

Protecting Your Child From Cultivating a Lifestyle of Damaging Deceit

Become a lie detector. Don't do it so you can punish liars. Do it so you can speak truth and impart knowledge. The quality of their lives may depend on it.

This is important for confusion and inaccuracies like $2+2 = 5$. But there are more important reasons to be a lie detector.

This is important for lies you hear children tell about others. Maybe they think someone is "always mean" after one negative encounter. Maybe they think a teacher is "unfair" when the grade they received they actually did earn, and the teacher was being fair.

Can you think of recent examples of lies like these that are relevant to your children? Correcting their thinking matters because their beliefs about people influence how they relate to the people.

Especially be a lie detector for lies children tell about themselves. Because identity controls behavior, they can't afford not to be honest with themselves.

- Children who think they're shy when they're really not may avoid all group activities. Maybe they just had one or a few negative experiences with people.
- Children who think they're not creative because of one comment from one teacher or peer may stop believing in their ability.
- Children who decide they're clumsy because they trip once may trip again because identity controls behavior. Maybe they were just in a hurry that time.

Think about your children and lies they may believe. Some may be much more serious than my above examples. Here's what I especially want you to understand:

If you hear your children lie to themselves about themselves and you don't correct them, and they know you heard them, they'll think you agree. That can cement the lie.

- If you hear your son say, "I'm so stupid!" you might respond, "What? I disagree. What makes you think so?" Listen to see if he was careless, didn't study, didn't do well on something quite challenging and the like. Reframe his understanding: "You're not stupid. You got a few answers wrong on a very challenging test. Don't lie to yourself."
- If you hear your daughter say, "I can't make friends" you might respond, "I'm sad for you because that's probably scary. Is it really true that you can't make friends? Tell me what's going on." You might discover one or two girls she thinks of as friends ignored her, and she thinks it's her fault. Or maybe she talked to someone new who didn't immediately appear friendly. Talk her through this so she realizes she can make friends, but there aren't guarantees.
- If you hear your son say, "I can't play sports" or something along those lines, and you know it's based on one experience, talk up. "Wait, I don't think that's true at all. Let's name sports you do play. And, just because today you didn't play all that well doesn't mean you can't play better. Would you like to practice?"

Again, be a lie detector. Speak truth. Impart knowledge. Increase your child's quality of life. {eo}

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