

Why Virtue Matters - Virtue Essay Competition 2015 Finalists:

Honesty

What is honesty, I mean the Oxford English Dictionary seems to know, the definition has never wavered. Then again if you were to say you had come into contact with raw, true honesty, you would be lying.

Honesty tricks us, plays with us, speeds away when you're close, and hides, camouflaged in the past and the present, in the web of lies and the sea of told and untold tales of fiction.

In short, you can never be completely honest. Nobody can, it's not human. Even if you can remember the days of old, of the sirens and the bombs, the shelters and the smoke. Most people would be amazed, screwing up their face, to recognise the lost memories that you just presented. What about the shoes the man next to you was wearing at the time? Strange, purple garments, you say. Would be better placed on his head you joke. But what if the shoes weren't purple but brown weren't strange but perfectly normal, and no, they didn't look at all like headgear.

Your brain confuses you, making sure, that if you've recently forgotten a story, you mix it with the baseline of the one you haven't, and again, and again.

Pure honesty is unachievable, but beautiful nonetheless. As if it's a pure white stallion galloping towards you, but always getting tripped at the last fence. People who strive for complete honesty, people who make it their aim to forgive, forget, be kind, caring. They never gain full honesty, but instead gain something else, something even better: the ability to be able to hold their

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heads high. It is every human's job to solve the complexness of live, and simplifying the whole thing to just being in control of honesty, it's always away from you, not part of you. Just under you, in the power of you.

Honesty is unexplainable, and the closest way I can get is comparing it to Sirens, with a beautiful song, but a dangerous reality. The world is built by secrets, from one nuclear bomb code, to an unfortunate opinion on one person's best friend. Honesty can be ugly.

Stories are history, but true history comes down to true honesty. Was King Harold shot in the eye? Was Richard III really a vile nephew-killer? Unless we travel back in time, or tear down the Tower of London we will never now.

Even our personal heroes. We may call them courageous, extraordinary, a genius of their art. We can never, however hard we try, make calling them honest justified.

So I conclude with a note of sincerity, trust (and a tinge of amusement at not being able to say honesty there). We may never be completely honest but we can always make the world a better place, by searching for it. And even though we are restricted from honesty, we don't have to be restricted from kindness and hope. Because in a world surrounded by lies and falsity, hope is the new honesty.

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