

THE POWER OF TELLING YOUR TRUTH

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Around the age of seven, we begin to lie. As a child, we learn that if we tell the truth, we may be held accountable and punished. At such a young age, we were taught to fear the truth—we equate it to something bad happening and resulting in a negative consequence.

Maybe you secretly snuck a cookie from the kitchen pantry, or stuffed a small toy from the store in your pocket but didn't tell anyone, and then you ultimately got caught. In many traditions around the world, this is considered the age of reason. Before this age, our five senses aren't fully grounded yet, and then we eventually begin to have a greater sense of right vs. wrong, safe vs. unsafe. Teaching children that it is sometimes hard, but it is brave to tell the truth, is the best gift we could ever give them.

As adults, telling the truth can feel just as challenging; this includes telling the truth to ourselves, and to others. We ask ourselves at a subconscious level—am I going to trust the power of my truth, or the power of illusion?

From my personal experience, coupled with my intuitive life coaching role working alongside clients, I've come to the conclusion that telling the truth is the answer to many, many challenges we face as humans.

- 1 We worry about being judged, so we slap on a social media filter.
- 2 We worry someone won't like us, so we fail to set healthy boundaries.
- 3 We worry a mistake could reflect poorly on our reputation, so we swallow our shame and don't own up to it.

HOW TO TELL IF YOU'RE LIVING IN INTEGRITY

1. When you're living in congruence, which means how you present yourself on the outside matches who you really are on the inside.
2. When your conscious thoughts closely match your unconscious thoughts.
3. When your actions in life match your desires and values.

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WHY IS TELLING THE TRUTH SO HARD?

The definition of vulnerability is "to be susceptible to physical or emotional attack or harm." Telling the truth requires immense vulnerability, so of course we want to avoid feeling this way at all costs.

However, not telling the truth is living with unnecessary suffering in a proverbial purgatory. Our brain is wired to keep us safe, when really, all we're doing is stuffing down the essence of who we truly are. The gateway to freedom is simply being honest. What you'll find when you start to take off the mask is people will begin to feel safe telling their truth as well.

One of the most powerful things to say in the English language is *Me too*. By telling your truth, you're not only holding space for yourself, but you're inviting others in to do the same.

You can start small by answering truthfully at the checkout aisle in your grocery store. The clerk robotically asks, "How are you today, Ma'am?" Instead of responding, "I'm fine, thanks," maybe you can softly but honestly say how you're really feeling. "Thanks for asking, the truth is I'm really tired and was up all night with my infant."

Can you imagine how shocking this may be to the worker who likely hears the exact same response every single time? Now, you both have a genuine connection and she may feel more comfortable sharing how she is really doing.

AN EXERCISE IN TRUTH TELLING

In Martha Beck's book *The Way of Integrity*, she shares an exercise to practice being vulnerable and telling the truth.

Step 1: Think of someone you trust.

Step 2: Think of something you haven't told your trusted person; it feels too sensitive or vulnerable.

Step 3: When the opportunity arises, tell your trusted person your secret. If they respond with judgment or seem uncaring, shut down the conversation. If they respond with love and acceptance, look into their eyes. Looking into each other's eyes fires our mirror neurons and shifts the way we feel about others. It reduces primal shame and helps us feel more safe.

Consider this your permission slip to turn off the filters, show up exactly as you are, and share your authentic selves with the world. Together, let's stop abandoning ourselves, start a cathartic revolution, and liberate each other from the chains of shame by just telling the damn truth.