

Text 3:

Why People Lie: Investigating The Truth About Deception

1. It was a clear summer night in Seattle, and my husband and I had gone to see a concert at a
2. local winery with a couple we were just getting to know. The four of us spread out a picnic
3. blanket, unpacked an assortment of gourmet snacks, and poured wine. Just before the
band
4. came on, a dozen hot-air balloons drifted overhead, stunning against the fiery sunset. We
5. oohed and aahed. As our husbands looked on, my new friend turned to me and said, "I've
6. always wanted to go up in a hot-air balloon. Have you ever done that?"
7. And then, out of my mouth, flew the lie. "Yes."
8. My cheeks flushed as she smiled in amazement and peppered me with questions. "What
was
9. it like? Was it fun? Did they serve Champagne?" "I don't remember what I said. I was too
10. stunned by my own deception.
11. Let me be clear: I had never set foot in a hot-air balloon. Never sailed among the clouds or
12. felt the wind in my hair 1,000 feet above the ground. As the lie smouldered in me that
13. evening, I analysed dozens of back-out strategies and explanations ("I meant to say that
14. when I worked for a cruise line, I helped people book hot-air-balloon tours, but I never
15. actually went up in one"). In the end, none seemed right. So, I kept my mouth shut. I felt
16. guilty and ashamed. The lie, as random as it was, suddenly had power over me.
17. Today, more than a decade later, it still does. It is the one nagging blemish on my
otherwise
18. spotless sense of integrity. What compelled me – the girl who, after taking her first sip of
19. alcohol in high school, immediately confessed to her parents – to blurt out such a trivial
20. untruth? Can I really consider myself an honest person if I could lie so easily about
21. something so silly?