

Personal Excellence

Life in the False Lane

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We've never met anyone who thinks of himself as a liar. Yet, what are the odds of finding a person on the planet who hasn't experienced life in the *false* lane? Neglecting to disclose the whole truth is the equivalent of a *silent lie*, and venting about people who aren't around isn't being candid, frank, or truthful. Spinning stories, massaging data, and concealing information are all forms of lying, because they all involve an *intention to deceive*.

Here are three ways to deal with the truth:

1. FACE THE TRUTH

At the bottom of *all* problems is always something we are afraid to face. Facing things squarely renews our hearts, souls, and bodies. Avoiding reality destroys us both personally and professionally. If you don't feel happy at home or if you don't feel creative in your work, you're not facing something. Many of us, for example, keep under-performing employees far beyond the time they should be released to find a job that matches their skills. We may not be facing that we don't like our job or that we need to take better care of our body, or other things. We may feel guilty about something, and that guilt gnaws away at us. We may feel angry about something—or scared or hurt. The energy we use to avoid these feelings shows up as fatigue and a sense of disconnection from the people we most care about.

You choose either to face something or to avoid facing it. Whatever it is—turn and face it squarely. To keep it simple, look for *feelings not felt, experiences not communicated, and agreements not kept*. Much unhappiness in our lives comes from these places. When you face them, you'll move forward with greater ease and speed.

To face the truth, ask three questions:

1. *What feeling am I not facing?*
2. *What experience am I not communicating?*
3. *What agreements am I not keeping?*

What do you most need to face right now in your life? Once you look at this squarely, you must absorb it so fully that it illuminates the underlying patterns in your life that are ready to be seen and healed. Then commit to doing something about it. Is there someone with whom you need to communicate? Is there something that you need to do? What will actually heal and resolve this particular issue? Each time we're willing to move through this process we become happier, lighter, and more agile.

2. RECOGNIZE YOUR OWN "TRUTH SLIPS"

To get beneath your habitual responses, you must commit to meticulous observation and on-going reflection. For example, you feel grouchy today about the stress your deadlines create for you, but you don't make the connection between your sour mood and yesterday's argument. The key to unlock the truth is to ask, "Is this a pattern?" When the answer is "yes," next ask, "How do I feed and manifest this pattern in my life?"

Perhaps you don't like to stand up to authority and argue for a different point of view. You don't feel good about your ability to communicate your opinions clearly, so you hold them back, preferring instead to over-commit while feeling critical of your manager's ignorance of the resources required to do a job.

To uncover truth slips, follow four steps:

1. *Notice when you feel physically or emotionally "off."*
2. *Ask yourself what's going on.*
3. *Identify familiar patterns.*
4. *Wonder how you sustain these patterns.*

3. CLEAN UP "SPINNING" AND WITHHELD TRUTHS

If you mislead someone, address it immediately. One way you perpetuate problems is to hold back until the *right time*, but the *right time* never comes. When something comes up

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about the information you withheld, it's much harder to come clean. So, when you catch yourself putting a spin on reality, call the person involved and let them know there's something you need to share with them. Handle it on the phone or in person—not email.

Use these steps to clean up a lie:

1. Confess the lie

I misled you by saying _____.

2. Tell the truth

The real situation is _____.

3. Express your feelings

I feel _____ because I didn't tell you about this earlier. I'm worried you'll be angry, disappointed, or _____ with me.

4. Take the next steps

I'd like to do whatever I can to clear this up with you.

Avoid slipping into defensiveness and justifying and explaining away what you did. Be direct and frank: "I did such and such, I don't feel good about it, I made a judgment error, and I want to clean it up." Listen—and listen well. The person may attack and blame you and display a lot of anger. They may stonewall and withdraw. They may feel victimized by your withheld information. Or they may feel relieved and grateful to finally be getting the real truth. Instead of sounding the alarm and raising your defensive walls, listen and reflect back their content, their emotions, and their underlying intention.

Even if the people "chew you out," their intention is probably to make sure you never do this again, which supports your success.

If the other person minimizes the situation or says it wasn't so bad, take responsibility and appreciate their willingness to be so supportive, but say you believe you set off an unfortunate situation, and you want to clear it up and ensure it doesn't happen again.

Express gratitude, if you feel it. Many times after a "truth-telling" session, you feel grateful the other person allowed you to clean up what you did. Even if they feel angry with you, they gave you the chance to come clean, and you're bound to feel better.

By consistently living and working in truth, you begin to break the cycle of duplicity. Truth clears the way for everything to speed up: effective teamwork, the flow of information, needed changes, and high quality work. You'll feel happier, and your own life will work better.

Contact info@worthethic.com or refer to www.worthethic.com for more information.



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