

BEAUTIFUL SAVIOR LUTHERAN SCHOOL

PRESENTS:

PEARLS OF LOVE AND LOGIC

Special Thoughts on Raising Kids

Lying

Lying in childhood is a phase. However, if the phase is handled incorrectly by adults, the phase could develop into a life stance.

Many parents unconsciously make lying an issue by asking, "Is that the truth?" when there is really no solid reason to doubt the child. Sometimes when a child is dejected or down, parents may say, understandably, "What's wrong?" The child will say, not wanting to talk, "Oh nothing."

At this point, it is not wise for the parent to say, "Is that the truth?" or, "Don't you fib to me," but to say instead, "Well if you want to talk, I'm here."

The most common mistake parents make, is to try and force their child to tell the truth when the parents already know the truth. This almost always ends in a control battle that neither parent nor child feels good about. Often the child continues to lie, getting deeper and deeper into negative feelings with the parent.

Here's how this parent avoids a control battle centered around stolen cookies by assuming the child knows the parent knows the

truth of the situation:

Parent: "Robert, come here. What did I tell you about these cookies?"

Robert: "Not to eat them, but I didn't."

Parent: "What did I tell you?"

Robert: "Not to eat them."

Parent: "Thank you! What did I say I was saving them for?"

Robert: "Paul's Party."

Parent: "Right. This hacks me off. You hit your room right now and think things over."

Robert: "But..."

Parent: "Where do you need to go to think things over?"

Robert: "My room."

Parent: "Thank you!"

If parents know the truth, and try to get their child to admit it, it is a hidden way of saying, "I know you are going to continue to lie to me." When a child has lied, restitution needs to be made. The consequence is handled coolly and as non-emotionally as possible so that when our children do tell the truth about a difficult issue, we can say, "Wow, I bet that was hard to say! Thanks for the truth!"

The emotion we have as parents is best reserved for when the child says or does something right. Children can be "convicted" and consequence on strong

circumstantial evidence. Parents who find a candy wrapper in a child's room and allow the child to protest that no candy has been eaten, are almost asking for the child to lie. A wise parent says, "I always take empty candy wrappers as evidence a person has eaten one. I think you need to give the whole thing some thought. If you still need to think about it over dinner time, no big deal."

Lastly, it is better to tell a child, "I don't believe you," than to say, "You're lying." It is easy for a child to argue he is telling the truth, but he can't argue with the fact that you don't believe him!

There are four basic rules for handling lying by children:

- Don't try to force your child to tell the truth when you already know it! Generally speaking, trying to force the child -ever- to tell the truth is a control battle the adult will lose.
- Give your child more positive emotion for being honest than negative emotion for lying.
- Consequence lying without anger.
- Children may be consequence for circumstantial evidence.

It's better to tell children we don't believe them than tell them they are lying