Honesty Among Physicians: a personal reflection

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“Roughly 1 in 10 physicians admits to having lied to a patient within the previous 12 months, and 35% do not completely agree that they should tell patients about their financial relationships with drug and medical device companies.”

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This workshop deals with honesty, and with ways to make each of us see that it is smarter (and better for our business) to be *more* honest with our patients and, in fact, with each other (and with all our “clients”).
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I will reflect on another question: why do doctors lie?
But first, let us agree on what is “a lie”?
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Is a lie the same as not telling the “Truth”

How often if there a clear “Truth” in a medical case?
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A man who tells him the red ball is in his left hand (lies)
A man who is color blind who also tells him the red ball is in his left hand (tells “the truth” as he sees it – is honest)
We agree, therefore, that a lying person (doctor) acts with clear intent to hide what he/she knows is Truth from another person (patient, family member)

What drives doctors to lie?
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Questions to ponder:

Is society more accepting of lying?
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Are there more people (doctors) who do not see lying as a “big deal”?
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How do we re-inculcate the value and centrality of honesty to medicine?
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What does it mean to be “wrong”?

What is wrong and right? Good and evil? Who decides?
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What is the value of The Truth (the red ball!)?
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Consequence of being lied to:

More time of his life searching for the truth
When you lie to a person, you are in fact cutting shorter their life by the time spent on the consequences of your lie.
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When a doctor lies to a patient he is in a real but imperceptible way, diminishing his patient’s life, a stark violation of our Oath that we shall “do no harm”