

Title : The Integral Woman

Every engineer is familiar with what an integral is. A word often associated with mathematics, integral is also defined as what is necessary for completeness. Thus an integral woman is a complete woman whatever her profession is. And what makes a woman complete especially if she is an engineer? Having the answer to this question may address the issues that 21<sup>st</sup> century women engineers face. Such issues include working in a male dominated environment, combining one's career with motherhood, acquiring more skills in order to fulfill one's dreams, and having the capacity to contribute to the improvement of society. Perhaps a consideration of what it means to be an integral woman can better illumine these issues.

A term more frequently heard among feminine circles, being an integral woman means having the ability or at least the chance to develop oneself in every facet of her personality. This holistic development encompasses the person's intellectual, emotional, social, physical, artistic and spiritual aspects. Being holistic does not demand perfection in all the said areas. Striving to be outstanding according to one's capacity and given circumstance is what matters.

As an engineer, one is naturally given the responsibility of playing a big role in building a society. Thus, a continuing process of intellectual and career development through study and training particularly in the latest technological innovations is a must for every engineer. Getting oneself involved in scientific and technical research is even a greater realization of the engineer's task in society building. As regards one's social, emotional and spiritual growth, it is imperative that an engineer express his ideals and principles freely, at the same time, have respect and be open to those of the others. If an engineer has artistic talents or some special athletic ability, she should be given the opportunity for enhancing those gifts.

The pursuit of being an integral woman is not an easy undertaking. One cannot do it by herself. She needs to belong to one or more support groups or at least partake in their activities that serve as venues for developing oneself in the aforementioned aspects. This is where being a member of a society such as IEEE becomes significant. The endeavors that IEEE ventures in, both in technological research and its immediate implementation provide an immense occasion for addressing the integral development of a person specifically in the intellectual and social aspects. The vast amount of information furnished by IEEE through its publications equip current and future engineers an essential source of knowledge necessary for their work or study. The other aspects such as the emotional, physical, artistic, and spiritual are also touched upon through the networks and linkages that are created in the various interactions that occur in the organization. The activities of IEEE including this contest is a means for engineers or students to reflect and act on what they are doing to further improve themselves in order to contribute better to society.

Moreover, IEEE's promotion of women in engineering paves the way for the "recruitment and retention" female engineers, a crucial issue in the field. This gives every woman engineer a venue to be the integral woman she aims to be. She can now exercise her femininity within the scientific and technical world, develop her talents and skills to the full, and share her knowledge for the much needed technological advancement to take place. Lastly, being a woman entails being a mother or at least having the fine motherly qualities of creating and nurturing, two characteristics applicable also to engineers.

This essay's author dreams of striving to be The Integral Woman and she will continue dreaming as she puts her baby to sleep after which she will resume working on her graduate thesis.