Levels Of Truth

Every time I tell the truth, I get into trouble. If I tell everyone what I’m thinking, they will walk all over me. I might hurt someone’s feelings if I told the complete truth. If I really told my boss the truth, I would be fired.

In *The Truth Option*, Will Schutz states that what we think is a problem caused by telling the truth is usually caused by not telling the truth and if we get to the deeper levels of truth, we are communicating with others in such a way as to promote trust and friendship even though the content of the communication may be disturbing.

The levels according to Schultz are:

**Level 1 (Self Deception):** At this level I am withholding my feelings and thoughts from both you and myself. This is the unconscious stage.

**Level 0 - (Withholding):** Important thoughts and feelings are not expressed for fear of retribution, being wrong, etc.

**Level 1 - (You are...):** Opinions are expressed. This is the critic stage—"You are bad...you are good." The critic is set apart and is judging the performance or worth of the other. This communication may be honest, but it is not open to feelings and deeper truth. The focus is only on you. "You aren’t nice."

**Level 2 - (About you I feel...):** The first level where there is an awareness of both parties. The focus is switched to how I feel about you. "I don’t like you."

**Level 3 - (Because...):** At this level I realize what actions or behaviors are the basis of the feelings expressed at level 2. "I don’t like you because you don’t ever talk to me."

**Level 4 - (From you I sense...):** We now recognize what we are sensing from others. "I don’t like you because you don’t ever talk to me and I’m afraid you think I’m insignificant."

**Level 5 - (I fear I am...):** I recognize my fears about myself. "I am afraid I am insignificant."

Once we have enough awareness to recognize our fear of being insignificant (or any other fear) we may not even have to mention our negative feelings as we realize they have more to do with ourselves than with the other person.