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In Dan Ariely’s path to studying and understanding behavioral science, the topic of dishonesty becomes apparent. How is it that on the one hand, we can say we are honest and wonderful people yet lie and be selfish? It's more beneficial to be selfish but we don't wanna lose anything from being associated with a negative trait, as humans living in society we find the thin line between being honest and dishonest. The ability to misbehave while thinking of ourselves as good people, The Fudge Factor. It becomes progressively easier to rationalize yourself and draw that thin line when the fudge factor is affected by thinking such as “it's not a big deal”, “everyone's doing it”, or “no one will know”. These are decisions we make every day sometimes without realizing like going above the speed limit conditionally or exaggerating your online life but this ability to create excuses makes more difficult decisions easier even when they're obviously wrong. Joe Papp was a professional cyclist who noticed his performance wasn't matching up to the competition, after finding out others in the field are on performance drugs and how easy it is to get some from a friend's doctor, it gives Joe less and less reason to say no making the decision seem more legitimate, ultimately making the irrational decision that hermes him in the long term when joe is drug tested and banned from the sport.

Now knowing that people tend to be dishonest, Dan Ariely hopes to measure to what extent people are willing to go to be dishonest with a series of experiments called The Matrix Experiments. The first one starts with having contestants answer certain questions in a certain time frame and have them count how many questions they got right, if they got six right they get six dollars, after that they were told to shred the papers, however, the paper wasn't completely shredded keeping their score. Once looking at the results Dan finds people on average solved 4 problems but reported solving 6. With over 40,000 people participating nearly 70 percent cheated. Some lied profoundly stating they solved all questions taking a total of $400 while others boosted their numbers slightly but to my surprise, the small cheaters took $50,000 in total, the number of smaller cheaters proved to have a greater impact since there was an abundance of smaller cheaters. This puts into play how much small decisions to us affect us as a whole. IRS for example is cheated out of more then %15 of its yearly tax revenue, insurance fraud in the U.S. is estimated to be more than $40 billion per year, and healthcare scams cost the government more than $200 billion per year. Cheating is a social behavior. If you do it alone it's bad but if someone you know does it or everyone does it, it becomes more acceptable. Mathew Kluger proves this point with his example of being confronted with a proposition to give insider information for profit. To win over Mathew it was reassuring to him this practice was common and not hurting anyone. No one even Mathew didn't expect anything to come from this but lie’s escalate when it becomes more acceptable. Mathew and his partner Ken were charged and arrested for insider trading dealing with $109 million trade deals.

The next idea dealt with how creativity affects people seeing how creative some people can be to prove something is legitimate such as a Ponzi scheme. Ryan Guerrilla's marketing team with TuckerMax's novel and movie are one example of how creative and out-of-the-box people can get to justify their actions. In other to sell the book and movie their strategy was to have people talking about it regardless of whether it was good news or bad. It started with sending out fake e-mails to get people to share links to Tucker's web page to instigating vandalism and riots to make news on television for publicity. The goal was to resonate chatter about the movie which made it easy to avoid the harm being done since the goal was being achieved, in this case, Ryan was deceiving more and more people with his campaign causing a movement that derived from the movie.

Just as lying can bring harm to the future us or others around us we don't do it for that reason, at a very young age we learn to lie to please people, for people, or to ourselves to do better and when combined with doing something good like lying for charity or lying for a surprise party people don't feel any harm in lying. Kelly Williams who wasn't happy with the level of education her kids were receiving at school opted to send her kids to another school district where her father lived not far from their current district, meaning she would be lying to the state of where her kids were staying for the benefit of her kids getting better education. When the state brought this issue up, Kelly Williams can't help but continue to state her kids lived there burying themselves deeper in the lie evening changing her driver's license and voter registration to her father's address. In the end, Kelly was charged with a criminal offense and was sentenced to jail time, what was supposed to be a small lie for the better of her children ended up affecting her life much more differently than what one could imagine.

With understanding why we sometimes lie and how lying can become more acceptable what happens to our social norms when confronted with a lie that benefits you? In a different variation of the shredder test, Dan placed an actor who 30 seconds states out loud he is done, whereas he collects his money and leaves. Does this encourage others to cheat too? Yes, by making it more socially okay and showing there's no downside cheating became more apparent but by having the actor dressed in a different school sweatshirt showing the one cheating isn't part of their community, cheating then goes down. To the students, it's not acceptable to cheat because it's not what they're expected to do, it happened to be another student from a different university with different expectations. Meaning it wasn't that they were less likely to get caught is the reason they cheated but because it was more morally acceptable in their circle that they decided to cheat.

The effect of being honest while undermining your lie is a build-up of pressure and an unstable state of mind, our decision at that moment is screwed where we are blinded by one goal hindering our sense of morality and not taking into effect the consequences. These small decisions are made in everyday life by us all as I said earlier with how fast we decide to travel on the road, and how our online profile is seen but in some situations, ignoring the lie causes problems. For example, For the time being, I decided to do Uber as a part-time job. With the flexibility to clock in and out for work whenever I trusted myself to work long hours to get paid a lot but I ended up procrastinating a lot early on and not putting in many hours. To my friends and family, though I boasted how I can make as much money as I want with sufficient hours put in when I and my friends went out for a meal I was scared of how much the meal might cost, my lying could have been exposed. Till today though even with my work ethic being better I still feel I Lied and exaggerated more than what I could actually do, Now it's become clear lying about your doing good at all times isn't going to bring you any help.

It becomes clear cheating, lying, and feeling allure to irrational decisions are part of being human, we thrive for things that make us feel good with minimal loss but we still need to be aware of our bad decisions and the decisions of others. There are factors and social norms that allow us to make the irrational decision easier all the while knowing it's wrong. We lie to do better or do cover up our shortcomings but it is best, to be honest, and take the loss rather than suffer later along in life.