



A LIAR IN YOUR MIDST

The Shocking Truth About Lying

When you read about the latest corporate or political scandal, it's easy to point fingers at "those big bad liars." However, here's the dirty truth. It's not just about "them." The truth is, almost everybody lies, perhaps not always on a grand scale that makes headlines... but if you start to watch, you'll see how often you are dishonest with both yourself and with others. To truly have a rich, full life — we must recognize our own lies and how rampant they are, then train ourselves to give them up. If we do not, then we remain stuck with a life happily blaming others — our spouse, a colleague, the government — but not dealing with the real issue ourselves.

HOW LYING BRINGS DOWN YOUR CONFIDENCE

Let's start with the little lies that fill our days. You know these well — you tell someone you tried to reach him when in truth you called once at a time you knew he was not available. You assure your wife you're on your way home when you haven't left the office yet. Maybe you tell your boss you completed an assignment when it remains unfinished in your drawer. Although these little lies seem harmless, they are surprisingly insidious. Any kind of lies, including the little ones, and the ones you hide inside you, destroy real self-confidence. Telling the truth means you know what you think, you believe in what you think and you consider it worthy of being spoken.



SACRIFICE OF INTIMACY

People often justify their lies because they believe telling them protects another's feelings. Yes, there is discernment involved — you don't blurt out cruel observations just because they cross your mind. But, it does create a problem when you choose not to tell someone you are angry when you are (a withholding lie) or say you agree with behavior when you don't (an outright lie) because you think that if you told the truth it would hurt them. It may make you feel virtuous to tell these lies — after all you are just being kind, you say to yourself — but what lurks underneath the so-called virtue is a form of manipulation... fear of the possible repercussions of your feelings and beliefs. But as the little lies pile up, they increasingly split you off into someone you are not. They mold you into behaving in different ways depending on whom you are with. Your life turns into a game of "Let's Pretend," and you don't even know it. The lies become so commonplace that eventually you don't even care. However, deep down inside it robs you of real confidence and intimacy. Ironically, your attempt to be kind to someone results in creating a distance between you, as you are not being truthful with him/her. Pretense makes real closeness impossible because you have become an actor in your relationships... whether you admit it or not, you can feel the distance and so can they.

THE LIES THAT GOVERN OUR LIVES

But there is also another kind of lie that is even more treacherous. These are the big lies that directly affects the way people see themselves and dictate how they conduct their lives. The big lies are what you saw — or thought you saw — as a child.



As a grown-up, you still believe these perceptions to be “the truth” and you have lived with those false beliefs your entire life. In reality, the “facts” people remember and build their life on are almost never true. Example: A thirty-something man lacks the confidence he needs to build a successful law practice. He feels like and acts like the skinny kid who was always bullied by others and that no one liked in school. But when he made a thorough investigation of his growing-up years, he came to realize he was well liked and had had many friends. However, when he was 14 there was one bully who picked on him for a few months that created this perception of being weak. Now, 20 years later, he was continuing to act on that “fact” of childhood and limiting himself because he believed he was incapable of standing up to others.

Unfortunately, everyone has big lies that started early and impact how he or she perceives their parents and family. Children don't see the complexities of relationships but decide instead, as an example, that dad was a bully and mom was a victim, or that dad was a perfectionist and mom was a flake. These misperceptions not only continue to govern individual lives into adulthood, they become the guidelines of generalized beliefs about the world... in this example, thinking men are bullies and women are victims. Note: These lies are always a trap. As long as people continue to believe their lies, they are stuck functioning based on the perceptions of an eight-year-old or 12-year-old or whatever age it was when they formed their view of themselves and their world. When stuck in these lies, a person cannot possibly grow and evolve.



MOVING PAST THE LIES

Whatever the sizes of the lies, the first step to being free is heightening your awareness of them. What is behind the specific lies you tell? For instance, take the person you are trying to avoid. What has happened in that relationship that makes you uncomfortable? Why are you avoiding the person? Search down all the things you are hiding from them or lying about. By analyzing the list, you will eventually come to your true feelings and beliefs about the individual and your relationship with him/her. This gives you the chance to address them to make way for the real conversations that will allow things to change. If there are people you realize you don't want in your life, understanding this instead of ducking their calls will give you freedom to give them up... to make way for people who are to your liking. Whatever it is, seeing how you honestly feel and think frees you to make decisions based on your real self rather than acting as you believe you "should." As an added bonus, when you start to be truthful, you will find that not only do you feel the fulfillment and confidence that comes with being your "real" self, but others are more truthful with you. Truth ups the ante for intimacy, says Lauren, and that is what conversation is really about.