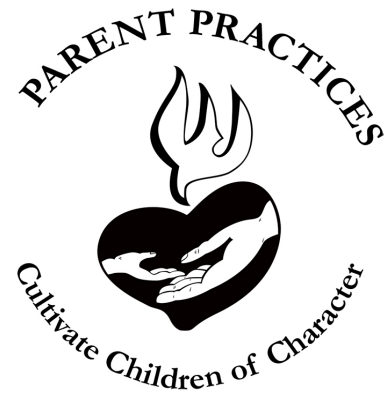


Redirect Lying, Cheating & Exaggerating, Part 2/2



Part One defined lying, cheating and exaggerating. It suggested what motivates these basic human tendencies. This newsletter offers parent-suggested advice for developing a truthful character.

Archbishop Fulton Sheen once said, "It is easier to create faith than to restore it." Understanding the power of those words and making efforts to reduce the fear factor are effective tools to shape the value of honesty within a child. Explain that toys can be mended; test grades can be improved; material things can be replaced; and restitution and consequences can correct poor choices. But **lying or cheating breaks the trust that we have for each other**. If we cannot trust the word of another, we cannot grow in relationship. The specific problem is insignificant compared to the value of truth and our ability to trust each other. It is better to tell the truth and take the consequence than to lie and lose the trust of another person.

Own up to your own mistakes. Be an example of directness and honesty; and use these suggestions to promote the virtue of honesty within your children:

QUESTIONS: Avoid asking a "yes" or "no" question that invites your child to tell a lie. Instead ask, "Where did you get that candy bar?" Ask your child why he lied or ask him to explain a particular behavior, i.e., fear, peer pressure, inadequacy, resentment.

TEACHING TOOL: View correcting a lie as a valuable opportunity to teach a lesson about moral behavior, restitution and responsibility. Avoid shaming.

ATTENTION SEEKING: If a child arranges a situation where she will be caught in a lie or an instance of cheating, she is probably trying to get parental attention. Increase practices that help her feel that she belongs and contributes; and that she is wanted, preferred, needed, and noticed.

POWER STRUGGLE: If a child is caught in a lie but denies it, his motivation may be a desire for power. Increase practices that help him develop self-reliance, respectful independence, and decision-making capability. Involve him in accountability and logical consequences for behavior. Use encouragement that is helpful, directional, empowering, and skill-related.

RESENTMENT: If dishonest behavior seems revenge-based, increase practices that foster initiative by placing more emphasis on effort than on results. Demonstrate that mistakes are redeemable. Increase opportunities for your child to experience fairness, justice, respect, reasonableness, consideration, and appreciation.

INFERIORITY: If lying is motivated by inadequacy, despair, or inferiority increase opportunities for your child to experience accomplishment, capability, skillfulness, diligence, and responsibility. Give him a task that requires steady care over time; help him manage time, set goals, and learn ways "to plan his work and work his plan."

TEACHABLE MOMENTS: As teachable moments for your child, use TV shows, movies, cartoons, books, and observable real-life situations that illustrate the effects of dishonesty on relationships. Explain how lying can become a vicious cycle, i.e., a lie to cover a lie.

CORRECTION: Separate the child from the deed. The act was bad; not the child. Involve God as a loving Father who offers life-giving advice. Jesus came to redeem and heal and show us the way to the Father.

REPAIR: When a lie affects others, teach your child to acknowledge the untruth, apologize, and to ask forgiveness.

PERSPECTIVE: If you sense that the purpose of your child's lying is to irk or annoy you, downgrade the seriousness of the situation. Act casual and very little impressed while applying the logical consequences of the behavior involved.

REDUCE FEAR: Lessen the fear factor associated with telling the truth. Teach your child to say something like, "Don't get mad about what I am going to tell you." Be extra calm. Respond rather than react.