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Is it Okay to Lie?

The question about whether it is okay to lie is an age-old one. However, when we take a look around us, it becomes obvious that everyone lies to some extent, including politicians, lawyers, and advertisers. Lying is common and acceptable in many professions. But, is it really okay to lie? Under certain circumstances, lying is not only okay, but must be relied upon in possible life-or-death situations.

In actuality, children begin lying at a very young age, but their lying is a sign of their growing thinking skills. According to one study done in 2002 at the University of Toronto, researchers found that 54% of three-year-olds lied about peeking at a toy, and about three-quarters of four-to-seven year olds told the same kind of lie (Moyer). Thus, lying is not only normal, but it also shows development of a part of their brains that perform executive functions, such as planning, memory, and inhibitory control (Moyer). Many similar studies show that lying, under certain circumstances, is actually a sign of healthy brain development in children. Since nearly everyone lies, it is a completely normal part of being human. In fact, there are situations in life where lying is okay because it may help save your life.

Most children are taught by their parents the concept of "stranger danger". Stranger danger is when a child should beware of a potential threat to their safety posed by strangers. In these situations, lying can be an advantage. For example, if a child's mother went to the grocery store and the child happened to be outside on his bike when an unknown man approached him, and asked if his parents were home, lying is a good idea. If the man planned on kidnapping the child, the man might be discouraged if the child said one

of his parents were home (National Crime Prevention Council). Thus, it is important for children to learn that there are certain circumstances where lying is a must.

However, many people may argue that lying teaches children that it is okay to lie as adults, that lying teaches kids how to get away with illegal behavior. If this were true, then we could not have a functioning society (Holliday). For instance, we need the military to lie in order to protect national security (Holliday). For example, during wars, the government must lie in order to protect our troops' positions and tactics. Other people might contend that lying is wrong because, once we are caught in a lie, no one will ever trust us again. The fact is, however, that we must lie under certain circumstances to protect our safety. For example, if a person were asked by a terrorist whether he is an American, it is probably necessary to lie and say that he is from another English-speaking country (Holliday). Thus, lying performs the important task of helping save lives.

Everyone lies. There is no way around the facts, as people lie during their childhood, researchers have discovered. Lying shows normal growth of our brains, and lying can help save children's lives during crucial times. Lying is okay, under many circumstances, because it helps society function smoothly, and lying can also help save lives. The denial that lying is abnormal, and trying to encourage everyone to tell the truth all of the time will disrupt the functioning of society, and could cause harm to many people.

Works Cited

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