

Ferdie J. Deering

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'Big Lie' Ruins Youthful Lives

HIGH school students soon will return to their campuses, where they will hear "The Big Lie", so this column is for them.

"The Big Lie" is just three words, but that is enough to ruin many young lives and limit the usefulness of others. The lie is that "Everybody's doing it!"

The truth is that not everybody is doing it. No matter what the application, chances are that some are doing it, but not everybody. Misery loves company, and it is worth noticing that "Everybody's doing it!" nearly always is used to rationalize questionable conduct; seldom is it used constructively.

Sloppy dress, rude conduct and profanity are examples. Advocates argue that it isn't "in" to dress neatly or to act politely, that "everybody" prefers to look and act like a bum. It isn't so. Most young people try to live decently.

The big lie shows up in students' social lives. It isn't true that "Everybody's doing it!" when it comes to sexual promiscuity, but those who do so often use the expression to tempt others. Anybody can live like a tramp, but that doesn't mean that everybody does.

Drinking of alcoholic beverages is boosted by the big lie. Some young people drink because they have a mistaken notion that it is a sign of maturity, but it is an error to assume that everybody does. Many mature people have never taken a drink.

Students also may be urged to try shooting drugs because "Everybody's doing it!" The number who do so is too many, but smart youngsters don't, because they know that drugs can result in a long trip without a return ticket.

Some students display their irresponsibility by reckless driving, but not everybody drives foolishly or wildly.

Stealing from fellow students and shoplifting from stores also are abetted by the big lie. The truth is that most people are honest.

Students may be told that they should read dirty books and see obscene movies because "Everybody's doing it!" This is not so, but the real reason that such trash should be avoided is that minds filled with lascivious thoughts aren't apt to be ready to receive worthwhile ideas and useful knowledge.

Time wasting probably comes nearest to being what everybody is doing. Many students cut classes to waste time, while others merely dawdle away precious learning hours with poor study habits and inattentiveness. Parents and teachers are not the big losers when students stunt their career opportunities by their own failure to obtain fundamentals in education and living.

Those who foster the big lie claim that you ought to adopt their bad habits because they say "Everybody's doing it!" Not everybody succeeds, but maybe you can!

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By Ferdie J. Deering



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The author, a well-known Baptist layman, is a member of the board of directors of the Baptist Foundation of Oklahoma. Former editor of THE FARMER STOCKMAN and author of two books, now in retirement, he prepares three special columns weekly for the DAILY OKLAHOMAN and carries on multitudinous other writing responsibilities. He and his wife live in Oklahoma City and are members of Nichols Hills Church there.

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