

you know it, you'll be terrified of running into your friends over the holidays because you're supposed to be in California hanging with LeBron.

Better to Be Polite

Still, lying may have its place—especially when it's done to protect someone's feelings. "Most of the time, being kind to someone is more important than telling the absolute truth," says Jane Frank, a psychologist in New York City.

It turns out that lying might even be good for your social life. White lies can help you smooth out awkward situations and make others around you feel better, says Dr. Robert Feldman, a professor who researches lying. In this way, he says, lying could be seen as a valuable social skill.

Perhaps the key is to think about why you're lying. There's a difference between lying to spare yourself—like faking illness to miss a big test—and lying to spare someone else. Of course, even lying out of kindness can be complicated. It would be cruel to tell your sister she's an awful cook. But if she plans to audition for *Chopped Junior*, being honest and telling her she needs to **hone** her skills first could save her from **colossal** disappointment.

So what do you tell your friend about his horrendous haircut? The truth or a lie?

Well, there is a third option: Don't say anything. Instead, "accidentally" drop your books, have a sudden coughing fit, and change the subject.

Then go buy him a nice hat. ●

Debate

What Do You Think?

Is it ever OK to lie? Go back to the article to find arguments that support each side of this debate. Write the information on the lines below.



YES

Kindness matters most.

1 It's important to protect people's feelings.

2

3

NO

Lying is wrong. Period.

1

2

3

Examine points on both sides of the debate—as well as your own beliefs—and decide what you think. State your opinion in one sentence below. This can be your thesis statement for an essay on this topic.

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