

## Isn't Lying To Yourself Fun?

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Turning It Around: Causes and Cures for Today's Epidemic Social Problems, striving to make the world and our own lives easier to understand and manage. Find out more about this book at the end of the article.

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It does not require many words to speak the truth.  
- Chief Joseph, native American leader (1840-1904)

Some people use the excuse that "they" don't really want the truth, that "they" want a fantasy "they" can nurture, one that doesn't involve "them" in responsibility for the way things are or in doing anything to improve the situation. Most times that's a lie.

It's no exaggeration to say that truth is one of the most difficult human concepts to find in practice in today's world. We find the media twisting news to make the platform and policies of the political party their owners favour look especially good.

We have politicians putting such "spin" on information they are required to reveal in news stories that they always appear innocent of sordid charges and even supportive of the side that appears to be "right" at the time.

We have clergy telling lies and committing illegal personal violations against others of their followers. Some teach their children in religious schools (the only schools that can usually be attended by children without charge or fee in those countries) the background they need to become the terrorists of tomorrow.

We have spouses lying to teach other about where they spent "missing" time and lied-to spouses lying to themselves by accepting a lie they know to be false.

We have children getting involved with drugs, breaking all sorts of laws to pay for their addiction, then lying to their parents about what they do with their free time and who they were with. Their parents believe the lie because they want to.

What would our world be like if everyone told the truth? This hypothetical question has been proposed before. This time I would like you to return to the first paragraph after the quote and consider how those situations would be different if the people who make excuses didn't make false alibis because they had to tell the truth.

Then move to the next paragraph and consider what our world would be like if the media told the truth, the facts rather than doctored and editorialized Pablum.

Continue, one by one, to the end of those paragraphs that discuss situations where we daily experience people telling lies and half-truths that confuse and complicate our lives in a real world.

You live in a real world, unless you want to live within your own fantasy. Your own fantasy shouldn't extend past advertising of products you would like to buy or services you would like to have. But your life is made so complex by untruths that it's hard to understand sometimes because so many people tell something other than the truth. And the stories seldom all match.

It could happen that people begin to tell the truth. We could teach children to tell the truth, provided that we don't lie to them while we do it. We could also teach them how to convey the truth in such a way that it doesn't hurt the receivers. I used to have a reputation as an employer who could fire an employee and make that person feel lucky that he or she had the opportunity to begin a new work life elsewhere, so I know it can be done.

Nothing is improved with a lie. No situation has ever improved because of a lie. No life was ever made more secure or better because of a lie. People who allow themselves to be deluded by lies eventually experience a day of reckoning when the truth becomes obvious. By then the lie-teller is usually nowhere to be found.

Until we start teaching the value of truth to every child, we will continue to live in a complicated fantasy world where very few things turn out to be the way we were told they should be.

That's not pretty. There is no need for us to lie to ourselves about that.

Bill Allin

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