

## Exploring self-deception

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Telling the truth, I have begun to realise, is being real. However, when I distort the truth to gain approval, impress people, avoid getting into trouble or to cover shame, I deceive myself in the process.

As a young child, in order to impress, I would distort truth. I remember on one occasion, when in school, I was asked by a classmate whose father owned two cars, how many we had. To impress him I said we had three cars, when in truth we owned none. I did this because I wanted to impress him. More recently, when I was among a group of consultants, the conversation veered towards how much each of us was earning per month. In order to impress the group and not appear incompetent, I misquoted my earning at a much higher figure than was actually true. I recognise I did this because I wanted to seem taller than the others. Sometimes I also tend to play down true success and in so doing, self-deceive. During a sharing session with other actors, several of them felt sad that they had never been recognised for their talent. In order not to appear superior I chose to tell them that I had also never received praise or award. The truth however was contrary.

In another instance, in order to gain approval, I was chronically indirect and only made hints to get my way. I remember once that I wanted to see a particular film, while my friends wanted to see another one. Wanting to gain their approval and not stand out, I hinted mildly that maybe we should see the movie I am suggesting for the movie they were recommending did not have good reviews. The truth was I had not read any review and also knew that none of them had, therefore I simply hazarded a guess. Instead of therefore saying what I actually wanted I had resorted to stealth.

Self-deception causes me to often dramatise and gain sympathy, thus in the short term I gain but in the long term my integrity suffers.

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