

“LITTLE WHITE LIES ... WHY HONESTY IS STILL THE BEST POLICY”

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I AM HERE TODAY TO SPEAK ABOUT LITTLE WHITE LIES, HOW THEY SURROUND US IN OUR EVERYDAY LIFE, THE EFFECT THEY HAVE ON US AS PARENTS, AND HOW THEY AFFECT OUR FAMILIES AND OUR FRIENDSHIPS.

TALK ABOUT A TOUGH SUBJECT! THE MORE I RESEARCHED, THE MORE CONCERNED I FELT – AS I REALIZED THE CONSTANT TRAPS WE FALL INTO ON A DAILY BASIS.

LET’S FACE IT, WE’RE ALL GUILTY. THINK BACK HOW IT ALL STARTED – AT SUCH AN EARLY AGE. YES, THERE IS A SANTA-PUT YOUR TOOTH UNDER THE PILLOW, SO THAT THE TOOTH FAIRY WILL COME – OR – LET’S SEE WHERE THE EASTER BUNNY HID THE EGGS. BELIEVABLE? YOU BET!! HARMLESS – FOR SURE. BUT WHITE LIES? YES!!

HOW DID WE FEEL WHEN WE DISCOVERED THE TRUTH? OUR PARENTS WERE QUESTIONED AND WE FELT DECEIVED AT THE EARLY AGE OF 8, 9 OR 10. THEN WE WERE FORCED TO THINK AND BEGAN TO QUESTION OUR PARENTS MORE OFTEN ABOUT WHAT WE THOUGHT WERE FABRICATIONS. AMAZING HOW IT ALL STARTED! – AND HOW HARMLESS EVERYTHING SEEMED.

BELIEVE ME, I AM NOT CONDEMNING THIS PHILOSOPHY-I LOVE SANTA, THE EASTER BUNNY AND THE TOOTH FAIRY – BUT I JUST WANT TO SHOW YOU HOW LITTLE THINGS, LITTLE FABRICATIONS, BECOME A PART OF OUR EVERYDAY LIFE. THINK ABOUT IT.

IN MY RESEARCH, I FOUND THAT LITTLE WHITE LIES ARE SEEN AS HARMLESS. THERE ARE MILLIONS OF THEM AND WE BECOME EXPERTS AT HOW WE USE THEM.

I’LL BE READY IN 5 MINUTES.

BOY, YOU LOOK GREAT!

BEST MEAL I EVER HAD!

OR HOW ABOUT CALLING IN SICK, WHEN WE WANT A DAY OFF – CREATE A GREAT EXCUSE, AND MAKE IT BELIEVABLE. FROM “THE DOG ATE MY HOMEWORK” TO “HONEST, OFFICER, I WASN’T SPEEDING” , IT IS NEVER-ENDING.

SO . . .LET'S TALK ABOUT SOME OF THESE LITTLE WHITE LIES.

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THERE ARE LIES OUT OF KINDNESS

GRANDMA KNITS YOU A SWEATER – AND YOU TELL HER HOW BEAUTIFUL IT IS.

THERE ARE LIES OUT OF CONVENIENCE

SOMEONE CALLS, AND YOU DON'T WANT TO TALK – “I'M NOT HERE.”

THERE ARE LIES TO AVOID EMBARRASSMENT

YOU KNOW. . .WHEN HE HAS A LITTLE “PROBLEM”, HE BLAMES IT ON THE DOG.

THERE ARE LIES TO GET THINGS WE WANT

YOU WANT AN I-PHONE, SO YOU SAY THAT YOUR PHONE IS BROKEN.

THERE ARE LIES TO MAKE OUR LIVES EASIER

JUST TELL THE IRATE CUSTOMER THAT YOU AGREE WITH HIM.

SELF-SERVING LIES TO HELP US GET OUT OF A JAM

HONEST, OFFICER . . .I WASN'T SPEEDING! ON THE OTHER HAND, HOW MANY OF YOU HAVE AVOIDED A TICKET BY BEING HONEST? YOU ARE RIGHT; I WAS SPEEDING. I WAS ON MY WAY TO CHURCH!

WE LIE TO SAVE RELATIONSHIPS

WE LIE TO BUY TIME

THE TRAFFIC IS REALLY BAD!

I COULD GO ON AND ON – BUT YOU GET THE IDEA. HOW MANY TIMES DO WE GET TO LIE, BEFORE WE BECOME A LIAR?

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SOME PEOPLE THINK IT IS FUN TO SEE HOW MUCH THEY CAN GET AWAY WITH – BUT IT GETS SCARY – ESPECIALLY WHEN IT GETS OUT OF CONTROL AND BECOMES A HABIT. YOU SEE . . . LITTLE LIES TURN INTO BIG LIES AND BIG LIES GET US INTO TROUBLE.

YOU CAN LOOK AT IT AND COMPARE IT TO A DRUNK DRIVER . . . IF YOU DON'T GET CAUGHT, IT'S FINE. BUT IF YOU DO, . . . YOU'RE LIFE CAN TURN UPSIDE DOWN.

THE QUESTION WE NEED TO ASK OURSELVES IS “WILL OUR LIE BE VIEWED AS A CONSIDERATE ACT OF KINDNESS – OR WILL IT CAUSE FEELINGS OF BETRAYAL AND DISTRUST? LIES CAN DAMAGE BUSINESS AND PERSONAL RELATIONSHIPS BECAUSE THEY GENERATE SUSPICION. BUT, ON THE OTHER HAND, IF WE TELL THE TRUTH, WILL IT HURT FEELINGS OR DO DAMAGE TO THE RELATIONSHIP?

I KNOW WE HAVE A VERY HIGH REGARD FOR HONESTY. WE BELIEVE IN KINDNESS, GRATITUDE, AND RESPECT BUT SOMETIMES PURE TRUTH CAN BE SENSELESSLY BRUTAL. HOW MANY TIMES DO WE CATCH OURSELVES SAYING, “DO YOU WANT AN HONEST ANSWER?” HOW SILLY DOES THAT SOUND? WHAT IF HE OR SHE RESPONDED, “WHY, ARE YOU USED TO LYING?”

IN A CULTURE WHERE LYING IS COMMON, THE OCCASIONAL LIAR FEELS LIKE A SAINT. IN THE LAND OF THE BLIND, THE ONE-EYED MAN IS KING. “I'M NOT SO BAD, AS LONG AS THE OTHERS ARE WORSE”. IT IS A RATIONALIZATION USED BY HONEST BUSINESSMEN, POLITICIANS, CHEATING ATHLETES, AND ON AND ON.

LOOK AT TODAY'S NEWS. POLITICIANS WILL TELL YOU WHAT YOU WANT TO HEAR. . . ANY KIND OF LIE FOR JUSTIFICATION. KIDS TODAY ARE EXPOSED TO SO MUCH AND ARE KEENLY AWARE OF WHAT GOES ON IN OUR WORLD- - THROUGH THE MEDIA, COMPUTERS, MUSIC, MOVIES AND FRIENDS. LIFE WASN'T MEANT TO BE EASY – IT IS COMPLICATED.

SO. . .WHAT DO WE DO? HOW DO WE RELATE THIS TO OUR KIDS AND INSTILL HONESTY IN THEM? KIDS ARE SMARTER THAN WE GIVE THEM CREDIT FOR. THEY OBSERVE, THEY COPY AND THEY IMITATE. IF WE ARE THEIR ROLE MODEL, IT IS OUR RESPONSIBILITY AS PARENTS TO INSTILL GOOD CHARACTER IN OUR CHILDREN. WE NEED TO HELP THEM UNDERSTAND THE DOWNSIDE OF TELLING A LIE AND THE REPERCUSIONS THAT CAN FOLLOW. WE ARE THEIR MIRROR.

WE HAVE TO LEAD BY EXAMPLE!! WE NEED TO TELL THE TRUTH AND HELP THEM UNDERSTAND THE CONCEPT OF WHITE LIES. WE CAN'T EXAGGERATE OR EMBELLISH AND WE NEED TO FOLLOW THROUGH ON OUR PROMISES. WE NEED TO BE CAREFUL OF WHAT WE SAY AND HOW WE SAY IT. KIDS LOOK FORWARD TO WHAT WE PROMISE AND THEY COUNT ON US.

WE CANNOT STRESS ENOUGH WITH OUR KIDS THE COMPLICATIONS THAT RESULT FROM LYING. . .THE BROKEN TRUST, THE HURT FEELINGS, THE LOWERING OF CONFIDENCE AND SELF-ESTEEM. IT SHAKES THE FOUNDATION WITHIN OUR FAMILY AND WITH OUR FRIENDSHIPS.

TOWER OF TRUST ACTIVITY

OTHER ACTIVITIES: "WEAVING A WEB OF LIES", "THE EGGSHELL IN VINEGAR", A FAMILY OR CLASSROOM CONTRACT.

STORIES: HANS CHRISTIAN ANDERSEN'S "THE EMPEROR'S CLOTHES", "THE BOY WHO CRIED WOLF".

GOOD FAMILY RESOURCE: "10 LITTLE LIFE LESSONS FOR CHILDREN".

NOW ANOTHER KEY ELEMENT I WANT TO STRESS IS THAT OF COMMUNICATION. I FEEL THAT COMMUNICATION IS ONE OF THE MOST POWERFUL GIFTS WE SHARE WITH OUR KIDS. WE COMMUNICATE

ABOUT LIFE, THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN RIGHT AND WRONG, AND ABOUT THE CONSEQUENCES.

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WE NEED TO TALK ABOUT CONSCIENCE AND SHARE STORIES ABOUT THOSE VOICES IN YOUR HEAD THAT QUESTION WHAT IS RIGHT AND WHAT IS WRONG. THE ANGEL ON ONE SIDE AND THE DEVIL ON THE OTHER TEMPTING YOU INTO WHAT CHOICE YOU SHOULD MAKE OR WHAT PATH YOU SHOULD TAKE. WITH OUR THREE KIDS, I USED TO SAY "IF YOU TELL ME THE TRUTH, YOU WILL GET IN LESS TROUBLE."

WE NEED TO STAY CONNECTED AS A FAMILY AND WE HAVE TO CREATE AN ATMOSPHERE WHERE OUR KIDS FEEL SAFE AND UNTHREATENED WHEN THEY COME TO US WITH THEIR CONCERNS AND PROBLEMS . . . SORT OF AN "OPEN-DOOR POLICY" WHERE THEY SHARE THEIR IDEAS AND ARE OPEN ABOUT THEIR FEELINGS. WE HAVE TO PRAISE THEM FOR TELLING THE TRUTH AND SHOWING GOOD CHARACTER. SO – MY 4 C'S ARE: COMMUNICATION, CONSCIENCE, CONNECTION AND CHARACTER.

I WILL BE HANDING OUT SHEETS ON CHARACTER BECAUSE THE BUILDING OF GOOD CHARACTER IS OF UPMOST IMPORTANCE WITHIN THE FAMILY. THESE SHEETS WILL EMPHASIZE THE 6 PILLARS OF CHARACTER COUNTS: THOSE OF: TRUSTWORTHINESS, RESPECT, RESPONSIBILITY, FAIRNESS, CARING AND CITIZENSHIP. WITHIN THE PILLAR OF TRUSTWORTHINESS ARE 4 CONCEPTS: INTEGRITY, HONESTY, PROMISE-KEEPING (RELIABILITY) AND LOYALTY. CHARACTER IS WHO YOU ARE WHEN NO ONE IS LOOKING! YOU ARE THE TREE AND YOUR REPUTATION IS THE SHADOW. HOW DO YOU WANT TO BE REMEMBERED? THE GOLDEN RULE. . . DO WHAT IS RIGHT, GOOD AND KIND IN WHAT YOU THINK, SAY AND DO.

ONE FINAL NOTE BEFORE SIGNING OFF AND OPENING IT UP TO DISCUSSION AND QUESTIONS: WE NEED TO ANSWER AND UNDERSTAND THE QUESTION OF "WHY DO OUR KIDS LIE?" QUITE SIMPLY, IT IS FOR THE SAME REASON THAT ADULTS LIE . . . THE FEAR OF GETTING IN TROUBLE OR BEING ALIENATED – THE SAME REASON WE FABRICATE OUR STORIES TO "OFFICER DIBBLE". PEOPLE SOMETIMES PRETEND TO BE SOMEONE ELSE AND THEY FABRICATE STORIES ABOUT THEMSELVES OR THEIR FRIENDS.

IF YOU TOOK AWAY THE FEAR OF PUNISHMENT, WOULD YOU TAKE AWAY THE LYING? IF WE CAN CONTINUE TO EMPHASIZE THE POWER OF HONESTY, OUR KIDS WILL CONTINUE TO GROW AND BE THE LEADERS IN OUR WORLD TOMORROW.

For more information, visit the following websites:

www.charactercounts.com

www.goodcharacter.com

For handouts from this workshop, please call the LEAD office at 847-295-9075 or email: lead9075@aol.com