

Honesty

Leigh - Marquette, Michigan 2009

From This I Believe: The Personal Philosophies of Remarkable Men and Women edited by Jay Allison

The truth can hurt, we all know that, but is it possible that the lies we tell to avoid the truth are more harmful? "He won't call, move on," or, "Yeah, you have gained weight," can really help somebody. I understand actuality can hurt someone's feelings, but in my mind, if I knew every time someone wouldn't call instead of sitting and waiting, I believe I'd be better off. If I asked someone if I had gained weight, and the truth was that I had, I could only hope someone would tell me the truth, so I can make an effort to lose it. This way, I am aware of my errors and I can productively correct them. I believe truth is the most important value because it has the ability to keep the obvious in charge and keep us in check.

I believe in the reality of life. The truth really will set you free. There is no doubt that, yes, white lies may spare someone's feelings, but the truth will set them free. I thought about this saying the other day, and I realized that absolute certainty is held in this saying. The truth prevents us from wasting our time on unrealistic goals. People tend to sugar-coat things, and they refuse to see how that slows them down in the long run. If you spend your whole life telling yourself that you're good at basketball, but in reality, you're only 5'2" and can't make a basket, you're going to be disappointed when you don't get into the NBA. It's great that your mommy believes in you, but, sorry kid, that doesn't work in the real world. The freedom honesty gives you is the ability to look at the world through objective eyes. If you do this, you stay free from deception or, as I said, unrealistic goals.

My whole life I have been brutally honest, and yeah, I've hurt some feelings, but really, I rarely get in arguments. The people that I surround myself with know that I'm going to tell them my honest opinion if they ask me, and I won't bullshit. They respect the fact that I "keep it real" because they too begin to stay truthful. This prevents me from confrontation because I never had anything to hide in the first place. I come as I am with a truthful and honest opinion. I believe that the ability to take on reality will set our society free from what holds us back from our potential. I believe that a truthful person in a world of white lies can make a difference.