



Honesty always rings true

Remember what it was like to possess unbridled honesty? For many of us adults, it's been decades.

Unbridled honesty is what made "Liar, Liar" — the 1997 comedy in which Jim Carrey played an attorney who can't help but speak his mind and tell the truth at every turn — so appealing at the box office.

On a daily basis, I get a whiff of that pure-white honesty children seem to innately possess, thanks to our three children, our 25 nieces and nephews and my 10 grandchildren.

We adults could learn a lesson or two about rigorous honesty from these little ones. Complete honesty not only is the easy way; it's the only way.

Our day-to-day dealings and long-term relationships with co-workers, customers, the public and our families and friends, hinge on honesty. Fortunately, honesty is pretty straightforward: *Is it true or false?*

Having said that, in practicing honesty sometimes there's a golden mean — that perfect spot somewhere in-between a child's penchant to be brutally honest (where, in some cases, a taming of the tongue would be advisable) and that point to which many of us adults seem to have "progressed" — where too

much is muddled or buried for myriad "reasons" (also known as *rationalizations*).

Political correctness aside, children's penchant to freely speak their minds often yields refreshing, humorous "big picture" honesty:

› **It's All About Perspective** — A few years ago, Bridgid was cuddling with our ever-lovable son, Jamie, who happens to have Down syndrome. Holding Jamie, and worried about serious medical tests our precious angel was set to receive the next morning, Bridgid told him: "When I was student teaching in college, I worked with some beautiful children who had Down syndrome, and Dad and I said to each other way back then, 'Wouldn't it be fun to adopt a kid with Down's?' ... And then God gave us you years later." Jamie's eyes lit up. He grinned ear to ear and asked, "You mean I was your dream come true, Mom?"

› **Laughter: Medicine Without a Co-Pay** — Bridgid shared the above story with me that day, when I got home from work. After hearing the touching tale, I looked at Jamie and tried to humorously change the gravity of the conversation: "Let me get this straight. You were hugging and kissing *my* wife? What were you thinking?" Jamie's little body shook with laughter as he quipped, "That was *my* dream come true, Dad."

› **Lord of the Rings** — I recently attended a grade school reunion (St. Mark, Class of 1980), where my wife discovered I'd previously proposed to five other women. Luckily, I was in the first grade when I was handing out rings. I'll never forget my dad asking me about the five plastic companion rings I was wearing and then grinning impishly — and cautiously — as he looked at Mom and asked, "Why on Earth would anyone want five wives?"

Having five wives is like having five different stories. It's best to be married to one story — the truth — at work and at home. Absolute honesty is the goal; we claim progress, but seek perfection.

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