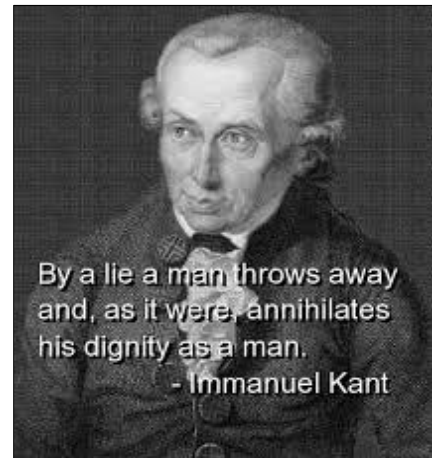


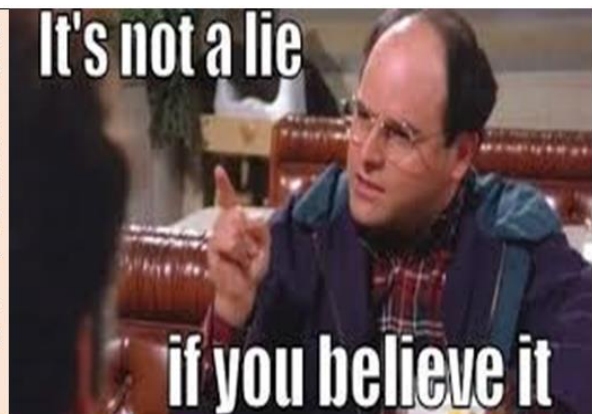
3. Masculinity is honest always, and is true to his words.

A real man doesn't just say that communication is important. He proves it by his words and actions. He means what he says, and says what he means. This honesty is never "brutal honesty", because when a man realizes that the truth may be difficult to hear, he has the ability to bring his tone down empathetically. He does not hide the truth in any way, and has the courage and skill to deal with the consequences regardless of what they are. With information (in fact, with *everything*) he is honest, open, generous, and has nothing to hide. He can be himself, not investing so much time and effort into what others think of him.



In today's world dishonesty is tolerated and even rewarded with money, if you can pull it off. Dishonesty is the norm in business. In business negotiations, we often assume that everyone is lying, and we may rationalize it with a sort-of "the ends justify the means" mentality. Or, we compartmentalize it, saying "that's just business, it's a game." But what do we observe? When someone is willing to lie in one area of their life, they are more likely to rationalize or compartmentalize it in others. It's a bad habit, a relatively new one, and a disease that spreads. In the distant past, lying could get you killed. Today, it's no big deal.

Note: I am using a restrictive definition of the word "lie", referring only to those words that are consciously known to be untrue. In other words, when a man is thinking one thing and saying something else that he knows to be untrue, what he is saying is a "lie". I'm not counting cases in which a man is simply withholding information or if he's not aware that what he is saying is false. That's not necessary for the purposes here. I'm using George Costanza's definition.



Certainly, you can think of situations where telling the truth could expose yourself or a loved one to grave physical danger, but that is rare in today's world. The extent that avoiding physical harm is not the reason for lying, a man "annihilates his dignity as a man." More likely, we tell lies to protect not our actual survival, but our virtual survival. We are so invested in our images and brands that we are willing to lie to preserve them. In general, women don't like men who lie, in fact they are repulsed by lying, and it degrades communication. It looks weak, because it is weak.

The degradation of communication in our culture today is so severe that nobody really believes anything anyone says anymore. The worst part is that so few people seem to notice or care, let alone talk or do anything about it. We just go with the flow, like zombie bullshitters.

What we say	What people hear
I'll call you back in 5 minutes	Maybe you will, maybe not, but certainly not in "5 minutes"
I'm not trying to sell you something	I'm trying to sell you something
Hi, how are you?	I'm following a script, don't challenge me
I understand what you're saying, but...	You do not understand what I'm saying.

It's almost as if our interpretations have become, and are still becoming more and more, our perceptions. We don't even call people out. "Hey you just said '5 minutes', do you mean it?" We simply allow ourselves to blindly and silently obey the conformist formula, not upsetting the apple cart, and don't demand anything else. It doesn't seem to matter that the words we speak don't really match what we are thinking.

Among the many negative consequences of poor communication is the escalation of conflict. Look at what happens when someone says "I understand, but..." The listener feels insulted that the speaker is ready to go on the offensive ("but"), which puts the listener on the defensive. This builds walls. The ensuing conflict is inevitable and can get very nasty. Especially in a disagreement, to prevent escalation, a real man never says "I understand" (and certainly not "I understand, but"), because the listener automatically does not believe you. A real man *demonstrates*, not says, that he understands by *FIRST* explaining the listener's point-of-view to the listener in his own words, even better than the listener can. Once this is accomplished, the wall comes down, the listener knows he's understood, and is now prepared to actually believe the speaker. The speaker has earned the right to now explain his own side. Notice how rare this is. Practically whenever we disagree with someone we seek to be understood before first demonstrating that we understand. Most arguments, maybe even wars, can be prevented by taking communication more seriously and developing good communication skills until they become habits.

Examples of unnecessary conflict abound. We see it between individuals and groups at every level. In the USA, a familiar case is the political wall between Left and Right, Democrat and Republican, Liberal and Conservative. When looking neutrally at the Occupy Movement (Left) and Tea Party (Right), for example, it is apparent that they are making the exact same observations and have the same frustrations and complaints: that the corporatocracy is too big and powerful. The difference is that the Left views corporations (corpora) as the problem and the Right sees the government (tocracy) as the problem, not realizing that they are just two aspects of the same thing. Only their solutions are different. If the Left and the Right would practice good communication, seeking first to demonstrate understanding before seeking to be understood, there is no doubt that they would be able to discover their common ground, recognize their common goals, and compose common solutions. However, the incredibly strong attachment each side has to their particular solution is preventing them from the first step of

effective communication. It precludes them from recognizing that they are likely observing the same problem, only from different angles.

And all of this conflict occurs even when men are being honest. When they are willing to lie, they do so to avoid the facts or to manipulated them. "The other side is wrong, and must be defeated." This has the tendency to escalate conflict even further by engendering mistrust, fear, anger, and ultimately violence.

"In a time of universal deceit, telling the truth becomes a revolutionary action." -George Orwell

In today's world, outright lying is accepted. Most people assume that even the President of the United States is lying to us and other world leaders, and it really does not seem important to us. We are still safe, secure, and complacent when it comes to honesty or lack thereof.

"Our fear of avoiding conflict is bringing conflict. Our fear of disapproval is bringing divisiveness. All physical wars arise from people with reason surrendering to their fear, and being silent. When we speak the truth, we hurl back the gathering unleashed dogs of war." -Stefan Molyneux