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Introduction. What is lie?

A **lie** is an assertion that is believed to be false, typically used with the purpose of deceiving someone. The practice of communicating lies is called **lying**. A person who communicates a lie may be termed a **liar**. Lies may serve a variety of instrumental, interpersonal, or psychological functions for the individuals who use them. Generally, the term "lie" carries a negative connotation, and depending on the context a person who communicates a lie may be subject to social, legal, religious, or criminal sanctions.

Aristotle believed no general rule on lying was possible, because anyone who advocated lying could never be believed, he said. Although the philosophers, St. Augustine, St. Thomas Aquinas, and Immanuel Kant, condemned all lying, Thomas Aquinas did advance an argument for lying, however. According to all three, there are no circumstances in which, ethically, one may lie. Even if the *only* way to protect oneself is to lie, it is never ethically permissible to lie even in the face of murder, torture, or any other hardship. Each of these philosophers gave several arguments for the ethical basis against lying, all compatible with each other. Among the more important arguments are:

1. Lying is a perversion of the natural faculty of speech, the natural end of which is to communicate the thoughts of the speaker.
2. When one lies, one undermines trust in society.

Meanwhile, utilitarian philosophers have supported lies that achieve good outcomes – white lies. In his 2008 book, «How to Make Good Decisions and Be Right All the Time» , Iain King suggested a credible rule on lying was possible, and he defined it as: «Deceive only if you can change behaviour in a way worth more than the trust you would lose, were the deception discovered (whether the deception actually is exposed or not).»

The potential consequences of lying are manifold; some in particular are worth considering. Typically lies aim to deceive, when deception is successful, the hearer ends up acquiring a false belief (or at least something that the speaker *believes* to be false). When deception is unsuccessful, a lie may be discovered. The discovery of a lie may

discredit other statements by the same speaker, staining his reputation. In some circumstances, it may also negatively affect the social or legal standing of the speaker. Lying in a court of law, for instance, is a criminal offense (perjury).

Hannah Arendt spoke about extraordinary cases in which an entire society is being lied to consistently. She said that the consequences of such lying are "not that you believe the lies, but rather that nobody believes anything any longer. This is because lies, by their very nature, have to be changed, and a lying government has constantly to rewrite its own history. On the receiving end you get not only one lie—a lie which you could go on for the rest of your days—but you get a great number of lies, depending on how the political wind blows.

The Old Testament and New Testament of the Bible both contain statements that God cannot lie and that lying is immoral. Nevertheless, there are examples of God deliberately causing enemies to become disorientated and confused, in order to provide victory

Zoroaster teaches that there are two powers in the universe; Asha, which is truth, order, and that which is real, and Druj, which is "the Lie". Later on, the Lie became personified as Angra Mainyu, a figure similar to the Christian Devil, who was portrayed as the eternal opponent of Ahura Mazda (God).

What types of lie do we know?

We all lie, but not all lies are the same. People lie and tell the truth to achieve a goal: "We lie if honesty won't work," says researcher Tim Levine.

- A **barefaced (or bald-faced) lie** is one that is obviously a lie to those hearing it. "Bold-faced lie" can also refer to misleading or inaccurate newspaper headlines, but this usage appears to be a more recent appropriation of the term.
- A **big lie** is one that attempts to trick the victim into believing something major, which will likely be contradicted by some information the victim already possesses, or by their common sense. When the lie is of sufficient magnitude it may succeed, due to the victim's reluctance to believe that an untruth on such a grand scale would indeed be concocted.
- A **blue lie** is a form of lying that is told purportedly to benefit a collective or "in the name of the collective good". The origin of the term "blue lie" is possibly from cases where police officers made false statements to protect the police force or to ensure

the success of a legal case against an accused. This differs from the Blue wall of silence in that a blue lie is not an omission but a stated falsehood.

- To **bluff** is to pretend to have a capability or intention one does not possess. Bluffing is an act of deception that is rarely seen as immoral when it takes place in the context of a game, such as poker, where this kind of deception is consented to in advance by the players. For instance, gamblers who deceive other players into thinking they have different cards to those they really hold, or athletes who hint they will move left and then dodges right is not considered to be lying (also known as a feint or juke). In these situations, deception is acceptable and is commonly expected as a tactic.
- Bullshit (also **B.S.**, **bullcrap**, **bull**) does not necessarily have to be a complete fabrication. While a lie is related by a speaker who believes what is said is false, bullshit is offered by a speaker who does not care whether what is said is true because the speaker is more concerned with giving the hearer some impression. Thus bullshit may be either true or false, but demonstrates a lack of concern for the truth that is likely to lead to falsehoods.
- A cover-up may be used to deny, defend, or obfuscate a lie, errors, embarrassing actions, or lifestyle, and/or lie(s) made previously. One may deny a lie made on a previous occasion, or alternatively, one may claim that a previous lie was not as egregious as it was. For example, to claim that a premeditated lie was really "only" an emergency lie, or to claim that a self-serving lie was really "only" a white lie or noble lie. This should not be confused with confirmation bias in which the deceiver is deceiving themselves.
- Defamation is the communication of a false statement that harms the reputation of an individual person, business, product, group, government, religion, or nation.
- To **deflect** is to avoid the subject that the lie is about, not giving attention to the lie. When attention is given to the subject the lie is based around, deflectors ignore or refuse to respond. Skillful deflectors are passive-aggressive, who when confronted with the subject choose to ignore and not respond.
- Disinformation is intentionally false or misleading information that is spread in a calculated way to deceive target audiences.
- An exaggeration occurs when the most fundamental aspects of a statement are true, but only to a certain degree. It also is seen as "stretching the truth" or making something appear more powerful, meaningful, or real than it is. Saying that someone devoured most of something when they only ate half would be considered an exaggeration. An exaggeration might be easily found to be a hyperbole where a person's statement (i.e. in informal speech, such as "He did this one million times

already!") is meant not to be understood literally.

- Fake news is supposed to be a type of yellow journalism that consists of deliberate misinformation or hoaxes spread via traditional print and broadcast news media or online social media.[10] Sometimes the term is applied as a deceptive device to deflect attention from uncomfortable truths and facts, however.
- A **fib** is a lie that is easy to forgive due to its subject being a trivial matter; for example, a child may tell a fib by claiming that the family dog broke a household vase, when the child was the one who broke it.
- Fraud refers to the act of inducing another person or people to believe a lie in order to secure material or financial gain for the liar. Depending on the context, fraud may subject the liar to civil or criminal penalties.
- A half-truth is a deceptive statement that includes some element of truth. The statement might be partly true, the statement may be totally true, but only part of the whole truth, or it may employ some deceptive element, such as improper punctuation or double meaning, especially if the intent is to deceive, evade, blame, or misrepresent the truth.
- An honest lie (or confabulation) may be identified by verbal statements or actions that inaccurately describe the history, background, and present situations. There is generally no intent to misinform and the individual is unaware that their information is false. Because of this, it is not technically a lie at all since, by definition, there must be an intent to deceive for the statement to be considered a lie.
- **Jocose lies** are lies meant in jest, intended to be understood as such by all present parties. Teasing and irony are examples. A more elaborate instance is seen in some storytelling traditions, where the storyteller's insistence that the story is the absolute truth, despite all evidence to the contrary (i.e., tall tale), is considered humorous. There is debate about whether these are "real" lies, and different philosophers hold different views. The Crick Crack Club in London arranges a yearly "Grand Lying Contest" with the winner being awarded the coveted "Hodja Cup" (named for the Mulla Nasreddin: "*The truth is something I have never spoken.*"). The winner in 2010 was Hugh Lupton. In the United States, the Burlington Liars' Club awards an annual title to the "World Champion Liar."
- Lie-to-children is a phrase that describes a simplified explanation of technical or complex subjects as a teaching method for children and laypeople. While lies-to-children are useful in teaching complex subjects to people who are new to the concepts discussed, they can promote the creation of misconceptions among the people who listen to them. The phrase has been incorporated by academics within the fields of biology, evolution, bioinformatics, and the social sciences. Media use of

the term has extended to publications including *The Conversation* and *Forbes*.

- **Lying by omission**, also known as a continuing misrepresentation or quote mining, occurs when an important fact is left out in order to foster a misconception. Lying by omission includes the failure to correct pre-existing misconceptions. For example, when the seller of a car declares it has been serviced regularly, but does not mention that a fault was reported during the last service, the seller lies by omission. It may be compared to dissimulation. An omission is when a person tells most of the truth, but leaves out a few key facts that therefore, completely obscures the truth.
- **Lying in trade** occurs when the seller of a product or service may advertise untrue facts about the product or service in order to gain sales, especially by competitive advantage. Many countries and states have enacted consumer protection laws intended to combat such fraud.
- A memory hole is a mechanism for the alteration or disappearance of inconvenient or embarrassing documents, photographs, transcripts, or other records, such as from a website or other archive, particularly as part of an attempt to give the impression that something never happened.
- Minimization is the opposite of exaggeration. It is a type of deception involving denial coupled with rationalization in situations where complete denial is implausible.
- Mutual deceit is a situation wherein lying is both accepted and expected or that the parties mutually accept the deceit in question. This can be demonstrated in the case of a poker game wherein the strategies rely on deception and bluffing to win.
- A noble lie, which also could be called a strategic untruth, is one that normally would cause discord if uncovered, but offers some benefit to the liar and assists in an orderly society, therefore, potentially being beneficial to others. It is often told to maintain law, order, and safety.
- In psychiatry, pathological lying (also called compulsive lying, pseudologia fantastica, and mythomania) is a behavior of habitual or compulsive lying. It was first described in the medical literature in 1891 by Anton Delbrueck. Although it is a controversial topic, pathological lying has been defined as "falsification entirely disproportionate to any discernible end in view, may be extensive and very complicated, and may manifest over a period of years or even a lifetime". The individual may be aware they are lying, or may believe they are telling the truth, being unaware that they are relating fantasies.
- Perjury is the act of lying or making verifiably false statements on a material matter under oath or affirmation in a court of law, or in any of various sworn statements in writing. Perjury is a crime, because the witness has sworn to tell the truth and, for

the credibility of the court to remain intact, witness testimony must be relied on as truthful.

- A **polite lie** is a lie that a politeness standard requires, and that usually is known to be untrue by both parties. Whether such lies are acceptable is heavily dependent on culture. A common polite lie in international etiquette may be to decline invitations because of "scheduling difficulties", or due to "diplomatic illness". Similarly, the butler lie is a small lie that usually is sent electronically and is used to terminate conversations or to save face.
- Puffery is an exaggerated claim typically found in advertising and publicity announcements, such as "the highest quality at the lowest price", or "always votes in the best interest of all the people". Such statements are unlikely to be true - but cannot be proven false and so, do not violate trade laws, especially as the consumer is expected to be able to determine that it is not the absolute truth.
- The phrase "**speaking with a forked tongue**" means to deliberately say one thing and mean another or, to be hypocritical, or act in a duplicitous manner. This phrase was adopted by Americans around the time of the Revolution, and may be found in abundant references from the early nineteenth century - often reporting on American officers who sought to convince the Indigenous peoples of the Americas with whom they negotiated that they "spoke with a straight and not with a forked tongue" (as for example, President Andrew Jackson told members of the Creek Nation in 1829). According to one 1859

account, the proverb that the "white man spoke with a forked tongue" originated in the 1690s, in the descriptions by the indigenous peoples of French colonials in America inviting members of the Iroquois Confederacy to attend a peace conference, but when the Iroquois arrived, the French had set an ambush and proceeded to slaughter and capture the Iroquois.

- A weasel word is an informal term for words and phrases aimed at creating an impression that a specific or meaningful statement has been made, when in fact only a vague or ambiguous claim has been communicated, enabling the specific meaning to be denied if the statement is challenged. A more formal term is equivocation.
- A **white lie** is a harmless or trivial lie, especially one told in order to be polite or to avoid hurting someone's feelings or stopping them from being upset by the truth. A white lie also is considered a lie to be used for greater good (pro-social behavior). It sometimes is used to shield someone from a hurtful or emotionally-damaging truth, especially when not knowing the truth is deemed by the liar as completely harmless.

The way we lie and why do we lie at all?

In the fall of 1989 Princeton University welcomed into its freshman class a young man named Alexi Santana, whose life story the admissions committee had found extraordinarily compelling.

He had barely received any formal schooling. He had spent his adolescence almost entirely on his own, living outdoors in Utah, where he'd herded cattle, raised sheep, and read philosophy. Running in the Mojave Desert, he had trained himself to be a distance runner.

Santana quickly became something of a star on campus. Academically too he did well, earning A's in nearly every course. His reserved manner and unusual background suffused him with an enigmatic appeal. When a suite mate asked Santana how his bed always seemed to be perfectly made, he answered that he slept on the floor. It seemed perfectly logical that someone who had spent much of his life sleeping outdoors would have no fondness for a bed

Except that Santana's story was a lie. About 18 months after he enrolled, a woman recognized him as somebody she'd known as Jay Huntsman at Palo Alto High School in California six years earlier. But even that wasn't his real name. Princeton officials eventually learned that he was actually James Hogue, a 31-year-old who had served a prison sentence in Utah for possession of stolen tools and bike parts. He was taken away from Princeton in handcuffs.

In the years since, Hogue has been arrested several times on theft charges. In November, when he was arrested for stealing in Aspen, Colorado, he tried to pass himself off as someone else.

The history of humankind is strewn with crafty and seasoned liars like Hogue. Many are criminals who spin lies and weave deceptions to gain unjust rewards—as the financier Bernie Madoff did for years, duping investors out of billions of dollars until his Ponzi scheme collapsed. Some are politicians who lie to come to power or cling to it, as Richard Nixon famously did when he denied any role in the Watergate scandal.

Sometimes people lie to inflate their image—a motivation that might best explain President Donald Trump’s demonstrably false assertion that his Inauguration crowd was bigger than President Barack Obama’s first one. People lie to cover up bad behavior, as American swimmer Ryan Lochte did during the 2016 Summer Olympics by claiming to have been robbed at gunpoint at a gas station when, in fact, he and his teammates, drunk after a party, had been confronted by armed security guards after damaging property. Even academic science—a world largely inhabited by people devoted to the pursuit of truth—has been shown to contain a rogues’ gallery of deceivers, such as physicist Jan Hendrik Schön, whose purported breakthroughs in molecular semiconductor research proved to be fraudulent.

These liars earned notoriety because of how egregious, brazen, or damaging their falsehoods were. But their deceit doesn’t make them as much of an aberration as we might think. The lies that impostors, swindlers, and boasting politicians tell merely sit at the apex of a pyramid of untruths that have characterized human behavior for eons.

Lying, it turns out, is something that most of us are very adept at. We lie with ease, in ways big and small, to strangers, co-workers, friends, and loved ones. Our capacity for dishonesty is as fundamental to us as our need to trust others, which ironically makes us terrible at detecting lies. Being deceitful is woven into our very fabric, so much so that it would be truthful to say that to lie is human.

The ubiquity of lying was first documented systematically by Bella DePaulo, a social psychologist at the University of California, Santa Barbara. Two decades ago DePaulo and her colleagues asked 147 adults to jot down for a week every instance they tried to mislead someone. The researchers found that the subjects lied on average one or two times a day. Most of these untruths were innocuous, intended to hide one’s inadequacies or to protect the feelings of others. Some lies were excuses—one subject blamed the failure to take out the garbage on not knowing where it needed to go. Yet other lies—such as a claim of being a diplomat’s son—were aimed at presenting a false image. While these were minor transgressions, a later study by DePaulo and other colleagues involving a similar sample indicated that most people have, at some point, told one or more “serious lies”—hiding an affair from a spouse, for example, or making false claims on a college application.

That human beings should universally possess a talent for deceiving one another shouldn’t surprise us. Researchers speculate that lying as a behavior arose not long after

the emergence of language. The ability to manipulate others without using physical force likely conferred an advantage in the competition for resources and mates, akin to the evolution of deceptive strategies in the animal kingdom, such as camouflage. “Lying is so easy compared to other ways of gaining power,” notes Sissela Bok, an ethicist at Harvard University who’s one of the most prominent thinkers on the subject. “It’s much easier to lie in order to get somebody’s money or wealth than to hit them over the head or rob a bank.”

As lying has come to be recognized as a deeply ingrained human trait, social science researchers and neuroscientists have sought to illuminate the nature and roots of the behavior. How and when do we learn to lie? What are the psychological and neurobiological underpinnings of dishonesty? Where do most of us draw the line? Researchers are learning that we’re prone to believe some lies even when they’re unambiguously contradicted by clear evidence. These insights suggest that our proclivity for deceiving others, and our vulnerability to being deceived, are especially consequential in the age of social media. Our ability as a society to separate truth from lies is under unprecedented threat.

“The truth comes naturally,” says psychologist Bruno Verschuere, “but lying takes effort and a sharp, flexible mind.” Lying is a part of the developmental process, like walking and talking. Children learn to lie between ages two and five, and lie the most when they are testing their independence.

Conclusion.

Every human lied at least one time in their life, counting anyone’s childhood. Some people prefer not to lie starting from conscious age, because they think it isn’t right. Some people lies all the time to everyone they know.

Lies have several types like white lie, bluff, or even fake news, and all those types called different depending on situation and the way it used. Lies may be used to disorient somebody, or just to calm somebody down.