

# The value of trust



*From our guest contributor, Michael Josephson.*

A teenager wants to go to a party, but she's sure her mom won't let her. So she and her friend concoct a false cover story.

What's the big deal? Most kids lie to their parents from time to time, and their parents probably lied to their parents. Despite rhetoric about virtue being its own reward, a great many adults – and a higher proportion of kids – are more likely to make their choices based on a calculation of risks and benefits than moral principles.

Since young people are particularly susceptible to choices that indulge impulses and favor immediate needs and wants, we need to teach them how making bad choices to gratify such desires can sabotage their most important relationships and impede critical life objectives.

Every dishonest act has at least two potential consequences: 1) the actual penalty, and 2) loss of trust. The second is by

far the more serious and underestimated.

This is especially true in parent-child relationships. Where trust is important, there are no little lies. When parents don't believe their children, their cords of control will be tighter and held longer. The price of lying is lost freedom.

It's often difficult to predict how a decision today will affect tomorrow, but dishonesty often has a lasting negative impact on relationships and reputations as well as self-image and character.

From both a moral and practical perspective, honesty is the best policy.

*This is Michael Josephson reminding you that character counts.*

Learn more about character education.



*Michael Josephson is an influential and internationally renowned champion of character education for youth and ethical conduct in business, government, policing, journalism, sports, healthcare and law. He is credited by many as the person most responsible for reviving and professionalizing the character education in school and youth-serving organizations. In 1992, under the auspices of the Josephson Institute he created CHARACTER COUNTS!, the world's most widely implemented character development initiative based on a common language of shared values – the Six Pillars of Character) and Pursuing Victory With Honor (1996), a companion program promoting ethics in sports.*