All about Lying

Has our world become a place where a plausible or entertaining lie is more welcome than the truth, asks writer AL Kennedy.

More than a decade ago, I met a liar and I rewarded him for lying to me. At the time it seemed like the right thing to do.

Imagine it's a January night with snow underfoot and I'm with a group of Scottish writers, loose in Manhattan after an upstate festival we're all slightly glad is over. We were heading for dinner, but at the moment we're standing in the dark, cold air while a total stranger lies to us. We know he's lying because the story he's telling makes no sense and we're quite good at stories. And we're kind of giving the stranger notes to improve his scam while he's requesting cash. The man isn't dressed for the weather and is shivering. The shivering isn't a lie. And we do all give him money. We say we aren't fooled, but are rewarding his excellent performance and we want him to head indoors now and be warm. He gave a good show and we're paying for it.

At the time this all felt like an unfamiliar situation - being openly deceived and rewarding the deceiver anyway, choosing to treat deception as entertainment, rather than feeling robbed, or seeking redress. Today it seems the scenario is commonplace. Falsehoods proliferate - multiple TV formats rely on cheap and nasty deceptions, but they're just fun. It's less fun when MPs juggle statistics until they blur, companies tailor phrasing to dodge lawsuits and many of us now assume something isn't true, precisely because we read it in the papers. And batsmen won't walk - because cricket just isn't cricket any more. Reliable truths seem threatened, if not unobtainable. And the public response required is apparently that of an appreciative audience. It's all just showbiz now.

And yet we generally dislike being deceived. In fact, we try to avoid it. We pore over articles and online guides which promise to reveal the honesty of our partners. We study books on body language so we can decode each other in love, or business. Our crime dramas emphasise the importance of scrutinising eye movements and gestures. While government surveillance and commercial data mining appropriate private truths, we can buy software to monitor our loved ones. In what feels like an age of lies, we struggle to establish the truths of others. Once suspicion enters in, the lover's question, "What are you thinking?" can begin to expect the answer, "That I'll smother you in your sleep."

Because it's hard to know if someone's lying. Lie detector tests generally aren't admissible in court, because they don't reliably know either. Juries tend to believe eye witnesses who believe themselves, although they're notoriously likely to be mistaken. Professional investigators tend to be only averagely good at spotting lies, but - disastrously - tend to believe they're much better than average. Examining video recordings of faces for micro-expressions can be informative to trained observers. But professionally and privately, observer bias can lead us to seek only evidence that reinforces our preconceptions. And how do we get the truth from those who are delusional, or who feel comfortable lying, or who've trained themselves to lie effectively? They could be deeply dangerous individuals but impervious to interrogation.

And when the stakes are high, when we've been harmed, or believe we will be, then the pressure to prove and punish guilt, to really deal with those who have terrible capacities, increases. But how do we

unlock generally mysterious, possibly resilient, perhaps monstrous human beings? How do we get the truth from expert liars?

Back in the realm of showbiz - we're increasingly told by TV and movies that the answer to our problems lies in torture. Heroes and heroines used to remain unbroken by evil torturers. From Mr. Blonde to Jack Bauer, Ethan Hunt to Dexter and across a slew of cop shows we're offered fictions in which heroes and heroines are torturers, who threaten torture, who ramp up their interrogation violence in glitzy, even funny ways - although the camera shies away from showing anything too dreadful. It's sexier to flirt with the idea of torture than show the hours of degradation, the scars of abuse, still punishing decades later.

And politics being, as they say, showbiz for ugly people - the lure of torture as a no-nonsense, macho necessity can seem irresistible. What once was held to be a practice of dark regimes is now presented as a not-too-embarrassing home truth, softened by a Hollywood makeover. It has been redefined as "torture lite", or something a refugee victim did to themselves, the bad habit a useful ally may yet grow out of, the useful habit we exploit in bad allies, something threaded darkly through UK court proceedings.

But those who find the practice of torture acceptable have not only abandoned their humanity, they have also forgotten their history and fallen for a lie in search of truth. Arguably the first manual for witch-hunters, the Malleus Malificarum - first published in 1487 - included a warning that torture victims might say anything to stop the pain. In Cautio Criminalis, printed in 1631, former witch confessor Friedrich Spee also warns against the tainting effects of pain and the tendency of one untrue confession to unleash a cascade of exponentially unreliable information. He notes that if both confession and silence are taken as signals of guilt then everyone is guilty. Truth evaporates.

Combine observer bias with unfettered cruelty and paranoia and you get the Holy Inquisition's centuries of pain. Or you get Pinochet's Chile, Pol Pot's Cambodia. You walk inside Abu Ghraib, the Columbia Haus, the Lubyanka, buildings where innocence becomes impossible and the only truth that emerges concerns torture itself - that torture isn't about information. What it gathers is often useless, or worse. Torture is a promise of terror - enough terror to subdue a mind or a population. Except, of course, the promise is a lie. Torture blinds security forces with repetitions of the nightmares they brought with them and it begs for justice, creates opposition.

Among other forms of resistance, torture produces whistle-blowers, people who can walk into buildings infected with inhumanity and remain human. They make the truth of torture known, sometimes at great personal risk. It seems, in fact, an epidemic of various concealments and deceptions is giving rise to a wider and wider whistle-blowing response. While the powerful seem increasingly able to simply redefine what truth is - what is, is - the whistle-blowers are treated with increasing severity. In government, in business, in healthcare, education and the security services, the useful truths whistle-blowers bring are ignored, or punished with dismissal, smears, gagging orders, even imprisonment. While journalism can sometimes seem irrevocably corrupted by rented opinions and gossip, serious investigative journalists - professional truth tellers - are in every sense an endangered species, specifically targeted in war zones, curbed and intimidated by both oppressive regimes and democracies.

So we exist, it would appear, in a world where truth is punished and liars may lie at will - about levels of surveillance, expense claims, about statistics and financial transactions, about abuses, failures in care, about the crushing to death of human beings at Hillsborough - and only slowly, slowly will truths emerge and then be denied, before the even slower push for acknowledgement, then justice, then perhaps reconciliation, progress.

Our situation seems bleak. But, equally, we may be at a tipping point when the showbiz dazzle of the narrative is no longer enough to make us pay up, express our gratitude for the skill of the fraud. More and more individuals now have more ways than ever before to declare necessary truths. We may be on the brink of an age when both lies and fears diminish and we can face each other honestly to find the joys in privacy and revelation. Maybe to ask and answer, "What are you thinking?" can be again an act of love.

On lying

- "History is a set of lies agreed upon" (Napoleon Bonaparte)
- "A lie that is half-truth is the darkest of all lies" (Alfred, Lord Tennyson)
- "A lie told often enough becomes truth" (Lenin)
- "In a time of deceit telling the truth is a revolutionary act" (George Orwell)

Some famous liars

- **Baron Munchhausen** - 18th Century German nobleman who made up so many tales about his battlefield exploits that his name became byword for lying
- **Pinocchio** - fictional wooden boy (pictured) whose nose grew longer every time he told a lie
- **Kim Philby -** high ranking British intelligence officer and Soviet double agent; declared "I have never been a communist" before defecting to Russia in 1963
- **Bernie Madoff** - NY financier **sentenced to 150 years** for defrauding investors of an estimated $65m

http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/magazine-24077633

The curious story of how the lie detector came to be

The science behind the lie detector test has been disputed since its creation 90 years ago, so is there any reliable way to tell if someone is lying, asks Dr Geoff Bunn, author of The Truth Machine: A Social History of the Lie Detector.

"If I was guilty and wanted to beat that machine, it wouldn't be hard," says Sharon Stone's psychopathic character in Basic Instinct.

And the history of the polygraph - better known as the lie detector test - is littered with people who have been able to trick it.

The polygraph machine was invented in 1921 in Berkeley, California.

"Berkeley was a town with a very famous police chief, August Vollmer, and he was in charge of police reform and a leader of police professionalisation in the United States," says Ken Alder, professor of history at Northwestern University in Chicago.

"He actually wanted to use the science to make the cops more law-abiding themselves, to substitute this new scientific interrogation for what was formerly known as the third degree, which was a way of getting information from people by beating them up."

Berkeley police officer John Larson created the first machine, basing it on the systolic blood pressure test pioneered by psychologist William Moulton Marston, who would later become a comic book writer and create Wonder Woman.

Marston believed blood pressure changes could show whether someone was lying.

The modern polygraph measures a range of physical changes such as pulse and breathing as well as blood-pressure.

But the credibility of the polygraph was challenged almost as soon as it was invented.

In 1923, **in what became a historic Supreme Court judgement, Frye v United States**, it was ruled that scientific evidence, like that obtained through the polygraph, should only be admissible if it was "sufficiently established to have gained general acceptance" in the scientific community.

The polygraph was backed by Leonarde Keeler, who in 1930 helped set up the scientific crime detection laboratory at Northwestern, the first forensic lab in the US, a year before the FBI.

In 1948 **Keeler played himself in the movie Call Northside 777** opposite James Stewart as a reporter who exonerated a man wrongly convicted of murder.

"One of the things Keeler was great at doing was bluffing people into confessing," Alder says. "He was able to get 60% confession rates by bluffing people [with the threat of the lie detector]."

His classes at Northwestern were attended by cartoonist Chester Gould, who is said to have based the incorruptible, square-jawed Dick Tracy character on Keeler and his colleagues.

Ninety years after its invention, the polygraph still has not been accepted by the scientific, legal or political communities.

"The whole process smacks of 20th Century witchcraft," said Senator Sam Ervin, who died in 1985.

It does not help that every now and again serious criminals trick the polygraph.

In 2003, Gary Ridgway admitted he was the Green River Killer, having murdered 49 women in the Seattle area. Ridgway had passed a lie detector test in 1987, while another man - who turned out to be innocent - failed.

It has been argued that psychopaths like Ridgway or serial killer Ted Bundy are able to trick the polygraph because they have lower anxiety levels than normal people but the research into this has had mixed results.

There are also examples of others - like Aldrich Ames, a CIA agent who spied for Russia - cheating it.

Polygraphy has no grounding in science because polygraph techniques in use today were developed by interrogators, not scientists, says George Maschke, a former US Army intelligence officer and co-founder of AntiPolygraph.org.

"It's dangerous and irresponsible to place any reliance on polygraph outcomes. Polygraphy has not advanced in the way a scientific field would, and that is because it's not a science, it's an interrogation technique. It can be useful in getting confessions, but it is not reliable in and of itself.

"Polygraph tests can be easily beaten. You don't have to be a trained spy or a sociopath. You just have to understand how to recognise the control questions and augment reactions to them with techniques such as biting the side of your tongue or solving a maths equation in your head," he says.

In recent years other lie detector tests have come on the market, such as voice stress analysis software, which has been used by some local authorities and government departments to check if benefit claimants are lying.

But will new techniques find foolproof ways of telling if someone is lying?

"It is possible under very controlled laboratory conditions to use a brain imaging technique called functional magnetic resonance imaging," says Steven Rose, emeritus professor of neuroscience at the Open University. "

Subjects are asked to deliberately tell a lie. The claim is that you can actually detect when someone is telling an untruth. But in the real world that ain't so."

Geraint Rees, director of the UCL Institute of Cognitive Neuroscience, says: "I don't want to be over-optimistic here that we are going to come up with some all-singing, all-dancing brain-reading, lie-detecting device. This is extremely unlikely, now or in the foreseeable future.

"What we can't do is say that because a particular area of the brain is active someone was doing something like lying. Any brain area does multiple things."

http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/magazine-22467640

Viewpoint: The good side of lying

Everybody knows lying is usually a bad thing, but is there a positive side, asks novelist Clare Allan.

I was reading a book recently with my niece and nephew. On each page, hidden somewhere in the picture, was a drawing of a small yellow duck.

My two-year-old niece took great delight in spotting the ducks and pointing them out to me. "Duck!" she'd go, "duck!"

But each time she did so her brother would jump in, saying: "No! There isn't any duck!'

"It's there," I'd say. "Look! She's right. There's a duck."

"There isn't any duck!" he'd say.

"'It's there!"

"There isn't any duck!" He was grinning all over. My four-year-old nephew had discovered the joys of lying.

I don't know how old I was when I told my first lie, but I'd imagine something similar to my nephew. It doesn't take children long to progress from the fun of attaching words to things - "duck", "milk", "car" to the even greater fun of attaching words to things that aren't there - or of making things up.

Sometimes kids, like adults, lie to try and get out of trouble. "I didn't hit her!" says my nephew, when his dad comes in to find his sister howling on the floor. But often it's just for the joy, as Gulliver puts it in Gulliver's Travels of saying "The Thing Which is Not", of creating our own reality independent of the facts.

I've always been fascinated by lying. I think it's the fact that when people lie they are free in a way that they're not when they tell "the truth" - whatever that means.

Liars are gloriously unconstrained. Reality is so often limited by tedious factors like lack of money, opportunity, luck, talent, looks whatever. When people lie they reveal the world as it ought to be, as it could be as it would be if reality didn't keep getting in the way.

Very often, in fact, they reveal far more than they do when they tell the truth. Think of Blanche Dubois with her paper lantern covering the "too honest" light bulb. It's hard to think of any "truth" more revealing than the lies she tells.

As a novelist, of course, I lie all the time. And because I'm interested in lying, I tend to find that my characters lie quite a lot as well.

My first novel, Poppy Shakespeare, tells the story of a woman who finds herself in a psychiatric hospital and has to pretend to be mad in order to claim the benefits to pay for the lawyer she needs to prove that she's not mad.

When I went to the Netherlands to promote the novel, I found myself, fittingly enough, caught up in something of a web of deceit. When I got there I discovered that they'd published the novel with someone else's biography on the back - another Clare Allan.

It was too late to do anything about it - the book was already out in the bookshops - so I thought it best just not to say anything. That night I was giving a reading and after it this woman came up to me, waving a copy of the book.

"You know we were born in the same year!" she said. And then she started on about all these other things we had in common, the jobs we'd done and that sort of thing, all on the basis of the false biography. Well, what could I do? 'That's amazing!' I said. 'What a coincidence!'

'We are in a way twins,' the woman said.

'So we are!' I said. And we talked for some time about the parallel courses our lives had taken to arrive at that basement in the Hague. I've a horrible feeling we may even have had our photo taken together - though I might be making that bit up.

Everyone lies. So anyone who tells you they don't is obviously lying. Even animals lie. You don't need to have words.

What's a stick insect if it isn't a liar? An insect pretending to be a twig.

I used to have a dog who was a very accomplished liar. In the flat I lived in at the time there were only two places to sit: an extremely uncomfortable, rock hard sofa and a glorious soft, saggy armchair. Naturally the dog and I both wanted to sit in the armchair but it only had room for one. So I'd be sitting there all comfortable and relaxed of an evening and the dog would get up and go to the door and give me a look as though asking to be let out.

Eventually I'd get up and walk over to the door and the dog would wait head down, no sign of anything untoward, until my hand was literally on the handle and then she'd suddenly turn and sprint for the chair and by the time I'd turned round there she was, curled up, half asleep already, so I didn't have the heart to move her.

She also hurt her shoulder, quite badly, when she was young and for the rest of her life if she thought she wasn't getting quite enough attention or if we met another dog on a walk and I bent down to say hello, she'd suddenly develop this terrible limp, which would vanish the moment my focus returned to her.

You don't need language to lie but it certainly helps. For a start, words enable you to lie when you're not even there. Most commonly by saying sorry. "Sorry, the number you have dialled has not been recognised. Please try again."

Or, my personal favourite: "Sorry, all our operators are busy at present taking calls from other clients. Your call is important to us and will be answered shortly." I've spent half a day with that one on repeat.

Psychologists estimate we each tell an average of six lies every day (The Lying Ape, Brian King, 2006). I'm assuming that's directly.

Lying by machine would take us into double figures easily. And yet for such a universal pastime, lies get a remarkably bad press. In fact it often seems no matter how serious the crime is or how despicable the thing we've done, lying trumps it every time.

Continue reading the main story

“Start Quote

Facts are true, by definition, which is precisely what makes them so dangerous. Because surely the incontrovertible 'truth' is the biggest liar of all”

End Quote

Murder is bad. Lying about murder - well that's unforgivable.

Does anybody actually remember what Jonathan Aitken did or didn't do? I certainly don't. But everybody knows he lied about it. The same with Nixon and Watergate, for that matter. What was that about? I don't know but he lied.

In fact maybe it's because we all lie that we love to condemn other people for doing it as though the more moral outrage we can muster, the more honest we ourselves appear. Immanuel Kant believed that lying was always wrong in any and every situation. He argued that if a murderer came to your door intent on killing a friend who you knew to be hiding in your house, you were obliged to tell the murderer where your friend was, rather than lying to protect him.

This strikes me as the sort of argument only a philosopher could come up with. Take the people who sheltered Jews in occupied Europe for example - the lies they told to protect them were not only not wrong but positively virtuous, I would have thought.

At the other extreme are the Iago lies. Malicious lies. Lies told for the purpose of harming other people.

I'm not defending those. Far from it. They're the sort of lies that give liars a bad name. But in between these two extremes, the virtuous and the malevolent - stand the vast majority of lies, the bulk of our six a day. And it's really this lying middle ground that I want to have a look at.

So what is a lie? Well, I suppose it's a deliberate attempt to deceive by saying something that isn't true. The false biography on my book was not in itself a lie - it was just a mistake. But when we chatted about our mutual passion for pigeon fancying, I was lying because I knew it wasn't true and I pretended - for whatever reason - that it was.

So telling a lie is not the same as saying something that isn't true. To lie you have to know that what you are saying is not the truth.

So what is the truth? Well there's a question. Many people, politicians especially, would have us believe that the truth is contained in facts. But it seems to me that facts can be exceedingly deceptive.

In fact, it strikes me as perfectly possible that facts are used to mislead people more often than lies are. Statistics for example - everybody knows that statistics can be made to say pretty much anything you want them to depending on what you choose to measure and how you present your findings.

And the truth depends on another lie, a lie we all ignore because we have to in order to communicate but a lie nonetheless and that is that words connect precisely with the things they represent.

What's more, that the things they connect to in my head are the same as the things they connect to in your head. But this is patently untrue.

If I say the word "table" I don't suppose that any two people imagine the same thing exactly. Perhaps that doesn't matter all that much in the case of a table - unless I'm trying to sell you one - but if we're talking about concepts such as love and hate or kindness and cruelty, or truth and lies for that matter it starts to get a bit more complicated.

It's the gaps between words and the things they stand for that makes the truth such a dangerous thing. At least in the hands of those who seek to exploit it.

To return to the Poppy Shakespeare example. A woman has to pretend she's mad to claim the benefits to pay for the lawyer to prove she isn't mad.

But what does it mean to be mad anyway? Is there any such thing as madness? Or sanity for that matter? And who decides what it is? In the case of so-called madness, history has proved this to be a particularly flexible word that can be stretched to cover all sorts of political, social and moral inconveniences. And that's just one example.

It's a dangerous misconception, it seems to me, that the truth is contained in facts.

Of course it isn't necessarily contained in lies either. But lies can at least be proved wrong. Facts are true, by definition, which is precisely what makes them so dangerous. Because surely the incontrovertible "truth" is the biggest liar of all.

And if the truth can lie, isn't it also the case that a lie can tell the truth?

"Art is a lie," Picasso said - presumably in Spanish. "Art is a lie that leads us closer to the truth."

Not a literal truth, of course. That's not its job. Fiction doesn't lead us closer to the facts. Fiction invents the facts. But in doing so it can, at its best, lead us closer to the truth.

And in a world stuffed full of statistics and spin doctors and evidence-based everything, it's important not to forget. That nothing is truer than the imagination.

http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/magazine-16612884

Not Telling or Hiding the Truth

Many people are under-reporting how much alcohol they are drinking. But what else are we fibbing to researchers about and why do we do it?

"I have the occasional sweet sherry. Purely medicinal."

It is a classic British sitcom scene. An inveterate boozer telling a little white lie about how much they drink to a doctor or other authority figure.

But the tendency to paint a less-than-honest picture about your unhealthy habits and lifestyle is **not just restricted to alcohol**. People also tend to kid themselves about how much exercise they are doing.

It is understandable that people want to present a positive image of themselves to friends, family and colleagues. But why fib to researchers?

After all, the man or woman from the Office for National Statistics or Ipsos Mori can't order you to go on a diet or lay off the wine.

It is a question that has been puzzling social scientists for decades.

They even have a name for it - The Social Desirability Bias.

"People respond to surveys in the way they think they ought to. It is otherwise known as lying," says Kate Fox, an alcohol and drinking culture expert who has done research for both the government and the drinks industry.

The recycling never lies

"People also kid themselves about how much they drink, but it applies to most surveys, which is why one has to use other methods to really find out what is going on."

It is a particular problem when it comes to "sins" such as alcohol and food.

Britain is one of a handful of nations - including the US - that has an "ambivalent drinking culture", says Fox. It is particularly prevalent in countries that have had a strong temperance movement.

“Start Quote

People respond to surveys in the way they think they ought to - it is otherwise known as lying”

"We have a morally charged relationship with alcohol, a love/hate relationship. It is a bit of a forbidden fruit."

In countries with an "integrated drinking culture", such as more Latin nations, drinking is a "morally neutral issue, only marginally more controversial than coffee and tea".

It is easy to see why people would want to make themselves look good - even to a clipboard-wielding researcher they have just met.

But what about when the researcher leaves the room? Or hands them a separate questionnaire to be filled in privately? They're all tactics used by researchers to try and iron out the Social Desirability Bias.

"You still want to project a positive image of yourself even if the survey is anonymous," says Bobby Duffy, managing director of Ipsos Mori's Social Research Institute.

The gap between the amount of alcohol being sold in the UK and the amount people said they were drinking, was first observed in the 1980s, he says.

"People have unrealistic expectations about what other people are doing and that does affect how they how they respond.

"They think other people are drinking a lot less alcohol, doing more exercise and having a lot more sex and that changes their view of their own behaviour."

The gap between perception and reality might be particularly acute in the UK, he suggests.

Awareness of healthy eating in the UK is among the highest in Europe, yet the country also has the highest obesity rates.

The key, says Duffy, is to view survey results as part of a bigger picture - and, he stresses, it is still possible to track overall social trends from self-reported surveys. But if people underestimate how much they drink, do they overestimate how often they have sex?

The sex survey has been a surefire way to boost the circulation of a newspaper or magazine for decades. Yet there is anxiety among sexual researchers that they are not as accurate as they should be.

In a large number of these surveys people inflate how often they have sex. They are buying into this idea that great sex is measured by how often you have it," says Petra Boynton, senior lecturer in International Health Care Research at University College London.

"We do have an anxiety about trusting sex research generally, partly because of worries over talking about sex but recently more because of the misuse of the survey tool as an advertising device.

It is hardly surprising, she says, that journalists and the public don't trust sex research:

"What they see shared in mainstream media is not the careful and more balanced work undertaken in social and health research.

"As sex stories on relationships advice in media are pinned on 'statistics', then this allows the dodgy PR polls to be used to tell us how we should be having sex and set up ideas about what is normal."

http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/magazine-21601880

Can a man's virtues cancel out his wrongdoings?

By **Malavika Sangghvi**
Source Business Standard
Last Updated: Sat, Oct 27, 2012 00:42 hrs

Do virtuous acts contravene a person's wrongdoings? Friends and admirers of fallen icon Rajat Gupta have all cited his numerous deeds of philanthropy and altruism, the acts of generosity that he has performed in his personal capacity. No less than world statesmen like Kofi Annan and Bill Gates have written letters citing instances of these.

Can a man's virtues cancel out his wrongdoings? Should it?

This question is all the more pertinent in the case of Lance Armstrong. A man whose personal courage gave hope to and raised millions for cancer victims. Does the fact that he has been shown to have feet of clay erase all the good that he ever did?

The question gets even murkier when it is applied to the British disc jockey, television and radio personality, the late Jimmy Saville, who has recently been revealed to be a paedophile who preyed on young children, often the most vulnerable, in hospital rooms. That he was also a fundraiser, philanthropist and the BBC's celebrated do-gooder makes the question of evil being tempered by good an even tougher one.

Time and again we are reminded that good and evil are just two sides of the same coin, that both exist in all humans and often our responses have to be far more nuanced than can be conveyed in newspaper headlines, twitter posts or TV debates.

Should the leader of a state, who was in office during one of the worst genocides of a minority community be later forgiven for focusing on all-round development and bringing prosperity and better standards of living for all?

Should a company that robs villagers of their land, resources and traditional ways of life be let off the hook for the noble work undertaken by its CSR initiatives?

Can a man who beats his wife be absolved because he is an exemplary community leader who devotes many hours to the uplift of the disenfranchised?

Take the case of the two outstanding icons of our age - Bill Gates and Steve Jobs - both men of the same age and from the same industry, who have done so much to impact our lives.

Besides his enormous contribution through his products which have improved the quality of our

lives, Gates has also famously devoted the rest of his days to philanthropy through his massive donations, the work undertaken by the Gates Foundation and by urging other business leaders to follow his example.

Jobs, on the other hand, expressed little interest in anything but his business. In fact, aspects of his life, revealed in the numerous biographies written on him, have not shown him to be overly noble or compassionate on many occasions. Does that make him a lesser man that Gates? Is his life less iconic than that of his famous peers? Has it made an iota of difference to the respect and admiration he commands?

How much good does a good man have to do to win our respect and admiration? In the cosmic mathematical equation, does one good deed carry the same value as one act of evil?

Perhaps the only way to reconcile these questions is to concern ourselves with our own personal components of good and evil; to recognise that they exist within us as they do in others, and try and not be too judgmental about them.

As for Rajat Gupta, his sentencing to two years in jail does indicate that his virtuous past did earn him a relatively lighter sentence.

A Nation of Cheaters

By **Kirk O. Hanson**

January 19, 2003

Cheating. What could be more American? From the snake oil salesmen of the late 19th century to the stock manipulators of the 1920s to the spitballers of modern baseball. But today it seems absolutely everybody is doing it. We cheat—or at least try to cheat—in every aspect of our lives. One out of four Americans surveyed say it's acceptable to cheat on their taxes. Former Tyco CEO Dennis Kozlowski sends paintings he bought to a New Hampshire address to cheat New York State out of the sales tax. College bound students cheat on the SAT tests. Teachers cheat by giving their students the answers to standardized tests so the teachers qualify for bonuses. Athletes cheat by using performance-enhancing drugs. Successful authors cheat by appropriating others' writing as their own. Even colleges steeped in honor codes—the University of Virginia and the US Naval Academy—have been rocked by massive cheating scandals in recent years.

After a depressing 2002 in which corporate executives too numerous to count cheated shareholders by fudging their accounts or manipulating markets, we have to ask whether cheating has become the new national norm. We have always had a few cheaters among us, but has the typical American now lost his or her moral compass? Have we lost our fundamental commitment to integrity and fair play? First of all, why do people cheat? There are two simple answers, neither very noble. People cheat to get ahead, even if they don't qualify for the advancement and even if they can't win a fair competition. Such people don't care about anyone else but themselves. This adult lies about the toaster he broke so he can get a full refund. The teenager lies about her age to save money on a movie ticket. The other reason is simple laziness.

But there are new reasons why people cheat—and these may give us a clue about how to stop the rising tide of cheating. Some people cheat today because they simply cannot get everything done which needs to be done. American life has become so intense, so rushed, so fully packed. Many shortcuts we seek involve cheating—copying school papers from the Internet or cheating our companies by telling our bosses we are sick so we can catch up on housework or errands.

Some people cheat today not just because they want to get ahead, but more because they fear the embarrassment of failure. Parents put huge expectations on children—you are a failure if you don't go to an Ivy League school. You have to win; we've sacrificed so much to make you a competitive swimmer. Companies put huge pressures on employees—you now have to do the job of two, or you will be laid off too. And American culture says again and again that you have to be successful and wealthy to be happy. Faced with this fear of being a failure, too many people seek a shortcut and falsify their resume, cheat on their SATs, or fudge numbers at work to look better.

Most threatening, at least to me, is the notion that more people are cheating today because they think everyone else cheats. I had to cheat on the test, some students argue, because everyone else cheats and we are graded on a curve. Some business students I have taught and some business people believe that "everyone cheats" and that you have to do so to be competitive. The widespread corporate scandals of the past year, touching so many of our blue-chip companies, have reinforced this cynical belief that good guys will finish last.

Finally, an increasing number of cheaters are arguing that they must cheat to resist unfair new systems of accountability. Teachers in schools are resistant to performance-based testing because it may threaten their jobs. Employees cheat to resist systems that silently measure their output. Some welfare advocates resist needs-based tests because they may remove some people from the rolls. So how can we reset the nation's moral compass and stem the troubling rise of cheating? There are things you and I can do individually—and there are things that must be done by our leaders in government, business, education, and the media.

What can we individually do? The first thing is to stand up for fair play in our own lives. We must resist the temptations to take short cuts with small acts of cheating. Pay full price for your child if he or she is actually 13 and not 12. And we need to become advocates for fair play. Talk to our children about how important integrity and fair play is and how cheating hurts them—it does!

We need to support efforts to control cheating. If someone is caught cheating, support strong penalties. If our own child is caught cheating, resist the temptation to blame the school or the teacher. If an athlete is caught cheating, support the referee or the rules which throw him off the team. Become intolerant of cheating around you.

We can turn down the pressure felt by our own spouses and children. It is OK if your husband does not get the big promotion; it's OK if your son does not get into the "best" school. Life is about doing your best, not just about winning.

There are also important things our leaders in government, business, and the media can do to help fight cheating in American life.

The first is to put tougher national laws and regulations in place that deal with all forms of cheating. We also need the commitment to enforce those laws and to impose tough sanctions. This is a job of Congress, regulators, and the courts.

Second, each of our institutions—businesses, schools, athletic teams, and voluntary associations—need their own tough rules against cheating. University of Virginia officials and its student leaders have apparently pursued the dozens of cheating cases uncovered recently, strengthening their own honor code in the process. But Bausch and Lomb board members weakened the company's ethical culture, in my view, when they did not remove Ron Zarella as their CEO after it was revealed he had claimed a degree he did not have. Even sports-frenzied Notre Dame knew it had to get rid of a coach that lied on his resume.

Third, leaders in government and the private sector are going to have to invest in new systems to enforce standards against cheating, at least for a time. Government regulators and tax officials will have to do more audits. Employers will have to check the accuracy of all resumes. College teachers will have to use new on-line systems to check for plagiarism in papers.

Finally, I believe all our leaders—particularly those in the media—must contribute to building a new American culture in which wealth and celebrity are not the defining marks of success, but instead old-fashioned values such as integrity, faithfulness, and service to those in need. As long as Americans are chasing a dream defined by winning above all, they will continue to find new ways to cheat their way to the finish line.

The article appeared originally in the Boston Globe, *Jan. 19, 2003.*

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http://www.scu.edu/ethics/publications/ethicalperspectives/cheating.html

To Boldly Go: Ethical Considerations for Space Exploration

by Margaret R. McLean

With yesterday's budget proposal, President Bush put money behind his January 2004 promise: "We will build new ships to carry man forward into the universe, to gain a new foothold on the moon, and to prepare for new journeys to worlds beyond our own."

In the budget unveiled on Monday, almost $17 billion will fly into NASA's coffers with around $5.3 billion dedicated to space exploration. The Crew Exploration Vehicle and Launch Vehicles will be built; new spacecraft on their way to the moon and Mars will be whizzing overhead by 2014. NASA chief Michael Griffin claimed that this new budget would set the stage for "the expansion of human presence into the solar system."

But before we think about exploring-and potentially exploiting-"the final frontier," we would do well to remember that we do not have a very good track record in protecting our planet home. We have expanded human presence into pristine forests resulting in the disruption of migratory routes, soil

erosion, and species extinction. What can be learned from our presence on Earth about the potential impact of our forays into the outer reaches of the solar system?

We are the only earthly creatures with the capacity to extend our influence beyond the 4 corners of the globe. This puts on us the responsibility to acknowledge that, despite the depths of space, it is not so limitless as to be able to weather mistreatment or suffer every demand we may place on it.

One way to think about expanding our presence in the solar system is through the lens of stewardship. Stewardship envisions humans not as owners of the solar system but as responsible managers of its wonder and beauty.

Stewardship holds us accountable for a prudent use of space resources. Such responsibility may support exploration of the final frontier, but at the same time it warns against exploitation of its resources. We must account for our urges and actions in terms of their impact on others, the universe, and the future.

As we boldly plan to extend ourselves to places where no one has gone before, we would do well to consider the following principles:

1. Space preservation requires that the solar system be values for its own sake, not on the basis of what it can do for us.
2. Space conservation insists that extraterrestrial resources ought not to be exploited to benefit the few at the expense of the many or of the solar system itself.
3. Space sustainability asks that our explorations "do no harm" and that we leave the moon, Mars, and space itself no worse-and perhaps better-than we found them.

As we expand human presence into the solar system, we ought not to park ethical considerations next to the launching pad. We must take our best ethical thinking with us as we cross the frontier of space exploration.

http://www.scu.edu/ethics/publications/ethicalperspectives/space-exploration.html

Cheating's Surprising Thrill

By Jan Hoffman

When was the last time you cheated?

Not on the soul-scorching magnitude of, say, Bernie Madoff, Lance Armstrong or John Edwards. Just nudge-the-golf-ball cheating.

Maybe you rounded up numbers on an expense report. Let your eyes wander during a high-stakes exam. Or copied a friend's expensive software.

And how did you feel afterward? You may recall nervousness, a twinge of guilt.

But new research shows that as long as you didn't think your cheating hurt anyone, you may have felt great. The discomfort you remember feeling then may actually be a response rewritten now by your inner moral authority, your "should" voice.

Unethical behavior is increasingly studied by psychologists and management specialists. They want to understand what prompts people to abrogate core values, why cheating appears to be on the rise, and what interventions can be made. To find a powerful tool to turn people toward ethical decisions, many researchers have focused on the guilt that many adults feel after cheating.

So some behavioral ethics researchers were startled by **a study published recently in The Journal of Personality and Social Psychology** by researchers at the University of Washington, the London Business School, Harvard and the University of Pennsylvania. The title: "The Cheater's High: The Unexpected Affective Benefits of Unethical Behavior."

"Showing people feeling positively after committing a moral transgression is pretty novel," said **Scott Wiltermuth**, an assistant professor in the business school at the University of Southern California, who writes about behavioral ethics and was not involved in this study.

One reason for pervasive garden-variety cheating is "that we have so many ways to cheat anonymously, especially via the Web," Professor Wiltermuth said. The exhilaration, he added, may come from "people congratulating themselves on their cleverness."

The impact is real: According to some estimates, software piracy costs companies **$63 billion a year globally**. The I.R.S. has reported an annual gap between actual and reported taxes of about $345 billion, more than half of that because incomes are underreported and deductions inflated.

In the study's initial experiments, participants were asked to predict how they would feel if they cheated. Badly, they generally reported.

Another set of participants was given a baseline assessment of their moods. Then they took a word-unscrambling test. After finishing, they were handed an answer key, told to check their answers and asked to report the number of correct ones. For every right answer, they would earn $1.

Participants did not know that researchers could tell if they corrected wrong answers; 41 percent did so.

The follow-up assessment of their moods indeed showed that the cheaters, on average, felt an emotional boost that the honest participants didn't.

"The fact that people feel happier after cheating is disturbing, because there is emotional reinforcement of the behavior, meaning they could be more likely to do it again," said **Nicole E. Ruedy**, the study's lead author and a postdoctoral research associate at the University of Washington's Center for Leadership and Strategic Thinking.

Then she and her colleagues removed the financial incentive. A new group would take a test on a computer. The results, they were told, would correlate with intelligence and a likelihood of future success.

But 77 participants were told that if they saw a pop-up message offering them the correct answer, they should ignore it and continue working.

About 68 percent of this group cheated at least once, clicking the button for the correct answer. In the follow-up assessment, this group also reported a rise in upbeat feelings.

Why did people feel so good about cheating? Was it relief at not being caught? That would imply that while cheating, they felt stress or distress. Or had they deceived themselves, rationalizing or minimizing the cheating to feel better?

Stripping away these possibilities, the researchers found that those who cheated experienced thrill, self-satisfaction, a sense of superiority.

The effect persisted even when subjects cheated indirectly. Next, they would solve math problems with someone who was just pretending to be a participant. The fake participant reported the results, elevating the scores, thus cheating for both. But no actual participant objected. And again, they felt just fine about it.

“We were a little appalled,” Dr. Ruedy said.

The researchers did not measure whether the “high” was short-lived. Nonetheless, the elated, addictive feelings triggered by cheating point to the difficulty in changing behavior, since old-fashioned guilt tripping seems ineffective.

One way may be to remove the potential cheater’s cloak of anonymity.

A **study last year in The Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences** looked at documents on which cheating often occurs, like tax forms and car insurance policies. Typically, individuals fill out information first, creatively or honestly, only attesting to accuracy with a signature at the end. But researchers sent an audit form to customers of an auto insurer, asking for their signatures at the top, like a swearing-in before court testimony. This form resulted in a 10.25 percent bump in the mileage reported, even though higher mileage usually translates into higher premiums.

Another solution to everyday subterfuge, suggested Professor Wiltermuth, would be to undercut the cheater’s self-satisfaction. Companies could send a message that “a monkey could game our system,” undercutting cheating as clever and emphasizing how much employee integrity is valued, he said.

Dr. Ruedy noted that the study’s cheaters believed that no one was hurt by their actions. “Perhaps people could be made aware of the costs that others actually bear,” she said. “Identify victims of their behavior.”

http://well.blogs.nytimes.com/2013/10/07/in-bad-news-cheating-feels-good/

New York Times: Rich People Care Less

October 07, 2013

RUSH: In the New York Times today in their opinion section, it's not really a news story, it is somebody's opinion and the title: "Rich People Just Care Less."

Yep. "Turning a blind eye. Giving someone the cold shoulder. Looking down on people. Seeing right through them. These metaphors for condescending or dismissive behavior are more than just descriptive. They suggest, to a surprisingly accurate extent, the social distance between those with greater power and those with less -- a distance that goes beyond the realm of interpersonal interactions and may exacerbate the soaring inequality in the United States."

Now keep in mind this soaring inequality has taken place under a euphoric, almost utopian Democrat administration. We're coming up on five years of this now. Almost at a five-year mark here on the Obama Regime and the gap between rich and poor is indeed wider than ever because the poor are getting poorer. Everybody wants to talk about the rich getting richer. The poor are getting poorer, and the middle class is getting poorer. I've got a great piece about what's happened in California. We've talked about this on several previous occasions. California is really two different parts of the country, abject poverty and obscene wealth.

The obscene wealth is in San Francisco, the Bay Area, Silicon Valley, and Hollywood. And elsewhere in the state it is abject poverty. Victor Davis Hanson has written about this extensively at National Review Online. He says it's becoming almost medieval and feudal the way California is ending up economically. And it's run by Democrats, and what that means is the gap between the rich and the poor in California is widening and that state has been run by Democrats for who knows how long. The rich in California are almost exclusively, not totally, of course, but the vast majority of the uber wealthy in San Francisco, even though this is a contradiction, even though many of them are entrepreneurial, they line up with the collectivist Democrat Party.

They do so for the social reasons. To be able to say they have compassion. To be able to say they care about people. To be able to be progressive on social things like gay marriage and abortion and this kind of thing. So the gap between rich and poor is widening because the poor are getting poorer. The rich are getting richer, but that always happens. The one thing about this country has always been that the rising characteristics of the middle class were paramount. People were striking out seeking their fortunes every day, every month, every year, every generation. And that's changing. And it's extremely upsetting.

So anyway, here we have on cue this piece in the New York Times: "Rich People Just Care Less," and I'm convinced that pieces like this are why otherwise conservative oriented people in business identify with the collectivist, socialist politics so that it will not be said of them that they don't care. So it will not be

said of them that they are indifferent. In fact, this guy's Daniel Goleman. Goleman is the author here. It's a G, G o l e m a n. Goleman.

"A growing body of recent research shows that people with the most social power pay scant attention to those with little such power," kind of like Obama and the bitter clingers. But that's not what this guy has in mind. "This tuning out," the socially powerful "paying scant attention to those with little" power, "has been observed, for instance, with strangers in a mere five-minute get-acquainted session, where the more powerful person shows fewer signals of paying attention, like nodding or laughing."

Can you believe this? I'm not kidding you. Folks, there's an attack on masculinity taking place in this country and it has been for quite a while, and you see it manifest itself every day in this country. In the month of October it really manifests itself in a very prominent way. But this all-out assault on achievement now, I mean, it is being fired with both barrels in the midst of economic downturn, this effort to continually divide us.

So the readers of the New York Times are now learning that the powerful, when they meet somebody that's not powerful, ignore them and don't pay any attention to them and don't smile and basically are not polite to them. As though this is something new! As if it's something new here in 2013 and has hooks into certain aspects of America that are really bad that poor Barack Obama's trying to fix but just can't quite do it.

"Higher-status people are also more likely to express disregard, through facial expressions, and are more likely to take over the conversation and interrupt or look past the other speaker," as though this is somehow... You know, it used to be in America... Did you know this, that Warren Buffett would talk to the guy, a homeless guy and actually have a conversation with him? The homeless guy would crack jokes and Warren Buffett with laugh and smile, give him a pat on the back?

Buffett would give him, you know, a couple of million bucks and say, "Have a nice day." That's the way it used to be -- and then Bill Gates, he is over in Africa and he's trying to keep people from getting AIDS and malaria. So he runs around and he sees these poor people and he stops. He has a nice conversation with them. "Oh, how are you doing?" "Just fine!" They crack jokes and Bill Gates laughs at them. J.P. Morgan? Did you know J.P. Morgan left his home each and every day and did this?

He went outside -- he ran -- and he purposely sought out people with no power and he engaged them in conversation, asked them how they were and whatever they said, he smiled, he laughed, he put his arm around them, he welcomed them to his home. Oh, yeah! Oh, yeah! The Rockefellers, too. To this day, he will run into a poor guy with no power, invite him to the house and say, "What's going on? How can I help you? What are you doing" The guy will start talking to him and Rockefeller will not look away.

Yeah, he'll act very interested. Oh, yeah, this used to happen. I don't know what brought this on. Romney? Maybe it's talk radio that's causing all of this incivility? (interruption) (interruption) Oh, you're not aware

of Buffett seeking out homeless people, giving them $2 million, asking them how they are, listening to what they say and smiling and laughing at their jokes? You're not? Oh. Oh. Don't you see it on the trains? The rich get on the train and they mingle with the commuters. (interruption)

Yes, they do. The rich ride the trains. Did you ever see the rich in the first class section of the airplane? They go back and talk to the people in coach. "How ya doin'? I'm sorry I can't sit here with you but if you've got any jokes, I'll be glad to listen to them and I won't act like I'm bored. I won't ignore you." That used to happen all the time. Didn't it? Yes, and now something's happened, folks, and we're just plain flat-out mean, particularly the rich. They look at somebody and they say, "You know what?

"You're a powerless boob. I don't have time for you. Get the hell out of my face!" Apparently, this is common in America. "Of course," writes Mr. Goleman, "in any society, social power is relative; any of us may be higher or lower in a given interaction, and the research shows the effect still prevails. Though the more powerful pay less attention to us than we do to them, in other situations we are relatively higher on the totem pole of status -- and we, too, tend to pay less attention to those a rung or two down."

So it doesn't matter where you are. A, there's always somebody who has more. I don't care who you are. But what this guy's saying is no matter where you fall on the income ladder, say, the people that are lower than you, you treat them like dirt now, and you used to not. When they would come up and speak to you, you'd stop what you were doing and smile and shake their hands and act engaging, and basically be polite. Now everybody's just rude.

"A prerequisite to empathy is simply paying attention to the person in pain." I'm not kidding; I could go on with this. This is research by a guy named Dacher Keltner, and his "research finds that the poor, compared with the wealthy, have keenly attuned interpersonal attention in all directions, in general..." So not only do the rich treat other people rudely, impersonally, and make them feel like dirt. The poor are attentive to everyone. The poor are nice to everyone. The poor are more attuned to how other people are feeling and want them to feel better than the rich ever are.

It's right here in the New York Times, and the guy is dead serious about it.

http://www.rushlimbaugh.com/daily/2013/10/07/new_york_times_rich_people_care_less

Is Your Kid Sick or Just Faking It?

Cold and flu season is upon us, but is your child really sick? 4 tips for suspicious parents.

WebMD Feature Archive - By **Kathleen Doheny**, WebMD Feature, Reviewed by **Louise Chang, MD**

Your school-aged child wakes up sniffling, coughing, and moaning that he just doesn't feel well enough to go to school. Could it be a cold? The flu? Or, even the dreaded swine flu? As a parent, how are you supposed to respond?
Sometimes, it's clear that your child has cold symptoms or flu symptoms and needs to be taken to the doctor.

Other times, illness in kids is not so easy to figure out. Your child may not look so sick to you. So before you heat up the chicken soup and call your boss, you might want to consider the possibility that something other than a virus has invaded your home.

Yes, we're talking deception. Faking it. Playing hooky, a la *Ferris Bueller's Day Off.* Just as Matthew Broderick, the lead actor in the hit 1986 movie, decided to give himself a glorious day off (including a spin around Chicago in a "borrowed" Ferrari), there is the possibility your child is faking it -- for attention, the thrill of it, or a zillion other reasons.

At some point during their school days, up to 10% of kids try to dupe their parents into letting them stay home by feigning illness, experts say. Sometimes, the guise is relatively innocent; but sometimes it masks serious problems, such as anxiety, depression, or their wish to avoid a bully at school.

Given the anxiety many parents feel when their children are sick -- especially since the swine flu outbreaks -- how can you figure out which symptoms are real and which aren't? WebMD asked three experts who've seen their share of faking -- a pediatrician, a child and adolescent psychologist, and a former school nurse -- to clue us in on how clueless parents can decide: Does your baby need medical attention, chicken soup, or marching orders to get to school? Of course, if your child looks and acts truly sick, it's time to call the doctor or take them to urgent care.

But if you have your doubts and are trying to decide if the illness is really called "don't-want-to-go-to-school-itis," here are our experts' four best tips, short of hooking up a lie detector:

1. Check Out the Medical Evidence

Common symptoms of flu - and swine flu -- include fever, extreme fatigue, dry cough, and body aches. Cold symptoms are typically milder, including a runny or stuffy nose. Taking the body temperature is a good first step, says JoAnn Rohyans, MD, a pediatrician in private practice who is also an associate professor of pediatrics at Ohio State University College of Medicine, Columbus, and a spokeswoman for the American Academy of Pediatrics.

Normal body temperature varies, she says. It can be about 97 degrees in the morning and higher later. "Ninety-nine degrees at the end of the day is still normal," she says. Pediatricians generally don't consider a fever significant until temperature rises above 100.4 degrees Fahrenheit.

You can check your child's throat and tonsils if that's the origin of complaints, Rohyans says. But she says parents often think tonsils look awful when they're actually normal. "Tonsils that are sick look like moldy strawberries or raw hamburger," she tells WebMD.

Remember, if there's any doubt -- especially when potentially serious illnesses like swine flu are a possibility -- call your child's pediatrician.

2. Look for Telltale 'Faking' Signs

Fake symptoms typically don't have staying power. Be suspicious, Rohyans says, if your teen is coughing her lungs out one moment but then talking nonstop on the phone with friends.

Kids who are truly sick usually doze off while watching TV, she adds. So if your offspring is glued to a TV-watching marathon, wide awake, it could be a sign that he's faking it.

Vague symptoms and those that move from one body part to the other may be a sign of faking it, says Donna Mazyck, RN, president of the National Association of School Nurses in Silver Spring, Md., and a high school nurse for 15 years. As in: "Oh, my head hurts. Now my stomach hurts." When the complaints move to the foot, be very suspicious, she says. "That's a little bit of a clue." Yet, she says, it's not foolproof, because sometimes symptoms are vague.

3. Get to the Bottom of the Problem -- If There Is One

Once you've decided it's an act, try to figure out why. Although some kids are just feeling lazy, others may have a sense of entitlement, says Rohyans, especially during cold and flu season. "They expect they deserve a few days off because everyone else is sick," she tells WebMD.

But some kids who fake it have more serious underlying problems, not just laziness or mischief. A common reason for faking, says Mazyck, is being bullied at school. Faking becomes a practical avoidance strategy, she says.

Anxiety about a looming test or other challenge is a common reason to fake it. "It could be anxiety or fear, because of a test or some class that is hard for them," Mazyck says.

3. Get to the Bottom of the Problem -- If There Is One continued...

Mazyck recalls a student in a school where she worked who would begin to feel sick at the same time day after day. She discovered it was always right before math class and linked the symptoms to anxiety.

This is a case of psychological problems leading to physical symptoms, says Barry Anton, PhD, a clinical child and adolescent psychologist at Rainier Behavioral Health and professor of psychology at the University of Puget Sound in Tacoma, Wash. Faking becomes "malingering," he says. "Malingering is defined as assuming a sick role to avoid something."

The child in this case may not even be aware that the psychological problems led to the physical ones, Anton says. "The pain is real, the cause is psychological," he says.

These scenarios are more common, he says, in younger children who haven't yet learned to verbalize their emotional feelings. "As they get older, they have better coping skills," he says, and are better able to talk about their anxiety and other problems instead of having it manifest in pain.

Depression might be another underlying reason for your child to fake illness, Anton says. "It allows you to withdraw."

4. Decide if You're Contributing to the Problem

Children in "high achieving" families whose parents have very high expectations often have high anxiety levels, Anton finds. "They may be much more likely to fake it."

Children from "chaotic and disorganized families" in which the parents themselves may complain about physical symptoms due to psychological stresses are also more likely to fake it, he finds. They are modeling their behavior after their parents' behavior, begging off school when the stresses turn into physical problems. "The pain is real," Anton says. So to call it faking isn't quite accurate. "But they can't identify that the pain is from the anxiety."

Often, Anton finds in his practice, the child's symptoms mimic those of the parents. So if a mother complains of a bad headache the day before her salary review, her son may do the same before an important math test.

If this sounds like your house, Anton says, consider getting professional help -- for you and your child -- to learn to deal with the anxiety and depression and other problems that may be leading to the physical symptoms.

If you are convinced the sick day request is just about playing hooky, don't "reinforce" sick behavior, Anton says. What's reinforcement? "When you go in and say, 'Here's some chicken soup, let's turn on your favorite TV show," that makes staying home look way too good compared to school, and is likely to encourage your child to try faking it again. If your child's really sick, the chicken soup and love route is fine, he says, for that limited period of illness.

http://www.webmd.com/cold-and-flu/features/is-your-kid-sick-just-faking-it?page=3

Cheating Death

The phrase **cheating death** is commonly used to describe the manner in which a person avoids a possibly fatal event or who prolongs their life in spite of considerable odds. A person who cures themselves of **cancer** without **chemotherapy**, a person who avoids by a narrow margin falling off a cliff or building or being shot or stabbed, or a person who survives hospitalization in **critical condition** in spite of a poor **prognosis** from doctors all might be described as having "cheated death". In **Greek mythology**, **Sisyphus** cheats death by tricking **Persephone** to let him return to the world from **Tartarus**.

Although it is difficult to find information about the origin of the phrase, it may be related to **anthropomorphism** of **death**, more commonly known in **English-speaking cultures** as **the Grim Reaper**. Such personification has also led to a wide variety of **pop-culture** references, perhaps most notably being the depiction of death in **Ingmar Bergman's** film ***The Seventh Seal***, in which a knight proposes a wager with death over a game of **chess**. In the film the knight comments that he knows death plays chess because he's seen it in paintings, possibly in reference to a medieval painting of death playing chess which hangs in **Täby Church** in **Sweden**. Playing chess offers the knight an opportunity to **cheat**. The popularity of Bergman's film has resulted in many parodies and may be responsible for the popularity of the **idiom** "cheating death". Cheating death is also a recurring theme in the ***Final Destination*** **film series**.

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cheating_death

Cheating Death and Being Okay With God

One in four Americans believes that by 2050, most of us will live to 120. Is that good?

JAMES HAMBLINAUG 6 2013, 12:22 PM ET

This Spring we learned of 32-year-old Russian multimillionaire Dmitry Itskov's determined **2045 Initiative**, which involves "mass production of lifelike, low-cost avatars that can be uploaded with the contents of a human brain, complete with all the particulars of consciousness and personality." The mid-century goal, in which Itskov seems confident, is meant as a step toward immortality.

David Segal in *The New York Times* put to paper the reaction of many: "Are you insane?"

Still almost three-quarters of American predict that by 2050, "artificial arms and legs will perform better than natural ones." A substantial majority also believe that by that point we'll have cures for most forms of cancer. And fully 25 percent of Americans think that by mid-century, the average person will live to at least 120.

Those numbers are according to Pew Research Center's Religion and Public Life Project, which just released **results** of an exhaustive study on our feelings about "**radical life extension**."

That term, used primarily by bioethicists and medical researchers, is still surfacing in mainstream conversation—most people report that they haven't heard it before—but that's changing quickly. Radical life extension doesn't usually conjure Itskovian avatars, but rather a body of slightly more intuitive (but still abstract) "treatments aimed

at prolonging life." The Pew project was undertaken because leading bioethicists foresee schismatic discussion around anti-aging research and treatments to become increasingly pointed in the not-distant future. Here we have the first large-scale breakdown of public perceptions.

The Pew Center also spoke with a cavalcade of religious leaders, whose perspectives run the gamut. No major religious bodies have issued official statements on these types of therapies, but scholars have begun to consider what their positions would be. A frequently recurring theme is concern over the disparities that access to these treatments could highlight and heighten—that people aren't generally opposed to the notion, as long as everyone has access.

I've condensed some of the more discerning perspectives. The **full text is here**.

Unitarian Universalist

According to Michael Hogue, associate professor of theology at Meadville Lombard Theological School in Chicago, the Unitarian Universalist Association on life extension "would probably come down [against it]." Opposition would likely stem from "ecological concerns as well as concerns about economic justice," he said, referring to the environmental impact of faster population growth and the possibility that only the wealthy would be able to afford life-extension therapies.

Catholic Church

Pope Benedict XVI expressed concern that significantly increasing longevity could strip life of its richest experiences – including the search for the transcendent and the need to have children as a hedge against mortality. A 2004 theological commission headed by Benedict (at the time, Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger) alluded to the issue: "Disposing of death is in reality the most radical way of disposing of life." And in a 2010 homily, Benedict warned, "Humanity would become extraordinarily old, [and] there would be no more room for youth. Capacity for innovation would die, and endless life would be no paradise."

Quaker

Many Quakers would have serious concerns about therapies to extend life, predicted Margery Post Abbott, a Quaker author. "Our view is counter to the attitude that one should do everything to extend life," she says. In addition, Abbott thinks many in her church would have reservations about whether the therapies would be available to everyone and whether dramatically extending human life would negatively impact the environment. "We are already overloading our planet's resources... and this could make the resource issue much worse."

Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (Mormon Church)

"The church believes that the human body is sacred, which is why it even discourages body piercing and tattoos," says Steven Peck, a bioethicist at Brigham Young University in Provo, Utah. "So, as long **as the body remained the same**, as long as you were only giving people more of what they already have without big alterations, I think it would be fine." On the other hand, "if there was a sense that [life-extension therapy] was desecrating the body, that would be a problem," Peck says.

Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

An official statement by the church's supreme governing body briefly addressed on longevity, endorsing "reasonable life extension without expecting or seeking perfection." It also warned that life extension should "not lead to unjust and disproportionately biased use of limited human and financial resources."

Islam

Radically extending life "probably wouldn't be a problem for most" Muslims, according to Aisha Musa, a professor of religion at Colgate University. According to Musa and others, Muslims believe Allah knows the exact life span of each person from birth to death, or what the Quran calls one's "term appointed."

"Since you can't really violate God's plan for you, life extension is alright because it's part of God's will," Musa said.

According to Mohsen Kadivar, a Shia theologian currently teaching at Duke, many Shia ayatollahs would likely sanction life-extension therapies as long as their object was not to extend life indefinitely. "There is a difference between life extension and immortality," Kadivar says, adding, "The first is acceptable and the second is not acceptable, according to Islam and the Quran."

Musa and Sachedina, who are Sunni, agree that striving for immortality would go against Islamic teachings because it would keep Muslims from heaven. "There is a deep-seated belief that death is a blessing," said Abdulaziz Sachedina, chair of Islamic studies at George Mason University and the author of *Islamic Biomedical Ethics*. "We look forward to dying."

Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod

Joel Lehenbauer, executive director of the church's Missouri Synod's Commission on Theology and Church Relations said a church position would likely reflect two principles: the church's "very public and very consistent ... pro-life position" and its wariness of "the over-regard for life for life's sake." So, no embryonic stem-cell research or human cloning. People shouldn't try to avoid the "basic scriptural fact" that everyone must die.

Presbyterian Church, U.S.A.

"Presbyterians trust science ... so there is no obvious reason to be inherently skeptical of life extension," said Charles Wiley, coordinator of the church's Office of Theology and Worship Presbyterian leaders would likely urge people to use their extra years "in the service of the church and God." He warned, though, that life extension not "be an idol [people worship] that out idols all others."

Southern Baptist Convention

"Christians certainly do not embrace death as a good in itself," R. Albert Mohler, president of the Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, told the Deseret News in 2006, "but we understand that death is a part of what it means to be human, and that the effort to forever forestall death is itself an act of defiance that will be both unworkable and morally suspect."

Jeffrey Riley of the New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary said that many evangelicals would likely accept life-extension, "depend[ing] on how it was being advertised."

National Baptist Convention, USA

“I think we would embrace it because we welcome the blessings of a longer life so that we can make more of a contribution to society,” said Rev. Charles Brown, a professor of Christian Ethics at Payne Theological Seminary.

“We firmly believe science can be used to advance God’s purposes,” said Marcus Gibson, senior pastor of the Greater Shady Grove Missionary Baptist Church in Columbus, Georgia

“There is something in our [African American] historical fiber that might make us want this, after having been denied so much for hundreds of years,” Gibson says. Brown agreed: “We have gone from a sense of impossibility in the 20th century to one of possibility in the 21st, and I think we want as much chance as we can to participate in these new possibilities.”

Buddhism

Only by realizing the ephemeral nature of existence and the illusory nature of the self, said former Buddhist monk and current executive director of the Institute for Ethics and Emerging Technologies James Hughes, will one stop creating bad karma and come closer to nirvana. Dramatically longer life would be beneficial, he says, because it would give each person more time to learn wisdom and compassion and to achieve nirvana. Karma Lekshe Tsomo, a Buddhist nun and associate professor of Buddhist studies at the University of San Diego, warned that “If a person is living a nonvirtuous life – for example, needlessly killing others – perhaps a short life is better.”

Seventh-day Adventist Church

If the Seventh-day Adventists’ highest governing body, the General Conference, were to debate life extension in the future, its members would likely vote in favor of it, says Allan Handysides, director of health ministries for the church. “In our view, the purpose of health is to fulfill the church’s mission – to witness to the grace of Jesus Christ,” he says, adding that the church. “The longer we live and the healthier we are, the better we can do our work.” However, he said, life-extension therapies “would need to be available to everyone.”

Hinduism

Hindu scriptures describe a “golden age” in the deep past when people lived 400 years. “Life extension would be seen as a return to this golden age,” said to Arvind Sharma, a professor of comparative religion at McGill University. “The normal blessing in Hinduism is ‘Live long.’ So why not live longer?”

Judaism

Rabbi Barry Freundel, an ethicist and theologian who also leads an Orthodox Jewish congregation in D.C. expects most Jewish scholars to support efforts to radically extend human life. “Judaism has a very positive view of life … so the more of it, the better,” he says. “The goal in Judaism is to make the world better and [extended life] would allow us to do more of that,” he said.

Rabbi Eric Wisnia of Reform Congregation Beth Chaim in New Jersey agrees that most Jewish thinkers are likely to embrace life extension. “Prolonging life and saving life, no matter how long, is a great thing,” he says, adding that longer lives would allow people to better teach and serve future generations. “Human beings are built for cumulative knowledge," Wisnia said, "and the older we are, supposedly the more wise we are."

It's relatively rare in healthcare that before we get too deep into how and if we can do something, we think so extensively about whether we should.

http://www.theatlantic.com/health/archive/2013/08/cheating-death-and-being-okay-with-god/278381/

Too Soon to Say Goodbye

by **Art Buchwald**

When doctors told Art Buchwald that his kidneys were kaput, the renowned humorist declined dialysis and checked into a Washington, D.C., hospice to live out his final days. Months later, "The Man Who Wouldn't Die" was still there, feeling good, holding court in a nonstop "salon" for his family and dozens of famous friends, and confronting things you usually don't talk about before you die; he even jokes about them.
Here Buchwald shares not only his remarkable experience–as dozens of old pals from Ethel Kennedy to John Glenn to the Queen of Swaziland join the party–but also his whole wonderful life: his first love, an early brush with death in a foxhole on Eniwetok Atoll, his fourteen champagne years in Paris, fame as a columnist syndicated in hundreds of newspapers, and his incarnation as hospice superstar. Buchwald also shares his sorrows: coping with an absent mother, childhood in a foster home, and separation from his wife, Ann.
He plans his funeral (with a priest, a rabbi, and Billy Graham, to cover all the bases) and strategizes how to land a big obituary in *The New York Times* ("Make sure no head of state or Nobel Prize winner dies on the same day"). He describes how he and a few of his famous friends finagled cut-rate burial plots on Martha's Vineyard and how he acquired a Picasso drawing without really trying.

What we have here is a national treasure, the complete Buchwald, uncertain of where the next days or weeks may take him but unfazed by the inevitable, living life to the fullest, with frankness, dignity, and humor.

"[Art Buchwald] has given his friends, their families, and his audiences so many laughs and so much joy through the years that that alone would be an enduring legacy. But Art has never been just about the quick laugh. His humor is a road map to essential truths and insights that might otherwise have eluded us."
–Tom Brokaw
http://www.goodreads.com/book/show/107196.Too_Soon_to_Say_Goodbye