

# The Sunday Guardian

***Life without fear, and relationships without lies***



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Ostensibly, no one likes being lied to. Yet in our social and familial transactions, lies are so prevalent that they appear almost foundational to our relationships.

Why?

Most of us have secrets to hide, big or small. How does something become a secret?

A fact is just a fact, why does it have to be kept a secret? Isn't it because we have been trained to operate on a pre-scripted manuals of ideal relationships. It runs something like this: A and B are in a relationship named X. The instructional manual for X is that A will behave in this particular way, and B will behave in that particular way. And if either of them violate these instructions and behave in uninstructed ways, then everybody is entitled to look down upon them. And once someone looks down upon them, it is supposed to hit their self-worth.

The manual continues: You are what others think of you. So, your self-worth will depend on the opinion the others hold of you. And their opinion will depend on how closely your behavior conforms to the manual.

Cultures round the world, and especially in oriental places like ours, place too much value on conforming to relationship stereotypes, and on the way people look at us. This almost forces us to turn dishonest. Not that we are born liars, an environment is created in which lying gets subtly encouraged. If the fellow in front of you is someone who cannot stand facts, what is he incentivizing you to do? Is he not incentivizing you to lie? And that's the kind of environment that exists in the society – in workplaces, in homes, in markets and public spaces. If you just put forward the facts, you run the risk of hurt and even outrage. On the contrary, you are considered respectable and acceptable if you just keep presenting pleasant lies. Is that not what most youngsters do to their parents? And employees to their bosses? And politicians to their electorates? When a hosteler youngster speaks to her parents on phone, how often does she disclose facts? Not that she really wants to lie. It's just that the fact would be often unacceptable to parents. Even if the fact in question is a harmless one, one still runs the risk of hurting expectations. The girl is just sitting in an eatery, but it's 10pm and Mama, coming from a cultured background, believes that girl should be back maximum by 4pm. 10pm is Armageddon.

So she interrogates, "What is this loud music blaring in the background?"

“No, no, Mama, it’s my roommate”.

She is sitting at an eatery, that’s all. What’s so scandalous about an eatery? But the Cultured Mothers Conditioning Manual says that mothers must sneak in even on their adult daughters, and if the behaviour of the daughter is found divergent, then she deserves sanction. So the girl is forced to lie, and continuously lying to others, it can become a habit to lie to oneself.

Those who are outwardly teaching us to always ‘speak the truth’, often they are the ones inwardly forcing us to lie. Living in their conditioned self and dogmas and rigid opinions, will they easily accept the truth? To please them, you become a habitual liar. And then that habit of lying turns inwards. You didn’t take the shower in the morning, but since the morning, forty times you have told forty respectable persons that you are well showered. By the time you reach evening, you’d have forgotten that you have not taken bath. And by night, you may start believing that you did take the shower in the morning. Incredulous it reads, but so it happens.

One of the markers of good company is you don’t have to lie there. Good relationship is founded on freedom, and not on the obligation to obey relationship manuals. It is not based on fear. Your worth in the relationship is not to come from the degree of adherence to prescribed code of conduct. Hence, good company is where even your worst part is not frowned upon. The other might frown, but less on what you did, and more on what you hid. In a good relationship there is no need to hide things or manipulate facts. There is no requirement to present agreeable faces to each other. You can display your most disagreeable self to the other (though not deliberately!). And all that the other would say is, “Let me help you overcome it”. He will not ask you to mask the unpleasant sides of your being. Instead, the fellow says, “I am strong enough to accept whatever follies you carry. And I’m also loving enough to lend you a hand to overcome all that”. The fellow isn’t saying, “I have seen your ugly face and let’s let it remain that way”. He is saying, “I see there is a thing here. Thank you for not hiding it. If you want me to assist you in getting rid of it, I am game”.

You go to a doctor and expose some ailing part of your body to him. The doctor

looks at the diseased part and hollers, “What rottenness! Stay away!”. Now what kind of doctor is that? He has exploded, “What perversion brought this sickness to you? I’m not a doctor, I’m a priest”. A good doctor must first all pass no moral judgment in looking at you and your reports. Even if your numbers are way off the mark, the doctor is not to run away, nor shoot you in the head, nor call the police. A good doctor will say, fine, I have seen this, now I will treat you. That’s the thing about good relationships – they are not afraid of reality, and they heal. You can come naked in front of the other. You don’t need to hide or pretend. And you find the other saying, “Hey, I want your welfare, I am with you in your effort to be your best self. I too will improve in the process, no favours done. Come on, let’s challenge our bondages together!”

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