



## Five lies we *all* tell at work

- Story Highlights
- Don't pretend to happily accept a task if you have too much on your plate
- Lying by making excuses about being late hurts your credibility
- Going to work when you are sick may annoy coworkers
- Lying about your progress on a project could come back to haunt you

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I hate to break it to you, but you're a liar. We all are.

Little lies - and the occasional big ones - are part of workplace culture, just like boring meetings and gabby co-workers. A workday that's 100 percent fib-free is a rarity.

The good news is that much of our dishonesty doesn't come from a bad place. We're not always trying to be deceptive; often we're trying to please other people, even at our own expense.

Still, mom did say we should always tell the truth. Do we need to put the kibosh on lying?

Absolutely, says Dr. Gabriela Cora, corporate consultant and author of "Leading under Pressure: Strategies to Maximize Peak Performance and Productivity while Maximizing Health and Well-being." "In the long run, consistently stating the truth will work in your - and everybody else's - best interest."

Although telling a lie can be easy, and you might even get away with it sometimes, you're not creating the best work environment. To help bring more honesty into the workplace, here are five lies we're all guilty of telling and how we could better handle them.

1. **"I'd be happy to."** Think about the last few times you've said you'd be happy to do something. How often was that statement sincere? When a supervisor or colleague sends some work your way and you would rather work on more pressing tasks, you don't know how to turn them down without losing your job.

If you accept a task and say you'll do it, your boss expects you to keep your word, Cora says. Therefore, if a new assignment may interfere with your other work, ask your boss which tasks have the highest priorities so you don't miss a deadline. He or she might have forgotten how much you have on your plate and will let you know what's most urgent.

2. **"No, I don't have any questions."** Who hasn't been given an assignment that just didn't make sense, but when the boss asked if you had any questions you stayed silent? After all, you don't want to be that person who doesn't understand what's going on.

"If you have questions and they will affect your ability to do a good job, you will need to find some answers," Cora reminds. Preface your question by saying that you just want to be certain you understand everything completely.

3. **"My alarm didn't go off."** Sometimes alarms don't go off, but more often than not, you slap the snooze button a few times before you realize you should already be halfway to work.

Fess up to it, Cora advises. "If you have a good track record, it won't be a big deal."

Be ready to explain yourself if you have a history of consistent tardiness. After all, your late arrivals are noticed even if nobody says anything, so your excuses will run dry eventually. Cora also suggests trying a simple apology without an explanation, such as "I'm sorry I was late." Then get to work.

4. **"I'm not sick - it's just allergies."** The only thing people like less than getting sick is using their personal days to stay home. If you have too much work to take a day off or you don't have any personal days left, you might want be tempted to pull one over on your flu-fearing co-

workers and attribute the sniffles to allergy season - don't.

Your colleagues aren't too pleased that you're putting their health at risk and they're even less delighted that you're lying to them. If staying home is not an option for you, Cora recommends addressing the issue by saying, "I hope I'm not coming down with a cold; I have many things to do."

5. **"I'm right on schedule."** When you've got a deadline for a project, you have every intention of staying on schedule so that you're not stressed up to the last minute. Then life happens and you barely begin the project two days before the due date. When your boss stops by to check on your progress, you wipe the sweat from your forehead and say everything's going as planned.

"I am working on it" might be the better response, Cora suggests. This answer lets the boss know you're hard at work without lying about how much you've accomplished. Although you might not think it makes much of a difference as long as the work is done on time, you could find yourself in need of some advice just before the deadline and you'll be caught in a lie if you're asking about something you said was already done.

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