

Why KIDS LIE & HOW TO GET THEM TO TELL THE TRUTH

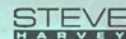
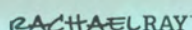
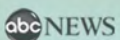
by Amy McCready
Founder of Positive Parenting Solutions



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INTRODUCTION

If there's anything more frustrating than learning our kids dug up the neighbor's flowers or borrowed our iPad without permission, it's listening to them lie about it! Especially if it's the second time this week. Whether you're facing a preschooler trying to convince you that her stuffed bear was the one who ate the last cookie or a 16-year-old who definitely wasn't at his friend's house last night like he said he would be, stay calm—you've got this.

This e-book will teach you all you need to know about lying, and how to get the day-to-day honesty you're looking for. We'll give you step-by-step, proven techniques you can use anytime you catch your child in a lie, as well as tips to help prevent the next episode. And, if you feel your problem is even bigger? Don't worry, we have fixes for that, too! Use this book along with the Positive Parenting Solutions coursework and tools to foster an open and truthful environment in your home.

Chapter One

THE REAL STORY ON HONESTY

The first thing we need to realize about dishonesty is that it's not only developmentally normal, it's also incredibly common. Just mention lying at a playgroup or on the soccer sidelines, and you'll find you're in good company—virtually all children tell the occasional fib (or whopper), and practically all parents are flustered or angered by this behavior.

According to research by Kang Lee, a University of Toronto professor and director of the Institute of Child Study, lying is a developmental milestone triggered by a shift in the way your child organizes information. It's perfectly normal and common for ages 4-17 to lie, and most 7-year-olds can lie so well even their parents can't tell. However, the amount of lying tends to decrease around age 17. Therefore, if your child is untruthful now, this doesn't necessarily mean the behavior will permanently continue into adulthood.

With that said, you're not going to wait until your child's in his late teens to address dishonesty. You want to address dishonesty as early as possible since hiding important information from trustworthy adults can be dangerous. So, while lying itself shouldn't raise a huge red flag, it does need to be dealt with.

WHY DO KIDS LIE?

In many cases, kids simply extend a game of make-believe to real life. But most of the time, kids lie for the same reasons we do: to avoid a negative outcome, punishment or embarrassment; to help someone else feel better; to impress; or to avoid disappointing an authority figure. Furthermore, they may not feel safe telling the truth, or they may simply want to stay out of the spotlight. Other times, kids lie to get attention, or to get a rise out of their parents.

Frequent lying is also linked to impulsive behavior—speaking before they think—and can even be a sign of ADHD. In some cases, for a combination of reasons, lying can become a habit.

In most cases, though, kids *would* tell the truth if the conditions were right—and that's what we want to focus on in this book and with the Positive Parenting Solutions tools.

GOALS FOR THIS BOOK

Dr. Shefali Tsabary, author of *The Conscious Parent* reminds us, **“There is only one reason a child lies to its parents: the conditions for it to feel safe have not been created.”**

As parents, in addition to teaching our kids positive habits, we need to create an environment that encourages openness and is safe for the truth to be told. We'll do this by looking at our own attitudes toward honesty, starting the conversation about truthfulness with our kids, and encouraging harmony in our homes.

We also want to ensure we handle dishonesty in a positive way that allows our kids to learn from their mistakes, rather than become discouraged by punishment. We'll learn how to handle lying, and any other negative behavior the lie was trying to cover up, without letting our emotions take over. When we send our kids the message that they can tell the truth without fear of retribution, we'll make great strides in promoting honesty in our homes.

THE AGES AND STAGES OF LYING

A lying preschooler is a much different beast (with a dragon tail and rainbow wings that can fly to the moon) than a teen who clearly knows the difference between fact and fiction. Kids withhold truth—or embellish it—for different reasons and in different ways as they grow. Read on to determine how to address mistruth at any age, plus when it's a big deal and when it's really not.

AGES 6 AND UNDER: THE TRUTH

Young children are just as likely to tell a story because they think it's silly or fun as they are to lie for more diabolical reasons—although kids as young as 2 or 3 may tell a fib to get out of a diaper change or a bath (“I took a bath at Grandma’s!”). And, they’re even more likely to simply confuse or forget the truth. Add to that their struggles with impulse control—which is completely normal for preschoolers—and you’ll get plenty of little mistruths that are easy to correct. Which means, that at this age, it’s crucial not to make a huge deal out of lying. If it gets a rise out of you, they’ll do it again...and again, and again.



When you encounter made-up stories or minor mistruths impulsively blurted out, treat them lightly, and continue to train your child in fact versus fiction, how to tell the truth even when it's difficult, why honesty is important, and so on. On the other hand, if your child confuses or forgets information, for instance, about whether or not they left their beloved action figure on the couch where it could get broken, you can usually let it go. Most of the time, you can just calmly state your view of the misremembered experience and teach them that sometimes it's okay to agree to disagree if you can't be sure of the facts. Focus on solutions for the future, or just move on.

But, what about the "I took a bath at Grandma's!" lie? If it's over a matter of importance, go ahead and verify by calling Grandma. Follow the solutions coming up in Chapter 4. Keep it short and simple, and make a mental note to keep the conversation about honesty going. Talk about the differences between truth and made-up stories, and about situations when it's important to tell the truth instead of a story. With plenty of patience and lots of positive work, you can nip dishonesty in the bud—for now, at least.



AGES 7-12: NOTHING BUT THE TRUTH

As kids in the 7-11 range face new experiences and learn more about the world, you'll notice that they want facts—nothing but the truth. And the more you open up with age-appropriate truth instead of the sugar-coated stories we sometimes tell younger kids, the more they'll trust you. The key is to keep it age-appropriate. After all, they're kids who aren't yet ready for the full truth about why Mommy and Daddy are separated, or why exactly they should never get into a car with a stranger. But, they probably need more than you'd tell your 4-year-old. Take their concerns seriously, and if you don't know an answer or how to respond, get back to them. This is a great way to build trust, as your kids (probably) still think you know everything.

As we all know, kids at this age are fully adept at lying to get out of trouble or to get out of something they don't want to do—but on a subconscious level, they'd rather enjoy a close, trusting relationship with their parents, even if it means facing the occasional consequence for something they did (or didn't do). You'll learn how to address these missteps in Chapter 4, and concrete ways to foster open communication in Chapter 3.

The great opportunity about this age is that these kids don't have the social inhibitions of teenagers, so they're still likely to spill the whole story behind the library book that's been missing for months, as long as you don't explode at them after the first sentence. In fact, you're in the golden age of easy communication with your kids. Make every effort to get into your child's world and show interest in them and their activities, as this will become harder in the teenage years. They'll return the favor by staying honest with you—most of the time, anyway.

Along these lines, be open and transparent about your own life, on an age-appropriate level. If you goofed up or made a bad decision, share it! Bonus points for making it funny! Model honesty and the fact that it's okay not to be perfect, as well as to let others' see your imperfections.

Finally, these kids are ready to talk about honesty on a deeper level, and are navigating the multi-year process of transitioning from a juvenile relationship with you to a somewhat more mature one. You'll know this because the typical answers we give to their big questions don't really work anymore, and you'll be having real conversations about everything from puberty to world hunger. Talk with your kids about why they should value honesty. Show compassion, and talk about whether they can trust their friends and other people around them, but withhold judgment. Be willing to discuss examples of trustworthiness or dishonesty, and keep the conversation going.



AGES 13-18: THE WHOLE TRUTH

Don't let your teens fool you: they still need you and they still crave a trusting relationship with you. However, developing trust becomes more complicated as kids gain independence because they increasingly turn to their peer group or the media for answers, rather than to you.

Even if we've laid the groundwork for honesty in the early years, we can't exactly relax, as the teen years bring a host of new challenges that will test our teen's resolve. And, as we know, the lies they tell at this stage in life may come with higher consequences. It's time to subtly shift how we think about the truth and lying. Realistically, there's a lot we're not going to know about our teens and their world. But, if we have a trusting relationship, we can open doors for communication to support our teens when they need it, and help them avoid—or survive—the worst of the world's consequences.



With the stakes so high, our biggest challenge is to control our own emotions when we catch our tween or teen in a lie. The strategies in Chapter 4 will help address our emotions in the moment. We'll continue to cultivate trust by using the strategies in Chapter 3. And, while you're building that trust, you'll recognize your teen's need for *authenticity*. Older kids actually crave the *whole* truth in all areas of their lives. They're trying to figure out what's real and true about the world, about themselves, and about the people close to them.

Truth takes on a whole new meaning as they start to spot contradictions in media reports and the actions of authority figures. You can help by letting them vent their frustrations to you and by helping them seek out the full story on issues they're interested in. When you encourage them to get the facts from a news story, for instance, you'll have lots of opportunities to talk about using all the different angles of a situation to find out the truth—and why it's important to honestly represent themselves and their experiences through both words and actions.

But here's the bad news: for teens, the cat's out of the bag about the fact that their parents aren't the prime authority on everything. And, if you try to convince them you have all the answers, you'll be left spinning your wheels. Fortunately, you can embrace your teenager's new revelation and simply show authenticity yourself. Let your kids see your areas of weakness, as well as how you manage them or work to improve. If they view you as an authentic, real person with weaknesses and past mistakes, they'll actually be *more* likely to trust you on the big stuff, like drinking and driving or pursuing good grades.

This is also the key time to help our kids get honest with themselves. Help them see how “the whole truth” can be helpful in understanding what's going on with their emotions, their relationships, and ultimately their success in many areas of life. For example, if they're upset and lashing out, is it because their best friend got the lead role in the school play, and they're stuck working on sets? And what's behind that? Jealousy? Worry that the friend will be too busy for them? Despair they're not good enough? Shattered dreams? Whatever it is, it's complicated—but helping them isolate their biggest concerns, and be honest with themselves, will help make honesty a lifetime habit.

Finally, keep in mind that with teens' complex emotions, they might not always know how they feel. Sometimes, honesty is an “I don't know,” and that's okay. Instead of demanding, “What were you *thinking*?!” say, “Let's figure this out.”

Chapter Two

FIXES THAT FLOP:

TOP 10 LIE-BUSTERS THAT HAVE NEVER WORKED!

When it comes to parents' solutions for lying, I've seen it all: spanking, grounding, tongue-lashing—and of course, all kinds of substances being stuffed into kids' mouths, from soap to hot pepper. And to be honest, many of us have experienced these punishments ourselves.

Here's my question: **do these responses actually stop lying, or just teach kids how to get better at not getting caught next time?**

Not only do these techniques fail, they often make the problem worse. As we do throughout the Positive Parenting Solutions coursework, let's get control of our responses first, and then we'll work on our kids.

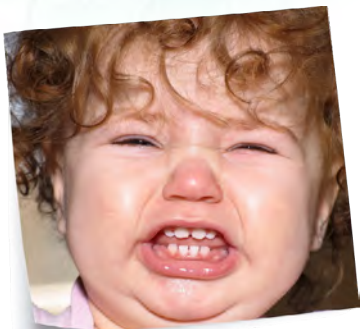


1. GETTING ANGRY.

Anger is the most common response of parents who catch their kids in a lie. *First, how could they lie to us?! And second, do they really think we won't find out?* The trouble is, once kids figure out we're going to blow our top at their bad behavior—whether they were playing with nails in the garage and punctured your tire, or lied about doing so—they're going to do everything they can to avoid that response. And, can you blame them? If your boss responded that way, wouldn't you be likely to cover up your mistakes any way you could next time?

Anger, frustration, annoyance—these are all responses that simply put kids on the defensive. When children are defending their position, either outwardly or inwardly, no learning is happening, except that next time they'll work harder to not get caught. And while kids need to learn that lying is a poor decision, anger isn't the way to teach them.

We will learn how to take the lie, and the negative behavior it was covering up, seriously by using methods that will encourage them to tell the truth in the future.



2. WASHING HER MOUTH OUT WITH SOAP, HOT SAUCE, AND OTHER PHYSICAL PUNISHMENTS.

It's natural to want to show our kids that poor choices have poor outcomes, which is why parents are so prone to punish. But punishment works the way anger does—it causes them to emotionally shut down as their self-protection responses kick in. When kids are in a defensive mode, the learning opportunity is lost. Instead, kids will be more likely to repeat the behavior in the future, but will focus on not getting caught. Plus, it degrades the parent-child relationship as the realization kicks in that *the one(s) who love her the most would physically hurt her*.

Even grounding kids or sending them to their room does nothing to solve the behavior—I know this from the thousands of parents who have used these techniques. It's okay to get some space away from the child to process the lie, and to suggest they take some time, too. But turning it into punishment will only guarantee the lies continue.

3. USING LOGICAL CONSEQUENCES ON LIES.

If we're not using punishment, can we use Consequences if they follow the 5 R's as outlined in Session 3 of the Positive Parenting Solutions program? Even if we know for sure the child is lying—which isn't always a given—there's really not a Logical Consequence that follows the 5 R's that we can put in place.



Although sometimes it feels like lying is a *really big* misbehavior that needs to be addressed in a really big way, this behavior is better handled with other tools from the course and by implementing additional strategies we'll cover in the next chapter. Our goal here is to promote honesty and create a safe environment for the truth—and there are plenty of positive ways to do that.

While Logical Consequences usually don't apply to lying, Natural Consequences may have a place if used in conjunction with the strategies discussed in Chapter 3. It's the story of The Boy Who Cried Wolf: warn kids in a calm moment that when they lie, people won't believe them next time. Then, simply let the Natural Consequence play out.

But, don't rely on this as your only method to address lying—think of it in the same way as getting your kids to brush their teeth. You'll teach them that if they don't brush, they'll get cavities, but you're also going to help them develop good habits through tools like When-Then Routines and Creating a Decision-Rich Environment from Session 3 of the course. Chapters 3 and 4 in this e-book will help you set the stage by providing tools and tips that specifically address lying.



4. EXPRESSING DISAPPOINTMENT.

When our kids lie, we're certainly disappointed—we harbor high hopes that they're taking the high road, no matter the situation. Something in us wants them to know they let us down. This is where we need to take the high road, though, and realize that expressing our disappointment to our kids and making them feel guilty will only backfire. Just like with physical punishment or anger, our kids will react by defending themselves, and not by learning from the situation.

Next time you're tempted to say, "I'm disappointed in you," keep the emotion to yourself and focus on solutions instead. Play the role of a support person, and manage your own disappointment away from your child.

5. ARGUING BACK.

When we catch our kids in a lie, our instincts tell us to let them know just how wrong they are. But, as we learned in Session 4 of the Positive Parenting Solutions course, when we get sucked into an argument with our kids, they get a major power hit. In fact, kids may at times use lying as a power play to hold control over their parents.



Arguing back against a lie does nothing to solve the underlying problem of why the child felt the need to lie. This response also fails to correct the misbehavior they were trying to cover up in the first place. Fighting only prolongs the negative part of the discussion and puts the child on the defensive.

Of course you'll want to correct the misinformation, but we'll teach you how to do it without the power struggle—it'll be far more effective if everyone's cooled down first.



6. DEMANDING TRUTH.

Short of a major safety issue (for instance, a child has run away from home), there's virtually no reason to demand the truth out of our kids. Not only is this disrespectful and damaging to the parent-child relationship, but it's also unrealistic. Just like forcing a child to eat broccoli, we can't really force them to tell the truth unless we take drastic measures, or use punishment. Punishment, as we know, will only make our kids want to do a better job at hiding the truth next time and will certainly erode the parent-child relationship.

Instead, we need to get comfortable with our children's growing need for independence and the fact that we simply won't always know everything about their world. This is a sign of growing up—not sharing every little thing. If we don't demand truth, and instead use positive methods to foster open communication and honesty, we're much more likely to get it, even when our kids leave home.

7. LABELING THE LIAR.

One of the most damaging ways we can react to lying is by labeling the child as a liar. As we see in Session 2 of the Positive Parenting Solutions course, labeling can cause the behavior to continue, and discourage the child. Anytime we call a child a liar, we tell her, "You'll always be this way," or, "Lying is part of your identity." We may be tempted to use the label in a well-intended way to call out misbehavior, but Chapter 4 will teach more productive ways to do that.



8. BLOWING IT OUT OF PROPORTION.

Not every lie needs to be a huge deal, especially if the behavior is rare. Sometimes kids just need a simple reminder that honesty is the best policy, and you can leave it at that. Likewise, the appearance of lies as a new behavior doesn't mean the child has suddenly "gone bad" or that they're covering up dark secrets. Manage the lies, but keep in mind it really could be just a phase.



9. REQUIRING DETAILS, DETAILS, DETAILS.

Even honest, fairly open parent-child relationships don't require parents to know every single detail of what goes on in their child's life. While our intentions are good, there's no need to grill our kids every time they walk in the door—or out of it. If you have set rules for where kids can go, when, and with whom, you can relax about the little things.

Especially as your kids grow into their teens, avoid the endless demand for honesty: Who was there? What were they doing? Did anything happen? Save the interrogation for when you really *need* the information, and relax in the meantime.

To be clear, there's certainly a difference between grilling a child about a pool party and showing interest. If you're chatting with your older child similarly to the way you'd talk to an adult, and both of you are mostly enjoying the conversation, that's totally fine. If your child doesn't want to talk about it, it's possible they're covering something up—or that they're just being a teenager. Either way, the best way to gain access to your child's life is through Mind, Body and Soul Time, plus the strategies mentioned in the next chapter.

10. THINKING THE PROBLEM WILL SOLVE ITSELF.

While not every teeny-tiny fib may need correction, and not every lie is the end of the world, honesty should be something we consistently strive for in our families. We need to monitor our kids' truthfulness and put in the work when we see a problem. Treat this problem as you would a weedy garden: clear it out, bit by bit, and then try to prevent a reoccurrence. Sure, it's possible your vegetables could win the war over weeds, but it's not likely and it'll take a long time. The same is true with lying. It's possible a mild case of dishonesty can clear on its own, but chances are you're going to need to do some treatment, plus some prevention for next time.



Now that you know what not to do about lying, it's time to face dishonesty head-on. In the next two chapters, you'll learn plenty of useful strategies to build an honest home, and how to manage the dishonesty you see.

Chapter Three

THE FOUNDATION:

HOW TO WELCOME HONESTY INTO YOUR HOME AND FAMILY

Despite what we see in society, research has shown that honesty really is the best policy. According to a 2012 study by Anita E. Kelly, professor of psychology at the University of Notre Dame, when people purposefully reduced the number of major and minor lies they told, they reported fewer mental and physical health complaints. They also reported stronger relationships and better overall health. Although this study was performed on adults, it stands to reason we're setting our kids up for success when we teach them to value honesty.

There are many more reasons a policy of honesty makes sense in your home, too—from closer relationships and less friction overall, to safety concerns. It's clear we want to make truth-telling easy for our kids and common in our homes.

As we saw in Chapter 1, **the biggest barrier to kids telling the truth is not feeling safe to do so.**

We want to address this head-on. In the previous chapters, we've seen all the reasons kids lie, and what we do to make the problem worse. Now, our work begins as we make our home safe for the truth.

The most important thing you can do to foster an open and honest relationship between you and your children is to schedule regular Mind, Body and Soul Time with each child. When you show you care enough to get into their world, they'll feel safe about sharing what's going on, even if it's difficult. (If you are struggling to implement Mind, Body and Soul Time, please review the advanced module: *The Busy Parent's Guide to Mind, Body and Soul Time*.)

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THEN, BUILD A TRUTH-SAFE FOUNDATION WITH EVERYONE IN YOUR FAMILY

BE OKAY WITH MISTAKES.

Make it clear that you view mistakes as learning opportunities to make better choices in the future. If kids know that you won't be angry or disappointed when they mess up, they'll be more likely to be open and honest with you. To address a mistake, simply say something like, "That's a great opportunity to learn for the future. If you could have a do-over, what would you do differently?" If your child's actions negatively affected another person, ask what needs to be done to "make it right" with the injured party.



TALK ABOUT FEELINGS.

In your conversations about truthfulness, ask your kids how lying makes them feel, and then how honesty makes them feel. Share your own stories about telling the truth even when it was hard, and also about how you have felt after lying. When kids realize that lies actually create a huge mental burden for them, they'll be more likely to opt for the truth.



DON'T SET YOUR CHILD UP.

It's the most common pitfall when we're addressing dishonesty: asking questions we already know the answer to ("Did you finish your homework?"). Instead try, "What are your plans for finishing your homework?" If your child hasn't completed his homework, he can save face by focusing on a plan of action rather than inventing a story.

BY FOLLOWING THESE TIPS:



CREATE A SAFE ENVIRONMENT FOR THE TRUTH.

If your kids are worried about being punished or yelled at any time they mess up, they won't feel safe telling you the truth. Practice using your Calm Voice (although it can be hard at times!) and focus on solutions that will solve the problem instead of assigning blame.

TALK ABOUT TRUST.

Help your kids learn what it takes to trust someone—for instance, knowing someone a long time, sharing positive experiences, whether or not they're trusted by Mom and Dad, and so on. Along with this, teach them that none of these attributes are a guarantee of *trustworthiness*, but rather we learn about people over time and build an opinion of them. Show kids that trust is built slowly, with lots of interactions and experiences, but that it can come crashing down quickly in cases of dishonesty. These conversations can help them make their own positive choices about honesty, and also help them evaluate their relationships and stay safe.

ACKNOWLEDGE AND APPRECIATE HONESTY.

Express encouragement when your kids tell the truth. Say to them, "That must have been difficult for you to tell me what really happened. I admire your courage for telling the truth. You are really growing up!"



BE SUPPORTIVE.

When your kids open up, resist the urge to nitpick. Focus on the major dilemma and counsel them in wise choices. If they feel respected rather than judged, they will come back for more another time.

BE TRUSTWORTHY.

If your kids trust you with their sensitive information—even if to you it's no big deal—guard that information as close as your credit card. If you simply must share about your 8-year-old's "puppy love" or the fact that your 15-year-old is still scared of the dark (for instance, to get advice from a trusted source), be absolutely certain you handle it respectfully in the unfortunate event that the conversation gets back to your child.



LISTEN WELL.

Our kids know when we're more interested in our phone (or the TV, or the grocery list) than we are in them. If we don't show them we're actively listening and genuinely care what they have to say, eventually they won't bother talking, and a willingness to open up will diminish. If you can't immediately tune into a rehashing of your child's day at school, say, "I'm so sorry—my mind is busy with this task right now. Can you give me five minutes to get to a good stopping point so I can listen with all my attention? I really don't want to miss anything!" Then, fully engage in the conversation.



SHARE A TRUST JOURNAL.

One way to improve communication with older kids—especially where there have been trust issues or a long history of power struggles—is to use a trust journal. Parents and kids can share feelings with each other using the journal. There are two rules: First, the journal is a judgment-free zone. And yes, that goes both ways as your kids learn how to respect others' opinions. Second, kids can't get in trouble for what they write in the journal.

DO REGULAR EMPATHY TRAINING.

We want everyone in the house to feel respected even when—especially when—they're sharing uncomfortable information. Whether it's the fact they wet the bed, or that they totally goofed their science project, or that their latest relationship ended badly, it's imperative the child feels respected as they share. Spend time in your Family Meetings, or other occasions, in empathy training so that everyone in the house—even siblings—knows how to respond empathetically and constructively. (See Chapter 10 of *The "Me, Me, Me" Epidemic: A Step-by-Step Guide to Raising Capable, Grateful Kids in an Over-Entitled World* for more strategies on teaching empathy.)



PRACTICE HONESTY EVERYWHERE.

Remember that young ears and eyes are always tuned in. Whether you're failing to correct the barista who gives you too much change or making up a story about why you can't volunteer at the school fundraiser, remember your actions set the example for acceptable behavior. Let your kids see you being honest, even when it's not easy, and they'll gain courage to follow suit.



REINFORCE UNCONDITIONAL LOVE.

Make sure your kids are often reminded that while you sometimes don't like their behavior, there isn't anything they could possibly do that would change your love for them.

A truth-safe home won't happen overnight, but with plenty of patience and training for everyone (including the parents!), your kids will come to feel safe being honest, most of the time.

Chapter Four

BUSTED!

HOW TO MANAGE LIES IN THE MOMENT (AND RIGHT AFTER)

No matter how much prevention we've done, and how open our kids seem to be with us, we're still likely to see some deception from time to time. After all, our kids go through lots of ages and stages, experiences and relationships—and they're only human. Everyone slips up from time to time, and some kids may still struggle with dishonesty on a greater scale. The key is to expect untruthfulness and brush up on your parenting skills, including the words to say. When your mind and your tongue are prepared, you'll be able to respond in a way that will help, and not hurt, the situation.

TO PREPARE YOURSELF FOR HANDLING THE LIE, STUDY THIS LIST OF TIPS FOR MANAGING YOUR RESPONSE:

RESPOND CALMLY AND WITH COMPASSION.

Whether the lie is fairly white or a whopper, get your emotions in check before you respond to the mistruth. This may take seconds, a few hours, or even a day.

DON'T PUNISH.

One of the main reasons kids lie is—you guessed it—to avoid punishment. If you punish them for the lie or the negative behavior they're trying to conceal, you're only doing more damage. They'll almost certainly lie again to avoid punishment—and with enough practice they'll get really good at it. Instead of hammering out exactly how your child messed up, focus on solutions. He'll learn from the experience and be more likely to tell the truth next time.



BE SURE.

If you're not certain your child is lying, tread carefully. If your child really is telling the truth, she'll be super discouraged if you don't believe her. If you're really not certain, let the potential lie pass, address any misbehavior, and use the strategies in Chapter 3 to foster more honesty.



SEPARATE THE LIE FROM THE BEHAVIOR.

They're two different issues, and each needs a different fix. If you address both at the same time, your child will likely get discouraged, and you'll inadvertently water down the messages you're trying to get across.

ALLOW THEM TO SAVE FACE.

Don't call them out. When you catch your kids in a lie, allow them to save face. Say, "I see there are still clothes lying on your floor. What is your plan for taking care of that?"



FIND THE UNDERLYING REASON FOR LYING.

Try to uncover the reason he didn't feel safe telling the truth. Say, "That sounds like a bit of a story to me. You must have felt afraid to tell me the truth. Do you want to take a little break and we can talk about this when you feel like sharing?" You'll get the honesty you're looking for, as well as information that may help you foster the truth in the future.

DROP THE LIE, BUT NOT THE CONVERSATION.

If your child continues to refuse to tell the truth, even after you've worked to find the reason, be willing to drop it and address any surrounding misbehaviors (as long as you're not worried about safety). Remember that you can't force out the truth. Ramp up your overall honesty efforts using the strategies in Chapter 3 so you're more likely to get the true story next time.

TREAT TALL TALES AS SUCH.

When your child stretches the truth, acknowledge it as a fun story and let the matter go. If your child is highly imaginative, do some simple training to help make sure she truly knows the difference between make-believe and the real world.



AVOID LABELING A LIAR.

Kids respond to labels, and often find it hard to break out of them. If you call your child a liar, you're more likely to propel the problem than put an end to it.



ASSESS YOUR CONTROL-FREAK STATUS.

If you've taken the PPS Parent Personality Assessment in Session 1 and your score was high in the Controlling or Superior category, you probably like to be in control and in the know. This mindset, if it gets too extreme, can undermine your efforts to create a safe environment for the truth, and has potential to create a vicious cycle. It might feel counter-intuitive, but try easing up on your need for control and to know every little thing that happens in your child's world—by doing so, you may open the door for more honesty.

DO ADDRESS MISBEHAVIOR.

Focus on PPS course strategies that positively address the specific misbehavior your child was lying about. **Ask yourself these questions:**

1. *What is this behavior telling me?*
2. *How might I have contributed to this behavior?*
3. *What does my child need to help him make a better choice in the future?*

When you positively address misbehavior using the PPS course tools, your kids feel empowered rather than threatened, which will lead to an overall decrease in the errant actions you see.

Chapter Five

IT'S GONE PATHOLOGICAL!

WHAT TO DO WHEN LIES TAKE OVER

We now know lies aren't the end of the world, and we have concrete ways to prevent and deal with them. But, I know what some of you are thinking: "Amy, you don't understand! My child's problem with lying is really bad! It's chronic! It's epidemic! And it's hopeless!"

Trust me, there's a plan for you, too. Read on to learn how to address even the worst lying habits.

SIGNS OF A BIGGER PROBLEM.

Sure, lying is common and normal. But lying all the time, almost by reflex or habit, isn't. How do you know if your child's problem has become something more than normal childhood lying? For starters, you'll want to evaluate the child's behavior before, during, and after the lie to see what's going on underneath. This is similar to the process of determining the root of a Mistaken Goal in Session 4 of the course. Once you've identified the root cause, you can solve the problem using the tips in Chapters 3 and 4, as well as a few additional tips below to greatly reduce the number of lies you see.

WHAT KIND OF LYING ARE YOU FACING?



DEFENSIVE LYING/LYING FOR SAFETY

This type of habitual lying is most common in families that often respond to their children with yelling, shame or punishment. Siblings take their cues from parents and lash out at each other with hurtful words or actions, and emotional turmoil is the result. Over time, kids learn to lie as one way to protect themselves. After all, if they tell the truth, they'll get shamed or punished—it's emotionally safer to lie. A habit is formed, and kids will lie even when they don't need to.

You can tell this is your child's problem if most of her lies help her get out of trouble or avoid embarrassment. The fix is to use the tools in the Positive Parenting Solutions course, as well as the ideas in Chapters 3 and 4 of this e-book, to make your home a more positive place. Start with Mind, Body and Soul Time (Session 1), and then add in the other course tools one at a time. It might take some time for your child to begin to feel safe with the truth, but with patience and a more positive environment, kids can learn that it's okay to be vulnerable and will eventually unlearn their lying habit.



IMPULSIVE LYING/LYING BY IMPULSE.

Some kids who frequently lie do so because they have trouble controlling their impulses. This is commonly seen in kids who have ADHD and other diagnoses, so if your child struggles with lying, it's worth a check-in with your pediatrician. But kids don't always need a diagnosis to suffer from impulse-control challenges.

Most parents know when their kids have trouble with impulse control—they see it when all the other kids are waiting patiently at a birthday party while theirs is busy sneaking icing samples. These kids often say and do the first thing that comes into their minds. It's endearing sometimes, but also a slippery slope.

Pediatricians can recommend specialists to diagnose deeper issues, and parents of these children should take the specialists' advice seriously. Aside from that, Take Time for Training (Session 2) will be a parent's best friend, as they help their child learn age-appropriate strategies for stopping and thinking before acting. The good news is that if you help your child navigate their impulses now, you'll help them avoid much bigger issues down the road.

PROACTIVE LYING/LYING FOR ATTENTION

Sure, a young child may travel through his days with one foot in his imaginary world, but after age 6? Kids generally shouldn't be making up too many stories on a day-to-day basis. If your child won't stop embellishing the truth, it could be that he's on a mission for attention. He's using lying to impress his parents, his teachers, his friends—anyone who will listen to his ambitious retelling of his latest baseball game, in which he won the game with a home run, when in reality he spent most of his time on the



bench. If he can make his stories fairly believable, he'll get a big hit of attention with each one he tells. That need for attention becomes a gateway to compulsive lying—especially since they'll often have to invent new lies to keep old ones going.

You'll know this is your child's particular challenge if he lies proactively—he's generally not lying to get out of trouble, he's instead using the lie to get into the spotlight. The sure-fire fix for this attention-seeking misbehavior is to lavish him with positive attention so he doesn't feel the need to lie for it, using Mind, Body and Soul Time. You can even schedule it between siblings, so he gets plenty of positive attention from those closest to him, and he learns that he doesn't have to continually impress others to feel loved. This usually clears up the problem, at least among family. If he continues to lie outside the home, work on helping him learn strategies for developing positive relationships, as he may need to brush up on his skills if he's been relying on lies. With a little training, and plenty of unconditional love, his lying habit will evaporate.



OFFENSIVE LYING/LYING AS A POWER PLAY.

Just as lying can be an attention-seeking behavior, it can also be a grab for power. Kids know how much lying aggravates us—especially if we've responded with yelling or punishment—and in extreme cases they'll use lies as a type of revenge or power play in attempt to get the control they're looking for. This can happen as part of a Mistaken Goal (See Session 4) in which kids are discouraged from not receiving the positive power they desperately need. Kids who are using lies for control over their parents will lie about anything—big or little. They'll begin to use lies simply because they can, and they may act like they enjoy pulling the wool over their parents' or teachers' eyes, even in insignificant matters.

If your child is using lies to gain control over you, you'll know because it feels vicious, and not as though she's simply defending herself. She may seem to be out to get you, and relish the conflict that ensues whenever she's caught in a lie, even bragging to her friends or siblings. To address this type of lying, review the course videos on Mistaken Goals, and follow the guidelines for the Mistaken Goals of Power and Revenge. Mind, Body and Soul Time is a must, as is removing any use of punishment or even Logical Consequences. The only way to stop this type of lying is to go back to the basics and supply plenty of positive power to your child, building her sense of significance. Once you've turned things around—and it'll take time—your child will no longer feel the need to use lies to gain control.

OVERWHELMED? KEEP READING.

As you are learning in the Positive Parenting Solutions course, tantrums, whining, sibling rivalry and the rest are not the real problem—they are symptoms of a deeper issue. The same is true for lying. It's a sign of a deeper issue, and we have plenty of tools to turn things around for your family.

IF YOU'RE NOT SURE WHAT STEP TO TAKE NEXT, FOLLOW THIS COURSE OF ACTION:

1. REEVALUATE THE BIG PICTURE.

Take a good, non-judgmental look at your family life. Have you had any major upheavals, such as divorce, a big move, a death in the family or a new sibling? Any of these could throw your child off, and it's possible that simply getting accustomed to a new situation can get them back on track. If this may be your situation, look for ways to help your child adjust as you gently manage the misbehavior.



2. FASTEN YOUR OWN OXYGEN MASK FIRST.

If you're working on making some changes to your parenting style, good for you! Keep in mind that it's always easier to change yourself than it is to change another person. Make it a goal to work on your own positive changes—using your Calm Voice (Session 2), providing a Decision-Rich Environment (Session 3), implementing When-Then Routines (Session 3) and of course, employing Mind, Body and Soul Time (Session 1)—before trying to change your child's behavior. Once you've made the changes you need, you'll be better prepared to help your child.

3. CHECK THE INFLUENCES.

Who is your child spending most of his time with? It can be difficult to change your child's friendships or media behavior, but if you suspect he's in bad company, you can use your parental control to make adjustments in the amount of time he spends with that company. For instance, if the neighbor your child hangs out with after school has his own issues with dishonesty, letting your child sign up for an after-school activity might be a great way to help him develop some new—and potentially more trustworthy—friendships.



4. MAP OUT A PLAN.

(see Chapter 7). Once you've identified a few changes you want to try, make a plan that you can live with. Spread your strategies out over a few weeks or months, and give yourself goals that you can control—such as carving out the time you need for Mind, Body and Soul Time, or setting up routines. Plan times to reevaluate and tweak (but not too often), and be patient. It won't happen all at once, but rest assured, if you're making positive changes, you're going to get a positive result.

5. SEEK MEDICAL HELP.

This is a must-do if you've noticed dangerous behavior, or if you think there may be something medical or psychological behind your child's lying.



6. ALERT CAREGIVERS.

When lying becomes a significant problem, trusted caregivers need to know (without labeling), even if only for the child's safety. Share your plan, and enlist their help in fostering an open, honest atmosphere.

7. DON'T FIXATE.

Lying can be tough to conquer, and there's no need to go head-to-head or make the problem bigger than it is. Allow plenty of time for you and your child to make some changes so neither of you get overwhelmed. Let your child see that you love her no matter what.



8. TRACK YOUR PROGRESS.

Take note of the frequency and seriousness of your child's lies at the beginning of this process, and again after several months of dedicated work on honesty. These measures aren't anything you'd ever share with your child, but you can use them to see if what you're doing is making a difference. If you see little to no improvement, it might be time to get professional help.

Whatever type of lies you're facing, rest assured you can get things back on track. Keep in mind your children crave an open, loving relationship with their parents, no matter how challenging the problem has gotten. You've got this!

Chapter Six

APPROPRIATE HONESTY:

WHITE LIES, SAFETY, HONEST OPINIONS, AND TOO MUCH INFORMATION

What about white lies? It's a question on everyone's mind whenever I discuss honesty, especially since most adults tell convenient little mistruths from time to time. Whether or not we personally tell the absolute truth about the meatloaf our mother-in-law makes every time we visit, you'll need something to tell your kids. In this chapter, we'll cover the training you'll need to do with your kids to manage everything from white lies to TMI.

IF WE'RE TRAINING OUR KIDS NOT TO LIE, HOW DO WE HANDLE WHITE LIES?

Kids see the world as black and white. To them, a lie is a lie, with virtually no grey area. And while teens can begin to tell the difference, it's no secret that white lies can be a very slippery slope at any age. Because we're trying to model honesty, and our kids will detect the white lies we may tell to get out of volunteering at the end-of-school picnic or dog-sitting a Great Dane for a week, white lies are a habit we need to consider dropping.



That being said, our kids will still need an explanation for the white lies they hear. Tell them that sometimes people use white lies to avoid hurting others' feelings, and that they probably have good intentions. Then, we need to train our kids in more positive ways to avoid hurting feelings and teach them it's okay to say an honest, "No, I'm not really a big dog person, and I don't feel comfortable caring for your dog." Kids might not get this right every time, but be sure to notice and encourage their efforts as they learn to be honest about their boundaries.



WHAT ABOUT SAFETY? IS IT OKAY FOR KIDS TO LIE ABOUT WHERE THEIR PARENTS ARE?

For issues of safety, I have one rule of thumb: if the truth really isn't safe, go ahead and lie. So yes, if your 12-year-old happens to answer the door while you're not home, he should use the "My dad's in the shower" excuse, or something similar. Practice these situations and other similar ones they can use as polite, but firm, escapes to get out of potential trouble. Teens, for instance, can help think of what to say if they're offered illegal substances or find themselves in other uncomfortable situations. In these cases, lies are okay if the truth is going to put them in danger.

The important thing is to remind your kids that we only use lies if we're not safe and something dangerous could happen. We don't use lies to get out of trouble or impress people. Point out plenty of examples. Expect your kids to slip up from time to time (for instance, "rescuing" themselves from serving a detention), and keep the conversation going as they get older and encounter new experiences.

IS IT OKAY TO GIVE A DISHONEST OPINION TO AVOID HURTING SOMEONE'S FEELINGS?

Since kids see lying as black and white, we really want to avoid lies in virtually every situation. But, you can tell your kids there's almost always a better way out. Teach them to look for the "good truth" when offering opinions and compliments about peoples' personal appearance or anything they're proud of, such as a picture they drew, or the new baby at their house. For instance, if a 4-year-old is asking her 8-year-old brother if he likes her unrecognizable picture, he can probably honestly say, "I love the colors you chose!" or "You really covered the whole page." Older kids can learn to use Encouragement (not praise! Session 2): "You really worked hard on that!" or "I can tell you love drawing!" Have some fun as you practice finding one good truth about funny dress-ups, silly action figures or crazy scenarios.



Along with this, you can train your kids that there are times people actually want our honest opinion. These questions are usually phrased differently—more of a “What did you really think about the story I wrote?” and less of a “How do you like my new haircut?” In these cases, kids can learn to offer one or two pieces of constructive criticism, using the sandwich method, which begins and ends with Encouragement and delivers the constructive criticism in the middle.

HOW MUCH IS TOO MUCH HONESTY?



Is there ever such a thing as too much honesty? If you’ve ever heard a 6-year-old’s version of the Night of the Stomach Flu, you’re likely to be nodding your head. For matters of safety—and social skills—teach your kids that the cashier at the gas station doesn’t need to know their exact birthday plans, but that Great-Grandma would love to hear them. Essentially, start an age-appropriate conversation about limits based on the level of trust and the type of relationship.

Too much honesty might seem like a little thing, but learning about discretion from an early age will save your family plenty of embarrassing moments, and help keep the trust levels high. Siblings can be more vulnerable with each other if they are confident no one’s going to tell the whole playground about their fear of the dark or their latest heartbreak.

Training kids in all the little nuances of truthfulness will keep the conversation going in your family. The more aware they are of the importance of honesty, the more likely they’ll be to develop it into a habit.

Chapter Seven

FROM WHITE LIES TO WHOPPERS: YOUR GAME PLAN

Whether you're facing a few fibs or a rash of deception, we've got a simple, step-by-step game plan for conquering (most) dishonesty in your home, and it will set the stage for more truthfulness in the future. Work through these steps at your family's pace, and you can rest assured you're making a real difference in how they handle the truth.

1. CHOOSE A BETTER RESPONSE.

Even as you work through this list, you'll still catch your kids in occasional dishonesty. Be sure you're responding to them in a way that bolsters your efforts. Print out the list of tips in Chapter 4, and review them often so you know exactly what to do next time you're faced with lying. For more help, review Calm Voice, in Session 2. You can quickly bring down the stress level in your home simply by lowering your voice, and your kids will respond with greater openness.



2. DETERMINE THE SCOPE OF THE PROBLEM.

Are you a young family with a few lies here and there? Or, on the other hand, do you have a child who would lie about what color underwear she's wearing? If you're unsure, reread Chapter 5 to see if any of the scenarios sound like your child, and put to use the extra tips there. Plus, review the Mistaken Goals section of the Positive Parenting Solutions course in Session 4.

3. GIVE YOUR PARENTING A CHECKUP.

Commit to complete or redo Sessions 1-7. Go through these sessions IN ORDER and don't skip anything. Remember, the tools are designed to build on each other and you'll see the best behavior in your kids when you are consistently using as many of the tools from the PPS Toolbox as possible.



4. MAKE YOUR HOME SAFE FOR THE TRUTH.

Equipped with the list of tips from Chapter 3, start the process of enabling your kids to open up. From the course, here are two great ways to do that:

- **Encouragement (Session 2):** Practice encouraging phrases (not praise) so your child knows your love/approval isn't based on his performance/behavior.
- **Family Meetings (Session 6):** Learn how regular Family Meetings can get your family openly discussing all kinds of topics, practicing positive communication skills and finding solutions.



5. START THE CONVERSATION.

If you're not really sure what to say to your kids about honesty, plenty of books can help. Use the book list at the end of this e-book to introduce topics around honesty, and then see what your child has to say. You can also look for opportunities in real life, but keep in mind that if you're overly judgmental about others, your kids will clam up out of fear.

6. REEVALUATE AND READJUST REGULARLY.

Depending on the severity of the case and the age of your kids, you might see positive change in just a few weeks, or it might take much longer. Set regular intervals to reevaluate your strategy, and be willing to adjust as your kids grow and are ready for deeper conversations about honesty.

Book list:

CHECK OUT THESE BOOKS WITH YOUR CHILD
AS YOU START THE CONVERSATION ABOUT
HONESTY AND OTHER VALUES.

PICTURE BOOKS FOR PRESCHOOLERS AND EARLY ELEMENTARY

Young kids love curling up with you and a good book! This environment provides plenty of opportunities to chat about openness, trustworthiness, and even how not to get fooled. What's more, the selection of books on these topics abounds. Whether your child is into princesses or Bigfoot, there are plenty of books below to help you talk about honesty with your younger child.

- *And to Think That I Saw it on Mulberry Street*, by Dr. Seuss. If your child likes to exaggerate and tell stories, this book is a must-read! Follow it up with a discussion about how you love to hear your child's stories, but the truth is great to hear too.
- *The Cat in the Hat*, by Dr. Seuss. The book ends with a question: would you tell your mother? This is an excellent teachable moment for how we would love to hear anything they want to tell us about their lives, even if it seems crazy—and that sometimes we need to hear. Then, respond with enthusiasm next time your child tells you a “Cat in the Hat” story.
- *Edwurd Fudwupper Fibbed Big*, by Berkely Breathed. Most of Edwurd's lies are merely annoying, but one whopper requires the army, air force, and dogcatcher to manage. Whimsical and sometimes hilarious, this book is told in rhyme by Edwurd's little sister.
- *Princess Kim and the Lie that Grew*, by Maryann Cocca-Leffler. This story presents a classic example of the hazards of lying to impress. In it, Princess Kim greets her new classmates by convincing them she's royalty.

- *Princess Kim and Too Much Truth*, by Maryann Cocca-Leffler. For those who wrestle with how to keep the truth kind, this sequel to *Princess Kim and the Lie that Grew* offers the perfect solution.
- *Eli's Lie-O-Meter: A Story About Telling the Truth*, by Sandra Levins. This story shows the consequences of lies—both for the person who lies, and for those around him. In the end, Eli is able to make amends.
- *The Empty Pot*, by Demi. In this folk tale, a child is rewarded grandly for his integrity in telling the truth even when he's afraid he'll disappoint the most important person in the kingdom. When you read it, let your child know he can never disappoint you, and he can be proud of himself for telling the truth, even when it's hard.
- *The Boy Who Cried Bigfoot*, by Scott Magoon. This fun retelling of "The Boy Who Cried Wolf" will help your child learn the importance of trustworthiness.
- *Betty Bunny Didn't Do It*, by Michael Kaplan and Stephane Jorisch. In this comical book, a pre-school-aged rabbit learns that telling the truth, even when it's hard, isn't the end of the world.
- *A Bargain for Frances*, by Russell Hoban. Frances wisely confronts her friend's dishonesty while maintaining the friendship.
- *The Emperor's New Clothes*, by Hans Christian Anderson and Virginia Lee Burton. Kids (and grownups) can't help but snicker at the deception of the proud emperor. Afterward, chat about why so many characters lacked the courage to tell the truth.
- *Ruthie and the (Not So) Teeny Tiny Lie*, by Laura Rankin. When Ruthie finds a tiny camera on the playground that she wants to keep, she lies and says it's hers—then struggles with this choice all day. In the end, she learns not only that honesty is the best policy, but also that everyone makes mistakes.

ELEMENTARY CHAPTER BOOKS

At this age, you're likely not reading everything your child reads, so conversations can be more difficult to come by than in the early years. What's more, storylines and characters become more complex as kids grow. Nevertheless, there are plenty of engaging chapter books that touch on honesty and can introduce your kids to role models who demonstrate honesty and integrity in difficult situations—just as you hope your kids will. If your child can't sit still long enough to dive into a good book, consider audio books in the car back and forth to school and activities. You can all listen at once and get into some great conversations.

- *Classic Starts: Pinocchio*, by Tanya Zamorsky and Carlo Collodi. We all know the classic tale, but this version makes the original accessible to elementary readers.
- *Honestly, Mallory!*, by Laurie Friedman. When Mallory is taunted by her classmates, she lies to save face. Soon, her lie grows until it's so big she can't sustain it and must make amends.
- *Touchdown Trouble*, by Fred Bowen. Sam's team is proud of their win—until they find that the winning touchdown was scored illegally. The team can't reach an agreement about what to do, and Sam's dad steps in and tells about a similar situation. Sam then risks disappointing half his team if he tells the truth.
- *Trumpet of the Swan*, by E.B. White. A swan, who uses a stolen trumpet as his only way to communicate with his kind, works diligently to pay for the instrument and restore honor to his family. This book has all the charm and storytelling appeal of its author's more famous work, *Charlotte's Web*.
- *How to Steal a Dog: A Novel*, by Barbara O'Connor. Georgina's family lives a difficult life, and Georgina believes she can improve their situation by collecting reward money for returning a missing dog. The problem is, the dog isn't missing yet! This book will open doors for plenty of positive discussions.
- *Dexter the Tough*, by Margaret Peterson Haddix. This story, written from the perspective of a bully, helps kids see the importance of understanding big truths about ourselves and others.

- *Harry Potter*, by J.K. Rowling. Throughout this popular series, Harry learns that things aren't always what they seem as he discovers who can be trusted and who can't.
- *Liar, Liar: The Theory, Practice and Destructive Properties of Deception*, by Gary Paulson. Kevin enjoys lying because he's good at it, and it makes life easier—until he finds himself in trouble with those around him. In this funny book, Kevin must find a way to end his lying habit before it causes him even more problems.
- The *American Girl* series: These books pass down timeless values such as honesty, courage, loyalty, kindness and persistence in a framework of historical events. The first few Felicity books focus on themes of honesty, but all the American Girl books will promote positive choices.
- The *Who Was* series: These biographies of famous people throughout history are fun and accessible for elementary ages. They highlight real stories of how strong values ultimately led to success and fame.

CHAPTER BOOKS FOR TWEENS AND TEENS

Keep the conversation going by continuing to offer books and movies with value-driven characters. You might not be able to keep up with everything your child reads or sees, but you'll find it's worth it to occasionally read the book or watch the movie together so you can compare opinions. Honesty will be only one of the many values you encounter in your teen's books, but you can always chat about whether a character is being true to herself, or honest with the world, or open with the people who can be trusted. Here are a few recommendations that highlight truthfulness and openness for your teen:

- *To Kill a Mockingbird*, by Harper Lee. In small-town Alabama, Scout watches her father defend a black man accused of rape. The family stands up for the truth even when it's unpopular and dangerous.
- *The Giver*, by Lois Lowry, or *Hunger Games*, by Suzanne Collins. In each of these series, the main character discovers difficult truths about their idealistic communities. By uncovering reality, they're able to begin to change their worlds.

- *The Secret Identity of Devon Delaney*, by Lauren Barnholdt. Devon's lie about a summer boyfriend seems harmless—until she moves to her “boyfriend's” town and starts the year at his school. In this tale of crushes, Devon learns to stay true to herself.
- *I am Malala, Young Readers Edition*, by Malala Yousafzai. This inspiring story will help your child stand up for the truth, even when it's both difficult and dangerous.
- *The Catcher in the Rye*, by J.D. Salinger. This classic coming-of-age story investigates the “phony” world of adults from the eyes of a teenage boy.
- *Speak*, by Laurie Halse Anderson. This book, about a girl who was raped at a party and made the unpopular decision of calling the police, shows readers that there are times when we all must speak up for ourselves.

DO YOU HAVE MORE PARENTING QUESTIONS?

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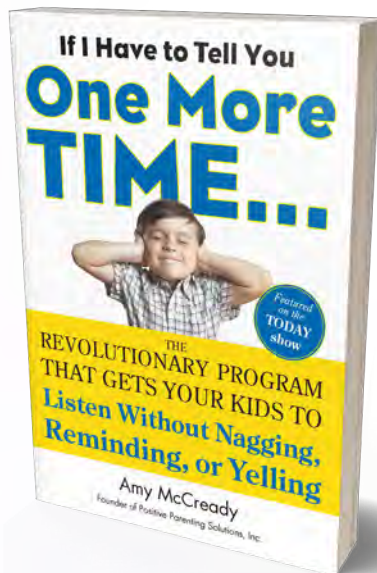


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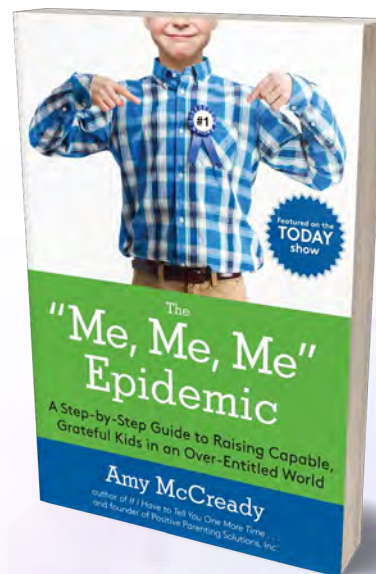
Nationally recognized parenting expert Amy McCreedy is the Founder of PositiveParentingSolutions.com and the best selling author of *The "Me, Me, Me" Epidemic - A Step-by-Step Guide to Raising Capable, Grateful Kids in an Over-Entitled World* and *If I Have to Tell You One More Time...The Revolutionary Program That Gets Your Kids to Listen Without Nagging, Reminding or Yelling*. As a "recovering yeller" and a Certified Positive Discipline Instructor, Amy is a champion of positive parenting techniques for happier families and well-behaved kids.

Amy is a TODAY Show contributor and has been featured on CBS This Morning, CNN, Fox & Friends, MSNBC, Rachael Ray, Steve Harvey & others. In her most important role, she is the proud mom of two amazing young men.

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