
what's up doc?



by Dr. Mary Livers

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Hello, Everybody:

Most of the time What's Up, Doc? is cheery and chatty, but this week, not so much. Something has really been on my mind this week. Lies and secrecy. Lies and secrecy and the destruction they do.

Two things have been prominent in the news – in our faces every day. First is the saga of ex-Congressman Weiner – an unfortunate name indeed – and second, watching reports on the Casey Anthony trial. Both cases, it seems, have one thing in common - something very evil: narcissism. If you look up the word narcissism in the dictionary, it will say that “narcissism is the personality trait of egotism, vanity, conceit, or simple selfishness, indifference to the plight of others.” It is also characterized by self-obsession, extreme selfishness, even to the point of having a lack of conscience and empathy for others.

As I watch Casey Anthony's crying spells, I wonder if she is crying for her lost daughter or for herself and the situation she is in. And then the accusation of sexual abuse by her father and her brother – and both have denied it – either she's lying or they are. In either case, it's very sad. With the ex-congressman, it appears that he has no sense of...well, just no sense. What would make a person think they could carry on like that, without one day that behavior being so publicly displayed? What was he thinking? He was saying one thing to his pregnant wife and doing another thing. So, lies are lies - destructive. I'm not sure we will ever know what happened in the Casey Anthony case. She will either be found guilty or not guilty. Regardless, it won't change the truth, and somebody's got to live with the truth.

Lies are insidious. Hurtful. Inauthentic. Lies are the antithesis of integrity. Honesty and integrity are part of our guiding principles. Lying in the work we do means not reporting what we know. There are lies of omission and commission in what we do. Not reporting accurately on incident reports is a lie – a lie of commission. Not reporting an incident at all is a lie of omission. Either one is wrong and hurtful. As an agency, every one of us needs to have the courage to not go along with the crowd, and not turn your head as if you saw nothing. Every one of us in the agency needs to have the courage to step up and do the right thing.

Let me shift this discussion and make it a little more positive. Aren't our lives better when we just do what's right? Have you ever been in a situation where you lied, and it hung over your head? You're always looking over your shoulder. Then the lie is exposed, and in a weird sense, there is relief. What I'm asking everybody to do is to check your hold cards – are you doing the right thing? Being honest? Are you following our policies, being helpful? If you are, then I'm sure you can go home feeling good and look yourself in the mirror. If you can't, do something about it. Come clean, turn over a new leaf, or get gone.

This agency needs people of integrity. Our youth deserve to have adults with integrity to work with them every day. Dust off those guiding principles. Talk about them in your staff meetings. It is not impressive for people to recite them. What is impressive is seeing people living them.

In summary, as an agency, we want to strive for honesty and integrity. It starts with every individual in the agency. I am counting on every individual to help make that culture real. Let's all take the road less travelled. Let's find the right way, the right time, and the right place, to find the courage to do the right thing, always, each and every day. Mistakes happen, sometimes we fail. Healthy people admit their frailties and mistakes and try to grow stronger. Let's all strive to be in that place.

All that said, my personal thanks to each and every individual employed by OJJ, for the work you do, and the honesty you bring to that work, as you strive daily to live up to our guiding principles and meet the mission. Wishing a happy Father's Day to all the fathers in OJJ, and those who serve as father figures to our kids. Happy Father's Day, GLL!

Sincerely, “Doc”

Dr. Mary Livers

P.S. Next week, perhaps I will be back to telling stories, which is not the same thing as lying.

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