

The psychology of the lie

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I found this in some desperate blogger's blog. I thought it was quite a good statement and was well written

"Today I read an article from Glamour. The title of the article was "The guilty confessions of women who LIE".

It was reassuring to know that other women lie from time to time, or actually, most of the time. It made me feel normal.

There are a lot of reasons people lie. I had a look of some of the reasons listed in the article:

- To make life easier or more interesting
- To appear more in control or more likeable
- To cover themselves
- To spare someone's feelings

For me it could be all of the above, or none of above. Simply because, I have no idea about myself, let along the reasons I choose to lie.

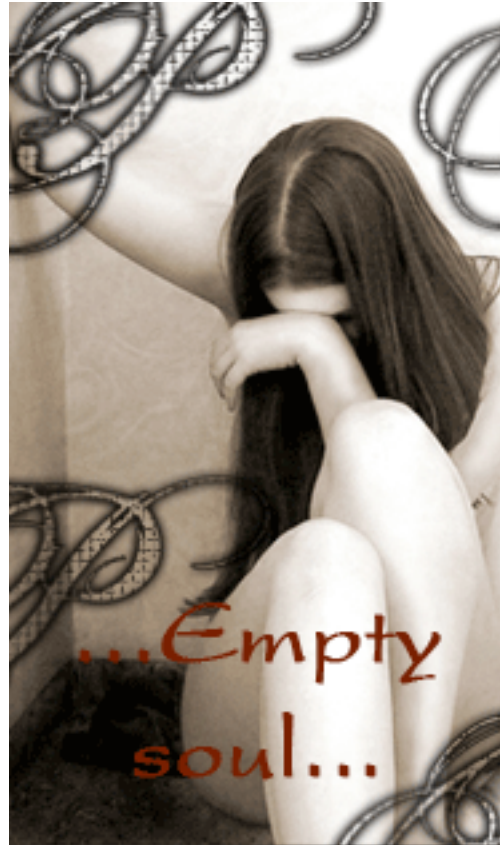
Can a person "choose" to lie? Sometimes I think it's more spontaneous. Lies just come out naturally. As if, they were the truth. And sometimes when we tell enough lies it becomes the reality. Because we actually living in lies.

Very existentialist.

I look at myself. Why do I lie? Is there any thing wrong with my life that I had to lie to make it better?

I have a gorgeous husband who adores me dearly. I have a beautiful contemporary inner city apartment in one of the most desirable cities. I am still young and still turn heads.

And, I am not happy." (end quote)



I wrote this some time ago:

Some young children play the game of: "Liar, liar pants on fire".

This is the child who is a repetitive or compulsive liar. They habitually or continually tell falsehoods or lies. There are two main types of compulsive liars: Type A) The child who tells a lie where they are obviously going to get caught. So why do they want to get caught? It can be for attention (strokes), there is some bigger issue going on and they want it brought out into the open (e.g. abuse of some kind, bullying at school), the child is a drama queen, the child is crying out for limits to be set and so forth.

Type B) The child who lies for expediency. To avoid conflict, punishment, escape the consequences of behaviour or obtain money/property. This is a more insidious type of lying and can reflect the beginnings of the development of the anti-social personality type.

An adult version of the game, is the game of "The affair". This is not that type of affair where it is a one off. For example both parties get drunk at the office christmas party and have a quickie in the storeroom. Instead this game refers to the affair that is ongoing and involves planned deception. For an affair to continue for any length of time there must be an ongoing series of falsehoods being told.



These are type A lies if the parties in the affair start taking more and more risks and thus continually increase the chances of getting caught. They want to get found out. Often this type of affair occurs because at least one party is desperately unhappy in a marriage and does not know how to deal with it, so they create a situation that brings it to a head. Finally, the 'innocent' husband or wife forces the issues to be dealt with when they find out.

There are other affairs that are long term and no one ever gets found out and these would involve more of the type B lies.

Game antithesis -

Type A - find out the motive for the lying and wanting to get caught is and then deal with that.

Type B - consequences of behaviour, developing a sense of morality and the rights of others as being important.

Also, as with any piece of behaviour lying can become habitual. One particularly sees this with drug users. To live in the drug subculture one has to lie at least reasonably often, so it becomes a habit and then you find sometimes drug users will lie when there is no reason for them to. They simply do it because it is a habit.



Is this lying?

I remember a long time ago a 20 something year old woman came to see me. When asked why she was there she announced that she was a compulsive liar. The first thing I did was to get her to redefine herself as a creative story teller rather than a compulsive liar

Another possibility for such individuals is for them to consider creative writing. The good liar is a good story teller. Hans Christian Anderson was a very successful liar. He had the ability to present "false facts" in a convincing and effective manner. He made his lies seem very believable and thus people would 'get into' the story being told.

On June 23rd I wrote a post called Teaching the Child. In it I described how I

will draw out the Child ego state in people I was about to teach to. My goal is to get these people into a state of mind so they are ready to receive information. I was manipulating them. Any good teacher is a good manipulator because he does not just give information. Instead he gets them into a certain state of mind and then gives the information. The good story teller and good liar do the same. They get the person into a state of mind where they themselves will want to believe the lie even before it has been told.

This is done through the relational. If a man is about to deny to his wife that he is having an affair, he does not start with, "I didn't do it". Instead he starts with, "You know I love you". He gives the wife exactly what she wants to hear because she at least partly wants to be lied to because the facts are painful for her. She does not want to believe the truth and by professing his love to her the errant husband heightens her desire to not believe the truth. It's not about him convincing her its about her convincing herself.

Without a doubt we all lie and the person we lie to most, is ourselves. Humans are continually lying to themselves. We are very good at telling ourselves lies and then believing them. How we do it is by such means as denial, repression, intellectualisation, catastrophizing, projection, sublimation and so on endlessly. Technically these called the defence mechanisms, more accurately they could be called, "The ways we lie to ourselves".



When the truth hurts the Child ego state just closes its ears and eyes to reality. It wants to be lied to, at least in part. The effective liar will heighten the other's desire to be lied to and thus the liar will be more effective.