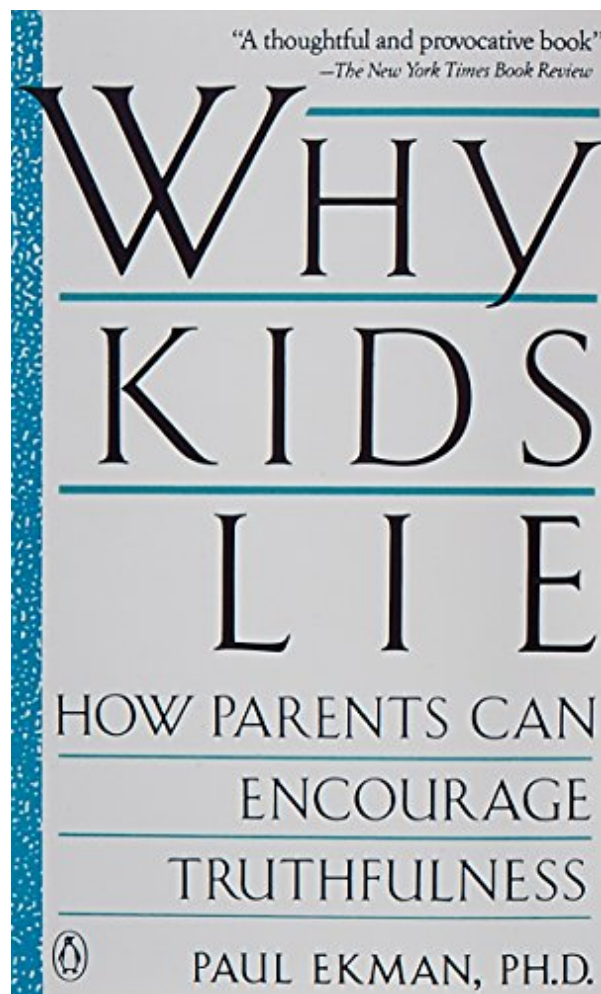


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PAUL EKMAN, PH.D.

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Children tell a variety of lies, from little white lies to boasting and bragging, to the outright concealing of information, and they do so for a number of different reasons. Dr. Ekman explains what motivates children to lie, how lying changes at different ages, and how a child prepares a lie. Dr. Ekman tells parents how they can encourage truthfulness in their children in this informative guide.

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- Binding: Paperback
- 224 pages

Most helpful customer reviews

7 of 7 people found the following review helpful.

Too many stats..not enough suggestions

By ANV Ohio

I was looking for a book to help an adopted 4 year old boy not lie. This book was filled with stats, but not really real world tactics I could use now. I would much more recommend 'The Connected Child' by Karen Purvis and Parenting with Grace by Popcak.

48 of 66 people found the following review helpful.

Not Enough Substance

By Diana M Hsieh

I was pleased to recent find Paul Ekman's book _Why Kids Lie_ given my interest in the virtue of honesty. The book proved to be an easy read, as the writing style was clear, engaging, and even friendly. But like many psychology books written in such a breezy tone, Eckman's book fell a bit short in the substance department.

However, the book was certainly not entirely lacking. Eckman summarizes some psychological studies that I have not seen elsewhere, such as those that investigating the factors influencing children's choices to cheat and lie. Of particular use to parents is his discussion of the evolution of children's attitudes towards lying throughout childhood. Most children start off with the view that lying is always wrong, then slowly allow more exceptions until dishonesty is pretty much okay whenever as a teenager. And he does offer practical advice to parents of lying children.

But two failings did stand out:

First, Eckman's understanding of the justification for honesty as a virtue is entirely limited to the argument that dishonesty destroys trust in relationships. No other reasons for honesty are given explicit attention. However, since so many lies go undetected, this argument from trust is one of the weakest arguments for

honesty available. Additionally, trust works in strange and muted ways in family relationships, because the option of scaling back or terminating a relationship is simply not available as in adult relationships. Members of a family are, for the most part, stuck with each other for better or worse for many, many years. If a child betrays a parent's trust, that parent cannot trade in their child for a new and better one. But the (limited) power of the appeal to trust comes from exactly this possibility: that our relationships might be severely hampered or even destroyed by the discovery of a lie. As a result, where children are concerned, the argument from trust really boils down to the fact that kids avoid lying for fear of being caught and punished. This sad fact certainly highlights the need for a more complete view of why honesty is a virtue.

Second, Eckman hops, skips, and jumps through important moral arguments concerning the scope of honesty as a virtue. He asserts (without much argument) that certain types of lies are acceptable, such as those told to be polite or to protect oneself from danger. Unfortunately, Eckman's moral distinctions are fuzzy and unclear, and thus prone to expansion. We see such expansion in his teenage son Tom's views on morally acceptable lies, as laid out rather well in Chapter Four by Tom himself. Tom argues that any lie "told for good purpose" is acceptable, including lies to "avoid getting in trouble" (109). We also see the failure of altruism to establish honesty as a virtue in his question: "As long as [a lie] doesn't hurt anybody, what is so wrong about it?" (109). Unlike Eckman, parents do need to demarcate clear moral lines with clear reasons if they wish their kids to adhere to moral principles.

For any parent trying to cope with a deceitful child, *_Why Kids Lie_* may prove useful. But don't get your hopes up.

13 of 18 people found the following review helpful.

Are you a parent or teacher? **MUST READ BOOK!**

By Dan Seidman

Mom, Dad, Teacher? You might want to put this book at the top of your reading list.

It'll have huge implications for your ability to handle kids at school and home.

You'll want to buy copies for other teachers and recommend it to parents.

Fun, fascinating, extremely useful read. Lots of interesting research, stories and more.

Covers all types of lying - bragging, avoiding punishment, protecting others, flaunting authority.

I saw my kids here throughout (I have great kids, but all kids lie to test people). This has helped me anticipate and respond - differently - to different kinds of lies.

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