**Life Lessons**

**HOW AND WHY IT PAYS TO BE HONEST AND TELL THE TRUTH**

**QUESTIONS to ask about Honesty**: • Would I rather others admire and fear me, or know and love me? • Underneath all my highs and lows, who is the real me, my deep-down true self? Who knows me like this? • Did my parents punish lying more or less than other misbehaviors? Do I do the same? Why, or why not? • How has it made me feel when others lied to me to protect themselves, and said they did it to protect me? • Is my mind closed about my beliefs, or do I keep looking for confirmation in different sources of truth? • Have the things I most believe in stood the test of time? Has history shown it endures, because it’s real? • Most importantly, when I list ***the people and organizations I most trust*** to tell me what’s real and true, and when I look at the chart of what’s healthy and what’s sickening, ***how healthy are they?***

**IMPORTANT BELIEFS FOR BEING TRUTHFUL**: ***My selfish self*** wants me to be comfortable and happy in the short run, not caring as much about others or the future. *My false self has to lie,* to hide how selfish and small I am. It *doesn’t accept its limitations*, so it’s often ill at ease. My chameleon ego shows people who I think I am, instead of who they realize I am. Instead of admitting my mistakes to earn back others’ trust that I’m being honest, my ego tries to get others to admit *their* mistakes, hoping they’ll try to earn back *my* trust. It wastes a lot of time on things that matter only to me, and only for a short time.

***My true self*** sees and wants what’s best for everyone in the long run. The real me can be myself at all times, which shows that I see others *as* *we all are*. When I don’t fulfill a promise, instead of making excuses, *I make amends*: I say I am sorry for making the wrong promise, and then make a better one that I am able to keep. I was taught there are *many sources of truth* that will support and *confirm each other*, *so I keep examining them*. They include science, the arts, journalism, history, democratic jurisprudence (trial by jury), reason (common sense), natural law and observation, the constitution and the government authority it provides (law and order), philosophy, popular opinion, and the author of all truth, God. When I consult them carefully, I will always find a *consensus that confirms what’s lasting, real, and true*. I realize easily what matters most, and seek guidance from others who have this same wisdom.

**SEVERE COSTS of lying to myself or others**: *losing my way* often because of my bad maps of reality; *exhaustion* from defending those maps and avoiding the briefer but greater pain of seeing how much I’ve missed; *keeping up* with my lies; *longing to be trusted* (like the little boy crying wolf); finding *no one I trust* *or admire* is with me in my filter bubble; *believing my own lies*; being *defensive when criticized*; not understanding why *I can’t live up* to my own standards; feeling like a *fraud*, afraid of *being exposed*.

**BENEFITS of being honest with myself and others**: Remembering the word *trust* comes from the word *truth*, and *honesty* from *honor*, when I say that I trust you with the truth, I honor us both with my honesty. The *truth sets me free, to change my mind* in response to new evidence. Being a *lifelong learner* gives me a *life that’s interesting*, to me and others. Being honest with God and others confesses my sin, allowing me to receive enough *forgiveness* to give it freely back to others, and to myself. I don’t have to discount the *love, respect, and understanding* of other healthy people, because they know and like the real me, warts and all.

• My deceitfulness feeds my sick, dying, make-believe self, which can only feed the same in others. • My honesty feeds my real, healthy, fruitful self, and from my fullness, I feed the wellness of others.

***Truth Soul Foods Exam:***

***Reality, Authority, Validity, Power***

**Denial:** lying, breaking promises, denying one's **Honesty:** telling the truth, keeping promises,

 limitations, lacking consensual reality lifelong learning, consistency in conduct

 **Denial brings**  • Lying • Cheating • Delusions**Honesty brings** • Character • Wisdom • Curiosity • Two-facedness • Closed mind • Ignorance • Common sense • Truth-seeking • Authenticity

Which *people* do I believe about what’s true, real, lasting and powerful? What makes me believe *they know*?

 And which *organizations* do I believe are the most trustworthy and truthful? Why do I trust *them*?

Do these people and organizations ever admit their mistakes, realize the harm they’ve done, and use this pain

 to motivate themselves to change their ways? Or do they just point out the mistakes of others?

Are my truth sources trusted by my family at home, by those I work with and work for in public? What authorities do I honor with my news filters, my time and money? Which do I reject? *Why them?*

When I list ***the people and organizations I most trust*** to guide me, the ones I tell others to trust, if I look at the chart to see healthy and sickening fruits, ***how healthy are my guides? How healthy am I?***

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**Receiving Junk Foods of Denial Receiving­ Whole Foods of Honesty**

­­• I pay little attention to seeking new information🡪 • In all settings I’m seeking to learn new things

• I get new information from similar, limited sources 🡪 • I enjoy seeking different views on things I see

• My one authority for truth needs no confirmation 🡪 • I seek confirmation in various wisdom streams

• Listening for what my itching ears want to hear 🡪 • Listening for painful truths that will set me free

### • I believe I don’t need to learn or grow any more 🡪 • I seek first to understand, then to be understood

• I believe everybody lies and covers up to get ahead 🡪 • Yes many do, but I believe a few can be trusted

• I arrange my life in very separate compartments 🡪 • I align with the same values/beliefs everywhere

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**Sharing Sickening Fruits of Denial Sharing Healthy Fruits of Honesty**

• I won’t give you criticism if it hurts your feelings 🡪 • I criticize to help you and others now and later

• I believe admitting mistakes shows weakness 🡪 • I admit mistakes to repair damages to us both

• I hear only my own criticism, speak only others’🡪 • I take criticism publicly and process it privately

• My lies are validated by what they do for me 🡪 • If a lie works to fool others, it will also fool me

• I show only my best to all so I’ll be admired 🡪 • I show all to some so I’ll be known and loved

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