

DECEPTION

Real or Fake News?



Dona Herweck Rice

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Power of Deception

What if they find out?

How do I win?

What if they don't like me?

Most people say that honesty is the best policy; nonetheless, the art of deception is alive and well in the world. The proof is everywhere. In schoolyards, children deceive teachers to avoid getting into trouble. On billboards, print advertisements, and commercials, companies may deceive consumers to sell more products. In courtrooms, lawyers may deceive juries to help their clients be cleared of charges. In government offices around the world, politicians may use deception to generate more votes and support.

Honesty may be a good policy—but deception can rule the day.

Honesty Is the Best Policy

“Honesty is the best policy” is an old proverb. But no one knows exactly how old. The first known use of the phrase is in the writings of Sir Edwin Sandys, an English businessman and politician, in 1599. He included it in a book he wrote about religion in the Western world.

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Power of Words

Merriam-Webster.com lists nearly 70 synonyms for *deception*. In contrast, there are fewer than 25 for *truth*.

For most of these countries, it is the main source of

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Deception can be a tricky business, though. One lie may require more lies to protect it, and soon the deceiver is swimming in a sea of lies. And, of course, once someone begins to deceive others, it may become easier for that person to continue the practice.

Ironically, deception itself can be a deceiver, leading a person to believe that outcomes in life can be controlled. *If I lie*, the deceiver might think, *then I can make everything work out in my favor*.

It also takes tremendous effort to keep a **lie going**. Holes in stories tend to spring leaks, just like holes in a dam. The truth, as they say, is out there—and it has a way of coming forward.

So where is the real power? **Is it in the truth—or does deception trump reality?**



Truth Will Out

“Truth will out” is another common proverb about truth and deception. It means that the truth will become known eventually. William Shakespeare wrote the phrase in his 1596 play, *The Merchant of Venice*: “...truth will come to light; murder cannot be hid long; a man’s son may, but at the length truth will out.”



THINK LINK

Consider these questions to get to the truth about deception.

- ▶ In your experience, is it easier to maintain deception or truth? Why do you think that is so?
- ▶ What is the appeal of deception?
- ▶ Can deception ever be a worthwhile—or even moral—practice?

A World of Deception

Look around. Can you spot the deceptions? Advertisers reshape the truth, photographers alter pictures, and politicians make **dubious** claims. The lines between real and fake are easily blurred through technology, language, and more. “Lasts longer!” “Better than the rest!” “Nearly sold out!” “You must act now!” These and other attempts to shape reality can be found everywhere.

The average person may change his or her appearance with high heels, makeup, body-shaping undergarments, stylized facial hair, and more. Are these things deceptive—or do they simply enhance reality?

Notable & Quotable

“Seldom can it happen that something is not a little disguised, or a little mistaken.”

—Jane Austen, author





STOP! THINK...

Photoshop® software was invented in 1987. It was first sold to the public in the 1990s to make photographic images clearer. Now, the program is a standard tool for altering photographs. Anyone with the program and a computer can easily change images in a way that looks real.

Look closely at these two images. The first is an unaltered photo, and the second has been edited with Photoshop.



- Are you drawn to one image over the other? Explain why.
- Is editing an image **legitimate** for personal use? What about for use in a newspaper or news magazine? Why, or why not?
- Should it be legally required for a disclaimer to be printed with altered images so that it is clear that the image has been altered? Explain.