



The Politics of Hope Ezine

“Helping Ordinary Citizens Become Extraordinary Public Leaders”



Politicians Who Don't Tell the Truth

By Donna Zajonc, March 2008

“The truth will set you free” is a common teaching of all the ancient cultures and religions. It is liberating to tell the truth to ourselves and possibly the most difficult challenge we face as human beings. Just ask Gov. Elliot Spitzer, or former Congressman Mark Foley or former Gov. James McGreevey or President Bill Clinton. By their own admission they told lies to themselves long before they lied to others.

The job of the ego is to keep us separate from our true self and it does this by deceit and lying. Our ego constantly chatters to us through our internal talk. One minute our ego tells us we are the greatest thing since sliced bread and the next minute it tells us we are a ridiculous fool that has nothing to offer.

The ego doesn't want us to realize our truth gifts and power or we might believe we don't need the ego. It is a matter of life and death for the ego so it hangs on to lying and mistruths and eventually we don't know which voice to believe.

Powerful political leaders are caught in a trap. The more they tell their voters (and themselves) that they have the skills and abilities to fix all that is wrong, the more they are listening to their inflated egos. Here's the Catch 22---Citizens tell researchers that they want a strong leader that will get things done and “fix” problems. The politician with an unhealthy ego may fall into the trap and tell citizens “I can do that!”

The longer politicians are in office the more they become lonely and isolated. Media and political opponents do not allow the political leader to make a mistake or they will be voted out of office. The ego shouts: “You are powerful! Say or do whatever you want! The voters love you!”

Political leaders are not the only ones who get caught telling a lie. Lying is on the increase throughout our society. Students cheat in school, sports stars lie about their doping, priests have lied about their sexual behavior and business leaders get caught lying about corporate greed.

It is short-sighted to believe that only the rich and powerful may come up short on the truth meter. One way to change the behavior of our leaders is to change the culture that has seeded this behavior. We must begin with our own tendency to stretch the truth.

Are you willing to face your own ego and internal talk? Here's a challenge that you may find very difficult---to tell the truth and nothing but the truth for 24 hours! Here is how it works:

- ◆ Sometime during the next week, select one day on your calendar and call it your Truth Day.
- ◆ When you wake up in the morning, leave a note next to your bed to remind you that today is Truth Day and commit yourself to tell the truth and nothing but the truth all day.
- ◆ If you are late for an appointment, no little white lies. When you attempt to take credit when credit is not due, tell the total truth.
- ◆ Make notes when you have a tendency to tell even the slightest mistruth.
- ◆ How did you feel when you told the truth in situations when you have a tendency to tell a small lie? Did you notice more integrity when you told the truth?

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The secret to telling the truth to others is to begin with telling the truth to your self. When we take the time to listen to our internal talk, even for just one day, we have a greater chance that we will hear our inner voice that longs to speak the truth.

Most of us believe we are truthful people. The insights you gain from this experience will help you learn more about the situations when you are tempted to stretch the truth. **If we tell the truth in small, everyday situations, it is easier to tell the truth when it really matters.**

If you wish to share your experience after you take the Truth Day challenge, I would like to hear from you. It is an enlightening and empowering experience. Try it!



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