

2022 International Essay Contest for Young People

[Children's Category – Honorable Mention]

Honesty

(Original)

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"Don't ever lie. Whatever the reason, never lie."

My grandmother always told me this. Every year, my family and I visited my grandmother. Everyday, in the morning and at night, my grandmother walked into her room and sat in front of a small Buddha shrine. She held up a pink book, flipped to the first page and started reciting the words. I was curious and asked what she was doing: "Grandma, what is that?" "These are Buddhist chants and I pray everyday to forgive my sins." "Forgive your sins? Have you ever done something bad?"

"Yes I have. That is why I pray for myself, for you, and for everyone."

"But I didn't do anything bad. The only bad thing I did today was eat Mom's candy." My grandmother told me the most devastating sin is lying.

Every time we visited, she taught me about the importance of telling the truth and the detrimental consequences of lying. However, I never took her words seriously and flew back to America without heeding her advice.

I enjoyed going to school with my friends everyday. Two of my closest friends were Jack and Bob. We hung out during lunch and had many periods together. On some days, Jack would bring a lot of tacos for lunch. He would choose who to give his extra tacos to and make them 'earn' them by doing something he ordered them to do. Jack and I were close friends so he usually gave me a taco without me having to do anything for him. One day, Jack and Bob were arguing. I never knew what their dispute was about but I tried to make them stop. They seemed really mad at each other and I had a feeling our friendship was about to collapse. Later that day, Jack came up to me and said,

"Hey Brandon, we should just leave Bob. I don't like him anymore." I had no idea how to answer him so I just nodded.

Then he said, "You're my friend, right? Can you go punch him? I'll give you a taco."

Brainwashed by the word 'taco', without considering my actions, I went up to Bob and punched him in the back.

"What was that for?" Furious, Bob punched back at me. At that moment I knew I chose the wrong actions and just stood there letting Bob punch me. When I got home, my mom saw a bruise on my arm and was shocked.

"Who did this to you?" "Bob."

"Ok. I'm going to inform the school office." The next day, Jack, Bob, and I were called to the office to meet with the vice principal.

"Who punched Brandon?" Jack and I pointed at Bob who looked back at us stunned.

"Brandon punched me first in the back!"

"No I didn't. You punched me for no reason." I replied. "Yeah, that's right." added Jack.

My heart was racing suddenly. All of my grandmother's words came back to me and I

couldn't stop thinking about what I had just said. As a result, Bob received detention.

I lied to protect myself but in the end, I damaged myself even more. I finally understood my grandmother's words.

After the incident, I decided to live honestly. My mother arranged a family meeting with Jack and Bob and their parents. At the meeting everyone explained what had happened. When it was my turn, I confessed that I had. I then apologized to Bob and to everyone at the meeting. I felt like a heavy burden had lifted off my shoulders.

Living honestly is hard but it is the right thing to do. It takes a lot of courage to speak the truth particularly when it can have negative results for you. But not telling the truth, especially when it can hurt others is even worse. The incident with Bob also made me realize that I needed to develop more compassion and empathy towards others. My grandmother had recently passed away. I thank her for teaching me these important life lessons and I hope to honor her memory by living honestly and being kind to others.