

Birdie's Story – Liar

I am the type of person who makes the same mistakes over and over and doesn't learn the lesson. I've done it with food. I've done it with people. And I've done it with anger. And even though I'm an intelligent person and regularly practice meditation, I have one big thing in my life I have not been willing to let go of: I'm a liar.

Faking comes so easily after decades of practice. When I first started doing it, it was protective and necessary. There were adults in my early life with whom it was just not safe to be real. Now all these years later, I'm still wired for subterfuge and there's some connection between this and how I keep making the same mistakes over and over. The worst for me is lying to my husband. I adore this man. We've been married a long time and I still adore him. Unfortunately, that has not translated into being authentic with him. Here are some of the things I do to this nice man: I harbor resentment and expect him to figure me out. I smile and pretend everything is peachy when I'm seething. I give him a hard time and make him feel like he did something wrong when I want to be left alone to binge on candy. I lie and tell him I had a great time with his family when I didn't. I fake happiness, I fake anger, I fake orgasms; if it can be faked, I've done it.

When I started working on finding my internal observer in the context of a therapeutic friendship, I came to understand there is a big connection between living lies and making the same mistakes over and over. If I consistently ignore my internal radar, I will of course make bad decisions and stupid mistakes. I will hurt the people I care about.

It took a long time in therapeutic friendship for me to discover that I do want to be more authentic. I do want to be known for who I am, even though it's not very pretty. We started with baby step observations, like how I reacted to certain foods. Then we worked our way up to how fake I am with my friends, just observing, not judging. The not judging part takes a lot of practice. Whenever I slipped into self-judgment I was guided back to the uncharged observing of how things are, just naming what happened.

Having someone there to lead me back on track whenever I started judging made it possible to observe my patterns without going into self-loathing. And then I was able to uncover the association between being a phony and repeatedly making the same mistakes. I may still hide with candy bars sometimes, but now I quietly let my husband know I'd like to be alone for a while.