



# Lies or Truth - You Decide!

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## ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Dr. Hancock has written a regular weekly column entitled "All Psyched Up" for newspapers in two Canadian provinces for more than a dozen years. Over the years, her readers and clients have said that they have benefited from her common-sense solutions, wisdom, and sense of humour. Dr. Linda Hancock, the author of "Life is An Adventure...every step of the way" and "Open for Business Success" is a Registered Psychologist who has a private practice in Medicine Hat. She can be reached at 403-529-6877 or through email [office@drlindahancock.com](mailto:office@drlindahancock.com)

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It can be so hard to understand why people tell lies - especially when it seems obvious that they are lying and will be "caught". I remember once when parents came to see me because they were concerned about their daughter. They said "She lies all the time". My reply was "That's what liars do!" You see, it can be effective and done so often that it becomes a regular part of life for some.

Over the years I have learned that individuals are motivated to lie for a number of reasons:

1. To avoid trouble or consequences - Children don't usually lie to get into trouble but will often lie to get out of trouble. Sometimes people believe that telling a lie will save them from stress, harm or having to pay a penalty. They figure that lying will have less risk of harm for them or might actually get them out of trouble.
2. Family or friends lie- - We tend to become like those we are around the most. When lying is an acceptable behaviour it is easier for everyone in the group to participate. As a parent, you might think it is acceptable to say things that aren't accurate but you must always remember that others are watching and following your example.
3. For obvious gain - Those who defraud others make promises that they know they will not keep but make them because they know that they will personally benefit by doing so. It's not just the scammers, however, who say things to get what they want. Unfortunately, those who lie can actually be found in all cultures, socio-economic levels and age groups.
4. As a joke - Some people make up stories or say things hoping that others will be amused by them. The result, however, is usually that someone gets hurt and credibility is lost. Remember the boy who cried "Wolf" and how others lost trust in what he said?
5. Denial - When you don't even know that you are lying to yourself, you are in denial. This is a common practice for those who are involved in addictive behaviours. Its cousins are minimization and blame.
6. When information is incorrect or missing - There are times when people do not have all of the facts and make statements that are not true because of this.
7. To impress or pleased - Some say what they think that you want to hear so that you will be happy. They are usually individuals who don't like conflict and lack assertiveness skills. The sad part is that they may become resentful when the other person's needs are met but theirs are neglected.
8. For loyalty sake - There are times when things are said to protect others who may come to harm or accountability otherwise. Victims frequently recant their testimonies or group members go silent in order to avoid pointing towards someone who did wrong.
9. Memory - So many times people who have experienced the same situations come out of them with different perceptions of what actually occurred.

The word "liar" has a rather negative stigma and so people often use other terms which they feel are more innocent. Fib, white lie, whopped, untruth or misspoke are often used instead. But it doesn't matter what you call it, the fact is that you didn't tell the truth. And that usually

means that someone will suffer and when you are "discovered" as a liar, you will lose respect.

My uncle, who was a judge, used to say that when you tell one lie, you have to tell another to cover it up. And then another and another until you finally get to the point where you can't remember what the first one was and then you go to jail. Well, not everyone will end up in jail but if you keep telling lies they will begin to form the bars of your own cell and soon you will feel trapped!

The easiest is to always tell the truth and enjoy the freedom that goes with that!