

Why I Lied All The Time

I don't really remember when I started lying.

For the most part, I didn't even think about it; it just happened. The lies came out of my mouth and were briefly satisfying, but never offered any sustainable relief. Relief was what I was looking for, although I didn't know from what.

On the surface I had a perfect existence. I was a straight "A" student, did well in sports and music, and had a group of good friends. But underneath all that I had an alcoholic father who couldn't keep a job; a diabetic, hypochondriac mother who didn't take care of herself and spent a good chunk of time in the emergency room; and a brother who was always in trouble at school.

I was paranoid about giving anything less than a perfect performance. I would fake being sick if I didn't feel like I was ready to get an "A" on a test. Or sometimes I would invent circumstances that could prevent me from getting an "A." That way, if I didn't get the good grade, the "circumstances" would excuse it. If I did get the "A," I would look like the underdog pulling ahead.

I was always afraid of being boring to my friends. I made up stories about my family and home life. Some were based on truth, but were greatly exaggerated. Some were outright fabrications. Everyone laughed and told me I was a great storyteller. It became part of my identity. I kept trying to top myself.

I wanted people to discover my underlying misery. I lied to see if anyone would notice. They did, but it was never enough for me. I still didn't feel like I mattered.

I wanted them to know I was worried about my father dying from choking on his own vomit when he passed out on the living room floor. I wanted them to know I held my breather and listened through the bedroom wall at night in hopes of hearing if my mother had another seizure because she didn't eat.

I wanted them to know how scared I was of failing, how afraid I always was that I might be on the verge of poverty, homelessness, or suicide. I wanted them to know how hard it was to always act like everything was okay. But I couldn't say any of these things.

I just wanted a hug. I wanted someone to tell me it would be okay. I wanted someone to tell me they understood. I wanted to feel like I mattered to someone, anyone. So I would test them, just to see if anyone would care.

For many years, I couldn't control my father's alcoholism. I felt fearful, unloved, and alone. The lies I told helped me to hide my shame, manipulate other people to care about me, and give me a feeling that I was in control of at least part of my life. But the lies were never enough.

I'm finally taking steps in Al-Anon to understand myself. I'm trying to break the cycle of looking to others to provide what I need to do for myself. I get so discouraged that I can't do everything perfectly all at once. But the awareness is important to me.

In Al-Anon, I have friends who love and care about me. I'm finding the courage to look at myself and my life with honesty. I'm learning to take little steps, every day, to grow myself into the person I want to be.

I know I can do it. I'm learning how in Al-Anon.

By Anonymous

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