

## Teach The Child Not to Lie

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Childhood is a significant period during the life of the individual. Whatever he learns at this stage gets deeply embedded in him or her. Therefore, parents should try to provide a rich environment and experience to the child so that good habits, behaviour and attitude will be developed within them from the very beginning. Sometimes the children develop small misdemeanors. They are first out of ignorance or to make fun with their near and dear. One among them is lying. Parents are worried about the lying of their children. But they should understand the underlying meaning and causes of telling lie of a child.

### Causes

The habit of lying in children are based on a number of reasons inevitably connected with the psychological level commensurate with his age. The main causes for this habit are:

#### a) The imperfection of linguistic tools:

The child may well know his daddy and distinguish him from others. But so long as the word "man" is not a part of his vocabulary he may announce the approach of any stranger with the remark that "Daddy" is coming. The verbal expressions which undergo a similar development are often criticized as lies when the real meaning of the child's utterances is not understood.

#### b) Insufficient discrimination between reality and fancy

A child may distress his solicitous parents by clearing that he sees a fox, an elephant, or a fairy. This is not a hallucination nor is it a lie. "Make believe", which are child really "believes" for the moment is an essential and natural feature of his play activities. It is far more in keeping to invite the child to explain whether he means a real or make-believe elephant than to scold him for "lying".

#### c) Wrong interpretation and immature elaboration of things seen and heard

Genuine lies are comparatively late appearing. The child does not at first know what it means to misrepresent facts intentionally. It is the fact of lying that is acquired.

### Situations

Lying mostly originates in three types of situations.

- a) **Lying in Self- defence:** The more severe the parents' punitive measures, the greater is the temptation to lie.
- b) **Lying in imitation of adult behavior:** As mother notices the approach of an unwelcome visitor, she sends her son to the door with the instruction to tell the man that she is not at home. This is now many truthful children receive their first instruction in lying.
- c) **Lying in order to receive attention and admiration:** When the child lives in a monotonous environment in which "nothing happens" so he feels strongly tempted to gain the coveted attention by recounting invented adventures.

### Types

A lie may be **intelligent, unintelligent or fantastic**. An intelligent lie appears plausible. It is not easily detected. It serves the purpose well even though the purpose itself is not desirable. An unintelligent lie is easily recognized and it misses the point entirely. It is usually a feeble-minded reaction. Fantastic lies are often of a pathological nature (pathological lying as defined by Healy to falsification entirely disproportionate to any discernible end in view engaged in by a person who at the time of observation cannot definitely be declared insane feeble-minded or epileptic). Such lie rarely if ever centers about a single event it manifests itself more frequently over a considerable period of years or even a lifetime.

#### The various types of lying include:

- a) **Simple reversal of truth:** A child who has broken a valued case insists that he had not broken it.
- b) **Exaggerations:** The report of teacher's faint praise assumes the proportions of an expansive eulogy. Father's strength, income or influence is magnified in the conversation with playmates.

- c) **Fabrications:** A child comes home excitedly and depicts a fire or an automobile accident which has not taken place.
- d) **Invented reports:** A child plays truant, when upon coming home he is asked what happened in school not knowing the facts, he fills the gap with invented reports.
- e) **Wrong accusations:** the cat, the maid or sister is blamed for spilling the milk which the child has spilled.

### Management

The principal prophylactic and therapeutic aims lie in the direction of avoiding or correcting the main causes. Fear of punishment is unhealthy in more than one aspect. Sensible management will make the child understand that it is to his advantage to tell the

truth. He should not be bribed into confession by the promise of indemnity. Any intelligent child will appreciate fairness and accept reasonable criticism imparted calmly and without hostility. The use of force and trickery is apt to be met with spite and stubbornness. Parents should be careful not to deviate from the truth themselves, at least not in the child's presence. If certain conventional lies are a must it is best to explain them to the child. The parents, teachers should be the role model for the child. The importance of truthfulness in the form of great man's life story and poem may also be narrated to them at the time of going to bed for sleep. The parents or teachers may not be hesitated to praise the child for his truthfulness and good deed. It will work wonders and the child will be a noble citizen in future by shaping his personality from the childhood.

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