

ISSUE 11

Everyday Lies

People lie every day! A man tells his wife that her new dress is lovely even though it looks terrible on her; she tells him that he is still as handsome as when they first met. People routinely inform a dying man that he looks well to keep his spirits up. Doctors sometimes withhold the worst news from their patients, and politicians and soldiers deliberately spread untruthful information to protect national security. In addition, of course, many folks lie to protect themselves or to avoid embarrassing situations. Lying is a natural, and sometimes necessary part of human life.

Discuss the following sentences: say whether or not they are lies and if they serve a good purpose.

- (1) There is a God.
- (2) Heaven and hell both exist.
- (3) I will love you forever.
- (4) Sorry, I'm too busy now.
- (5) Money can buy everything.
- (6) It's not my fault.
- (7) If you study hard, you will succeed.
- (8) I didn't know.
- (9) The traffic was heavy.
- (10) Politicians work for the good of their nations and their people.



Sample Answers

(A) To tell people that they will surely succeed if only they study hard is a lie but a necessary lie. The real truth is that there are no guarantees of success or failure. Some *dedicated*, intelligent people will *inexplicably* fail despite their ability and hard work, just as good fortune may shine on a handful of lazy, stupid folks who are lucky enough to win a lottery. However, studying hard is usually a *prerequisite* for success, and most people who do not study hard won't go very far in life. But to tell them that would *do them a disservice*; they need to believe that success will automatically come to them if they are diligent, or they may decide to take a chance on pure luck.

(B) The only people who believe that money can do everything either have no money or too much money. The poor use their lack of money to excuse their inability to do things, while the rich have an *inflated* idea of their own worth and *potential*. Everybody else realizes that money is very useful but has limited utility; the real value lies in courage, ability, *perseverance*, intelligence, *sociability*, and many other personal characteristics. So telling people that "money can do everything" harmfully *distorts* the truth.

Speak Your Mind

1. Talk about the lies that people tell most often.
2. What would be a common lie told by:
 - (a) an ordinary worker?
 - (b) the boss?
 - (c) parents?
 - (d) kids?
 - (e) the jobless?
 - (f) husbands to wives?
 - (g) wives to husbands?
 - (h) teachers to their students?
 - (i) a drunk driver stopped by a cop?
 - (j) a person who is late for an appointment?
 - (k) someone who didn't call his friend right back?
 - (l) people who get drunk often?
 - (m) anyone who can't quit smoking?
 - (n) a man or woman who fails to lose weight?
 - (o) people who just got fired?
 - (p) a man who is having an *affair*?
 - (q) a woman who is *unfaithful* to her husband?
3. Do you think white lies are necessary? Why? What would happen if people stopped telling them?

Speak Your Mind Helpers

3. Do you think white lies are necessary? Why? What would happen if people stopped telling them?

M : How do I look?

F : You look wonderful, just like always.

M : Did I spend too much on my new suit?

F : No, it looks great on you. When you go to that meeting, I know you'll *wow* them with your *proposals*.

M : Afterwards, why don't we go somewhere to celebrate?

F : Great! I'll wear my new dress. And that new diamond necklace I just got.

M : That sounds wonderful! I'm glad I have your support. Sometimes I'm not so sure of myself, and it's great to know that you are behind me *boosting* me all the time.

F : Nonsense. You're always basically on the right track, but you just need a little *nudge* from time to time to keep you *pointed* in the right direction. That's all.

M : Are you sure?

F : Of course I'm sure!

M : Well, then, maybe now is a good time to test the theory. I won't be coming home tonight.

F : Why not? Another late meeting?

M : No, there's no late meeting. There are never any late meetings.

F : What are you saying?

-**wow** : impress greatly

-**proposal** : plan or suggestion that is given formally to an official person or group

-**boost** : make (sb) feel more positive or more confident

-**nudge** : slight or gentle push

-**pointed** : directed toward

M : It's difficult, but I want to be completely honest. I'm seeing another woman.

F : What!?

M : That's right. One who never has to lie to me. She doesn't just tell me what I want to hear all the time. She loves me for who I am, not for who she wants me to be.

F : You fool! If I weren't *stroking your ego* every step of the way, you wouldn't be where you are today. You'd just be another *washed-up*, middle-aged man. Everything you have, you owe to me!

M : Is that right? You mean everything I owe is because of everything you have. I've worked hard for years just so you can spend all of my money on yourself. Your new dresses and diamonds, indeed!

F : You wouldn't have any money if I didn't guide you all the time. So, leave me, see if I care. Go to your "other woman." See what happens then, when you're *left to your own devices*. But, after you fail, don't come begging me for help. It's over!

M : You, too. When you don't have any of my money to spend any more, don't come back to me for more. I'm tired of supporting you.

F : And I'm equally tired of all the psychological support I've given you!



- stroke one's ego : flatter; motivate to become more confident

- washed-up : no longer successful

- leave (sb) to one's own devices : leave (sb) alone and without help