

# ***When leaders lie.* Integrating an understanding of deception and its ethical implications in the context of leadership education.**

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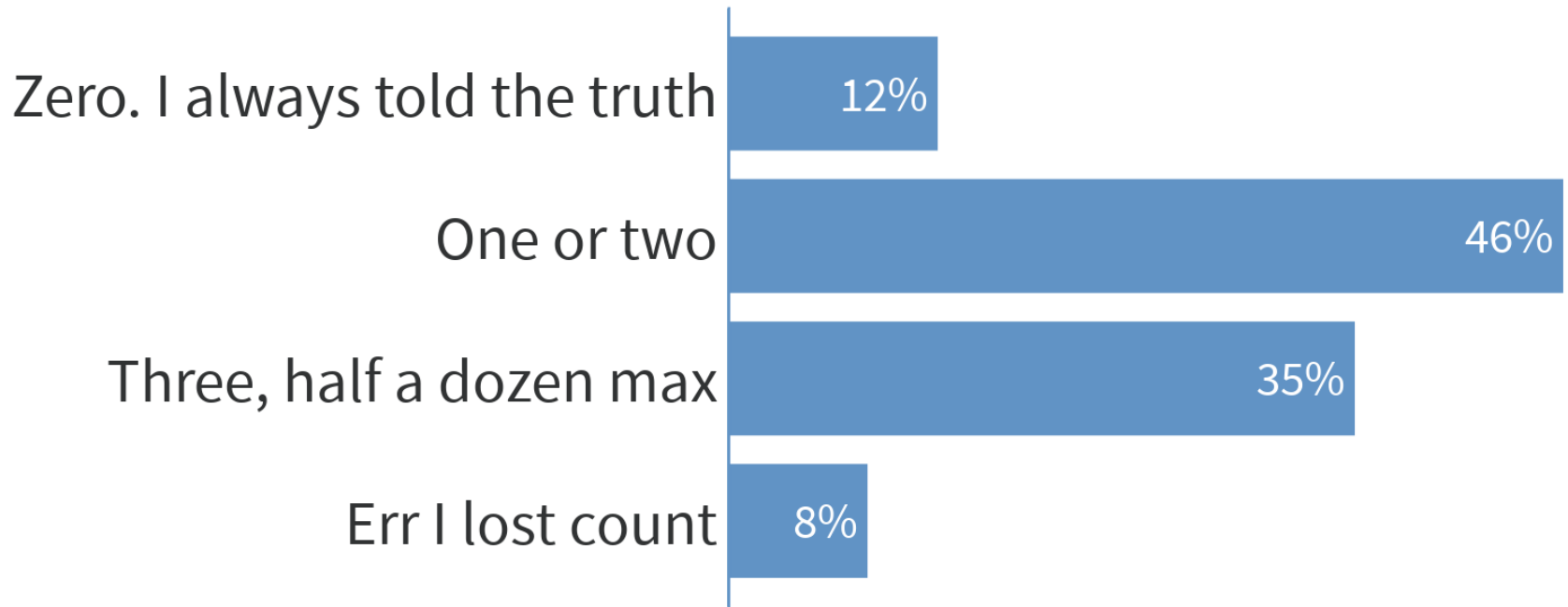
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# Personal reflection


- **Think about the last three days, and the interactions you have had with family, colleagues, friends, across all modalities (F-t-F, Teams, email)**
- **How many lies, equivocations, small fibs, exaggerations have you told?**
- **Be HONEST and think about your reasons**
- **Make a mental note of this number**

 **Poll locked.** Responses not accepted.

## Number of lies you told in the last three days



 **Poll Everywhere**

 Answers to this poll are anonymous

**People lie every day.  
Students lie every day.**

**Bad News**

**Good News**



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 **Poll locked.** Responses not accepted.

**And if you had to choose your emotional reaction using this scale?**



 **Poll Everywhere**

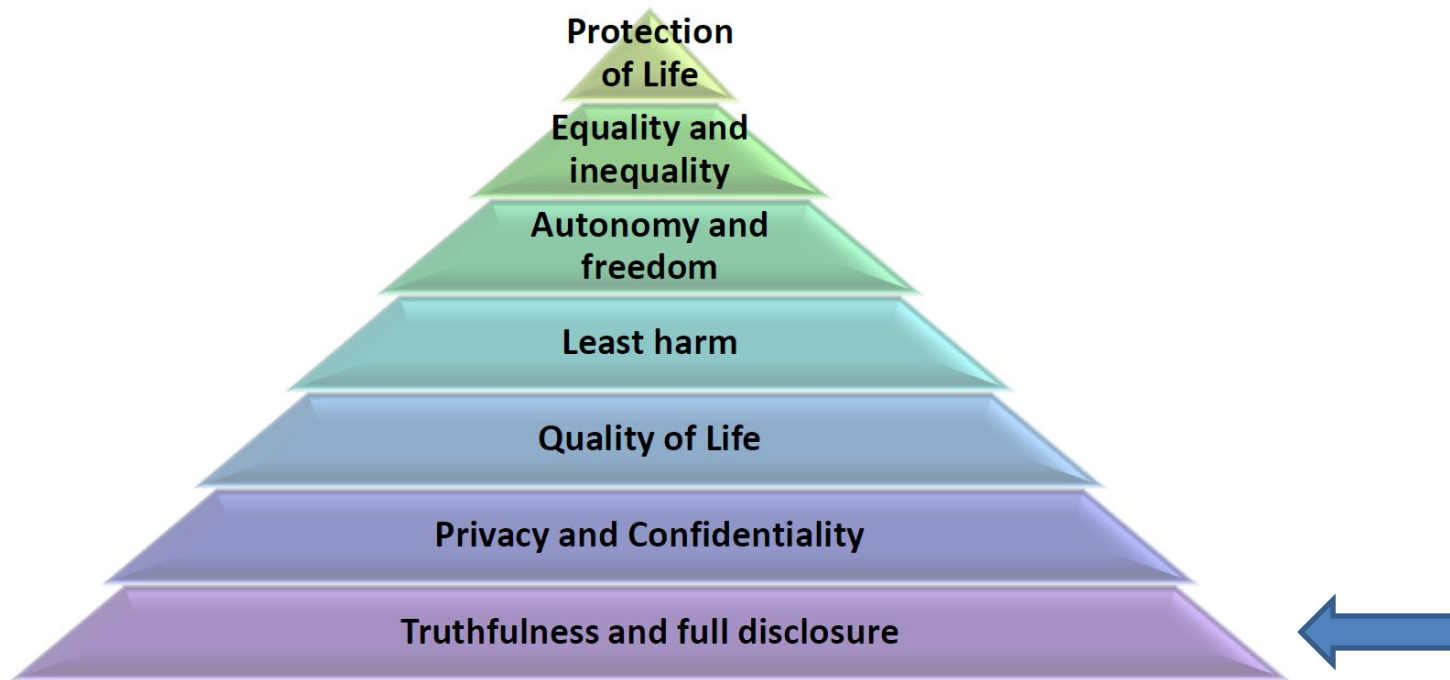
# Mixed feelings and messages

*Well-socialized people revere honesty and disapprove of lying and other forms of deception. At the same time, well socialized people engage in deception, regularly and skillfully, not only for altruistic reasons but also to gain advantages over others*

(Alexander & Sherwin, 2003 at p.393)

**Alexander, L., & Sherwin, E. (2003). Deception in Morality and Law. *Law and Philosophy*, 22(5), 393–450. JSTOR.**

# Truthfulness as a principle



Ethical Principles Screen from Dolgoff, Loewenberg, & Harrington (2005). Ethical decisions for social work practice. Thomson Brooks/Cole.



# The consequences

- **Decreased trust in institutions, leaders, experts, communities AND EACH OTHER**
- <https://www.pewresearch.org/topics/trust-in-government/>
- <https://www.pewresearch.org/topics/trust-facts-and-democracy/>

# Learning Goals

- 1. Clarity**
- 2. Consequences**
- 3. Courage**

**Scenario-based discussion**

# Clarity

# Extreme examples are not always helpful



# Deception and Theories of Moral Leadership



Authentic leadership



Servant leadership

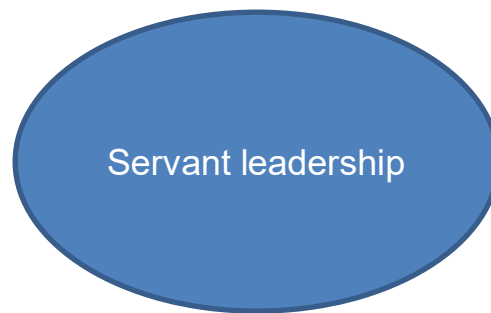


Ethical leadership

# Linking moral leadership theories to ethical perspectives



Virtue ethics



Consequentialist  
Utilitarian



Categorical imperative  
Deontological

Lemoine, G. J., Hartnell, C. A., & Leroy, H. (2018). Taking Stock of Moral Approaches to Leadership: An Integrative Review of Ethical, Authentic, and Servant Leadership. *Academy of Management Annals*. <https://doi.org/10.5465/annals.2016.0121>

# Ethical Leadership

One of Drew's employees gets fired after company leaders discover this employee has been planning to start his own business. Drew has been advised for legal reasons not to discuss the circumstances of the employee's departure. Some of Drew's team who worked closely with this employee are concerned and ask Drew about the situation. Drew says:

"I don't know what happened."

# Authentic Leadership

Jo's company allows managers to give their employees professional development training as rewards for good performance. Jo instead believes that these opportunities should be used to motivate low performing employees. Jo nominates one of the lower performers for a professional development training opportunity. In the reasoning write-up, Jo states:

**“This employee is doing very well and deserves this opportunity.”**



# Servant leadership

Riley's company is going through a business downturn. The CEO told Riley that the company is going to downsize and layoff 10-20% of employees within Riley's department. In order to keep morale high, in the departmental meeting discussing company-related issues, Riley says:

**“The company is having an excellent year and plans to grow going forward.”**

Think about how you would approach ethical dilemmas that revolve around lying or telling the truth. Which of these best describe how you would think about such dilemmas?

- A. I think about the ethical standards that I hold myself to and would hold others to. I would want to know my conduct complies with rules and policies.
- B. I think about what course of action would be consistent with my core beliefs or values, even if others do not agree with them.
- C. I think about how my behavior would affect the well-being of others. I would try and make sure I choose the action that increases well-being and minimize harm.

**Creating with Critical Thinking**

# **Consequences**

# Choose Your Own Adventure Story

- **Much like interactive books or video games**
- **Students write scenarios to depict the consequences of each choice**

## Challenge

Chris' employee asks for a promotion. Chris has no intention of promoting this individual due to their performance issues.  
Chris says:

## Choices

Lie

*Management has put a ban on promotions for now.*

Truth

*Your performance does not warrant promotion*

## Consequences

C1

C2


These represent new Challenge, ad infinitum

Model taken from

<https://blogs.articulate.com/rapid-elearning/build-branched-e-learning-scenarios-in-three-simple-steps/>

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## What held you back from telling the truth?


“avoid conflict”

“didn't want to start a fight”

“Excuse”

“protect other person”

 Poll Everywhere

 Answers to this poll are anonymous

# Imagining and Applying **Courage**



We overestimate the negative consequences of truth-telling

**“Focusing on honesty (but not kindness or communication-consciousness) is more pleasurable, socially connecting, and does less relational harm than individuals expect.”**

Levine, E. E., & Cohen, T. R. (2018). You can handle the truth: Mispredicting the consequences of honest communication. *Journal of Experimental Psychology: General*, 147(9), 1400–1429. <https://doi.org/10.1037/xge0000488>

# Recap

- Find **clarity** in your principled approach to deception
- Critically consider the **consequences**
- **Courageously** approach the possibility of honesty.

# Questions, Comments, Reactions, and Ideas



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