

Sincerity Sucks

Sincerity is nothing but a label we put on past experiences to describe people who actually did what they said they'd do.

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Do you admire a guy who has the courage to get in your face, tell it like it should be (and rarely is) and sincerely doesn't care what you think of him for saying so, because his point is what's most important and really, truly matters to him (and you)? We have that kind of admiration for Blair Warren.

"I don't care how much you claim to be sincere; if you repeatedly fail to follow through, you're not," wrote Blair. He calls his unique, razor's edge point of view "Crooked Wisdom" on his website of (almost) the same name. We call it right on and, it's time. Tell us what you call it.

"Sincerity makes the very least person to be of more value than the most talented hypocrite."

— Charles Haddon Spurgeon, 19th Century Baptist Preacher

"Faithfulness and sincerity are the highest things."

— Confucius

"There is no greater delight than to be conscious of sincerity on self-examination."

— Mencius

There is little doubt that sincerity is one of the most prized qualities one can possess. We esteem those who are sincere and ridicule those who aren't. We demand it of those we deal with and believe ourselves to possess it at all times. Yes, sincerity is held in high regard.

But something very terrible has happened to the idea of sincerity. It has become worse than meaningless. It has become poisonous. And to make matters worse, few recognize this fact. How do I know this? Here's how:

About a year ago, I became very frustrated after being let down by a number of 'sincere people' on a couple of very important projects. Now, given that these people let me down, what makes me say they were 'sincere'? They TOLD me so. They 'assured' me I could count on them to come through and then, when they didn't, they 'assured' me they were sincerely sorry and wouldn't do it again. Of course, they did do it again. And yes, they were sorry for that, too.

Now, I'm as willing to forgive and forget as the next guy, but these people are forgetting something very important and that is this:

When it comes to getting things done in life, a pattern of behavior beats a claim of sincerity every time

Is this obvious? Not at all... at least not to the vast majority of people. How can I make such a blanket statement? Well, in the wake of the 'let downs' I just described, I sat down and wrote the following:

*To gain the favor of others, be sincere when making commitments to them.
To retain the favor of others, be more sincere when you apologize for breaking these commitments. I cannot overstate the importance of sincerity.*

Now, in case you missed it, this advice is sarcastic. I only point this out because *almost no one who reads it recognizes the sarcasm!* In fact, a lot of people who've read it said that it was "valuable advice" for dealing with other people. "Of course, sincerity is important," they would say "Maybe even the most important thing of all"

Well, these people are wrong. Dead wrong. And what makes the problem even worse is they don't know it. This is what makes those who falsely profess sincerity so dangerous —they actually believe their own lies!

I submit that:

All the promises of “sincerity” in the world mean nothing, without the follow through to back them up. In other words, I don’t care how much you claim to be sincere; if you repeatedly fail to follow through, you’re not.

Now, while this is easy to see when it is written on paper, it is horribly difficult to recognize in real life. And what's worse is, those who recognize it are quickly dubbed insensitive for doing so.

I know this, because when I confronted those I mentioned earlier about their lack of follow through and refused to accept their “sincere” apologies, I was labeled an ass. Of course, *they* weren't asses for failing to live up to their commitments, only *I* was one for failing to accept their 'sincere' apologies.

I have news for them. If they think I was an ass then, they're really going to think I'm one now. Why? Because here's another accusation for them:

Their claims of sincerity are counterfeit. They are worthless. And not recognizing this fact is one of the biggest differences between them and those who actually get things done in life. In other words, failing to discriminate between “claiming sincerity” and “demonstrating sincerity” is one of the primary causes of frustration and failure in our lives.

Again, few understand this, because few have ever stopped long enough to consider it. With just a little reflection, the truth becomes clear; sincerity, as it is understood today, means nothing. Literally.

When you repeatedly fail to live up to your commitments, being “more sincere” when you apologize for your failures MEANS NOTHING!

Failing to live up to your commitments and then expecting “sincere apologies” to make up for it doesn’t make you sincere; it makes you UNTRUSTWORTHY

Sincerity has become a plague; A silent killer of relationships and productivity. When someone says they’re sincere you’re supposed to let go and stop pressing. When they fail to perform, what are we supposed to do? That’s right, accept their “sincere” apology and forgive and forget. Nonsense!

Here’s a better alternative

Realize that claims of sincerity are worthless. Realize that we can never know if another person *is* sincere- Never. We can only know if another person *was* sincere. Likewise, we can never know if we *are* sincere- Never. We can only know if we *were* sincere

In other words, in the present moment sincerity means nothing.

One’s actions are all that matters. Sincerity is nothing but a label we put on past experiences to describe people who actually did what they said they’d do.

Does this sound harsh? Perhaps. Is it true? Absolutely. If sincerity is to ever mean anything at all, it must be something we *demonstrate* rather than proclaim.

So, why do we still hold sincerity up to such esteem? Because it serves as a “short-term fix” in our daily lives. As long as we accept each other’s empty claims of sincerity, our relationships will be “happy” and “harmonious”— in the short run. Ultimately, they will be unproductive and eventually destroyed, because if we can’t count on each other, our chances of success, and maybe even survival, are nil. So which do you prefer?

Regardless of your choice, never kid yourself— sincerity is meaningless. Actually, it is worse than meaningless. It sucks. And I mean that *sincerely*.

Blair Warren is a television producer, writer, marketing consultant and self described “voracious student of human nature”.

He’s been working in the field of television production and marketing for nearly 20 years, producing over 300 half-hour episodes and nearly 50 one-hour episodes of niche programming. Blair has also worked on countless commercials, promotional tapes and marketing campaigns for such clients as Diamond Shamrock, La Quinta Inns and Suites, The Cancer Therapy and Research Center, Pabst Blue Ribbon and Old Milwaukee Beer.

During a brief hiatus from television (92-94), Blair was a Programmer Analyst for Shell Oil, where he worked on high-level computer system designs as well as provided technical field support for some of their refineries’ onsite computer systems. He said, “While I loved the work, I soon found myself longing for the excitement, unpredictability and freedom that television had provided me, so I hung up my programmer hat and haven’t looked back”.

The move has allowed Blair to not only exercise his “creative side” but has given him ample time to pursue his near-obsessive fascination with human nature.

To learn more about Blair Warren, sign up for his newsletter, read his blog and get a free copy of his book, *The No-Nonsense Guide to Enlightenment*, visit his website, **Crooked Wisdom** here: BlairWarren.com