

Honesty is Still the Best Policy

I read in the newspaper 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?

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.

A few months ago I was on a train with a friend of mine. We were returning home from a short trip to the center of town, and we had a lot of shopping bags with us. We chatted all along the trip, so we hardly noticed the sign of our home station until the train was ready to shut the doors. When we finally understood it was time to get off, we picked up our bags and dashed out of the wagon. We stood on the platform totally out of breath. When the train left, I suddenly realized that I didn't have my purse. I only remembered leaving it on the seat next to me. I was very upset and said that this was the end of the world. My friend kept telling me that I would find my purse again, but I didn't believe a word of what she said. We walked home and I told her that I would never see that purse again. Deep inside I wanted someone to find the purse and have the decency to give it back to me.

When we finally got home there was a message on my answering machine. Someone had seen me leaving the wagon without my purse. That person had gone straight to the police station at the next stop and left off the purse. I couldn't believe my ears. I would get my purse back! But most importantly I realized that there are a lot of people, who still believe that "Honesty is the best policy."

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NB. This text is an adaptation of "Honesty" from the excellent book called "Monologues" published by "Longmans". If the above text is too difficult, other easier and shorter texts can be found in "Monologues".