

"The Importance of Being Honest with Yourself" Part I

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"Nothing is easier than self-deceit.

For what each man wishes, that he also believes to be true."

~ Demosthenes 384-322 BC

We often hear people say about someone else "He's lying to himself!" as if this is an unusual happening when in reality, most of us do it quite frequently. Whether it's believing we're not driving that fast, that we really couldn't have eaten that many cookies, that we're not late for work that often, that very few politicians lie, that the economy isn't that bad, we're all susceptible to lying to ourselves and probably do it every day in some form or another.

Being honest and objective takes work and can be quite uncomfortable, which is probably why we can find ourselves veering off course at times. We may be faced with evidence that tells us something is false, but the strength of our prejudices, desires, and biases work against us, leading us to believe something is true after all. This can lead to our developing a habit on not really evaluating effectively how we look at ourselves, others, and the world in general. We might think it's not such a big deal, but just looking at the examples above we can see there can be serious consequences down the road if we persist in deceiving ourselves. These consequences may be primarily to us, but also impact on others, sometimes with devastating results.

Over the next few weeks we'll take a look at this behavior, how and why it happens, and some ideas on how break the habit and to increase our self awareness to our advantage.

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