



Love and Logic When Kids Lie

There are few things that leave parents angrier, or more worried, than when their kids act "truthfulness-challenged." The good news about lying is that kids do it. What I mean is that all youngsters experiment with bending the truth, and it doesn't necessarily mean that they'll end up becoming con men, criminals or politicians. That is, as long as we can help them see that honesty really is the best policy.

One way of achieving this goal is to apply the following steps:

1. Use "I feel like you lied to me" rather than "You lied to me."

If your kid replies with "No, I didn't!" this allows you to say, "I know...but I feel like you did."

2. Help the child see lying as an index of maturity.

Achieve this by saying, "When I feel lied to, it makes me wonder whether you are mature enough to handle some of the privileges you enjoy around here, like television, your video games, and things like that."

3. In an empathetic way, let the child know that privileges will return when maturity goes up.

"The good news is that when you can prove to me that you are more mature, I'll know that it's time for you to have these privileges again."

4. Remember that parenting isn't like a jury trial: There's no need to prove guilt beyond a reasonable doubt.

Far too many parents get snowed by their manipulative kids and begin to wonder whether they are jumping to conclusions. I recommend trusting your heart and saying, "All I know is that I feel lied to, and I know that your life will be a lot happier if you learn how to avoid leaving people feeling that way."