

**Generations**

# Little white lies we all tell

It's wrong to tell a lie no matter how you slice it, dissect it or put it in a category something along the lines of "I had no choice but to lie." But we all tell those little white lies, myself included, in an effort not to hurt others or, all too often, to get oneself off the hook.

An article on [www.bestlifeonline.com](http://www.bestlifeonline.com) had 20 of the "most popular" little white lies, so here are a couple.

The first is uttering the words "I'm fine," even when you're not. When I've had a particularly tough day, feet aching, computer on standby mode, all three dogs barking at nothing but the wind, and the only TV fare in prime time giving me a choice of zombies or vampires taking over the world, or wacky, rich housewives whose toughest problem is how to spend money on themselves, or superheroes saving the world against the zombies, vampires or housewives, the little white lie "I'm fine" may slip out. This usually happens after tossing

the remote at the big-screen TV when my husband peers around the corner and asks, "Everything okay?" According to the article, this one is "perfectly acceptable" in that even



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if you're not fine, you're not obligated to delve into a deep discussion.

So, as I get up from the sofa to hunt for the batteries that flew out of the tossed remote, just as soon as I get the guide to pop up, I'm pretty sure there'll be an old rerun of *Seinfeld* on at least one of the over 200-plus channels.

Second, there's, "You look skinny in that dress/suit/shirt" when you're really wondering how he/she squeezed into the Spanx body shaper that's obviously under it. However, you're no Kate Moss (Twiggy for my generation) and don't want to lose a friendship over something so trivial, so you keep quiet and leave

the little white lie on the table.

Research, however, tends to blame the other party, your friend. A 2010 University College in London study reported that our brains are actually "massively distorted" when it comes to body image and that the neuroscientist who led the research told a reporter, "There may be a general bias towards perceiving the body to be wider than it is." In some cases, most people see their bodies as two-thirds wider and a third shorter than what the rest of the world sees.

I haven't yet used the white lie, "My phone died," because I'm still mastering the art of turning my new smartphone on and off. However, once when I was on an extended land line call, I almost fell asleep and did utter the words, "I think my phone is dying," after stifling a snort heading toward a snore.

The next one, "I'm listening," intertwines with the one above although, according to the article, April Masini, a relation-

ship expert, insists that the person on the receiving end of this white lie "probably already knows that you're not listening" whether he or she is sitting across from you or hanging on the other end of your phone call. To soften the blow, she suggests saying, "Could you repeat that?" Works for me.

The common white lie, "I'm five minutes away," isn't part of my repertoire because I'm one of those annoying people who always shows up half an hour early no matter how hard I try to be on time or, even more appealing, five minutes late.

It's a built-in mechanism that I simply can't control thanks to my supervisor counseling me when I was 17 on being 15 minutes late for work. It still works 54 years later.

When anyone cooks a meal for me, "Your cooking is delicious," will always be the truth and never a little white lie because I'm just plain grateful for the luxury of bypassing a stove, oven or microwave no matter how

bad the food is. Even my granddaughter's cookies and cake in her Easy Bake Oven is a welcomed treat and better than anything I could whip up.

"Tell me the truth, I won't be mad" is a tough one because most of the time, you're not going to be happy about what you are about to hear after you've said it and your jaw automatically tightens in preparation for the inevitable. A glass of Chianti might help.

The little white lie, "I didn't throw it away," is one my husband will say I've violated many times. Yes, I admit that occasionally the clutter that found its way into the trash wasn't something he wanted in a landfill, but I also have the excuse of not remembering if I did or didn't do it since I've hit and passed 70 years old.

That's the best part of growing older — you get to use that little white lie whenever you need it.

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