - “poof” - a miracle *immediately* happened! But he didn’t give up! He started a church that grew so large, it had to be moved to a University’s basketball arena! Thousands attended his church, while only a couple hundred remained at the old one. That day *he truly was in the Midst of a Miracle!*

### **NFL Team and a Young Man need a Miracle**

After years with a losing record the (then) St. Louis Rams were hoping for a great season. But in the first preseason game, their quarterback suffered a season-ending injury. All looked lost as they had to bring in the 3<sup>rd</sup> string quarterback, a grocery-store stocking clerk with little college, and no NFL experience.

Having been cut from another NFL team, this seemed to be his last chance. Up to this time his main job had been to hold a clipboard. No one knew they were *“in the Midst of a Miracle.”*

Replacing the injured star, he was an instant success! That year the Rams won the Super Bowl. The grocery store clerk, 3<sup>rd</sup> string quarterback, Kurt Warner, is now in the Hall of Fame.

### **Are you just Iron or far more valuable?**

*A bar of Iron may cost \$5; made it into horseshoes, it’s worth \$12; made it into needles, it’s worth \$3500; made into balance springs for watches - \$300,000! Your value is determined by what you can make of yourself. So, look to your future and don’t shortchange yourself!*

Next time you’re facing a major disappointment, stop complaining! Stop feeling sorry for yourself as if you are a victim of circumstances and get moving! **Change your words and say: “I’m in the Midst of a Miracle!” You’ll see great changes in your situation! Victory will be yours!**

### III. Be Wary of Uncontrolled Anger

Our emotions can take over when someone bruises our ego – our “pride.” We lose control “exploding in anger.” Yes, an unpleasant incident may seem significant at the time, but in retrospect probably isn’t very important in the grand scheme of life. Prideful anger causes irrational actions and nearly irreparable mistakes. Uncontrollable emotions can turn sure winners into big losers!

Anger stems, most often, from a single culprit – PRIDE! Pride causes arguments, fights, divorce, even wars. As a kid, I learned to count to 10 before reacting to any offense. Actually, it’s still not a bad idea - but count slowly.

In the book of Proverbs (a source of tremendous wisdom) **pride** is exposed as something God hates! Written around 2,700 years ago (700 B.C.), Proverbs 6:16-19 states:

*There are six things the Lord hates. There are seven things He cannot stand (an abomination to Him):*

- 1) A **proud** look;
- 2) A **lying** Tongue;
- 3) Hands that kill innocent people (**murder**);
- 4) A mind that thinks up **evil plans**;
- 5) Feet that are quick to do **evil**;
- 6) A **witness who tells lies**; and
- 7) A man who **causes trouble among brothers**.

Wow! It must be very serious when God hates **PRIDE** at #1 and murder is only at #3. You may not believe in God, but just in case He’s real, can you take the chance of ignoring Him?

#### Billy Joe, Billy Joe, Billy Joe

Billy Joe, an African-American minister, gave a sermon some years back at the church I attended. He was about 5’9” with a powerfully-built body and impeccably dressed. This is his testimony to my best recollection:

*He said, “I didn’t always have this build. I used to be slim and very fast. In fact, I ran the anchor-leg for my high school’s, mile-relay*

team.” (The event requires 4 athletes to run a 440-yard-dash (once around the track) *passing off a “baton” to the next runner.*) We won our conference championship, so advanced to the “Districts.”

*That day as we exited the bus and began warming up, I heard someone chanting, “Billy Joe, Billy Joe, Billy Joe” a couple of times. This chant increased slightly as the race was about to begin. (Five teams were competing for the coveted trip to the state finals.)*

*The gun sounded and the runners were off. Our first man was running a great race, but as he handed off the baton, we were in 2nd place. Our next man also did great, but lost his position, so we were in 3<sup>rd</sup> as the baton was exchanged.*

*The chant “Billy Joe, Billy Joe, Billy Joe” started up more in earnest as our third runner began his 440. Even though he ran a great race, he lost another place. Now, we were in 4<sup>th</sup> when the baton was handed off to me.*

*When I got the baton, I **was on fire!** I immediately caught the runner in 3<sup>rd</sup> place. The crowd seeing how fast I was running, increased the chant “Billy Joe, Billy Joe!” Down the backstretch, I caught and passed the guy in 2<sup>nd</sup> place. The crowd, standing now, was really into “**Billy Joe, Billy Joe, Billy Joe!**” Coming around the back corner into the home stretch, I passed the guy in first place. And the crowd was going crazy, yelling “**BILLY JOE! BILLY JOE! BILLY JOE!**”*

*As I passed the 1<sup>st</sup> place runner, he yelled, “Get back you little “N-Word!” At that moment I had to make a decision.*

*No one would have blamed me if I had jumped on him and beat him bloody – BUT we would have lost the race. Instead, I finished the race. We won and celebrated!*

## **MORAL**

*Pastor Billy Joe’s point was: “**Don’t let an offense keep you from your destiny.**” What was our destiny? It was to win the Wisconsin State Championship!*

In life, people are going to make you angry. They will offend and disrespect you. But, Uncontrollable Anger is NOT your friend! It can make a fool out of you as well as making you miss your destiny. Please, **don't let an offense keep you from your Destiny!**

### **Mother Teresa's Affirmation**

Mother Teresa was a very poor Roman Catholic Nun from one of the poorest countries in the world, Albania. She became a legend and saint serving the poorest untouchables in India for many years. Here's what she said:

*-“People are often unreasonable, illogical and self-centered;  
**Forgive them anyway!***

*-If you are kind, people will accuse you of selfish, ulterior motives; **Be kind anyway!***

*-If you are successful, you will win some false friends and some true enemies; **Succeed anyway!***

*-If you are honest and frank, people may cheat you; **Be honest and frank anyway!***

*-What you spend years building, someone could destroy overnight; **Build anyway!***

*-The good you do today, people will often forget tomorrow; **Do good anyway!***

*-Give the world the best you have; It may never be enough;*

***You see in the final analysis, it is between you and God; It was never between you and them anyway!”***

## IV. Honor Your Parents

You may never have considered this, but those who raise you (mother, father, grandparents, guardians) are your biggest advocates, fans, and boosters. They always want the best for you! They give their lives for you and would willingly die for you! Although you may often disagree, they are unwavering in your support. As you succeed, act heroically, look great or even just accompany them, *they are incredibly proud of you!*

### What You Don't Know

This may be a shock! The business world for parents can be an absolute WAR! At the end of the day, they can be mentally beaten down. Decisions about the health and wealth of your family can often be negatively affected by their work. Parents may simply have no control over it!

Co-workers may criticize them (trying to steal their job); their ideas may be stolen; co-workers lie; bosses make irrational demands; blame is placed on them; salary or commission might get reduced; they may be overlooked for promotion; or may have just been cut-off in traffic coming home!

For parents it can seem like something is always breaking down: oven, washing machine, refrigerator, or the car. Precious hours and big money are required. They are aware of your needs as well! Where are they supposed to get the money? Seriously, where are they to get the extra money you need? This responsibility can mentally and physically wear them down!

Your parents may arrive home near a boiling point. So be kind! Imagine if YOU arrived home to your peaceful refuge with all these worries. Then you're greeted with something like: Two of your kids arguing, over who has to put the stupid dishes in the dishwasher. Do you wonder why parents get "cranky?" You might feel, "What did I do that they yelled at me?" Now you know why! **Show your parents a little mercy!**

## **Parents are not Unlimited Servants**

Parents/guardians/grandparents have needs and wants just like you. They require appreciation and love! Additionally, they feel responsible for you and truly want your needs met. They desire your happiness. They tirelessly serve you but may have pressing responsibilities they can't avoid. It's those bills! Time for you to be understanding. Share some love with them! They really need it.

## **Surprise**

Once I was honored at a luncheon as the most amazing employee the president ever had. Shock! Within 2 months my job was suddenly eliminated because the Board of Directors didn't understand the business. I was unemployed for 2 years!

At the time I was my family's sole breadwinner. We had 4 young children. Both my wife and I were embarrassed because of my situation. In the neighborhood grocery store my young daughter loudly asked, "When Dad gets a job can I have ....? What a huge embarrassment!

## **Parenting is Serious Business**

I admire your parents. Each is a fount of knowledge, experience, and wisdom, having dealt with major real-life situations. Since you were a baby, they've been protecting and teaching what they feel you'll need in life to prosper!

**They're not done!** They understand their knowledge is limited, so need **help** preparing you for life. When you graduate, you'll need your parents even more help and advice.

Parents know life can be challenging, dangerous, difficult, and unfair. People **will** lie, cheat, and constantly try to take advantage of you! Your parents are always trying to help. They want the best for you and are still preparing you for life.

## V. Education is Critical to Success

Sadly, many students view school as bondage until freedom around 3:00 pm. Supplemental help is provided by experts called teachers. They are gathered economically in buildings called schools. Administrators set rules to help these run smoothly and to prepare you for success in life.

You need to extract, pursue, and evaluate all the knowledge from **everyone** you meet. These include teachers, bosses, experts, and especially your parents along with every available resource you can find. Some information will be good; some not. So, throw out the bad!

(Even my old horse, June Girl, knew to eat grass, and spit out the sticks.) The knowledge you gain, combined with wisdom and understanding will help you succeed in all phases of life.

**Shock! Do you understand, you WILL pay for school for the rest of your life? It ain't cheap either ! What???**

More than 25% of my state's total income goes to funding schools. (Income includes state's income tax; lottery; gas tax; etc.). Plus, local property tax for schools (renters pay it as part of the rent) takes another 6% bite out of my income (almost \$300 a year). You may go to school for only 12 years, but you will pay for it each and every year for another 60!

**Question: What are you learning now for the tens of thousands of tax dollars you WILL and MUST pay for school?** Are you getting your money's worth, or are you spending precious class time playing video games, text messaging, or sleeping?

**You may think, "How will I EVER use this junk?"** Actually, you need to develop critical thinking, math, reading, and English skills just so you don't get cheated when you buy a car, food, furniture, electronics, etc. These skills are needed to protect you from the unscrupulous people you absolutely *will* encounter!

## **Detentions are Reminders**

As you are aware, being late to class is considered tardy and earns the hated, one-hour detention. This is a reminder to students, they are trading 60 minutes of their life for being just a couple of minutes late.

Real-life bosses also closely scrutinize your attendance record. A few minutes late several times, no longer results in a detention, but means missing a promotion or getting fired! Great attendance is serious! No longer just a little inconvenience, being late can lower company profit! It also shows your boss you feel your job isn't really important! Your company may agree with you, deciding to eliminate your job!"

## **Honest Question**

Seriously, who is supposed to perform your job function if you are not there? Perhaps, 10 employees can't do anything until you arrive. This costs the company profit. Imagine if an airline pilot arrives 20-minutes late. It adversely affects the plans of hundreds of passengers who depend upon prompt departures and arrivals. Some may miss connecting flights, important meetings, and/or key appointments. What if you were the passenger? How aggravated would you be?

As you graduate into the workforce, you'll have lots more to learn as an employee. Those who learn quickly and work hard get promoted, are given more responsibility, and make more money! (Advice: Never allow your name to be associated with anything negative - especially being late. Unprofitable businesses may have to reduce the workforce. Problem employees are first to be laid off!)

**Let's look at the positive!** If you are early, work hard, learn quickly, stay late, and work selflessly, you'll be considered very valuable. They'll say "I wish all my employees were like you!" They will fight to promote you, increase your pay, and keep you, even when they have to cut back on employees!

## Competition for Success is Unrelenting

When I worked in Taiwan, I visited a student's home and learned a lesson. (You have it easy!) Kids there, have school 5-1/2 days a week with hours of homework every night! Students know if they do poorly their future is doomed.

**Attention:** You are NOT just competing against your classmates, but hundreds of millions all over the world! Your prosperity is dwindling as you play video games, text, and/or sleep. Thirty years from today, you will be able to look back and gauge the value of what you learned in school.

*(I was a poor student in grade school. My math teacher said, "If you had \$5, and you asked your Dad for \$3 more, how much would you have?" I replied, "\$5." She said, "You don't know your arithmetic!" I said, "You don't know my Dad!")*

*In high school, I got straight "Ds" in English for 4 years – both semesters. I never thought I'd need it. BIG MISTAKE! I got a rude awakening when I went to work in the business world. I had to write product specification sheets. Fortunately, my boss, Jim Long, had been an English major in college and rescued me. He patiently, but unmercifully corrected my work dozens of times for weeks until he was satisfied. Afterward, I used this skill to write hundreds of specification sheets for several other employers.*

You might think, "I'll never use something like microbiology! I'm going to be a salesman!" But you learn, the highest-paying dream jobs are pharmaceutical sales representatives. You'll need all the microbiology you ever learned to get the job!

Learning is a life process. I'm over 28,000 days old and am STILL learning! I rely on **knowledge** from books written by authors who are the most successful in their fields. Daily, I gain **understanding** from those I meet, trying to grasp the **wisdom** of the ages. I read the Bible over and over, because of its tremendous knowledge and wisdom to help my family prosper.

## **VI. Pursue and Follow Wisdom**

In school and life, you will encounter wise people and some fools. I highly suggest listening to the wise. Don't waste time on fools! I understand fools well because I was chief among them. As nearly a straight "D" student in high school, I was kicked out of the band class a record number of times. I was the embodiment of a fool.

Fools, like I was, make loud, self-serving wisecracks. The teacher's thoughts are interrupted. Key information about to be imparted for the benefit of all is lost. Ignorant students giggle and laugh totally disrupting the class.

Fools, aren't funny, but are robbing other students of valuable information for use on tests or later in life. In effect, they are putting their hands into your future pocket and throwing thousands of dollars into the air. Later as adults, students will never know, they were robbed by those fools in class.

### **Who are the wise?**

The "wise" could be anyone. They will help you in life IF you only listen. Here's an example:

While I taught Junior High School in suburban Chicago, I was concurrently working on a Master of Fine Arts Degree. It entailed practicing the Bass Trombone nightly after almost everyone had left the building.

Each night, Abe Shapotkin, an evening janitor cleaned classrooms, emptied trash, put desks in straight rows, and swept the floors. Few respected him, because of his clothing, his job, and his ugly little house by the railroad tracks.

One evening as he came into the classroom where I practiced, he made the following comment. (Please understand, he had no knowledge of music performance of any kind.) *"You know, Jim, I've been listening to you practice for 2 or 3 months and I have never heard you play one piece of music without a mistake."*

BAM! That was the missing ingredient from my practicing! Abe's comment helped me get my Master's degree quickly! He didn't look or sound wise, but his comment was wisdom from God! I'm so thankful!

### **Student Wisdom**

I still ask all students every class period to repeat this phrase:

**I'm Quick! I'm Sharp!  
I'm Bright! I'm Smart!  
I'm Rich and Good Lookin'  
And a Major Blessing!**

One day a 7<sup>th</sup>-grade girl, told me I needed to encourage others, and become a motivational speaker. What nerve! A 7<sup>th</sup> grader telling me what I needed to do, even though I had a Master's Degree, performed in front of thousands, was a published author, had 25 years of business experience, and worked in several different countries, traveling extensively! Wow! But, she was so right!

You and I never know where wisdom is coming from. Keep your ears open. We have two ears and only one mouth. Guess our bodies are telling us, we all should listen twice as much as we speak!

### **Rock Solid Dependability**

We depend upon so many things: our parents, water supply, garbage collection, cars, cafeteria, computers, electricity! It's a big deal when something/someone we depend upon becomes unreliable. It is like a lie – untrustworthy.

Are you reliable and dependable? Your promise, integrity, and commitment must be rock solid! Many depend upon your honor. Your success requires absolute dependability! 100%! Your word should be your bond!

## VII. Great Handshakes Earn Respect

I never want to waste students' time, so teach ideas to enrich lives and enable success in the long run. As students enter classrooms, I almost always, shake their hands correcting it if necessary. ("Handshake" is a misnomer. It's really a "squeeze or grip.") As class begins, I explain how investing one second in a great handshake will also make them MONEY.

### **The Squeeze should be Solid**

Weak and limp handshakes give others the impression of your instability. They think, "You're just another kid!" But, YOU'RE NOT JUST SOME KID. You're really important – a difference maker! A solid handshake identifies you as a solid person who should be taken seriously! (Some wrongly shake others' hands so vigorously, arms nearly come out of the socket. Instead, just give a slight shake to establish contact.)

**Don't squeeze too hard** Once I squeezed a prospective client's hand too hard, trying to impress them with my solid advice. However, with an unexpectedly weak grip, I heard all the knuckles cracking. This cost me a \$10,000 sale because the client got the impression, I would be overbearing, commanding all decisions in THEIR business. Advice: Just give a solid handshake.

### **Second, look the person in the eye to establish trust**

Anyone unable to look a person in the eye is thought to be "shifty-eyed" and untrustworthy. (Security officers in stores use cameras hidden by half globes in ceilings to spot potential shoplifters. The cameras are so precise, they allow a 50-cent piece to be identified from 85 feet.) Important: for initial trust, just look people directly in their eyes.

### **Third, pause and smile**

Why smile at someone you don't even know? Answer: Because you want them to like you! It shows you are kind and friendly. Many go through an entire day never seeing a single sincere smile. Your happy greeting makes you memorable.

Don't just rush past them, either. Your sincere smile can make their day. Immediately, something inside their heart will say, "That's a nice person. I like them!" Key: Your genuine smile gives you favor and a big advantage in life.

In just one second your handshake delivers three messages: 1) You're not just some kid. You have lots to contribute; 2) You can be trusted, and 3) You are likable. All these advantages are the result of an investment of only one second! Few young people have this skill, but now you know it. (Hint: Employers generally hire those they like.)

### **Real Life Handshake Benefit**

When I was very young, my Dad taught me a proper handshake, then wanted me to meet some old man. (He had to be at least 30!) After graduating high school, I asked him if he could help me get a job for the summer to pay for my college. (In the intervening years, his multi-national oil company promoted him multiple times until he was a VP.) Without ever looking at my grades (almost straight Ds), he said "Sure!" Why did he? He remembered my character through my handshake and knew I wouldn't embarrass him.

This man went to a company-owned service station on the Illinois Tollway and politely suggested to the manager to hire me. The manager said, "Yes, sir." That job paid my way through college and later part of my master's degree. In today's economy, it's equal to tens of thousands of dollars! My investment? A one-second handshake and working hard!

**BONUS:** When shaking hands, do it at arm's length. Don't get too close! It makes most Americans uncomfortable. Also, don't just grab their hand, then barge past them. Pause and give the recipient your earnest attention. It'll make them feel important, and elevate you in their eyes.

**Always give a great handshake. You never know who you are greeting. They just may help you in the future.**

## **VIII. Guard Your Integrity**

Your personal Integrity can never be taken away from you! You must give it away! Sure, people can lie about you; steal your house or car. They can take your clothes; cut off your hair, BUT they can never take away your personal integrity. Once honor is lost, it's very difficult to regain! Only you can give it up.

Someone once made a series of accusations about a girl I met. I chose to find out about them for myself. I found they weren't true. So, I married her! For me to trust that source again, there would have to be a dramatic change in that person's life. His honor was lost! (Fortunately, he dramatically changed!)

### **Integrity when no one is watching**

Walking my little dog, Bella, in a neighborhood around 9:00 p.m., I saw a \$1 bill just resting in the grass in front of a house between the street and sidewalk. Wow, I initially thought, "Money just for me." I grabbed it and took about 2 steps.

Then, I remembered, only I can give up my integrity. Where's my Honor? So quickly, I backtracked, took my little dog, and went up to the house. Most of the lights were out when I rang the doorbell. Then I waited and waited.

Finally, a 45-ish man opened the door. I said, "I was just walking my dog and spotted this dollar in the grass and thought it might be yours."

He replied, "Wow, I wondered where that dollar went. Earlier, I went to the auto parts store. It must have dropped out while I was working on my car. Later, I looked for the change and couldn't find it. Thanks for finding it."

### **Keeping Your Integrity**

Here's the point: What could I possibly do with \$1? My honor is worth so much more! Again, once I give it up, it's almost impossible to regain. In some incidences, it's permanently lost!

What if you see a few dollars falling out of someone's purse or pocket? What do you do? What if you are late for class or appointment? Do you make a lying excuse?

In life we may compromise our integrity for convenience by telling a little white lie, stretching the truth, or doing something just a little bit shady or dishonest. In the long run, does it really benefit us to compromise our **Integrity** and **Honor**?

### **Lies**

If you lie once, it's hard for someone to trust you again. Have you noticed many U.S. Politicians now only **mis-speak**; they **prevaricate** and employ "**Spin Doctors**" to create **propaganda**? THESE ARE ALL LIES! (These all come from Satan, for he is a liar and the father of it.)

It doesn't matter whether wordsmiths use an **untruth**, a **fib**, **little white lie**, **tall tale**, or **invention**; IT IS ALL FROM THE PIT OF HELL. Of the 7 things God hates - #1 is Pride, #2 is A LYING TONGUE. Only #3 is murder!

### **Where is your Honor?**

Is your honor the same as many politicians'? Do you occasionally use just a little convenient untruth? Lies are sneaky and will become a habit. Someone is always watching you; maybe it is only your Conscience!

### **LIKE TO LEAD A SUCCESSFUL LIFE?**

Seek Wisdom; Value your Parents; Deal carefully with Anger and Adversity; Hold on to your Integrity; Seek a Solid Education in whatever endeavor you chose; Remember how to shake someone's hand, and; Don't Forget Who You Are!

Develop good habits and throw away the bad. The good are more valuable than strength, great learning, your feelings or, advice from friends. **To help you succeed in life, trust Common-Sense and your Conscience, and don't compromise!** These will help you prosper and protect your life.

**Don't Forget Who You Are!**

**You're Quick!**

**You're Sharp!**

**You're Bright!**

**You're Smart!**

**You're Rich and  
Good Lookin'**

**And A Major  
Blessing!**



## **James S. Edwards**

Mr. Edwards presents encouraging, uplifting, and fun messages focused on those twelve and up. Students often repeat his 17-word motto reversing the effects of degrading, cutting, derisive, and belittling comments.

For 20 years in marketing, he traveled extensively as a presenter at national educator conferences, as well as writing educational journal articles and pamphlets. Since 2004 he has been a substitute teacher in Missouri, marketing consultant, entertainer, private teacher, and magician.

He received a Bachelor of Music Education from Illinois Wesleyan University and earned a Master of Music from Northern Illinois University. As an innovative educator for 13 years, Jim started the first swing and jazz choirs in Illinois plus an early show choir.

**For Questions – Inquiries – Presentations**  
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