

## No such thing as a harmless lie? How dishonesty hurts our ability to connect with other people

Have you ever told a friend a made-up story to entertain that person or spare his or her feelings?

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We examined the possibility that small instances of dishonest behavior have unintended consequences for our emotional intelligence—it seeps into our ability to read others' emotions. Our research indicates the harm is real—and lasting.

In a [series of studies](#), we concluded that an act of deceit can undermine a person's ability to interact with peers, even those removed from the original lie. Specifically, we found that when people engage in dishonest behavior, they are less likely to see themselves as relational (for example, as a sister, friend, colleague or father) and are subsequently less accurate in judging the emotions of others.

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This result suggests that once we engage in dishonest behavior, we may also distance ourselves from other people by regarding them as less human, which allows us to continue down a path of subsequent, repeated unethical behavior. Our research implies that even small acts of dishonesty can go a long way, leaving ripple effects that may undermine a fundamental building block of our humanity: social connection.

**Read full, original post:** [How Dishonesty Drains You](#)