

The irony in "tell the truth but tell it slant" by emily dickenson essay sample

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The irony cannot be missed in Emily Dickenson’s poem “ Tell the Truth But Tell it Slant”. This poem is read like a church hymn, advising the reader to not exactly tell the blunt truth if asked. Thus, in the cadence of very familiar moving religious tunes, Dickinson implores one to tell the truth, but to give it an angle that makes it more palatable to the listener. Dickinson either wished to dramatically touch the spiritual side of the individual as he read the poem, or she was totally irreverent concerning religion. Either interpretation serves to get the message across. Dickinson believes that most individuals do not possess the ability to handle truth with grace. Truth hurts. An example in its simplest form could be described as follows. An individual wishing to tell a significant other “ I am sick of you! I do NOT want to date you anymore!” will find the message accepted more readily, and handled with more dignity if, in the telling, the truth is couched in a little white lie.

“ I don’t deserve a wonderful person like you; I could not ever be good enough for you, and since you ought to have someone much better than me; I am going to step out of your life and allow you to find someone more worthy of your wonderful qualities.” The truth, put into a sugar coated “ line,” is less emotionally damaging and the receiver of the bad news will possibly remain more composed and self confident than hearing the truth. Therefore, the truth, bent, is less harsh to the listener. Truth is personified, giving it a life of its own in Dickinson’s poem. The irony of a hymn-like poem suggesting the “ darker edge of truth” gives an eerie quality to the very <https://assignbuster.com/the-irony-in-tell-the-truth-but-tell-it-slant-by-emily-dickenson-essay-sample/>

honesty of Dickinson's revelation. Then again, perhaps a hymn is what our world needs to face possible unknowns.