



Honesty is Still the Best Policy (Part One)

First paragraph

You are the “teacher”. Read this part to your partner:

I read on the Internet the other day that we all tell an amazing number of lies every day. According to the article we very seldom say exactly what we think. In most cases we prefer to avoid the truth rather than hurt other people’s feelings. Usually we believe we are being polite or respectful of others, but in actual fact we simply cannot face telling others what they do not wish to hear. Are people really ready for the whole truth and nothing but the truth? Isn’t it easier to tell a “little white lie” or be dishonest, if there is no penalty?

Now read this same part to your partner leaving pauses for him/her to repeat:

I read on the Internet / the other day / that we all tell / an amazing number of lies / every day. / According to the article / we very seldom say / exactly what we think. / In most cases / we prefer to avoid the truth / rather than hurt / other people’s feelings. / Usually we believe / we are being polite / or respectful of others, / but in actual fact / we simply cannot face telling others / what they do not wish to hear. / Are people really ready / for the whole truth / and nothing but the truth? / Isn’t it easier / to tell / a “little white lie” / or be dishonest, / if there is no penalty?

Ask your partner the questions below. (Your partner should try to answer in complete sentences and use many of the words in parentheses. In case of problems, give him/her some hints.)

1. Where did the speaker read this information? (on the Internet)
2. When did the speaker read this information? (the other day)
3. How many lies do we tell every day? (an amazing number of lies every day)
4. Do we often say exactly what we think? (we seldom say exactly what we think)
5. What do we prefer to avoid? (we prefer to avoid the truth)
6. Why do we avoid the truth? (not to hurt other people’s feelings)
7. What do we usually believe? (we believe we are being polite or respectful)
8. What can we not face telling others? (we cannot face telling others the truth)
9. The speaker asks two questions. The first one is about the truth. What does he say? (Are people ready for the whole truth and nothing but the truth?)
10. What does he say in the second question about “little white lies”? (Isn’t it easier to tell a “little white lie” or be dishonest, if there is no penalty?)

Now go to page 2 and exchange this paper. Your partner will become the “teacher”.

This text by QualityTime-ESL was inspired by a short excerpt from “Monologues” (Longman)



You are the “teacher”. Read this part to your partner:

Second paragraph

We live in a world where dishonesty is more or less taken for granted. We expect politicians to tell lies. We expect them to make huge promises that they will never be able to keep. We expect businessmen to try to take advantage of television viewers by broadcasting deceitful advertising. We expect students to cheat by using plagiarism in their written work. We even expect pollsters to give inexact results of surveys, in order to influence our opinions in one way or another. But isn't it terrible to say that we live in a world where no one seems to be honest? In my opinion people are far more honest than we expect them to be.

Now read this same part to your partner leaving pauses for him/her to repeat:

We live in a world / where dishonesty / is more or less taken for granted. / We expect politicians to tell lies. / We expect them to make huge promises / that they will never be able to keep. / We expect businessmen / to try to take advantage / of television viewers / by broadcasting / deceitful advertising. / We expect students to cheat / by using plagiarism / in their written work. / We even expect pollsters / to give inexact results of surveys, / in order to influence our opinions / in one way or another. / But isn't it terrible to say / that we live in a world / where no one seems to be honest? / In my opinion / people are far more honest / than we expect them to be.

Ask your partner the questions below. (Your partner should try to answer in complete sentences and use many of the words in parentheses. In case of problems, give him/her some hints.)

11. What is more or less taken for granted in our world? (dishonesty is more or less taken for granted)
12. What do we expect politicians to do? (to lie and make huge promises they won't keep)
13. What do we expect businessmen to do? (to take advantage of television viewers; to broadcast deceitful advertising)
14. What do we expect students to do? (to cheat by using plagiarism in their written work)
15. What do we expect pollsters to do? (to give inexact results of surveys to influence our opinions)
16. What does the speaker think is terrible? (that we live in a world where no one seems to be honest)
17. What is the speaker's opinion on honesty? (people are far more honest than we expect them to be.)

Finally together with your partner (or with a different partner) discuss the debate themes suggested by your teacher.

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