

A Question for Trumpists: Do You Know Who You Are?

“One is always ethically responsible for Faustian bargains – a responsibility in no way abrogated by the fact that much doubling takes place outside of awareness.”

Robert Jay Lifton: The Nazi Doctors

In the dark days of World War II, the Nazis occupied Holland. The Gestapo rounded up Dutch Jews for deportation to concentration camps at Dachau and Buchenwald.

Late one night, a group of Dutch laypeople visited the home of Hendrik Kraemer, a missionary who had recently returned home from Indonesia. They talked about atrocities being committed by the Nazis, and their fears should they try to do anything about it. They asked for his advice.

Kraemer said he could not tell them what they should do, but added that “if you know who you are, then you will know what to do.” That night they formed the Dutch Resistance.

The root of the word integrity is integer. An integer is a number that cannot be evenly divided. It is an indivisible whole. A sphere that cannot be cracked. A person of integrity has one set of values that guides their actions at work and at home, in politics and in religion. It guides how they treat others, whether or not they like or agree with them.

To say that a desired end justifies dishonorable means is to violate the wholeness, the integrity, of the person who makes that rationalization. It is what psychologist Robert Jay Lifton describes as “doubling,” a psychic compartmentalization that allows an individual to engage in, or pretend to not see, something that would violate the values held by their best self. The mob boss who extorts and murders by day then goes home to join his family in a prayer before dinner is engaged in doubling.

Someone who claims to stand for family values, for Christian values, but then looks the other way at the cruelty, corruption, and avarice of a pathologically dishonest sexual predator like Donald Trump because they support his political aims, is engaged in doubling.

If you call yourself a Christian, but with your votes and by your silence you have endorsed Donald Trump and Trumpism, do you know who you are?

The Hendrik Kraemer story is recounted in Ronald Greer’s book *If You Know Who You Are, You Will Know What To Do: Living With Integrity*.



Are you who you say you are?