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### Why Lying Can Make Sense Part II

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## FAMILY TIES

# Why Lying Can Make Sense PART II

BY SUSAN E. MURRAY

When our children develop a belief in their own personal capabilities, it is easier for them to see themselves as capable. Their self-discovery will give them opportunities to build their own self-confidence and see that the important adults in their lives are open to understanding their fears and challenges, including telling the truth.

Usually borne out of expediency, we all too often *assume* how a child (or our spouse) will respond to a situation. When they get upset and balk, we are surprised by their reaction. When we assume, we ignore a most beautiful characteristic of human beings, which is the ability to learn and change from day to day.

I invite you to consider that we can add to our children's understanding of how capable they are by *checking*. When we take time to check, we're saying we respect the fact that the person is capable to make decisions and we're trying to make room for that.

I believe *checking* is a logical alternative to *assuming*, and it works to advantage in all relationships. Could it be that whenever possible it's better to expect nothing and discover than to assume prematurely and discourage growth?

It's easy to slip into assuming, directing, threatening, correcting, and expecting when we have little physical and emotional energy and lots to do. In the process, we lose chances to affirm and validate our children's experiences through dialogue. When children (and spouses) have enough data that tells them we are *safe* to open up to, the need for telling untruths or not being totally truthful is not nearly so tempting.

What a gift we can give to our children, our spouses, and others who are important to

us, when we respect them enough to *check* rather than *assume*. When we ask, "What was your understanding of...?" or "What more would you like to tell me about...?" we take important steps to remove barriers that keep those we love from being totally open and honest with us.

When children experience these positive attitudes and behaviors from important adults in their lives, they are more able to internalize the experiences and make confident, honest decisions for themselves.

In closing, I'd like to share some wise words with you, penned by Ellen White more than one hundred years ago. "How will you successfully educate your children? Not by scolding, for it will do no good. Talk to your children as if you had (*have*) confidence in their intelligence. Deal with them kindly, tenderly, lovingly."<sup>1</sup>

She also wrote of the importance of encouraging children by words of approval and looks of love. "These will be as sunshine to the heart of a child and will lead to the cultivation of self-respect and pride of character."<sup>2</sup>

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Susan Murray is an associate professor of family studies who teaches behavioral science and social work at Andrews University. She is a certified family life educator and licensed marriage and family therapist.

<sup>1</sup>White, Ellen G., *Manuscript 33*, (1909)

<sup>2</sup>White, Ellen G., *Testimonies for the Church*, Vol. 3, p. 532, (1872)

