

OUR VALUES

Integrity. Excellence. Joy. What do these three words have in common? They are the guiding values of Archway Properties. Let me explain further below what they mean to us.

Integrity. Like so many concepts in our society, the meaning of integrity has been diluted and diminished in everyday use. Webster's defines integrity as a "firm adherence to a code of especially moral or artistic values". A more contemporary definition is "the honesty and truthfulness or accuracy of one's actions". While I don't believe anyone (especially me) is perfect, I do believe it is important to strive for consistency in all our endeavors, and when we stray from that ideal, to take corrective action.

So how has the notion of integrity been diluted in our society? First, when describing someone, we often say "He has *good* integrity". That seems innocent enough. But why do we have to insert *good*? I think it has a lot to do with our natural tendency to compare ourselves to others so that we view behaviors in a relative sense. Simply put, we are saying the person with good integrity is better than most. But, that is not the standard by which integrity should be considered.

Is it okay to be truthful until I may lose out on something I want? Is it okay to compromise my moral code in certain settings because others seem to routinely do so? Is winning really more important than how we do so? We invite our clients, customers, associates, vendors, suppliers and partners to hold us to a higher standard...and let us know when we miss the mark!

Excellence. This is the quality of being outstanding or extremely good. Unlike integrity, it can often be measured or determined in a relative sense. It is easy to determine when a product or service is poor or bad, but how many things do we consume which are just mediocre, average or ordinary? Why do we settle for less than excellence? Our culture has taught us that excellence costs too much. So, I end up buying a shovel made in China that barely lasts a season versus the one made in Arkansas that is still going strong after several years. Did I really save money on the cheap shovel?

As I have tried to teach my children (all productive adults now), if you just show up on time, have a good attitude and do what you say, you'll be ahead of 95% of the competition. Sad but true. But what really excites us is that last 5%. At Archway, we have a couple of catch-phrases that help us stay focused on excellence. One is to "under promise and over deliver". Another is to "exceed expectations, as opposed to just manage expectations".

Joy. Boy, that one just came out of left field. Why is joy one of our guiding principles? Joy is not happiness. In fact, joy and happiness are fundamentally different. Happiness tends to be externally triggered and is based on other people, things, places, thoughts and events. Joy is contentment or delight that comes from an attitude of the heart and spirit. It is a choice we make that is not dictated by circumstance.

Let's be honest. We all prefer to be around people who are joyful, who see the positive, who are not easily discouraged, who delight in others' success. Most of us spend more time over a lifetime at work than anywhere else. It can be a grind or it can be a calling. It can be abusive or it can be respectful. At Archway, we try to share joy with all those we encounter.

While each of these values is important in its own right, they are much more powerful when combined as in a three legged stool. Integrity is essential, but not very useful if the individual does not have the necessary skills and competency to perform. Joy is wonderful, but not at the expense of missed deadlines and poor results.

If you have read this far, thank you. I'll be periodically writing articles about my perspective on industry trends, current events and specific challenges we face. I promise they will not all be this "preachy"!

For those of you who are currently doing business with Archway, we appreciate the confidence and trust you have placed in us. For those of you considering working with us, we invite you to see for yourselves how we're doing on living up to our values.

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