

White Lies: To Lie or not to Lie?

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On the other hand, we don't want to live our lives dictated by people who resort to emotional blackmail to get what they want. What happens, if you are a teenager and want to chat with a friend, whereas your Mom needs your help? To say, "I know Mom that you are collapsing under the burden of your tasks, that you need to send out invitations to your party and cook and go to work, but I prefer to chat with my friend instead of helping you," won't work because: a) your Mom will get upset; b) you'll have a fight; she'll tell you that you are irresponsible, that you don't care, etc. and in the end, you'll both be upset. You want to do what you want to do and at the same time, you don't want to upset your mother. But what happens if what you want to do is in opposition with what your Mom wants you to do? The easy way out is to lie. You say to your Mom that you've got lots of homework, you have a test tomorrow and if you don't study you'll fail, etc. Then your Mom leaves you, and you can sit and chat with your friend, and no one gets hurt. At least, that's what you think.

But here is the catch: although it was a little white lie because you didn't want to hurt someone, and you only wanted to do your thing undisturbed, you have set up a trap for yourself; a trap that will only grow and engulf you. How does this work?

Your Mom will ask you tomorrow, how was your test? To which you can answer that it was great, so-so, cancelled, whatever. This is another lie. You'll have to remember your lies or you'll get caught. Your energy gets tied up in these little "white" lies, cover-ups, intentions to manipulate others so that you can have what you want without paying the price.

Lying is trying to get something without paying its price.

But lying itself has a price, which is seldom taken into account. It matters not why one lies, whether to gain some undeserved favor, or to not hurt someone, or to avoid being scolded or punished. In the final count, it amounts to feeling tired, mostly uninterested, feeling lack of satisfaction, and mainly, not reaching one's goals. In the cosmic book keeping, not paying the price now is the kind of procrastination that accumulates interest on the debts that will drain out one's energy. If and when you are caught, you'll use lame excuses, emotional blackmail, and any other means to try and manipulate the other.

Take another example. You date a woman. You tell her you want this to be an exclusive relationship. She says, OK. But you are not whole with the relationship and keep thinking about what you might lose by not being available on the market. So you go and look for other women. You date others. You don't sleep with anyone else, but when you go out with another woman, you tell your girlfriend that you have a business meeting, you have to attend to family matters, and so on - white lies, but...

A dishonest person doesn't always intend to be dishonest, but tries to smooth out inconsistencies within his own being, such as wanting something, but not wanting to pay the price. Paying the price would involve hurting the other as well as possibly losing the affections of the other.

However, actions have consequences. The solution to wanting the action, but not wanting the consequences is to lie. This turns into a pattern that weakens the person and makes him wishy-washy, and when he needs to confront something tough, he will either fold up or lash-out, out of proportion. The pattern of avoiding confrontations creates a distorted view of reality, also reading into other people's motives things that are not there, or not seeing what really is there. In this sense, honesty is a tool whereby one can reach higher levels of clarity and also, more energy to bring about results in one's endeavors. This is due to the fact that dishonesty complicates matters, which become chaotic with time, and then, the person feels weighed down by his helplessness. In such cases, trying to control the chaos creates more chaos because this is done from a space of dishonesty and hence, confusion. Controlling chaos is a tricky business that includes knowing how to change complicatedness into "complexity", which has laws that can be applied. Complexity is not controlled by force, but by small inputs, reminders of past actions. When these reminders are lies, it all becomes total chaos, randomness.

Lying is a choice. It is legitimate if one is willing to pay the price of lying. When I was a little girl, the neighbor's dog bit me. I yelled from the pain and seeing a little blood. The neighbor dashed to the scene and said that now he would have to kill the dog. I told him I fell, and that's why I bled; the dog did not bite me. I lied. But I saved the life of that dog and I would do it again. If the neighbor reacted differently, if he would have told me I shouldn't have scared the poor dog out of his wits by throwing myself on him lovingly when he was sleeping, then I would have told him the truth.

Yes, lying is a choice. The best way to choose whether to lie or not is by looking at the price-tag; everything has a price: both lying and also being honest. Honesty might not be pleasant; it might not be easy, but in the long run, it pays.