

The background of the cover is a large, dense crowd of people, rendered in a blue-tinted, hazy, and slightly blurred style. In the foreground, three individuals are clearly visible: a man on the left in a dark suit and light blue tie, a woman in the center with short brown hair wearing a purple shirt under a dark blazer, and a woman on the right with long dark hair wearing sunglasses and a striped shirt. The overall mood is one of a vast, anonymous crowd with a few distinct individuals.

Is SELF- EMPLOYMENT *for* YOU?

ANYONE *can start a business...*
only FEW *can SUSTAIN a business.*

PAUL E. CASEY

(965 words)

Are you thinking about taking the plunge into the world of self-employment? The following excerpt on “Ethics and Integrity” is a passage from the book, “Is Self-Employment for You?” This book goes beyond the ABC’s of how to write a business plan but examines the possible entrepreneur’s emotional readiness and personality traits that ultimately make the difference between success and failure. “Is Self-Employment for You?” Author Paul Casey has successfully sustained his communications business for over fifteen years. The book costs \$15.95 and can be purchased by visiting Amazon.com and inputting Is Self-Employment for You?

ETHICS AND INTEGRITY

By Paul Casey

My parents taught me ethics and integrity, just as their parents taught them the importance of honesty. I consider myself lucky to have grown up in a family environment where doing the right thing was considered to be the *only* option. If you are a person who has to think long and hard about the difference between right and wrong, then starting a business may not be the best thing for you.

Ethics is defined as: *The rules and standards governing the conduct of members of a profession.* **Integrity** is defined as: *Strict personal honesty and independence.*

The only part of life that you have absolute control over is your word. If you work for a large organization, you can sometimes hide from ethics. Under the company umbrella, you are not considered to be entirely "at fault" for the company's unethical decisions. You may have been one of several hundred unethical decision-makers. Even if you knew that the decisions you were making were wrong, you may have been in a

position where you were forced to make those decisions or lose your job.

But when you are a self-employed business owner, you are 100% accountable for your own actions! The only finger you can point is at yourself!

There is a point in your life where you must decide if you are going to be up front and honest with people, or if you will do anything to make a buck or pass the buck. Having a creed of ethics and integrity is a conscious mindset. Your goal should be to place ethics and integrity into your *unconscious* mindset, so that this creed becomes automatic.

I have made my share of mistakes in business, but I have always made a point of adhering to ethics and integrity. If a client overpays me by \$1.00, my accountant is under strict instructions to return the money. If I give you my word, nothing will stop me from trying to fulfill that commitment. If I fail, I will apologize and take full responsibility for my shortcomings.

ULTIMATE RATIONALISM

Many years ago when I was just starting my business, I completed a very large print job for a retirement center. After the job was distributed, the owner informed me that the retirement center was almost bankrupt, and he didn't have the money to pay me. I was obviously very angry when I heard this.

To my amazement, the owner then went on to tell me that he really hadn't done anything wrong by not disclosing the company's financial condition to me. He said, "I didn't lie to you. I just didn't disclose everything." *He rationalized his bad behavior.* What is absolutely frightening is that this person actually *believed* what he was saying. I have since learned that this person left so many people high and dry that he actually had

to move to another city for personal safety reasons. But that's another story.

I do not understand the mentality of thieves and liars. In addition to being just plain wrong, it's also a very expensive way to live. Thieves and liars spend all their time running from people that they've cheated, or dreaming up complicated schemes to cheat more people, when it would be much easier for them to get a job and earn money *honestly*. It just takes too much effort to be dishonest.

The most dangerous people in this world are those who "rationalize" their bad behavior. If you are in business for any length of time, it's not a question of if, but *when you will encounter these people*. Unfortunately, they are very hard to spot when you first meet them. On the surface, they appear competent and approachable, but many times you find out too late that they are irresponsible and untrustworthy.

I also hear that many people who steal and cheat are not in it for the money but do it for the thrill of the cat-and-mouse game. They obviously don't care about the real-life traumas that they cause. Computer hackers are notorious for this type of behavior.

I recently read a news article about an engineer who spent nearly a decade perfecting a software package for large engineering firms. After spending thousands of dollars to develop this package, he offered it for sale on the Internet. It was an effective piece of software, so many engineering firms were willing to pay for it, despite its high price. But just as the engineer was about to launch his business, a hacker broke into his web site, stole the software package, and offered it free of charge on another web site. When the hacker was caught, he said he hadn't been interested in making money from the stolen software. He just enjoyed the rush of stealing it over the Internet.

Why don't these people just take up rock climbing or white-water rafting for their

kicks and leave the rest of us alone?

Finally, if you don't subscribe to the concept of being ethical for moral reasons, I can 100% guarantee one fact of life that I have seen through life time and time again:

“What goes around comes around.”