

## Loyal

*To be loyal is to commit yourself to a cause, dream, or individual and to stick to that commitment. Most people, one imagines, are loyal in some or many respects, but some are loyal tfrom top to bottom, say to a cause (Communism; vegetarianism) or to an individual (Mao-tse tung; Kim il Sung). Complete loyalty means putting your every act under the charge of a person or cause. It means a personality transplant, of the beloved figure into the worshipper.*

### Examples

1

Like many people with an 'artistic temperament' I am a mixture of personal weakness and fierce capacity for loyalty. I have unfortunately a desire to please, and therefore capitulate or mollify in many instances where manliness would seem to require the risking of conflict. Certain events, however, trigger my stubborn commitment to cause. In 1967 I was invited to teach for the summer at the University of Buffalo. I drove from Iowa for this job, but when I arrived at the Dean's Office, for my first day of work, I was given a form to fill. I read it carefully. It required me to sign on a line saying I was not, nor had ever been, a member of the Communist Party. I immediately objected. I had not been, nor was I, a member of the Party, but I did not want to be asked that question. It was an invasion of privacy. I remained loyal to my deepest conviction, that I should not let myself be coerced. I refused to sign. I was asked to wait. Deans and dignitaries met somewhere in the background. A few hours later I was told I could teach without signing. My refusal became the cornerstone of a legal case, which led to the final annulling of the Loyalty Oath.

2

When I speak to Y about X, behind X's back, I am failing in my loyalty to X. But why am I necessarily bound to X in loyalty? Suppose I hardly know X. We are just names to each other. Am I then bound to him in loyalty? Yes I am. For the fact is that none of us are just names to one another. We are all living presences, making our way through the fascinating, difficult passage, and we owe one another respect for that simple reason. We owe one another loyalty because without having chosen it, we are all brothers in the blood.