

BOTTOM LINE INTEGRITY

By

Dr. Darlene Treese

"If humanity does not opt for integrity we are through completely. It is absolutely touch and go. Each one of us could make the difference." – Buckminster Fuller

Integrity has 3 definitions: (1) firm adherence to a strict moral or ethical code; (2) the state of being unimpaired – soundness; (3) the quality or condition of being whole or undivided - complete. No matter which definition we choose, a life of integrity seems to be the exception rather than the rule. If someone you trusted has deceived you, you know that lies can undermine credibility, disintegrate relationships and erode trust. So why do we tell lies and why do we believe them? Can we become more discerning about how much to trust without becoming overly suspicious?

The purpose of lying is to create the reality we want. We lie because we believe it is the best thing we can do on our own behalf. We may call them white lies, false statements, mental reservations, evasions, or exaggerations, but whatever we say that is not the truth is an untruth. We live in a world of deception. Some people are masters at telling us what we want to hear and what they want us to believe. Lying is gaining acceptance as a philosophy of life. We exaggerate our circumstances to pump up our egos or to conceal shame, fear and disappointment. We lie to avoid getting caught. We lie to gain financially. Telephone scams defraud thousands of people. Figures are manipulated on tax returns and profit/loss statements. False claims are submitted to insurance companies. Companies make outrageous promises to promote their services, products or stock.

Why do we believe lies? In a world of deception where people twist words, facts and figures, why don't we ask questions or check sources? Part of the reason is that we don't want to admit that we can be gullible and manipulated. Also it means confronting our own exaggerations and lies that we've told. Denial is a lot less work! Liars count on our trust as much as we want to believe them and lies divert our search for truth and destroy our integrity. When confronted with their lies, people may use these defense mechanisms: **denial** (I did not!), **blame** (He made me do it), **anger** (intimidate, distract from the original issue), **justification** (I can do what I want. Everyone's doing it. Give me a break – I made an error in judgment this one time), **hide behind an honorable intention** (I had to do it save the company), **challenge to your authority or judgment** (What a goody two shoes you are! You're too sensitive. I thought I could trust you to keep this confidential. How could you even think this after all we've been through?).

Rebuilding trust is hard work. The liar must take responsibility and realize that trust must be earned. You must do what many liars cannot: acknowledge the good and the bad within yourself, reconnect with your own integrity, and learn from past encounters with deception. There are very practical reasons for leading a life of integrity. You can enjoy success through your reputation for honesty. You will have less stress and concern and feel better about yourself. Since you do not fear being discovered, you will have more peace of mind and confidence. Good relationships are based on mutual trust. When trust is gone, relationships are hollow, shallow and they lack joy. Good leadership training shows the importance and value in having pride in what you do and whom you are. In our age of information deceptions and lies will be discovered sooner or later. Dishonesty is inefficient. The right thing to do is seldom the easy thing to do. But it's worth it.

Dr. Darlene Treese has been in private practice in hypnosis and counseling since 1983. She is a Diplomate in Counseling with the National Institute of Sports, Past President of the American Psychotherapy and Medical Hypnosis Association and Vice President of the Rotary eClub of Southwest, USA. Darlene has been internationally acknowledged for her positive action and solution-based therapies and work with corporations. "A person for the people," Dr. Dar is always available to help with your questions and dilemmas through office visits, email or telephone consultations. Call her at **850-201-0073** or visit **www.AskDrTreese.com**