



Believe What Others

Do

By Dr. Linda Hancock

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

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Often individuals are disappointed or resentful after a person who they trust lets them down. Anyone can make promises or say things that they don't mean, and problems occur if we believe they will follow through. It is especially foolish of us if we know that the person has a pattern of saying things without linking them to congruent actions.

So why do you think that people say things they don't mean? There are several reasons:

1. Unrealistic hopes - There is an old expression that states: "If wishes were horses then beggars would ride". Just because you want something doesn't mean that it will magically happen. Reaching goals requires effort not just words.
2. Wanting to please - So many people think that they will not be liked or have a good relationship unless they say things that other people want to hear. That is just foolish and dishonest. Be yourself! Most people prefer honesty over trickery.
3. Not thinking long-term - Usually the passage of time reveals truth and character. When you do things only for short-term gain you will likely be disappointed in the future and those who are watching you will lose their trust.
4. Minimizing effort that is required - Success usually comes from consistent actions over a long term. Think, for example, about losing weight, saving money or learning a language. All of these are achieved with regular, consistent investments of both commitment and action.
5. Protecting themselves or others - Truth is often compromised if a person thinks that telling it will lead to negative consequences for themselves or others. Deceit, however, is often a thin veil that disappears.
6. Desperation - "Desperate people do desperate things". When there is urgency and limited options an individual might say things that they think will meet their immediate needs. Don't let their crisis become your crisis.
7. Past successes - Often negative patterns develop when desired results are achieved. A person who is always begging for help likely continues to do this because they have previously gotten the help they wanted. Being repeatedly forgiven for bad behaviour might endorse continued bad behaviour. Check yourself to determine if you are actually being part of the problem by giving in or not holding someone responsible.
8. Naivety - Some people say things without having enough experience or information to know what is realistic. Be careful that you don't end up in arguments. Standing back and allowing the person to gain a different perspective through experience will benefit both of you.
9. Emotions - An angry parent might be heard saying to a child "I am never going to take you shopping with me again". If the parent means this, s/he faces big problems. Either shopping will not occur without childcare for many years to come or the child will learn that the parent says things they don't mean.

It can be very annoying to hear individuals, especially those we love, say things that don't seem to be positive or realistic. The best thing you can do is to make sure that you don't fall into the similar patterns. Do your behaviours match your dialogue and are you developing patterns that will move you forward positively in life? The choice is yours.