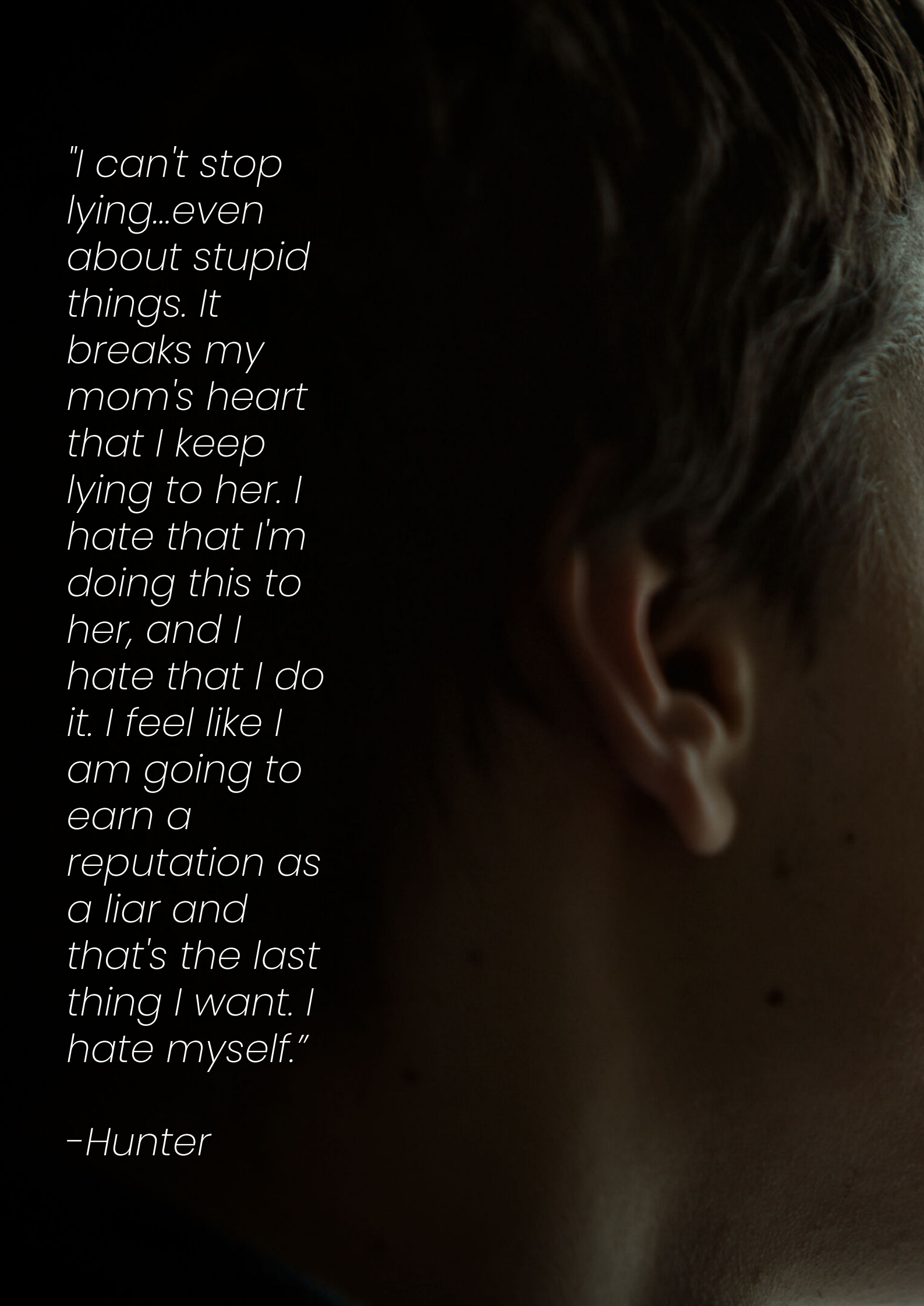


UNDERSTANDING LYING

“Why Do People Lie and How To Stop.”

THE **HOPE** LINE

TheHopeLine.com



*"I can't stop
lying...even
about stupid
things. It
breaks my
mom's heart
that I keep
lying to her. I
hate that I'm
doing this to
her, and I
hate that I do
it. I feel like I
am going to
earn a
reputation as
a liar and
that's the last
thing I want. I
hate myself."*

-Hunter

Lying is such a big part of our modern society that it's nearly commonplace these days. From the media spinning hearsay into "news stories" to the latest gossip in the school hallway, it's hard to decipher what's actually true.

Many people lie for various reasons, like trying to make themselves look better in front of others or to hide a painful truth. No matter what the rationale, lying can easily become a dangerous cycle to fall into. If you struggle with lying or are unable to free yourself from the cycle of lying, there is hope and help for you.

Why Do People Lie?

When people don't feel comfortable with the truth, they often find ways to change the story to avoid feeling judged or embarrassed. Once it works a couple times, lying becomes an "easy" fix for many problems but inevitably makes life more complicated. There are a variety of common reasons why people lie, including:

- Need for approval or wanting to please others
- Trying to make oneself appear to be "better" than they really are
- Controlling a situation or response
- Hiding true feelings or fear of vulnerability
- "Protecting" someone or themselves
- Maintaining a sense of power over others or a situation

*"We tell lies when we are afraid...
afraid of what we don't know,
afraid of what others will think,
afraid of what will be found out
about us. But every time we tell a
lie, the thing that we fear grows
stronger."*

-Tad



**Lying is the best way to destroy
any trust someone might have in you.**



Different Types of Lies

Lying by omission. While it might not technically seem like lying, leaving out key facts or details in a story is *not* telling the complete truth. By leaving out details purposefully, you mislead others and give them a false sense of reality.

Telling "white lies." No matter how small or "harmless" they seem, white lies are still lies. They may make a particular social interaction feel easier in the moment, but it's always better to be truthful yet tactful.

Exaggerating the facts. Similar to "white lies," exaggerating the facts and not representing something honestly leads to trouble. People who tend to exaggerate usually do this because they feel an unhealthy need for approval from others. When reality inevitably fails to live up to the story, the liar ends up looking bad, dishonest, unreliable, and potentially hurtful.

Outright lying. Some people completely falsify information about themselves, others, or situations. In this type of situation, the person lying might do it for sport, to see if they can control someone, or because of deep shame about the truth. From saying you got an "A" when you really got a "D" to claiming that you've never, *ever* exchanged texts with that one girl, outright lies are a cruel manipulation of another person's reality.

Spreading rumors. Gossip and rumors are part of everyday life in our society—even the media treats it as news! When you knowingly spread rumors or stories that aren't confirmed to be true, you are participating in dishonesty.



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Pathological Lying

Beyond the occasional instance of lying, a regular cycle of persistent lying may be pathological and points to mental health issues such as sociopathy. Pathological lying is defined as “a long history of frequent and repeated lying for which no apparent psychological motive or external benefit can be discerned.” There are a variety of personality and behavioral disorders that are related to pathological lying, from narcissism to ADHD. Although no pathological liar exhibits exactly the same characteristics, here are signs to look for:

- Narcissistic or self-centered behaviors
- Abusive behavior
 - Deceptive, manipulative actions
- Impulsive decision-making
 - Mood swings, including being easily/angered
 - Lacking empathy
 - Unable to stop lying, even when confronted

If you're struggling with pathological lying, or you suspect that a loved one might be, reach out for help.

[Chat online with our trained HopeCoaches.](#)

How to Stop Lying

Lying can feel like a never-ending cycle when you're caught up in it. However, that doesn't have to be your story. You **can** stop the cycle today and start a journey towards honesty and healing.

Recognize lying is an issue. The truth isn't always easy to hear (or to speak). The first step in stopping the cycle of lying is **being honest with yourself** and admitting you have a problem with lying. Once you recognize the issue, you can move forward with real change and healing for yourself and those around you.

Be true to yourself. A big part of being true to yourself is being honest about your own feelings. Identify your feelings and dig deep to understand **why** you feel a certain way before you hide behind a lie. This is tough work! Don't be afraid to seek counseling and ask for help.

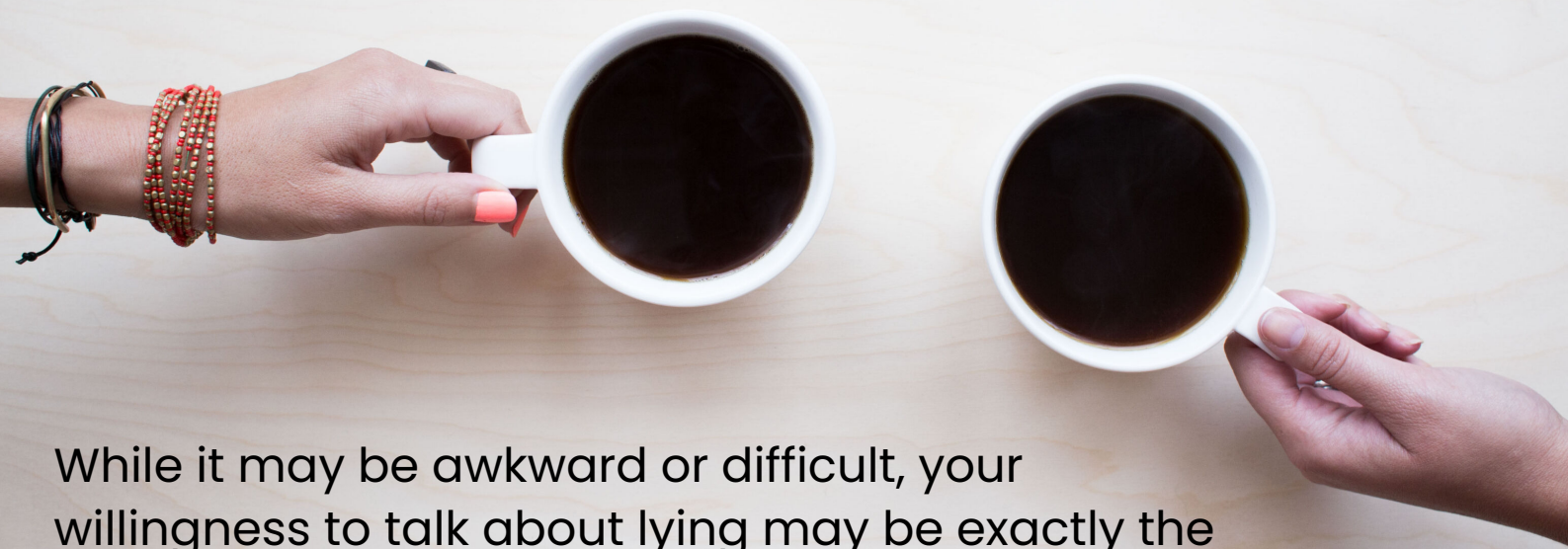
Find accountability. Talk with someone who will hold you accountable and ask how you are progressing often. If you slip up and lie, stop the cycle right then by admitting it and moving on. Need someone to talk to? Chat online with a HopeCoach at **thehopeline.com**.

Practice telling the truth. If you are struggling with lying, start by being honest about simple, everyday things. For example, if someone asks if you want to go to see a new movie and you don't want to, let them know tactfully that you aren't that interested in the movie. **There is a way** to be honest about your feelings yet be tactful, friendly and polite.

Ask for forgiveness. Start with honest, open communication with your friends, loved ones and those around you. Remember that no one likes being lied to. It may not be pretty when you come clean, but most people prefer the honest truth over a lie, even if it's hard to hear. Ask for forgiveness and begin to rebuild trust.

Helping a Friend Stop Lying

If you suspect a friend struggles with lying, you may feel unsure how to address the issue with them.



While it may be awkward or difficult, your willingness to talk about lying may be exactly the opportunity they need to begin being honest about their issue.

Talk About it. Start the conversation by discussing your feelings, like “I’m concerned/sad/frustrated about [insert situation or example of lying], and I want to talk about it with you.” By being open and honest, you can help create an environment where they feel they too can begin to be honest.

Offer accountability and forgiveness. Although you may be ready to talk about lying and help put an end to it, your friend or loved one may not be there yet. If that is the case, don’t try to blame or attack. Instead, let them know you are there if and when they want help or someone to talk to.

Avoid being judgemental or attacking them. If your friend or loved one admits to struggling with lying, be supportive and ask them about how they are working toward change. Let him/her know you offer understanding and encourage them to continue building trust in themselves and with others.

Get advice and support for yourself. Talking with someone or supporting them through dealing with lying can be emotionally, mentally, and physically draining. Reach out for help and advice before you get overwhelmed!

Chat online with a HopeCoach at TheHopeLine.com.

Give them this Guide. Your friend or loved one may be in denial about their lying problem or not be ready to confront it. Consider sending them this eBook to help start a conversation or let them know you are there to talk when they are ready.



How To Forgive and Move On After Being Lied To



Accept that forgiveness is a process. Real forgiveness takes time and emotional labor. Whether or not the person who lied asks to be forgiven, it will require compassion and understanding on your part.



Release the hurt and anger. To truly forgive and move past the lying, it's important that you release the negative impacts of being lied to, like anger or constantly thinking about it. If you don't, those emotions will never leave you, creating a toxic cycle with the person who lied, or keeping you tied to them forever.



Recognize actions taken to repair or terminate the relationship. Acknowledge personal growth and positive steps taken by the person who lied. If they attempt no acts of repair and honesty, you may also need to move forward by ending it with them.

Benefits of Living an Honest Life

Honesty means less stress. Lying is extremely stressful. You have to constantly run through the stories in your head and keep track of who you have told what. When you are honest, you don't have those worries.

Honesty builds trust. Relationships are dependant upon trust. If you resist the temptation to lie, you increase your capacity to build lasting relationships based on trust. If you are honest then you will have healither, longer relationships with friends, family, and significant others.

Honesty builds respect and integrity. If you are a person of integrity, it means what you do matches up with your what you say. In other words, you walk the way you talk. People *know* you mean what you say. It means you can be relied upon which builds others' respect for you.

Are you willing to commit to a life of honesty and integrity?



Want to start working on telling the truth right away?

Think about the questions from this worksheet and write down your answers.

The goal of doing this exercise is to help you analyze why you lie and how telling the truth can set you free.

"If you tell the truth, you don't have to remember anything."

–Mark Twain



Advantages

*(What did you gain?
What was positive
about the
experience?)*

Disadvantages

*(What did you lose?
What were the negative
consequences?)*

Feelings

*(How did you feel
before you spoke?
How did you feel
afterwards?)*

Think of a specific lie you told recently. What were the advantages and disadvantages? How did the lie make you feel?

Think about what might have happened if you had told the truth in the above situation. What might have been the outcome?

Think about a situation in which you chose to tell the truth. What were the advantages and disadvantages? How did you feel in that situation?

A Spiritual Perspective on Lying

Life is complicated, and a solid lie sometimes seems like the easiest option for everyone. "What they don't know won't hurt them" is the lie we tell ourselves to justify fudging the truth. In reality, though, lying hurts *you*. Ultimately, it *destroys* your sense of self because:

A) Even when nobody else knows you're lying, *you know* you can't be trusted. Losing trust in yourself is the beginning of a hard road in life.

B) Every piece of truth you keep to yourself is a missed opportunity for connection. Eventually, you'll end up incredibly lonely, since nobody will be able to know *the real you* that you've never truly shared.

Here at TheHopeLine, we care about you and want to help you navigate difficult situations like dealing with lying and

underlying issues related to it.

No matter what you're facing, God loves you. You are *valued* and worthy of respect and forgiveness in His eyes. In fact, forgiveness is His whole thing... Romans 8 even starts out with: "***There is therefore now no more condemnation for those in Jesus Christ.***" You won't be judged or shunned for the mistakes you've made. To the contrary, God wants to *help* you *solve* your problems. How?

>> THE SOLUTION

You are loved and accepted, regardless of what has happened in your past or your current struggles. God wants to see you discover your true self-worth and identity in Him, so that you can live an *abundant* life.



If you want to know more about having a relationship with God or have questions about lying, chat online with a HopeCoach at TheHopeLine.com.

You can also find Bible verses about lying and truth [here](#).

To find more of TheHopeLine's Guides on Depression, Self-Worth, Suicide, Eating Disorders, Relationships, and other common struggles, visit us at:

<http://www.thehopeline.com/guides/>

If you have found this Guide helpful, please help us get our Guides into the hands of others by donating [HERE](#).



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