



Written by [Selwyn Duke](#) on June 16, 2025

Why Honesty Is the Key to MAGA — and the Good Life

Many years ago now, I encountered a man wearing a T-shirt stating “Everybody lies, nobody cares.” I thankfully never saw that shirt again. But I did think to myself at the time, “Well, I don’t lie — and I *do* care.”

We all should. No one had to explain why, either, to John Birch Society founder Robert Welch. He addressed the importance of honesty in 1970, writing:

If all men (and women too, of course), from diplomats to drunken bums, would simply resolve tomorrow always to be truthful, about everything — to the best of their knowledge and understanding — and would then abide by that resolution, I believe that fully half of all the troubles and grief of the human race would disappear within six months.



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While one could quibble about what percentage of problems would disappear and how fast, the basic principle is unarguable. It’s as with a computer: garbage in, garbage out. If the input is incorrect, so will the output be. But if the data fed into the system is correct — is Truth — the output will also be correct.

So it is, too, with social systems, the family “system,” the political system — and the “system” *that is your mind*. Yes, being honest with oneself (i.e., not rationalizing) is the most important dimension of honesty. More on this later.

Many Reasons To Lie, One Great Reason Not To

Writing about this recently, commentator Eric Utter quoted the famous Thomas Jefferson line, “Honesty is the first chapter in the book of wisdom.” He also acknowledged that speaking and living Truth can be costly, [stating](#):

In extreme cases, doing the right thing may even result in losing one’s fortune or life.

The Founders knew this all too well. Nevertheless, to a person of character, courage, and integrity, it has to be done — and it brings with it the peerless reward of self-respect, and the knowledge that those who come after you will benefit from your actions.

Nonetheless, people find many reasons for lying, from making money to gaining social acceptance or power. Yet there’s one overriding reason not to lie:



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It's wrong.

It also can destroy civilization — and one's own life.

While the "Everybody lies, nobody cares" types may dispute lying's wrongness (during an honest moment!), humanity's actions tell the tale. Clinical psychologist Jordan Peterson, who emphasizes the honesty imperative, illustrated this well [in a talk](#) years ago, stating:

No one teaches their children that the best way to navigate the world is by lying constantly. Parents don't sit their kids down and say, "The world is a corrupt place, everyone lies, and your job is to become the best liar possible to succeed and fix things." Instead, people instinctively act as if the opposite is true. Most parents are upset when they catch their children lying, which suggests a deep-seated belief that truth is the proper way to proceed. While it's not always clear why people hold this belief, their behavior — disapproving of lies and encouraging honesty — demonstrates that they act as if truth is the foundation for a good and orderly life.

The Beauty of Truth

Also instructive is that none of us wants to be lied to, and we're generally angry when it happens. Consider as well whether we would trust that man wearing the "Everybody lies, nobody cares" shirt. Would you be inclined to have him provide medical care, tutor your child, or even fix your car? In fact, honesty is a quality we seek in a hire or when retaining services. And all this, and the Golden Rule ("Do unto others..."), raises a question.

Can we reasonably make the case that it's okay to lie to our fellow man?

Yet people still have those "reasons" — and "My reasons are always reasonable," right? In reality, though, we hurt ourselves along with others when we deceive. Dr. Peterson addressed this in [a more recent exposition](#). You "have an obligation to the development of your soul to speak the truth," he emphasized. He then illustrated the consequences of not doing so:

For instance, if you go on a date with the goal of securing a sexual partner for the night, you might craft your words to manipulate the other person into providing what you desire. This instrumental use of language, however, is problematic. What if your idea of what you want is misguided? Treating someone as a means to impulsive pleasure may diminish the potential for a healthier, more meaningful interaction. Pursuing short-term gratification might not serve you well in the long run — next week, a month, or years down the road.

The Power of Sincerity

Another example is a stereotypical politician, who'll tell any lie and erect any facade to gain power. This he craves just as someone else may lust after money, sex, or food. What eludes him is that he doesn't need more power or higher office. He needs to start living in sincerity for two reasons. First, as Greek philosopher Aristotle pointed out, living a moral life is a prerequisite for happiness. Second, if you must deceive to facilitate a career — and it's just like lying on a résumé — perhaps that career isn't for you. In this case, embracing honesty can help you find your *true* calling (which itself increases happiness).



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An irony, too, is that many grand political liars (and others) dream of greatness. But how many great triumphs, inventions, innovations, or discoveries are realized via the pursuit or expression of lies? Whether in the scientific, political, social, or any other realm, authentic greatness has been achieved by seeking Truth. Einstein did not say $E = mc^{\text{whatever works for you}}$.

Then there is, again, lies' effect upon the wider society. Consider here agitprop (political propaganda), e.g., [Soviet agitprop](#). These are lies fed into a target nation's system for the purposes of destabilizing it, weakening it. We easily recognize this as what it is, too: a hostile enemy action designed to destroy.

Yet is the effect less pernicious merely because the lies are peddled by a nation's *own* politicians, media, and activists?

And are these liars any less enemies of our civilization?

We'd do well to remember that each time we disseminate a lie, we're taking a cudgel to the body politic. And doing this enough can beat the life out of a republic.

Finding Truth

All this said, you can't tell the Truth without knowing it (though you can avoid lying regardless). And you can't know it unless you're honest with yourself. Lying to oneself — rationalization, that is — is interesting, too. We do it, obviously, when an aspect of reality is scary, uncomfortable, or highly inconvenient. Perhaps it's contrary to a cherished agenda. Yet we often have an inkling it's happening. There's an unease, a sense that you're hiding from an unwelcome reality, keeping it quarantined in your mind's recesses so that it never has its day in intra-cranial court.

Yet this process damns us to dislocation from reality. After all, to rationalize is to distort reality for oneself. Do this often enough and long enough and you can lose touch with reality. Then you perhaps won't be able to find it even when you want to. This can result in what's known as "disordered thinking."

Lastly, though, there is a prerequisite for seeking and accepting the Truth in all things and in all times and in all situations: loving it. And a prerequisite for this is understanding that it's real, something transcending man and above him. Put most simply, too, Truth is this: God's answers to all of life's questions.

(Note: The contrary thesis — the atheistic perspective — correlates with moral nihilism, the notion there's no right or wrong. Yes, *really*. I explained this in the past, such as [here](#) and [here](#).)

In conclusion, honesty really is the key to making America great again. A nation of liars can never prosper — and a nation of Truth-seekers can never fail.

For those interested, the earlier-cited Jordan Peterson presentations are below.



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