

When is the last time you said. “I don’t know”?

Being straightforward means you know when to speak up even if you don’t have the answer. When I admit I don’t know something, it doesn’t mean I can’t learn or solve a problem. In fact, I generally work harder when I don’t know something than when I do.

When has pride pushed you back?

Pride exists at the organizational level and can just as easily become tainted. Think about it. How many times have you witnessed senior level executives not acknowledging a problem? The reason? Pride. Ego. They don’t want to admit that there is a problem because of ego: someone else will think they’re weak, or that they’ll lose face. To admit your decision was wrong means you are weak, correct? Absolutely the opposite!

Fear freezes your ability to be straightforward

When we are scared, nervous, or afraid, we shut out the

outside world. We become less open and transparent. Instead of accepting our true selves, and admitting that we are afraid, we put up a wall designed to keep out the truth. We make things up to compensate—about how good-looking we are, about how clever or competent we believe ourselves to be, about how much money we make. We lose sight of the importance of being straightforward and honest. Fear can undermine openness and honesty in anyone—including me!

When was the last time you lied?

None of us grows up and then suddenly starts lying. We develop a tendency toward telling fibs – and outward lies – at early age.

What is the cost of a little white lie?

We have all lied at some point in our lives, even if it's one of those “little white lies” you told your mother. The thing is, lying is never acceptable. Unless and until you replace lying with being straightforward, you'll never have a caring mindset.

How will you embrace the truth?

A friend communicated a story to me about Alan Mulally, the former CEO of Ford. When Mulally first joined the organization, he gathered his senior management team together to identify what needed to change at Ford. In a nutshell, Mulally asked his team to color code their initiatives red, yellow, or green. Red meant things were in bad shape—for example, a launch date might be missed. Yellow meant an initiative wasn't going well, and green meant the initiative was on track.