

# Integrity as the main trait of a lawyer: atticus finch character analysis

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“ Don’t judge each day by the harvest you reap but by the seeds that you plant.” In the classic novel, *To Kill a Mockingbird*, main character Atticus Finch lives by this saying; he judges the seeds he plants, not his success each day. This character, crafted by Harper Lee, applies courage and justice to difficult situations throughout the book. Constantly setting a noble standard, he pushes through adversity and prejudice that engulfs his small southern town in the 1930’s. Shaped by his past experiences, hero Atticus Finch strengthens the story’s moral values by displaying qualities that influence his family and an entire town.

Like any classic hero, Atticus’ history framed the person he eventually became and the morals he held himself to. Growing up at Finches’ Landing, ‘ One Shot Finch’, his nickname earned from his sharp shooting skills, learned lessons like fairness and sensibility young. He eventually even gave up hunting because, “ God had given him an unfair advantage over most living things (Lee 98)”. Being a white male, Atticus took the opportunity to attend the University of Alabama to study law. Soon after moving to his hometown, Maycomb, to practice law, he was voted to the state legislature where he met his wife. Within seven years of marriage, Atticus’ wife died of a heart attack, leaving him with two children, Jem and Scout, by himself. Events like these taught him perseverance and patience at as a young adult.

These lessons Atticus learned soon helped him when he faces major adversity at his job as a lawyer. Readers learn a lot about Atticus’s integrity in the Tom Robinson case. When assigned defense of a black gentleman in a contentious rape case, Atticus prepares for the trial with diligence. Even

when the town and even his own family disagrees, Atticus does his job to the best of his ability. He takes his job seriously, respecting opponents and preparing diligently, despite the clients class or race. Atticus shows this year before when he defended Walter Cunningham's entailment, even allowing him to pay in nuts and firewood. "The Cunninghams had no money to lay a lawyer, they simply paid us with what they had (Lee 210)." As a lawyer, Atticus truly does his best; bring out timeless, honorable traits.

From ambition to zealousness, Atticus shows personality traits at his work and at home that show his true integrity. One of the major beliefs he has is that treating all people with equality is vital to a functioning society, even in an era when racism was socially expectable. Calpurnia, the Finch's black maid and nanny, is treated with respect and as an equal by Atticus, even taking the children with her to the all black church, First Purchase. He also believes in an unorthodox definition of courage, saying that "it's when you know you're licked before you begin but begin anyway and you see it through no matter what (Lee)." Sincere Atticus proved this while protecting Tom outside of the jail by himself. Knowing the danger and potential consequences, Atticus chooses to do what is right and stands up against his fellow townspeople.

Apart from work, Atticus shows these traits and others around his family at home. Honest is important to him, especially when dealing with his children. He tells Scout the definition of rape and a whore-lady, despite her young age. He also puts his intellectually to work at home, reading every chance he gets. In the book, it also tells that he wasn't like the other fathers, "he did

not play poker or fish or drink or smoke. Just sat in the living room and read. (Lee 89).” It upsets Jem that Atticus wouldn’t play in the town’s football game; his father saying he was too old. Atticus’ life is that which may be expected of a fifty year old’s, staying true to his values and beliefs.

With honesty and equality, Atticus fights obstacles, such as an unpleased town and curious children, by holding fast to what he knew was right. Lessons that he acquired by experiences as a boy carried through to his adult life. When faced with situations as a lawyer, he also stood strong and unwavering. Also his personality shines through, always treating people humanly. These characteristics also show at home by the way he handles his children and household. Every story needs a hero, and Atticus Finch couldn’t fit the role any better!