I'm insecure so I lie? but I want to stop! [1]

Dear Alice,

I'm so insecure that my first reaction when I'm asked a question about myself is to lie and make myself seem like I'm more than I am. It's not even with questions, I've made up stories, and taken other people's stories as my own and I can't seem to stop. What can I do?

Answer

Dear Reader,

It sounds as though you are looking for a way to change how you relate to others. Because you think your insecurities lead you to lie, you might choose to take steps to improve your self-esteem and resolve your insecurities. This may be a gradual process, but it's very likely that you'll feel less inclined to lie as your self-esteem improves.

To do this, how would you feel about seeking the help of a professional counselor? This would be a safe place to talk out your dilemma and decide on some reasonable goals for changing the way you interact with others. Building self-esteem takes a lot of work. With a professional counselor, you can learn to accept yourself, take stock in your strengths, and change your lying behavior.

Can you imagine what it would be like to answer questions honestly? How would it feel to speak with others, proudly, about your own interesting life? How much time and energy would you save if you didn't have to keep up with the false stories you've told?

It may be helpful for you to talk with a counselor. You can get a referral from your health care provider, or you can find a counselor in your area at the National Institute of Mental Health [2]. If you have health insurance, your plan may have a list of counselors and a procedure for connecting with services. That information should be on their website or you can call your insurer to get more guidance.

You'll be the one to decide the next step. Because you've connected your beliefs about yourself with your lying behavior, it makes sense to take a hard look at these things together. Even though you are struggling with lying and insecurity at the moment, you can be very proud for reaching out for support. In fact, this act shows tremendous courage and honesty.

Alice!

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Resources

Counseling and Psychological Services (CPS) (Morningside)
Mental Health Service (CUMC)

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