

it a habit to treat others as we want to be treated, it becomes much easier. Each time we interact with another person, we must ask, “If I were that other person, what would I want me to say or do?” Of course, we want to be told the truth.

As we strive to implement the Golden Rule in our lives—treat others like we would want to be treated—we also must try to identify and remove the short-term selfish actions from our lives that destroy our friendships.

For example, many of us found as little children that we could escape an uncomfortable or boring situation in life by asserting “I have to go to the restroom.” That is a statement normally made based upon our private bodily feelings to which others do not have access. So as long as we do not do it too often, we learn that we can avoid situations we do not like by asserting a fact that may not be true, but that nobody else can quickly disprove.

Some learn to avoid unwanted situations by asserting “I feel sick”—a claim that others cannot easily disprove. That false claim may work for a while—but then collapse when the child is found vigorously playing. When caught, some children decide to cease their lying ways; others learn to become better liars—making up an explanation why they suddenly feel better.

To successfully overcome the habit of lying, one has to want truth and real friendship more than one wants the temporary benefits of telling tall tales. One has to be willing to overcome each little step that one took down the wrong path, and replace it with the right path.

This does not mean that we can suddenly gain back all of the **friends and family that we lost through lying**. Some of them are so badly offended that it may take years for them to see that we have changed. But the only way to gain them back is to get started down the right path. Here are some positive things we can do:

If you have some **current friends** to whom you have said some false things, try apologizing to them and setting the record straight. While this will be difficult and may result in the loss of some friends, it will also be the start of long-term relationships with others. It will also be an ongoing reminder of the difficulty caused by telling friends things that are not true.

Make every effort be truthful with **new friends**, even when it is very scary and we think we have to lie. There are times when wisdom indicates we should not say some things or answer some questions. But we do not have to lie. For example, the person whom we barely know that asks how much money we have or earn, may need to be politely told that they are not getting that information—but not told something false. The ugly person who asks, “How do I look?” may need to here that you are glad that they are trying to improve their appearance—when they are not emotionally able to receive a direct answer to their question.

The Effort Is Worth It

This writer has known people who have lived much of their lives lying to people whenever it seemed helpful to them. They were lonely, angry, depressed and sometimes vengeful. Most were involved with substance abuse, and several were responsible for their own deaths. It is not a happy way to spend the life that we have.

Honest people, even though they may have lost their wealth to the trickery of liars, always have the love of many friends to whom they have been truthful—even to their dying days. Lifelong friends are worth the effort! 📖

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Finding Lifelong Friends

Have you ever wondered why some people have many friendships that go on and on, while others apparently have no longterm friends? Have you met people who make friends quickly, but seem to lose them just as quickly?

Do the ones with friends just happen to meet all the right people, and the ones without friends meet all the wrong people? Or is there something that people actually do that causes them to have many friends—or **no friends**?

This little article will show you that there is a reason why these things happen. You will see how anyone can become the kind of person who has many long-lasting friends.

You do not need money, nice clothes, social skills, good connections or an attractive face or body. These things may help you make friends more quickly in some situations, but they will not keep good friends and they can actually work against you—producing false friends who want to use you.

The way to keep friends is quite simple and clearly within your grasp. **Treat others the way you want to be treated, which includes always**
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being truthful to them. We do not like people to lie to us, so we do not lie to them.

If you are telling yourself, “I already do that,” then you probably need to keep reading. The greatest difficulty in changing one's life is not making the changes—it is recognizing the need to change.

Most people who have trouble keeping friends blame their ex-friends for the problem. Unless people stop to consider what they could do to change themselves, they will probably die blaming their ex-friends.

Many today have grown up with parents who were untruthful, or they have been untruthful for so long that it seems to be a normal way of life. Unless one thinks hard to look into one's own soul, the necessary answers will not come.

Does your definition of lying go like this: “Lying is saying something that is not true and then somebody else catches you doing it.” In other words, is a lie not a lie until someone figures it out? Indeed, if nobody ever figures it out, nobody will ever call you a liar. But that means that you cannot have any friends that are close enough to you that they could figure it out. Do you keep your distance, and keep on going?

No! You do not want to live your life wondering which of your friends might figure out which of your past lies. That produces anxiety and frequently loses friends. You want to learn to live with truth. And you can!

Some Questions for You

Consider the following list and ask yourself how often you say or think these things to yourself:

1. “I never said that.” (when you actually did say that—or something like it)
2. “What they don't know won't hurt them.”
3. “Who is going to know?” (what I did)

4. “It could have happened the way I said.”
5. “They will never figure it out anyway.”
6. “That was the only way I could get what I needed”
7. “What I said (or did) isn't as bad as what they said (or did) to me.”
8. “They deserved it.”
9. “Just because I'm more creative with my answers doesn't mean I'm a bad person.”
10. “They believed me, they're happy about it, so it's O.K.”
11. “I was just kidding.” (when people unexpectedly find out something you said)
12. “I didn't mean to hurt anybody by that.” (when you know you were bad to them).
13. “I would never lie to you”, “I swear on a Bible”, or any of thousands of other sayings people use to assert something is true when they are not telling the truth.

How did you do? Were there a lot of “sometimes” answers? Would you believe that there are people who can honestly say “almost never” to all 13 of the above? And those people have a lot of long-term friends!

Unfortunately, just one negative experience can end a friendship. Can you think about how

Abusive Relationships Don't Count

Some relationships endure even when one person frequently lies to the other—but these are usually **abusive** relationships, not friendships. An employee may appear to be friends with a lying boss, but does so because he is afraid to lose a job. A woman may accept a lying boyfriend because he provides for her in some way. A man may continue with an untruthful manipulative woman, because it is the only place sex is available to him. On the other hand, two skilled liars may be each other's friends because they can tell when the other is lying, so they remain together, continuing to deceive and alienate other potential friends. None of these patterns are healthy.

you felt when somebody lied to you? It is easier to use the “lie” word about someone else than it is about ourselves. How often do we say, “They lied to me”? How seldom do we say, “I lied to them”?

When someone is on the receiving end of one of the above 13 points—when those things are said or done to them—it affects relationships. When one is the victim of multiple lies or deceptions, the only kinds of “friendships” that survive are abusive ones (see box).

Often, people who struggle with telling the truth will point out how much their clever, but untruthful approaches have done for them. What they underestimate is how many people, after days or even years, find out that someone has lied to them or used them. People talk, coincidences happen, people ask questions they “were not supposed to ask”. Often, the longer it takes them to figure out the lie, or the more sophisticated the lie was, the more upset the person is with the one who lied to them.

Sometimes, people will confront a friend when they believe they have been lied to. They may receive quite an argument—maybe a batch of new lies to cover the old one. There is a tendency for liars to keep honing their skills and tell “better” lies. The “better” a liar is, the less likely they are to get help for a problem. People they offend usually just drop them as a friend. Hence, the person who tells lies concludes that all these people are unfriendly and it is their fault.

But the result is the lack of lifelong friends for the person who is struggling to tell the truth. They may learn to make new friends very quickly, but they cannot keep them. The good news is, that person can reverse the situation.

Making Your Life Better

We do not naturally think about how other people will perceive our actions. We naturally think about what we want. But if we try to make