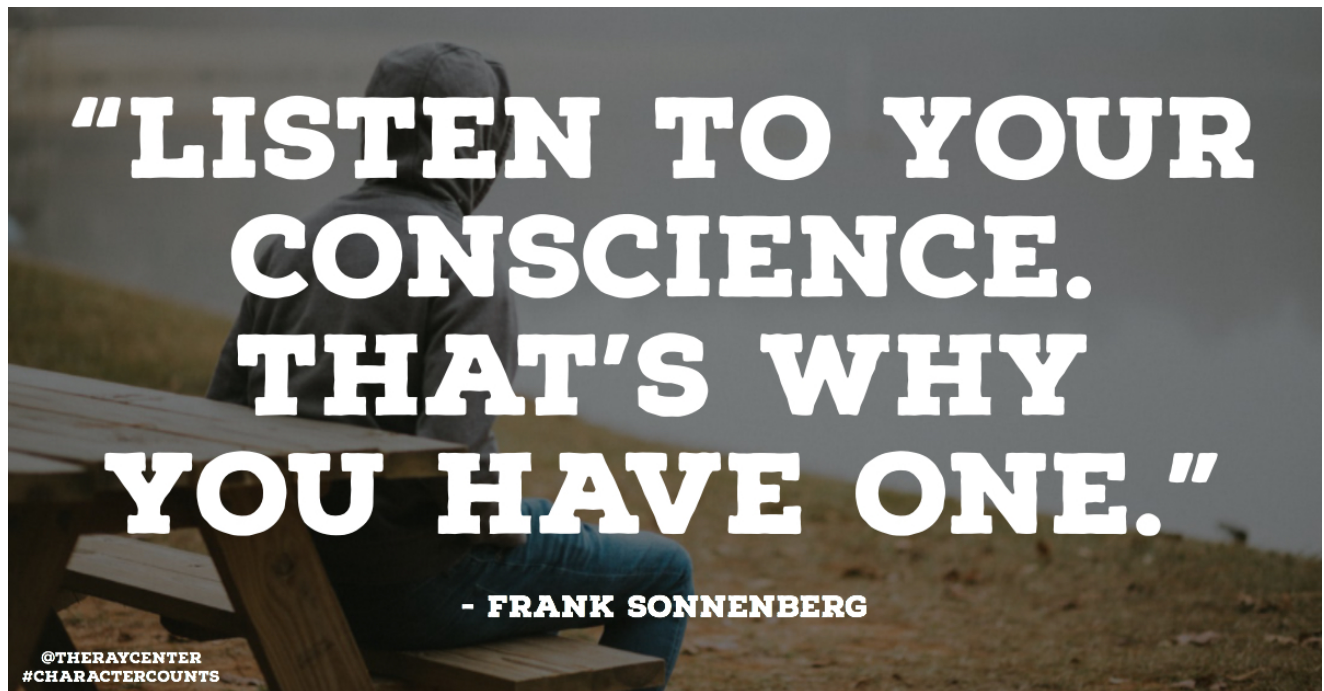


# Do you think white lies are off-color?



*From our guest contributor, Frank Sonnenberg.*

Imagine having this conversation about white lies with your conscience:

*"Are you really going to tell a white lie, break a promise, or stretch the truth?"*

*"Oh come on," you think. "You're not going to judge me, are you? It's 'just this one time.' White lies never hurt anyone. Everyone does it. Besides, I never said I was a saint."*

Sound familiar?

## **The truth about white lies**

I'm sure everyone has a "good" excuse for telling a white lie. "It's for my family." "I want to protect her feelings." "It's for the good of the organization." But here's the rub...

The first time you tell a lie, break a promise, or stretch the truth, you'll probably give it some thought — weighing the advantages and disadvantages of lowering your personal standards. You'll undoubtedly be a little nervous because your conscience told you not to do it, but you decided to go that route anyway. And, if you get away with it, you may even think you won, but did you?

The next time you're faced with a similar situation, you'll probably give it less thought than the first time, and you may even accept a little more risk. Before you know it, you'll undoubtedly think you can get away with telling lies every time. Why not? The score is already two for you and zero for your conscience. You may become so accustomed to fibbing that you don't even question how much you've lowered the bar for yourself.

### **They matter**

You can try to convince me that you're right, if that makes you feel better, but I choose to live my life the right way. Folks like me know that when we make a promise, our word is as binding as a contract. And we know that there's no reason for someone to challenge our word or second-guess our motives — because we live our life with honor and integrity. That enables us to build trust, strengthen credibility and respect, and earn a solid reputation. What's that worth? Everything!

Some people may argue that the world isn't black and white. They know how close they can go "to the edge" so there's no danger of this downward spiral. Well, that's a decision between them and their conscience.

As for others, they can explain their actions away by saying that "everyone does it" or they're doing it for the "right reason." But I question whether they're trying to persuade others or to convince themselves.

So the next time you find yourself saying "just this one

time,” remember what you’re trading off in the process. Forget about what you may lose from your friends and colleagues, and start thinking about whether you’ll be able to face yourself in the mirror every day. Is it worth it? You’ll have to answer that for yourself. My only advice is to listen to your conscience. That’s why you have one.

This is adapted from *BOOKSMART: Hundreds of real-world lessons for success and happiness* by Frank Sonnenberg released November 2016.



Frank is an award-winning author. He has written six books and over 300 articles. Frank was recently named one of “America’s Top 100 Thought Leaders” and one of America’s Most Influential Small Business Experts. Frank has served on several boards and has consulted to some of the largest and most respected companies in the world. Additionally, *FrankSonnenbergOnline* was named among the “Best 21st Century Leadership Blogs,” among the “Top 100 Socially-Shared Leadership Blogs,” and one of the “Best Inspirational Blogs On the Planet.” Frank’s new book, *BookSmart: Hundreds of real-world lessons for success and happiness* was released November 2016. © 2018 Frank Sonnenberg. All rights reserved.