

Would You Lie For Your Brother (Sister)?

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This question was presented to me back when I was in college, while joining Alpha Kappa Psi, a national business fraternity. In order to join a fraternity, one must complete a probationary period that is referred to as "pledging". During this time, the "pledges" often have to endure various "tests" and ultimately have to undergo both written and oral examinations. The final exams determine whether or not you will be accepted as a member.

One of the primary tenets of a fraternity is unity. In many ways this quality is sought more than all others. In our fraternity, each pledge was tested as to the quality and extent of his devotion to unity.

One of the "tests" that was commonly enacted upon the pledges of my fraternity usually occurred just prior to the final written examination. At this point, a copy of the answers to the written exam was given to one of the pledges (actually it was "planted" on the unsuspecting pledge).

During the final oral examination (interrogation) the pledges were brought into the room individually and asked various questions (most of these questions were designed to cause the pledge to react). Each pledge was unable to tell the other pledges what they were asked after the oral examination.

Ultimately, during the final oral examination, the question came: "Were you or any of the other pledges provided a copy of the examination answers?" The pressure was on; only the poor pledge didn't realize that everyone else in the room was in on the "set up" and knew that the answers were given to the pledges deliberately.

If the pledge hesitated, another question was asked: "Pledge So-and-So stated that some of the pledges had a copy of the answers, is this true?"

What now? All of the pledges were certain no one knew. Those that had the answers expected the rest of us to protect them. It was the moment of truth, the time to decide:

Would you lie for unity?

This question is replayed constantly:

- A DC recognizes that the conduct of another DC towards his patients is unethical. It is a friend. Does he notify the state board?
- A DC is asked to perform an IME by an insurance company. (This DC is very loyal to the chiropractic profession, he conducts his examinations with the utmost of professional care. This DC honors his relationship with the insurance company. He believes that he is an example to other IME doctors who only serve the insurance company.) Upon reviewing the records and consulting with the treating DC, he discovers that there have been gross abuses in billing and over-treatment. What does he report to the insurance company?

The list of possible incidents goes on and on.

Should we defend and support every other chiropractor in the name of "unity" regardless of what this person does or says?

"Unity without uniformity" is very, very critical if the chiropractic profession is going to survive and prosper. But perhaps the slogan should be modified:

Unity without uniformity but demanding responsibility.

Responsibility is really the key to unity:

- The ICA and the ACA work together on national political issues, you can be assured that this unity and cooperation would not be possible without responsibility. This holds true every time two or more DCs meet to accomplish anything.
- Two people can't be married unless both are responsible to that relationship. The necessity for responsibility to allow unity is constant.

The applications are endless.

This responsibility is a requirement for everything that is done or said within our profession. Whether it be how an association conducts itself, the type of marketing tactics a company uses to sell its product to chiropractors or what a publication prints as truth.

Unity without responsibility only leads to fraud. Ultimately, one party believes that they have been defrauded by the irresponsible party.

Actions always speak louder than words. No matter what an individual or organization says, they will ultimately be judged by how responsibly (or irresponsibly) they act.

For the chiropractic profession to flourish in today's competitive environment, we must all be more responsible than ever before. It is not enough to point a finger at a state board, an association or a leader in the profession. Responsibility begins with YOU.

You are the leader of the chiropractic profession in your community. You are the one who will suffer if chiropractic in your area loses its credibility.

When a child is irresponsible, he loses privileges. So it is with individuals and professions.

We must have unity.

Chiropractic must continue to flourish and succeed.

But first, we must have responsibility.

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