

Why Kids Lie And What You Can Do To Stop Them

A book for all parents and professionals so simple and powerful that it can
bring an end to your frustration over your child's annoying behavior.



How to End *Lying*

FROM THE BESTSELLING AUTHOR

B. BRYAN POST

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You Can Do To Stop Them

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How to End Lying: Why Kids Lie And What You Can Do To Stop Them

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In Loving Memory of Kristi Post 1974 – 2010



This book, and the work it represents, is dedicated to the life and legacy of my sister, Kristi Post.

Kristi's journey—her struggles, her strength, and her spirit—laid the foundation for everything I have come to know and teach about love, healing, and the power of connection. Without her, and without the challenges our family faced together, there may never have been a Bryan Post as the world knows today. Her life was not easy, but it was deeply meaningful. Through her, I came to understand trauma, to recognize the silent cries of children in pain, and to discover the radical, redemptive force of love.

Her story lives on in the hundreds of thousands of families who have been touched by this work.

She was my sister, my teacher, and the spark that ignited a lifelong mission.

Kristi, your life shaped my purpose. Your memory fuels my passion. And your legacy lives on in every heart healed and every home transformed through this message of love.

With eternal gratitude,
Your Brother.

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Chapter 1

All Kids are Dishonest from Time to Time

Many childhood behaviors are frustrating to parents, but few are as challenging as lying. Lying is something that most parents say they “just will not tolerate”. However, it is also such a universally common problem that it is rare to find a parent who has not had lying take place in their home, in some form or another. Whether it is omitting the truth, evading the truth, not telling the whole truth, or a blatant lie; this issue becomes the “pet peeve” of many parents.

Would you be surprised to find out that there is a simple formula guaranteed to end your battle with lying? This formula will be outlined in a later chapter, but first we will visit three stories of children who

were dishonest with their parents, all in different ways and for different reasons; but all just as unnerving to their parents. Pay close attention as we watch these parents learn a new formula for eliminating the underlying cause; thus resolving their issue with lying.

Sixteen-Year-Old Steve

Steve has just received his first speeding ticket. He was showing off in front of friends and happened to be in a school zone. He didn't even see the blinking lights.

His consequence? Well, not only was Steve speeding, but he was going 45 mph in a 25 mph School Zone, which doubles his ticket.

The problem (other than the speeding ticket)? Steve just received his driver's license two weeks ago. He was given the privilege of driving his family's standby car, a 1985 Honda Accord, to school so that he wouldn't have to ride the bus and his father wouldn't have to pick him up after basketball practice. Surely he will lose this special privilege and lose face with his friends. Maybe he will even lose his license or lose his parent's trust. He might not be allowed to drive again until he is eighteen! After all, all of these things are possibilities.

Steve's answer? He just won't tell his parents. He will pay the ticket himself, out of his savings account. They'll never know, he'll drive slower, and the world has just become a peaceful place again.

Bigger Problem? Steve is only sixteen and the

ticket occurred in a school zone, so not only are his parents notified by the local police department, but the school is also notified and they subsequently contact Steve's parents to inform them of the incident. Steve had not expected his parents to be notified, so he is taken by surprise when they ask him about the ticket. Just when he thought he had things under control, he is sent into a panic again. So, when Steve is questioned about the ticket, he lies! He says it wasn't him, he doesn't know about the incident, and surely the police must have him confused with another kid.

Ten-Year-Old Samantha

Ten-year-old Samantha received an "F" on yesterday's homework assignment. The teacher sent home a report slip for her parents to sign and return back to school the next day. Samantha didn't do the assignment because she was watching a favorite television show on her new television that her parents had bought for her bedroom because she had gotten such good grades the past three months.

Her consequence? She received an "F" and had to face the shame of going from making good grades to a really bad grade.

The problem (other than the "F")? Samantha had just received her new television under the premise that she would continue to study hard, make good grades, and be responsible with her television watching. Surely, she will lose her new television and her parents will be very angry with her. Maybe they

will ground her, not let her play with her friends, or not let her go to the sleepover at Sarah's house this weekend. And to top it off, they may not ever let her watch television again until she is eighteen years old! At the very least, they'll be really angry and she'll be embarrassed because she has disappointed them. After all, any of these things could happen!

Samantha's answer? She just won't tell her parents. She'll sign their names to the slip. She has really good handwriting. She'll write extra neatly and in cursive and the teacher will never know. Her parents will never know about the "F," she won't let this ever happen again, she'll study harder, she'll be more responsible, and the world just became a peaceful place again.

Bigger Problem? First of all, Samantha is an excellent and responsible student, so her teacher finds this behavior out of character for her and is concerned. She decides to call Samantha's mother, who is also a friend, just to check and make sure that Samantha is okay. Second, Samantha is only ten and no matter how neatly she writes in cursive, these are obviously not her parents' signatures. So, not only did Samantha fail to mention the "F" to her parents, but it is obvious to her teacher that she has forged her parents' signatures on the slip she brought to school the next day.

Five-Year-Old Ben

Five-year-old Ben is a foster child. He has been living in his new home for almost three months, attending

a new school, and making new friends. Everything had been going well until one day at school when all of Ben's new friends brought money for a special lunchtime dessert. But Ben forgot! All of his new friends got dessert and he did not. The following week, on special lunchtime dessert day, Ben knew he had saved the extra money. But not feeling quite safe enough to ask one of his foster parents to retrieve it from the special place where they kept it for him, he snuck into his foster father's change drawer instead, and took the four quarters he saw sitting inside. Now, not only did Ben have money for his own dessert, but he also had three extra quarters to buy his new friends dessert too. All of his friends were going to think he was the greatest kid in the world and so very cool!

His consequence? Ben instantly becomes terrified that he is going to get caught. Though the dessert was super tasty and all of his friends thought he was the coolest, there is a looming fear that he is going to be in big trouble.

The problem (other than the fear of being in trouble at home)? Most people do not realize that foster children struggle with a constant fear of not having a home to live in or not being able to return to the home where they may currently live. At five years old, such a fear can turn into sheer panic at the thought of any possible conflict. In fact, the fear became so great that Ben was unable to sit still, listen, or do his school work correctly the rest of the day. This led to the teacher issuing repeated threats

for Ben to calm down or else there would be consequences. Unbeknownst to the teacher, these threats just increased Ben's fear even more, which led to him being even more fidgety and inattentive. Before he knew it, Ben was sitting in the principal's office, listening as the principal was calling his mother to come and get him.

Ben's answer? There isn't one. He is frozen in terror! The possibilities of what are to come cause his insides to twist into a terrible pain.

Bigger Problem? As if the fear of being in trouble at school is not enough, the calling of Ben's foster mother brings on a new feeling of terror and triggers a secondary fear. Ben comes from an environment of neglect and abuse. Surely, at the very least he will not receive any food that night, and perhaps he will be locked in his room or in the basement for the next week, or maybe even forever. Ben fears that he could possibly even die! The taste of the sweet dessert and celebration of being the cool kid are long forgotten memories. Ben's only thoughts now are of sheer survival. He cowers in the corner of the principal's office.



Chapter 2

The Key to a New Formula for Lying

The above scenarios may seem different, but in essence they are all the same. They all have a few common denominators that, when understood, can and will help you transform the behavior of lying into a magical opportunity for teaching responsibility, developing morals, and increasing family harmony. You are about to learn a formula for this transformation, but first you must know the key to making it work. The Key is that you must be willing to patiently carry out each step and let the process work itself out, even when it does not look like it will work. You cannot interrupt the process with your own attempts to teach or punish.

This is the single greatest obstacle preventing

parents from applying this approach with success. Even with the magic formula I am about to place in your hand, your past years of embedded patterns and conditioning will resurface, in an attempt influence you to change or add to the equation. DO NOT ATTEMPT TO CHANGE THE FORMULA. Here is the reason why this formula must be applied as outlined, and not changed.

**Kids lie out of fear. But not just children.
Everyone lies out of fear**

This is a simple, but profoundly transforming truth. It starts with a threatening event, causing the child to become stressed, resulting in fear. If this fear is not alleviated the child may go into panic mode and do the first thing that comes to mind, including lying. Worse yet, if the fear is exacerbated by the threats of a well-meaning teacher or parent, it could turn into sheer terror.

Before moving on, read each of the above scenarios again and see if you can identify the fear of the child involved in each situation. After you have done that, then think of three scenarios of lying that you have recently experienced with your own child, and look for the fear in those incidents.

STOP!

If you have not completed the above exercise of reviewing the stories and then thinking of three scenarios of your own, then ask yourself, “Am I really committed to ending this problem behavior?”

There are only two primary emotions: Love and Fear. This means that all other feelings are the

display of one of the primary emotions in disguise. Underneath lying, there is first the experience of stress. Stress leads to fear. For example, there is the fear of rejection, the fear of being caught, the fear of abandonment, the fear of abuse, etc. To alleviate one of these fears, a child may lie. Therefore, lying is based in fear. The sooner you can grasp this concept, the quicker you will see your child's behaviors begin to transform.

In each scenario the child is compelled to do something that they innately know is not right. The problem is that in the moment of stress, they are not thinking clearly. In fact, brain researcher, Joseph LeDoux, tells us that in times of stress our thinking becomes confused and distorted and our short-term memory does not work effectively. Therefore, in the midst of a stressful situation; such as showing off in front of friends, receiving an "F", or stealing money to impress friends, the child is no longer thinking clearly.

Furthermore, any attempts to teach the child in such a moment will be ineffective because the child will not clearly process or remember what is being taught.



Chapter 3

The Transition from Fearful Parent to Loving Parent

In each of the scenarios in Chapter 1, we see a child who is caught in his fear and has selected lying as the safest solution for their self-preservation. If they were not in a fearful state, they would have been able to think through their problem and would not have chosen the same solution. The parents in each situation are about to face the same decision. There is no doubt that being faced with one of these situations would send any parent into a “fear-full” state. But if they use the key in Chapter 2, understanding that their child has acted out of fear rather than sheer defiance or poor character, they

will be able to begin the process of calming their own fears first and then the fears of their child. We will follow each scenario through this process.

**Let's first go back to Steve –
The boy with the speeding ticket.**

Steve's father is currently employed at a local mill, and has watched as several of his friends and co-workers have been laid off over the past month. Every day when he goes to work he fears that he will be the next. Steve's father completed 10th grade and has worked at the mill ever since. He works very hard in his job every day in hopes that his efforts will keep him employed. Steve's father is very proud of being able to provide a good life for his family. He is very proud of his son, Steve, and wants for him all the things he did not have himself. He sees Steve as having a bright future, graduating from high school, going on to college, and becoming a professional. Steve's father is determined that Steve will not have to work in a manual labor job, but that he will be a professional who has a good paying job with full benefits, and will be able to provide for his own family with ease.

When Steve's father receives the call from the school, he is upset. He immediately approaches Steve about the ticket and Steve lies. Steve's father "hit's the roof"! He yells at Steve for getting the ticket, but is more upset about the lying. The more he yells, the more stressed and fearful Steve becomes, and the harder he clings to the lie. Steve's father's anger reaches a boiling point and nearly escalates to

physical assault, when Steve's mother enters the picture in an attempt to calm Steve's father down.

Steve's father processes with his wife how upset he is that Steve is not taking advantage of the opportunities he is offering him. He expresses in his ranting that everything he does day in and day out at the mill is so that Steve can have a good life, and the way Steve repays him is by getting a ticket they cannot afford; and then worst of all, he lies about it! Steve's mother listens quietly as her husband goes on and on. As his anger begins to dissipate, she quietly tells her husband that she loves him and that he is a very good husband and father. Steve's father let's out a long, deep breath. He begins to talk about all the good things he wants for his son and for his family. Steve's mother and father talk about all the great things that they have accomplished as a family, and all the great qualities of their son, Steve. Steve's father realizes that his feelings of anger are really connected more to fear. It is the fear that he is not a good enough father, that he is not a good enough provider, and that in general he is just not good enough! He realizes now that he has been laying his fears and issues on his son.

Remember Samantha

The girl with the "F" on her homework?

Samantha's mother is a single mom, divorced three years ago after discovering that her spouse was having an affair. Being a single mother is something she had never expected.

When she gets the news from Samantha's

teacher she listens, with her insides churning and turning. Not only is she disappointed and worried about Samantha, but she is embarrassed that this teacher, a personal friend of hers, has witnessed this unacceptable behavior by her daughter. By the time Samantha's mother gets off the phone she is sobbing! All she can think is, "Here I am alone again, always having to deal with everything by myself." This thought of overwhelming loneliness stirs up feelings of deep sadness, fear, and anger. Last night she stayed up until 1:00 a.m., trying (to no avail) to figure out how to make her salary as a secretary stretch to meet all the bills that are piling up. She has had many sleepless nights due to feeling that she has no real help, and that she has to do it all alone.

When Samantha comes home she finds her mother sitting at the kitchen table crying. She goes to her mother and offers comfort, only to have the hug shrugged away. Samantha's mother cannot stand to be touched. She is too stressed out and overwhelmed! Samantha goes to her room and turns on the TV. Her mother hears the TV and storms into the room, hastily turning off the TV, while internally feeling like she could throw it across the room and smash it through the window. Samantha stares wide-eyed, at her mother's actions, not daring to say a word.

Samantha's mother goes into a tirade about Sam's grade and about how the TV is going to make her stupid; and that if Sam cannot be smarter than the TV, then the TV is going to have to go! Samantha left tearful, rejected, and feeling desperately alone

as her mother storms out the door toward her own bedroom to prevent doing something more drastic that she would regret.

Later that evening, Samantha's mother calls her friend. She tells her the story of Sam's failing grade and how she handled the situation. Her friend listens quietly. Sam's mother continues to process the experience and in doing so she realizes that she feels betrayed by Sam. She feels almost the same way she felt when her ex-husband lied to her about having an affair, and almost as betrayed as she feels that he has left her to be a single mother. In this moment of realization, Sam's mother sees that she has been laying adult issues on her child, and that her child is only 10.

She realizes that had she not been so stressed out and overwhelmed these last few weeks, Sam would not have befriended the TV. She realizes that her overwhelming stress has left Sam feeling sad and alone, the same way she is feeling. She realizes that had she not been so stressed out and overwhelmed these last few weeks, Sam would not have befriended the TV. She realizes that her overwhelming stress has left Sam feeling sad and alone, the same way she is feeling.

Now let's return to Ben

The boy whose lunchtime desert turned into a fiasco.

Ben's foster mother, Mary, has always felt compelled to care for children who needed help. She

left in the middle of her college education in early childhood development to raise her own children who are now grown. Ben's foster father, Tim, is a supportive, involved parent; but he is very traditional in his beliefs about parenting. He was raised by a strong-handed father and a by mother who believed that the discipline of the children was the father's duty. As a result, Tim strives to do things differently than his parents. Although he believes in spanking, he also believes that there are other ways to get better outcomes. He finds that when he has the urge to spank it is usually because his patience and frustration have completely escalated and he is stressed out.

When Mary receives the phone call from the school, she feels immediately anxious. Her initial thoughts are that Tim will hit the roof! She deliberately breathes and gives Tim a call to tell him the news.

Tim takes a deep breath, saying, "Mary, I am really at the end of my rope with this young man. I don't know that I am cut out for being a foster parent. Remember all the fights between our son and me? I just don't know if I can do this again." Mary is compelled to feel responsible for bringing the added stress to the family by her desire to be a foster mother. She makes a conscious effort to breathe and then breathe some more, and then she begins to share with Tim that she is afraid that he will not support her in this desire. She expresses her deepest fear that the added stress will lead to a break up between her and Tim.

Tim reassures her that he understands her deepest fear, but that he has no plans to leave her. Mary realizes this fear is not so much connected to Tim, as it is to her father leaving when she was a young girl. Mary and Tim breathe together, as Tim soothes Mary's fear and reminds her that this is not a new fear, it is simply an old fear being triggered anew. Mary shares with Tim that she would like to try the new parenting ideas that the two of them have been studying. She suggests that she pick Ben up from school and that she take the first few steps.



Chapter 4

The Transition Explained

Any parent facing a scenario such as these, containing lying, would typically react with anger and frustration. Since there are only two primary emotions: Love and Fear; which one do you think drives your anger and frustration? You guessed it: FEAR. In reality, you are not angry at your child for lying. You may feel angry, act angry, yell, spit, and fuss; but the truth is that you are scared about your child's lying. You may think it means they do not trust you, you are not safe, they are not safe, you are not a good parent, or any number of other distorted thoughts.

Just as your child's lying is driven by his stress

Just as your child's lying is driven by his stress and fear, the actual lie itself triggers stress and fear within you, thus driving your own negative behavior. And do not forget, in the midst of stress you are not thinking clearly either, and neither is your short-term memory working effectively. If you were thinking clearly you would have learned, over the past however long that your child has been lying to you, that your repeated reaction of yelling, giving a consequence, or getting angry is not working to end the problem behavior. Furthermore, because your short-term memory is not working effectively in the moment, you forget that handling the lie the same way as the last time did not change the behavior then and probably will not change it now. So, you must be willing to do something different. In the words of Bishop T.D. Jakes, "If you always do, what you've always done, you will always be where you've already been!"

The angry parent is not an effective teacher. You will only cause the guilt, remorse, shame, and fear that your child is already feeling to be redirected toward you, thus delaying the healing process of this situation. It does not allow the child to internalize the feelings of his conscience telling him he has done wrong, and urging him to take responsibility for his own actions.

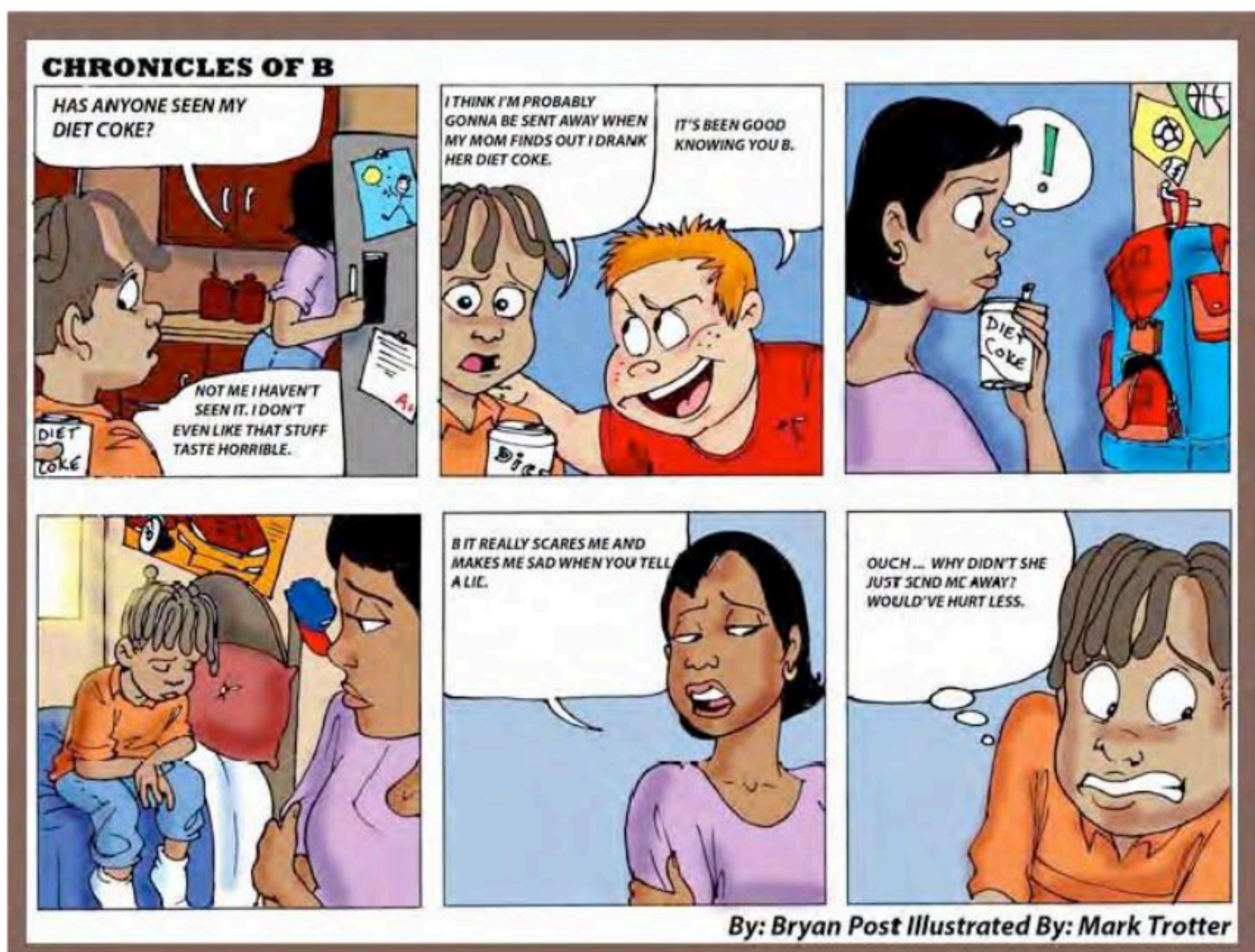
When you become angry towards your child, you get in the way of the lesson that is inherent in the problem, giving your child an opportunity to blame you for the problem rather than taking

responsibility himself. Don't do this. It is a rather common problem with both today's and yesterday's traditional parenting approaches. Rather than discipline, which means to teach; we punish, which only creates more stress and frustration that is then directed outward, or sometimes even inward, which can be worse.

The loving parent may also be a scared parent, but rather than blaming the child for the fear, the loving parent uses the fear as an opportunity to teach; thus allowing the lesson to be learned naturally without force, fear, shame or blame.

“Without a relationship, there is no influence. If you've lost the relationship, you've lost everything” –

Bryan Post





Chapter 5

An Educational Story About A Loving Teacher

Mahatma Gandhi's grandson tells a story about a time when he was young and was charged with picking up his famous grandfather from the airport. However, on this particular day he was running late. When he arrived late to the airport to pick up his famous grandfather, he was asked by Gandhi, "Why were you late?" Gandhi had called and knew already that his grandson was running late, so he was not reprimanding him, but merely inquiring as to the cause. Nevertheless, the grandson lied. In relating this story he says, "I lied to Gandhi!"

He says that his grandfather, obviously realizing

He says that his grandfather, obviously realizing the lie, turned to look at him and tears began to well up in his grandfather's eyes. He spoke these words as tears streamed down his face, "I must give repentance for whatever it was that I did to you that would cause you to be so afraid of me that you would have to lie. So... I will walk home these fifteen miles." The grandson states that he still remembers following his famous grandfather, five miles per hour in the dark, as he walked the fifteen miles because his grandson had lied to him.

This story is instructional on several levels; however, for our purposes the importance lies in three areas:

1. The most powerful teaching occurs in the process. When we follow the process without obsessing over the outcome, very powerful forces of nature are able to work through the child and become far more educational than our words or consequences could ever be. However, it is difficult to trust the process until you become comfortable with it. The process does not try to force, control, or dictate the future. It is only focused on now, this moment. Lecturing the grandson about the spiritual and moral reasons for not lying would have done little to influence the core cause of the lie.

Making the child walk the distance home as punishment for the lie would have only led to the child being resentful towards his grandfather and feeling as though the punishment was not warranted or justified for such an insignificant action.

In such an instance, the core cause of the lie would still not be addressed; rather, it would actually be reinforced. In such an instance, the core cause of the lie would still not be addressed; rather, it would actually be reinforced.

2. There is a difference between being made to feel guilty and ashamed and being allowed to feel guilty or ashamed. The first only breeds more fear, which typically turns into defensiveness and anger. The latter is an effective teaching tool, more powerful than we can even imagine. When you make a child feel guilty or ashamed by becoming angry and acting in an aggressive or manipulative way towards him, he only turns the feelings back on to you. In this way, rather than internally processing the experience, he externalizes it and makes you the perpetrator. When you take responsibility for your own feelings, rather than blaming or threatening your child, you set up the mechanisms for self-reflection and internal growth to take place in the child.

3. There is a difference between a fear-based consequence and a love-based consequence. A fear-based consequence is punitive and blaming. It is one of the most common parenting mistakes. Typically you will hear, “Well you have to teach children responsibility.” However, this approach is more based in shame and punishment than in actual teaching. A fear-based consequence stems from parental fear about the behavior and the prediction that if the behavior does not change something bad is going to happen in the future.

It is seldom effective for any long-term duration. Such an example would be had Gandhi made his grandson walk home because he lied. As discussed earlier, this form of consequence does little to truly teach, and generally breeds more resentment and ill will. What was practiced in actuality, was a love-based consequence, delivered without blame or shame. By taking complete responsibility for the situation, Gandhi changed the moral course of his young grandson's life. To this day, the grandson offers, he does not lie. A love-based consequence is imposed when the adult takes responsibility for the action, but the child is allowed to feel the emotional impact on the adult.



Chapter 6

The Formula

The Formula for eliminating lying is so simple that you will miss the impact if you do not give it concentrated thought and consideration. Talk about it with others, listen to your own internal stirrings that are triggered, and read this entire booklet at least four times over. Warning: this Formula will go against everything you have ever been taught or have believed to be true about the solution for lying. But remember, if the solutions you had learned before were in fact working, you would not be reading this booklet to begin with. You have nothing to lose by trying something different, but everything to gain.

Here is The Formula:

Step 1: Own Your Part (and breathe).

Step 2: Ignore the Lie, Don't Ignore the Child.

Step 3: Wait (and breathe again).

Step 4: Take Responsibility.

Continuing on in our three scenarios, the parents have already recalled the key to understanding lying from Chapter 4, and now we will watch what happens as they begin to apply The Formula in this chapter.

Let's take one more look at the situation with 16-yr-old Steve, as his parents try out the new Formula they have been studying.

Step 1: Own Your Part (and breathe).

Steve's parents realize that the dynamics in their family have put Steve in a bind. He has been expected to meet great standards of learning and accomplishment as set out by his father. His father suddenly realizes that these standards are less about Steve and more about proving that he is a good father. He also understands that Steve experiences pressure to be a "tough guy", since the history of men in his family is all about being rugged and quick-tempered. Steve's father acknowledges that he and Steve are at a crossroads, and that if he continues to approach Steve with force, the relationship will likely be broken, just like the relationship between his own father and himself.

Steve's parents already know about the ticket and

now he has just lied to their faces. Internally they are very upset, sad, scared, and disappointed - not about the ticket, but about the lie. Both taking a deep breath, they look at one another and begin to apply the formula.

Remembering to breathe in the midst of stress is the single most important factor during the first step. Breathing is considered to be the one proven way that we can interrupt our stress reaction. When you feel your stress level starting to rise, take at least 3 to 10 slow, deep breaths and remember to also stay connected to your fear. Doing so will hold your anger and frustration at bay, because you will be removing the roots of the stress by focusing on your fear.

Step 2: Ignore the Lie, Don't Ignore the Child.

Rather than protesting or arguing as they typically would, Steve's parents turn to him with sadness in their eyes. His father steps forward, giving Steve a hug. Steve immediately becomes rigid, not sure what to expect and his father gently says, "I'm just glad you are safe son." With that, both parents turn and walk away.

Steve obviously is shocked, overwhelmed, confused, wanting to be defiant, wanting to protest, but not feeling compelled to do so. He just stands there and the waves of guilt, shame and remorse begin to course through him.

Step 3: Wait

Calm yourself down. You must find a place of

love and compassion within your heart, having faith that the process will dictate the outcome.

After one hour, Steve's father knocks on his door. Steve invites him in. Steve's father says gently, "Son, your mother and I love you and want you to be safe. It hurts us very much when you tell us a lie. It makes us feel like we can't trust you and that you don't trust us. We love you and only want you to be okay."

Step 4: Take Responsibility.

In order to teach responsibility, we must first be willing to be responsible ourselves. Giving a consequence is not an act of responsibility, it is an act of reactivity; therefore it does not teach responsibility, it teaches reactivity. Steve's father continues, "First of all, you and I need to figure out how to make the money to pay for this ticket. Do you have any ideas?"

Steve replies, feeling somewhat relieved, "I can use my savings."

Steve's father responds, "That's not what your savings is for. In some ways this is my fault. I should have taught you to be a more responsible driver. I want you to give some thought to what we might be able to do in the neighborhood to earn the extra cash, or maybe the court will let us do some community service or something."

Steve says, "Dad, it wasn't your fault. Why should you have to do anything? Just let me take care of it."

Steve's father insists, "No, it is my fault. I should have taught you better. You aren't going to like this

Steve's father insists, "No, it is my fault. I should have taught you better. You aren't going to like this very much, but for the next week I will drive you to and from school. This will give me time to teach you again how to drive responsibly. Until then, I can't let you drive on your own. I just wouldn't feel very safe about that."

Steve feels a combination of shame and anger rising to his reddened face. He wants to protest, but feels it is better just to let things happen the way they need to happen. He thinks to himself, "Geez, for a smart kid, I can be really dumb sometimes."

After you have followed steps 1-3, then leave it alone. Do not lecture. Do not mention it unless the child brings it up first, and then only listen. And do not attach any of your own shameful consequences. Remember, giving a consequence does not teach responsibility. Being responsible teaches responsibility.

Now we head back to the situation with 10-year-old Samantha, as her mother tests this new Formula.

Step 1: Own Your Part (and breathe).

Samantha's mother realizes, after talking to her friend and reflecting, that the past month has been very stressful for her. She realizes that in her attempt to protect Sam from her stress, she has left Sam unsupported and unsupervised. She realizes that she has asked Sam to take on the responsibility of monitoring herself, and a result of that, Sam is watching way too much TV.

Step 2: Ignore the Lie, Don't Ignore the Child

Still quite upset, Samantha's mother decides to use the new Formula for this opportunity. Previously, though far from a mean or degrading parent, Samantha's mother would have given a harsh and stern lecture, taken away the television set, and grounded her from use of the phone for at least two weeks. This time, however, she sits down on the couch, takes several deep breaths, and goes into Samantha's bedroom.

Samantha's Mother begins, "Hey Sam, I love you honey. When things happen and you become scared you will often times do things that will only get you further into trouble. I hate for that to happen because one, I love you; and two, you are a great girl and I am very proud of you. Sam, when you do things you aren't supposed to do and then out of fear you don't ask for my help, it makes me very sad and scared. It makes me feel as though you don't trust me and that really scares me."

Samantha, not knowing to exactly what her mother is referring, but having some idea, just nods as tears begin to well up in her eyes. After a moment, Samantha's mother turns and leaves the room.

Step 3: Wait

The sensation is more than Samantha can bear. She wants to run out the door screaming, chase her mother down, grab onto her leg, and plead for forgiveness; but she just can't. She simply does not know what to do and fears what might happen.

Step 4: Take Responsibility

Returning an hour or so later...Samantha's Mother approaches her, "I apologize to you, Sam, for not monitoring your television time better. Sometimes I forget that you are only ten. When I make that mistake, then both of us end up suffering. I become worried and you don't study enough to do as well as you are capable. This is probably going to upset you, but for the next week, you'll need to watch television down stairs with everyone else. After a week, then we'll try your television again in your room, but with some definite time limits."

As we return to the story of Five-Year-Old Ben, let's see how his foster parents apply The Formula.

Step 1: Own Your Part (and breathe).

Mary and Tim realize that a great deal of their own stress, and their own perception of themselves as good people, is tied to their role as parents. They recognize that they bring issues of fear of abandonment, as well as fear of being shamed, into the dynamics of the family. They understand that these issues are the same for little Ben.

Step 2: Ignore the Lie, Don't Ignore the Child

Having just finished reading The Formula for the third time, Mary, Ben's foster mother, is ready to take action. Overall, Ben has done very well, but his lying has increased and Mary is finding it more and more irritating. Now, with the phone call from the school, Mary can only imagine that things are probably going to begin to get worse. As that last

thought passes into Mary's consciousness, she realizes suddenly what she has just thought, and immediately cancels it out of her mind, so as not to grow it any greater. "NO!," she thinks to herself, "Ben is a good boy - scared and hurt, but good. I can love him through these new challenges."

As Mary walks into the principal's office she can feel how literally horrified Ben must feel. She feels it so strongly that it is shocking. A five-year-old boy should not ever have to experience this much fear. She can feel the sadness well from her heart into her eyes. "How very scared he must be," she ponders with compassion.

After briefly visiting with the principal about the problem, Mary asks that she and Ben be left alone in the office. She feels it is better not to prolong the child's fear, but rather to bring some calm before driving home.

Mary sits beside Ben, places her arm around him, and softly speaks, "Benny, you are gonna be alright. I love you and everything is gonna be okay." She could feel Ben melting into her arms and she noticed a few little tears trickle down his face before he quickly wiped them away. Once home Mary fixed Ben a snack and suggested that he play quietly in his room.

Step 3: Wait

After sometime, though Mary wants to wait for her husband Tim to get home, she decides to go ahead and begin the second step of the formula. Knocking lightly, so as not to surprise Ben, Mary walks into the room. She joins him down on the floor. Mary says

calmly, “Ben, you had a really tough day at school today. Did something happen that caused you to get so upset?”

In that moment the shock of Ben’s earlier experience comes rushing back to him. Just as surely as his initial anxiety had calmed, it comes roaring back even stronger this time. Without answering Mary, Ben jumps up on the bed and gets as far into the corner of the bed as he can.

Mary is caught by surprise. She didn’t expect this to happen. Remembering to breathe, she calms herself, rises up to the bed and places a single hand on Ben while stating, “Benny, you are special and I care about you very much. It really scares me when you get so scared. I hope you start feeling better soon.” Then matter-of-factly, Mary walks out of the bedroom.

Tim calls on his way home and Mary fills him in on what has happened. As he walks in the door, she encourages him to remember to breathe. Tim thinks it best that he, too, wait a while before engaging Ben. Upon walking into his bedroom and preparing to empty his day’s worth of change, Tim notices that not only is his drawer slightly open but the quarters he had stacked the night before have been toppled over and four of them are missing. Then it begins to make more sense.

Tim shows Mary the drawer to make sure she is not the one who has taken the coins, and then they both have to breathe together because now, not only has there been a problem at school, but in addition,

there is stealing to deal with. Remembering the formula, Mary recants how scared Ben had been when she arrived at the school, and now it makes sense as to why he reacted the way he did.

Both Tim and Mary feel a little more empathy and sadness for their young foster son, knowing how scared he must be.

Tim and Mary walk into Ben's room and ask him to stand up from his playing. Both get down on their knees so they can be eye to eye with Ben. Mary speaks first, "Benny, we love you and care about you. Sometimes when you are really afraid about something you might do things that you are not supposed to do. When that happens you probably become even more scared. We want you to be able to trust us, and we want to be able to trust you. We hope that you can understand that you are safe with us in this home."

Tim adds, "Ben, when you take things from me, it really hurts me and scares me. I think it scares you too. I want you to know that I love and care about you. Do you understand?"

Head bowed, Ben nods, "Yes." Both Tim and Mary give Ben a hug and Mary announces that dinner will be ready soon.

Step 4: Take Responsibility

Later that night, Tim enters Ben's bedroom, where he is tucked into his bed. Tim says quietly, "Ben, when you took my coins it really hurt my feelings. It scared me because I want you to know that you can ask me for what you need. Do you understand that?"

Ben answers, “I’m sorry, Dad, for taking your coins. I needed to buy dessert for my friends and me but I didn’t have any money.”

Tim responds, “I understand. I really do, and I am so sorry, son, that you did not feel safe enough to ask. You don’t have to steal here. We will take care of you when there is something that you really need. Next time, ask your mother or I, because otherwise you get really scared and have a really tough day at school. Do you understand that also?” Ben nods his head yes. After a kiss and a hug, Tim and Ben say good night.



Chapter 7

Start Using the Formula Yourself

Sound simple? Maybe even too simple? Well, of course. But it IS just that simple! The only thing that may vary is the intensity of your reactions to the lie. But the root of the lie, the fear, never changes. Fear is always at the root. Think about that over and over, before you are put in the situation to have to deal with lying. Then, when you are placed “in the moment” you will already have The Formula in mind. If you immediately feel extremely reactive and angry towards your child for their lie, in spite of what you have learned here, remember that it is a normal reaction, and maybe some fear is being triggered from your past.

Remind your self of the **Key to The Formula** – realizing that stress has triggered the fear, which has caused your child to feel the need to lie. Calm yourself, try to find the fear you are feeling, and think about when you have felt that way before. It will help you to calm yourself and your child if you take a moment to ask yourself this series of questions.

- **What am I afraid of?**
- **And if that happens, what will that say about me?**
- **How will that feel?**
- **When was a time I was lied to in the past?**
- **How did that make me feel?**

A Note from the Author



I am convinced that following this approach will help you to solve your child's problem behavior. However, do remember, underneath the lie is stress and fear. If the behavior continues spend more time listening to your child and try to figure out what it is in your relationship with him or her that has caused so much fear. Fear is at the root of it all, even when you will not know what the fear is, or even feel that your child has anything to be frightened about.

I look forward to hearing about your phenomenal success in solving your child's lying. Please send me a personal note to **support@feartolove.com** and let me know how The Formula worked for your child.

May God Richly Bless You and Your Family,

Bryan Post

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Bryan Post'. The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large, sweeping loop at the end.

