

I know I did but it's been so long since I lied. Now I just don't tell them things.

No was always the lie... in response to *Did you take the cookies? Did you feed the goldfish twice? Do you know where my keys are/what happened to my cigarettes/etc.* until I was old enough to do dumb things all on my own. Like smoking, for example. I lied via omission until my mom found a pack of my cigarettes I'd forgotten in her car, she came into my room while I was sleeping, yelled *really?* and threw them at me. I didn't lie at that point, just looked ashamed and said nothing. On the off chance my mom reads this—LOVE YOU. And, third day not smoking (birthday gift to myself).

The red kitty did it.

My father is the type of man that continually promises more than he can deliver. It comes from good intention, but it fails over and over again. It runs from the small to the unforgivable, but always, I know he'll never do what he says, or at least not in the way or the time frame that I need him to do something. It's caused an enormous amount of pain and friction between us. Yet at the same time, his promising and wanting things that were beyond his reach is what made me be able to see and reach beyond the social strata I would have otherwise been stuck in. It's what brought him to this country. My father is a dreamer, in both the good and bad sense of word.

Yet my father is also someone that requires an intense amount of personal affirmation. He wants my mother and I to trust him blindly and to praise him. His insecurities and our trusting him is intricately tied into his alcoholism, the abuse and neglect that he suffered in his parent's hand, to the verbal abuse he inflicted on my mother, to patriarchy, and a slew of other things. Yet growing up, I had to lie, over and over, and tell him I trusted him and that things were ok. We would have terrible fights, throw things at the walls, I'd call him an alcoholic and a failure, but by the next morning, my mom would make me go up to him and kiss him and tell him things were ok. I'd tell him I trusted in the choices he'd make for us.

I don't do this anymore. It's a great strain between us. I learned I needed to stop living in denial and accept my father with his limitations. And I do. So today I tell him I love him, but I don't tell him I trust him.

I told my parents my best friend was gay so that he could spend the night.

Last year after being sober for almost two years I moved to California and slipped back into drinking. I thought the change of venue and sun of Los Angeles meant I escaped my demons. In about 6 months they reappeared, in Vegas no less, and I realized I had broken a deal with myself rather than undergoing a miraculous molecular change upon moving to the West Coast. My mother has never drank and has always been *against alcohol*. She was so happy the first time that I quit drinking I couldn't tell her I had let it slide. The funny thing is I don't feel bad about it because I have had so few secrets from my mother, I feel more like an adult that I went through that transition and subsequent growth on my own.

College, freshman year, summer vacation University of Miami. I told my parents I was driving to Washington, DC with three friends when in fact, I was headed to the Big Apple. I would have gotten away with it until I crashed the car on the Willis Avenue Bridge.

I really only remember one. My mom was really strict with our diet, but when my dad was home, he would get us sweets. My favorites were Little Debbie Zebra Cakes and dipped cones from Dairy Queen. One night my dad took me to get a dipped cone after my mom had acted like she didn't want him too. When she put me to bed that night she asked me if we had gotten dipped cones and I said no, trying to protect my dad. When Dad came in to say goodnight, I proudly told him how I'd saved his ass. He got so solemn and said, *You told a lie*. He sent my mom back in so I could confess. I remember crying and feeling so guilty. I didn't lie again for years and years.

The very first time I got black-out drunk I was 14 years old. I was staying at a friends house who was 16 and he had a car. We wanted to get some booze and my parents were out on the town so we decided to drive to their house and sneak into my mom and dad's liquor cabinet. We emptied a bottle of red label stoli and filled the empty jug with water then emptied a bottle of dark rum and filled it with apple juice. After getting back to my friends house we waited for his mom to go to bed then went to the garage and got absolutely smashed drinking terrible drinks like vodka with diet coke, rum with diet coke and some foul concoction of rum, vodka, some kind of red juice and probably some diet coke. The only thing I can really remember from that night was that we were watching an anime show that involved carrots raining from the sky.

The next morning I experienced my first (and one of my worst) hangovers. My parents picked me up on their way home from church. Still a little drunk I slumped into the back seat of my moms Chrysler and waited for the inevitable. Before we made it two blocks down the road I calmly rolled my window down, shoved my head and shoulders out of the car and vomited with all my might. My parents confronted me of course and demanded to know if I had been drinking the night before... and all I had to say was *No... we went to Chick-fil-a...*

I told them I was happy to be getting married.

My dad has always wanted a boy. I am an only child, so obviously he never got his wish. He is a man who works with his hands. He builds cars for fun and he can fix anything. I have always been fascinated by his intelligence and skill, but he chose never to share that with me. I would always try to hang out in his workshop, but instead he would invite over his friend's sons or my male cousins and teach them things. He told me I wasn't allowed to stay in the workshop with them. Even today, he says things like if he had a son he would buy them so many things and teach them so much. He says this in front of me.

I have chosen to pursue an area of study that lets me use all kinds of tools and heavy machinery. I gravitate to my male teachers who don't treat me like I don't matter because I'm female. I am a woman and I'm just as badass as any boy.

I tell my dad I understand and that I know he loves me.

My mother asked me whether I'd been raped, and I couldn't tell her yes even when she told me it had happened to her, too.

The text for this book was compiled from lies people told their parents. These were shared anonymously and are presented anonymously. I want to deeply thank everyone who shared their stories. This book acts as one part of a three part meal/installation project but can be digested seperately as well. The concept, installation/meal, and book, were created by Claire Siepser of *Little Dinosaur Press* in 2011.

Sharing is caring afterall.