

2.7 Radical Honesty

Tell the truth, or at least don't lie.[\[1\]](#)

0

When you want to live freely, openly, and at ease, without tension created by maintaining falsehoods, radical honesty is your answer. Most people lie every now and then without giving it much thought. Sometimes, these lies are harmless. But more often than not, they come with costs that can be hard to anticipate. When lying is a habit, then covering up for lies with more lies also becomes a habit, and managing this web takes enormous emotional and cognitive effort. The alternative is making a conscious effort to tell the truth, or at least not to lie. While scary at first, over time this can greatly simplify your communications and increase trust.

1

- Simplifies our communication and frees us from the tension created by lying and covering up for lies.
- Creates deeper connections with people and facilitates more sustainable relationships.
- Choosing to tell the truth makes you trustworthy and enables you to trust others more easily.

2

- Complicated situations are sometimes difficult to talk about openly.
- Truth can hurt people and may push them away. To sustain honesty while minimizing pain and fostering connection takes skill and compassion.
- Balancing privacy with a commitment to the truth can be tricky.

3

Radical honesty is not about sharing everything on your mind. It is simply about being completely honest and refraining from lying—even from telling little white lies or making inaccurate statements. Honesty can sometimes be inconvenient or even dangerous. In situations when you are tempted to bend the truth a bit, trust that, in the long term, choosing to be truthful will be worth it. Of course, in an extreme case where there's a risk of physical danger to you or others, lying might still be a valid option.

It takes skill to tell the truth in a way that safeguards you and others. You might want to assess whether the other person wants to hear your truth and whether the current setting is appropriate. Try to anticipate how what you need to say will affect them emotionally and adjust your delivery accordingly. You can also ask the other person in advance: "Can I be completely honest here? Is this a good time?"

A commitment to honesty doesn't mean you must share everything on your mind with everybody. Helpful phrases to lean on when you don't feel comfortable speaking the truth can be, "I don't want to answer that question," or, "That's private."

4

1. Radical Honesty: How to Transform Your Life by Telling the Truth, by Brad Blanton.
 2. Rule 8 in 12 Rules for Life: An Antidote to Chaos, by Jordan Peterson (Random House, Canada, 2018).
-