

## THE LAST WORD

# “Is it Ever Right to Lie for Your Job?”

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One person's lie is another person's economy with the truth. It's all a matter of labels. Troublesome labels such as “liar”, “cheat” and “thief” should not deter a person from pursuing important career goals.

Lying is the primary tool in your armoury in which you must develop the proficiency necessary to achieve that most noble goal: career survival and advancement.

From an ethical perspective, lying at work is really only permissible if it:

- 1) Gets someone into trouble; or
- 2) Pushes you ahead of the pack.

The aim is to achieve both. Remember that youth and enthusiasm are no match for experience and treachery.

Consider the story of Fred and Ginger who have been friends since school.

Ginger understands that to get ahead at work, you need to develop as a politician. Politics is all about lies, deception and appearances. Fred dreads the thought of office politics. He becomes agitated and stressed by the cut and thrust usually involved in the process.

Fred believes the word “politician” to be synonymous with power-seeking, promise-breaking and cynical dishonesty. Ginger believes these are the very skills required for corporate survival and prosperity. Ginger's view is that clever office politics should be about five things:

- 1) Networking to build your power base, while diminishing that of others
- 2) Seizing upon opportunities to raise your profile
- 3) Hoarding valuable information from rivals, subordinates and/or superiors
- 4) Sidestepping disasters or passing the buck to avoid blame
- 5) Taking credit for yours and (especially) other people's successes.

Ginger's career has been built on these five elements of job retention and survival. On their own they are insufficient, but when Ginger combines them, they are a suit of armour, protecting her job prospects. Most importantly, Ginger knows these five facets involve the frequent and liberal usage of lies, doublespeak and deception.

Ginger's work style is based on the pronouncement of a wise philosopher who once said: If at first you don't succeed, cheat, repeat until caught, then lie.

Ginger understands there is a reason why the word “lie” is neatly contained within the word “believe”. It’s no coincidence that “lie” also fits neatly into the word “client”, to whom most lies tend to be directed. All of this serves to prove that it’s actually a law of nature, to have to lie at work.

From this, Ginger is irresistibly led to the obvious conclusion that it is morally wrong not to lie at work (and in any situation involving love, of course).

In their occasional get-togethers, Ginger tries to explain to Fred, in an attempt to inject some common sense into the discussion: “you didn’t dream of telling the truth in your resume when applying for that plum job, for which you were so obviously unqualified – so what makes you think that the very behaviour that got you the job in the first place, ought to be abandoned once you actually landed the role? After all, at the interview, when you were asked your view on subjects on which you knew absolutely nothing about, didn’t you lie with impunity? So it’s time to stop acting as if you’ve never had any practice at it...”

Ginger has made a career out of gross and emphatic exaggeration over the amount of work she has. When confronted with a two hour task she knows that only a fool would attempt to complete it within that time or—perish the thought—in even less time.

Ginger’s primary objective has always been to appear busy and essential. She knows that if you have nothing to do, you will hardly be seen as essential—unless you are the boss, of course—in which case it doesn’t really matter.

When Fred stupidly (or perhaps accidentally) completes a task within the time allotted, this simply means that he is given something else to do—yes, that’s right, more work! Eeeek!! What Fred has never understood is the fundamental principle of worklife, that the payoff for laziness is immediate.

Ginger understands that an unfortunate by-product of working in a corporation is having to work with other people. That there may be times when she might even have to be part of a team (shudder!). This usually meant that she would be required to spend a large part of the day interacting with colleagues, subordinates or superiors and, in extreme cases, having to actually get along with them.

Regrettably, Fred also had to do his share of interacting with people at work. In doing so, he misguidedly chose to develop friendships with many of them.

To profit fully from these relationships and to extract the most out of them, from the outset, Ginger made the choice to treat these people as she would a spouse or other family member. That is, she learned to manipulate them.

Fred’s choices have led him to a life of mediocrity, stuck in the rut of middle management, constantly leapfrogged for that elusive promotion by some pimply MBA kid with no scruples. Fred is content to drive a rusty old banger and to have his little circle of friends, who regularly get together for a schooner, to moan about the boss and the mortgage. Fred dreams of becoming the boss, but knows that it could never be, because he is not prepared to lie to make it happen.

As an exponent of the art of lying, it is no surprise to learn that Ginger went on to become the CEO of a global corporation, earning tens of millions every year, plus a mountain of stock options and with enough perks to make Donald Trump drool. Ginger dreams of having a wild fling with Fred, but knows that it could never be, because he is not prepared to lie to make it happen.

Frank Adoranti is the author of *How to Lie, Cheat & Steal Your Way to the Top*.

#### LAST WORD

***A serious and good philosophical work could be written consisting entirely of jokes.***

LUDWIG WITTGENSTEIN, (ATTRIBUTED)

