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Semester 1 (Fall 2025)
Lying Podcast

Word count. 1490

Should You Tell White Lies?

Hello, My name is Emma. Today, we are going to talk about lying. We've all done it. Telling a lie to protect someone's feelings, to avoid trouble or just to make a story seem more interesting. I think lying is one of the universal habits that we do more than we think we do. Today, I want to talk about lying in our personal lives and what it can cost us. This is the kind of dishonesty that lives close to us that could test our relationships and sense of integrity and even how we see ourselves. Firstly, I want to define lying. According to the Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy, lying is defined as "to make a false statement with the intention to deceive". So it's basically saying the person who is lying knows the truth but decides to deceive the person they're talking to. There is another kind of lying called white lies. This is defined as a harmless or trivial lie, especially one told to avoid hurting someone's feelings. White lies are motivated when the truth is overly complicated, uncomfortable, or just tedious. White lies could allow people to censor the truth and avoid awkward social facts. I can admit that I've done this to protect my friends' feelings or my families feelings if I don't like something. I am someone who believes lying is wrong, and you shouldn't do it- because even a small lie could potentially break someone's trust.

Part 1: My personal story. According to Trinity University, white lies might be a form of facework, which posits that people are motivated to act in ways that allow social interactions to occur smoothly by avoiding disagreements that could harm either person's image or pride." So,

I'll have to admit that I have told white lies to my friends before. I wish I didn't but at the time, I thought I was protecting their feelings.

One of the 1st times I remember telling a white lie was on Halloween a few years ago. So it was Halloween night, a close friend asked me if her costume and makeup looked good. I thought to myself it looked... interesting, a little weird but I didn't want to hurt her feelings. So I smiled, nodded, and said "It looks good and fine" even though I was a little unsure about it. Later, we went trick or treating, I started to feel guilty. I kept wondering what other people might think when they saw her. I didn't want anyone to judge her, and I realized I had lied because I didn't want to offend her. My lie made me feel bad and unsure like I chose comfort over honesty. Looking back I wish I chose a kinder way to say how I truly felt.

Another time I told a white lie was on my birthday. A relative gave me a gift— and I knew after I opened it, it wasn't something I liked or wanted. I smiled, and said "Oh, I love it" and thanked them, even though inside I was thinking, I don't like it and won't use it. When they asked "Do you really like it?" I confidently said "Yes! I love it" I could feel the guilt inside me starting after I said that but I didn't want to make them feel bad. Looking back, I wish I'd found an honest way to say how I truly felt about the gift. I know it wasn't a huge lie but it reminded me how I avoid honesty to keep the moment good. I found that "these uses of white lies are so common they are often not considered lying and are accepted as normal behavior." (Bryant). This just shows that people are so used to telling white lies that it is a social norm now. It made me wonder: Why do we lie to protect ourselves and the person we're lying to even though it hurts both people?? After I lied, I want to understand why people lie at all.

Part 2: Many people assume that lying is always selfish, but in reality, we often lie to protect both ourselves and others. According to Lickerman, "We lie to obtain protection," "We

protect ourselves, our interests, our image, our resources, and others.” (Lickerman, 2010). We lie to protect ourselves from conflict and to protect what people might think about us. We also lie to friends and family to protect their feelings, often saying what they want to hear. These “protective lies” are often motivated by care or fear rather than cruelty. According to the Forbes article, "We lie to save face, to avoid hurting other people's feelings, to impress others, to shirk responsibility, to hide misdeeds, as a social lubricant, to prevent conflict, to get out of work, and many more reasons” (Forbes). Bella DePaulo, Ph.D., a psychologist at the University of Virginia, has confirmed that lying is simply a condition of life. In her research she found that both men and women lie in approximately a fifth of their social exchanges lasting 10 or more minutes” (Kornet). That's shocking because this means that lying has almost become a normal part of communication. Lying is not rare and is a normal social behavior that could happen regularly in conversations. Similarly, Leonard Saxe, Ph.D., a polygraph expert and professor of psychology at Brandeis University, says, “ Lying has long been a part of everyday life. We couldn't get through the day without being deceptive” (Hart). This means that lying is deeply woven into human behavior. Small deceptions could help people manage relationships, avoid tension, and maintain politeness. Lying is a skill that most people use to protect feelings and preserve a person's dignity. I think people want to avoid tension and keep a good relationship with people and that's why they tell lies. But this doesn't mean you should lie all the time to deceive others.

Part 3: Why we shouldn't lie: We shouldn't lie because lies can diminish trust in our relationship, whether it's family, friends or anyone close to us. For me, I don't tend to lie to people unless I feel like I absolutely have to, because I don't want to break someone's trust. I also think that if you keep lying to people it will become a habit and you won't be able to stop. Lies can slowly erode the foundation of trust that holds our relationships. Trust is something that

takes time to build and I don't think we should risk breaking that bond. Trust is what makes people feel safe and open with each other. Saying one white lie once in a while, probably isn't that big of a deal but when they start to add up, they can make people start to doubt you if you are telling the truth. I feel like once you break trust it's hard to rebuild the trust. For me, I try not to lie to people because I feel like honesty is better than lying, even though being honest can be uncomfortable. I know it can be hard to be truthful because you don't want to offend someone. But over time, I realized that telling the truth might be better because it shows that you care about the person even though it might hurt the person. Also if you tell the truth, the person will know that you care about them and will help the person grow. Honesty doesn't have to be harsh, or hurtful. You can still be kind and truthful to the person. I realized that honesty, even though it's hard to say sometimes, can help the person. Next time, you think about lying, think about if it's really necessary and try not to be afraid to tell the truth. Thanks for listening! This was the Lying Podcast. My name is Emma Hutchinson. Bye!

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