



Honesty is The Healthiest Policy



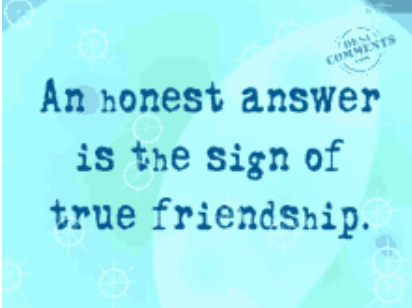
We're back with another issue of Positive Pulse, the e-newsletter for everything to do with healthy living. This month's theme is honesty!

- Being honest can actually improve your health.
- It is important to not only be truthful to others, but also to yourself.
- Sometimes honesty isn't the best policy when feelings can get hurt.

After you're done reading, [don't forget to listen to our webinars every Tuesday! You can find registration links and recordings here.](#)

We are also holding Healthy Lifestyles Project: LIVE events, every Wednesday at 11 AM and Friday at 1 PM. [Register here.](#)

Honesty &



An honest answer
is the sign of
true friendship.

Being Honest Improves Your Self-Esteem

- A study done by psychologist Robert S. Feldman at the University of Massachusetts revealed that the rate at which people lie is about one lie per ten minutes of conversation.
- He also concluded that the main reason people lie is to seem friendlier or more competent than they really are. In other words, they want to gain the friendship or admiration of others.
- Based on this study, other experts have suggested that these kinds of lies fulfill the role of concealing reality from some people. The reason is that deep down, people see their lives and ways of being as uninteresting and unworthy of other people's recognition.
- The curious thing about all of this is that authenticity is one of the most valued and admired character traits. This means that the more sincere a person is when they talk about themselves and the way they are, the more likely it is that they'll win other people's sympathy and admiration. This all contributes to an increase in self-esteem, which feeds back into the cycle: more sincerity, more acceptance, increase in self-esteem.

Honesty Reduces Anxiety

- The problem with lying is that it puts you in a never-ending cycle of lies. If you tell someone that you're a rock star, for example, you'll have to invent a hundred other lies for the first lie to be credible. For the person who lies, the worst thing that could happen is to be found out.
- So not only do they have to have a good imagination, but they probably also need to spend a lot of time trying to keep their story straight, so that they're not caught in the lie. This means they need to have a good memory so they don't contradict themselves.
- This demands a strong emotional expenditure that, sooner or later, manifests as stress and anxiety. They have to keep their attention on alert so that they don't get confused, which only increases the tension.
- When you're honest, you never have to carry that much weight. You don't have to go along creating explanations, or spend time spicing up your story with details that make it credible. This allows you to be more relaxed and act more naturally, which avoids an enormous waste of emotional energy so you can use it on more important things.

Honesty and Health

- Doctor Anita E. Kelly, professor of psychology at the University of Notre Dame and director of the Templeton Foundation, conducted a study to investigate the effects of honesty on health.
- To do so, she acquired a group of 72 volunteers and divided them into two groups. One group was instructed to be completely honest in all of their conversations, while the other group received no instructions about honesty. The group who had to be honest specifically couldn't lie, even about seemingly small or trivial subjects. The exercise lasted for five weeks.
- During the time of the study, the volunteers from both groups had their health monitored and took weekly polygraph tests. Once the experiment was over, they saw a clear difference in health between the people who were honest and the people who lied.
- The former presented less headaches, sore throats, nausea, and dizziness, while

the latter showed no change in these symptoms.

- The results were so encouraging that even the researcher decided to be completely honest the following winter. She noted that she didn't have to sleep as many hours to feel fully rested, and that she didn't get colds anymore, which would always afflict her during cold weather.

SOURCE: <https://exploringyourmind.com/3-ways-honesty-can-improve-health/>



Be Honest With Yourself

Stop Putting Off Dreams

- Perhaps the biggest lie we tell over and over again is "I am not worthy of my dreams." The second biggest lie is that "I can always start to chase that dream tomorrow".
- We may come up with excuse after excuse for not pursuing dreams.
- But once you get honest with yourself, you may release it is a fear of failure holding you back.
- But this will be time not spent pursuing your passions. Be honest about what's holding you back and start chasing your dreams now.

Own Up To Your Mistakes

- Living an authentic life means taking responsibility for the good and the bad that you do. If you avoid the truth and act as though you did nothing often places you in a worse position than if you had owned up to your mistake.
- If you are deathly afraid of owning up to a mistake made at work, school or program you may literally lose sleep over your mistake and keep telling yourself that it's better to just let time do its thing instead of admitting it was your fault.
- But when you own up to a mistake you may find that people can be incredibly kind and understanding about the whole thing.
- At the very least, being honest will bring you relief over worrying about the consequences of being found out.

Don't Shrug Off Your Feelings

- When you constantly avoid how you are feeling, the feeling only amplifies. This is because your emotions are designed to be action signals. So if you ignore the signal over and over again, eventually it will get so loud that you have to listen. And this is when you can experience a full-on nervous breakdown or panic attack.
- Being honest and admitting what you're feeling is the first step to starting to change that emotion to the one you actually want to be feeling.
- So instead of stuffing your feelings deep down, have the courage to honestly face them and listen to what they want to tell you.

Realize You Don't Know Everything

- Sometimes we are not being honest with ourselves about what we don't know. And this is when imposter syndrome can really start to creep in.
- But what is not discussed is the power that can come from admitting that you don't know it all. Embracing a growth mindset typically causes more people to be drawn to you and want to engage with what you have to offer because they know

you're not trying to schmooze them over.

- Being honest with both myself and yourself about what you do not know actually fosters a better relationship between you where you are able to grow and find answers together.

Get Honest Feedback

- If you really can't seem to find a way to be honest with yourself, then it's time to find a trusted loved one to tell you how it really is.
- This means you need someone who is not afraid to "hurt your feelings" and cares enough to be authentically raw with their feedback.
- This one can be tough to implement. Ask a friend to give truthful feedback about what you should do. They may preface their feedback with an, "Are you sure you really want to know?" statement.
- But they will hopefully be honest with you and let you hear the truth from a more objective view. Try and listen and see if it resonates with you.

SOURCE:

<https://www.trackinghappiness.com/how-to-be-honest-with-yourself/>



When To Avoid Too Much Honesty

Best Interests At Heart

- There are classic examples of lying being detrimental, and the most damaging kinds of lies tend to be those that promote your own self-interests at the expense of others.
- But "prosocial" lies—fibs intended to benefit others—can actually build trust between people, according to research.
- People care about whether you have good intentions a lot more than whether the person is being honest per se.
- Just remember: Lies are most beneficial when they're not selfish. If you tell your partner he or she looks great before a date to boost his or her self-esteem, that's one thing. But saying it just to get your loved one out the door because you're already late is where your motive can veer into selfish territory.

If There's No Time To Change

- Say your friend asks you how he or she looks right before walking on stage for a speaking event, or enquires about what you think of the speech just prior to reaching the podium. Even if you notice a stain on his or her outfit, or think the speech could use work, think about whether the person has the time to react to the information and control the situation.
- If there's nothing they can do to improve or make a change in that moment, you might welcome deception. Lying in this sense is likely seen as benefitting the other person because there's truly nothing he or she can do in the moment.
- Conversely, if they have the capacity to react to the information, honesty is the better choice.

Constructive Criticism

- When sharing feedback, honesty is important. And while it's easy to use "I'm just being honest" as an excuse for just being mean, brutal honesty isn't always the most effective way to get your message across.

- Instead of telling a low-performing employee that he's performing terribly, consider saying something like, "You've had a rocky start, but everyone struggles at the beginning," then segueing into constructive criticism. Your feedback will likely be received better which in turn will benefit your business in the long run.
- Try the "compliment sandwich" where you stick a compliment before and after the hard to take criticism.

Right Before A Special Occasion

- The debate over lying is not only about whether honest information can help the situation, but also whether that information is delivered at the right time. One thing people care about is whether honest information will distract them from something important.
- An example: You hear your friend's company is expecting layoffs right before she leaves for her wedding. Should you tell her? In these situations, people tend to appreciate withholding the truth until later.
- It comes back to the idea of control—if your friend is about to leave for her wedding or honeymoon, she won't be in a position to preemptively explore other job opportunities. And while every situation is different, consider asking yourself whether honesty in a situation like this would truly benefit the other person—or simply be a distraction.

If You're Not Close With The Person

- Mild and well-intentioned deception can be even more beneficial in distant relationships. In more competitive relationships or first interactions, honesty is a lot more precarious and can damage relationships and reduce trust.
- That's because both parties are less familiar with the other person's true intentions and they each might wonder, is this person trying to undermine me?
- Still, if you're inclined to give honest feedback to a more distant acquaintance or a friend of a friend, try providing the truth coupled with benevolence—something along the lines of, I really want you to do well, so I'm giving you this criticism.
- Close relationships, on the other hand, can give way to more of an appreciation for honesty and confessing to friends is likely not as bad as you think. We systematically overestimate how uncomfortable truth-telling will actually be.

SOURCE: <https://time.com/5406989/when-better-to-lie-than-tell-truth/>

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The Horizon Foundation for New Jersey

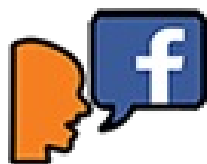
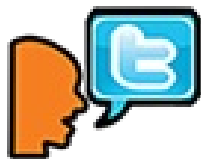
The [Healthy Lifestyles Project \(HLP\)](#) is a program of The Arc of New Jersey and receives funding through a grant awarded by [The Horizon Foundation for New Jersey](#).

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