

**64% of Americans Today Think it is Sometimes Justified to Lie, Compared to 42% in 2006**

*One in Five Men Indicate Lying to a Spouse or Partner About an Affair is Sometimes or Often Okay*

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## **64% of Americans Today Think it is Sometimes Justified to Lie, Compared to 42% in 2006**

### ***One in Five Men Indicate Lying to a Spouse or Partner About an Affair is Sometimes or Often Okay***

**Washington, DC** – Armed with boxes of chocolate and dozens of red roses, many Americans spent Valentine’s Day this year celebrating relationships with a partner or spouse. With the holiday spirit in mind, Ipsos Public Affairs conducted an online survey among Americans from February 9 – 10, asking respondents whether or not lying is justified in a range of situations. Overall, findings indicate that both 64% of men and women say that lying is sometimes justified, compared to 42% of respondents from an Ipsos Public Affairs poll conducted in 2006.

Nonetheless, not all lies merit the same level of justification. Across the board, the majority of Americans believe it is sometimes or often okay to: lie in order to avoid hurting someone’s feelings (56%), for a parent to lie to his or her child about their own past misbehavior (54%), to exaggerate the facts to make a story more interesting (52%), and to lie about one’s age (51%). In general, Americans were less likely to think lying about being sick to take a day off work (48%) and lying on a resume (18%) are justified. Finally, when it comes to lying and relationships, Americans say that lying to one’s spouse or partner about forgetting an anniversary (33%), or about an affair (14%) is sometimes or often



okay. However, results also find that a situation in which lying is okay varies greatly by gender, age, and marital status.

*Everyone lies - but who lies more - men or women?*

For men, 22% reveal that they have to lie or cheat often or occasionally (even if it's just a little), compared to 13% of women.

- In fact, 32% of men admit they may have told a lie in the last week. Still, more than one in five women (23%) say that they also may have told a lie in the last week.
- The majority of both men (63%) and women (67%) confess they may have told a lie in the past week to a friend or family member.
- But, co-workers aren't exempt: 16% of men and 12% of women report that they have lied to a co-worker in the past week. Even more concerning, 25% of men and 11% of women indicate it is often or sometimes okay to lie on a resume. Somewhat less surprisingly, 48% of both men and women declare that it is sometimes or often okay to lie about being sick to take the day off work.
- Roughly one third of both men (36%) and women (29%) admit lying to one's spouse or partner about forgetting an anniversary is often or sometimes okay. However, things change when it comes to the big stuff- 81% of men compared to 92% of women find lying to one's spouse or partner to be never okay.

*You guessed it - 75% of millennials admit it is sometimes justified to lie*



While 3 in 4 Millennials can find a way to justify lying, 61% of Gen Xers and 57% of Baby Boomers also indicate that lying is sometimes justified.

- Whether it's a looming mid-life crisis, or an attempt to be served while underage, 57% of Millennials think it's sometimes or often okay to lie about one's age.
- Gen Xers and Millennials may be more similar than one might think - 15% of both age groups believe it is often or sometimes okay to lie to one's spouse about an affair; 90% of Baby Boomers say that it is never okay.
- While it seems Millennials have an aptitude to justify a lie, still one in five (19%) of Millennials believe it is never okay to lie in order to avoid hurting someone's feelings.
- Everyone likes to tell a good story: 64% of Millennials, 52% of Gen Xer's, and 41% of Baby Boomers find it often or sometimes okay to exaggerate the facts to make a story more interesting.

***Going on a Date This Week? Beware: Singles Love to Lie (Less Than Millennials, Though)***

72% of singles, compared to 54% of divorced or separated respondents say that lying is sometimes justified.

- For some, the pressure is on to lie: 23% of singles and 17% of married respondents indicate they often or occasionally must lie.
- However, it is those living with a partner (39%) that were more likely to say they may have told a lie this week, followed by 38% of singles. Widowed respondents (9%) were the least likely to report they may have



told a lie in the past week. Nearly one in five (19%) of married respondents report they may have told a lie in the past week to a co-worker.

- Married respondents (5%) were slightly more likely than single respondents (3%) or respondents living with partners (3%) to say it was often okay to lie to a spouse or partner about an affair.

Now that we've covered some truths about lying as it relates to gender, age, and marital differences, we'll be back on Tax Day (April 15<sup>th</sup>) to revisit lying as it relates to cheating on one's taxes.

*These are findings from an Ipsos poll conducted February 9-10th. For the survey, a sample of 1,006 U.S. adults (ages 18 and over) was interviewed online in English.*

*The sample for this study was randomly drawn from Ipsos' online panel (see link below for more info on "Access Panels and Recruitment"), partner online panel sources, and "river" sampling (see link below for more info on the Ipsos "Ampario Overview" sample method) and does not rely on a population frame in the traditional sense. Ipsos uses fixed sample targets, unique to each study, in drawing sample. The source of these population targets is U.S. Census 2014 American Community Survey data. The sample drawn for this study reflects fixed sample targets on demographics.*

*Statistical margins of error are not applicable to online polls. All sample surveys and polls may be subject to other sources of error, including, but not limited to coverage error and measurement error. Where figures do not sum to 100, this is due to the effects of rounding. The precision of Ipsos online polls is measured using a credibility interval.*



*In this case, the poll has a credibility interval of plus or minus 3.5 percentage points for all respondents (see link below for more info on Ipsos online polling “Credibility Intervals”). Ipsos calculates a design effect (DEFF) for each study based on the variation of the weights, following the formula of Kish (1965). This study had a credibility interval adjusted for design effect of the following ( $n=1,008$ ,  $DEFF=1.5$ , adjusted Confidence Interval=5.0).*

*For more information about Ipsos online polling methodology, please go here <http://goo.gl/yJBkuf>*

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