



New Year's Resolution

New Year's parties are by now long over, but it's not too late to start thinking about New Year's resolutions. Listening to several discussions on the topic, I've heard the usual vows to eat better, exercise more, work harder, etc. They've got me thinking about my own coming year.

It's basically a tradition at this point for me to sit down in January and decide to eat breakfast (they do say it's the most important meal), go to all my classes and finish my assignments early. I always promise myself it will be the year things are different.

Like clockwork, February rolls around and I find myself staying up till the crack of dawn to finish a paper or cram in a few extra study hours. That inevitably leads to missing breakfast, a messed up sleep schedule, and most likely a missed class somewhere down the line. Just like that, I take out all three resolutions in one fell swoop.

This year it's going to be different. My resolution is to stop lying. Wait, don't put down the paper. I'm not saying I have a serious lying problem. My parents taught me from a young age that lying is wrong and honesty is the best policy.

But I'm going to let you in on a little secret. Every once in a while I tell a little white lie. "Hey, this meatloaf is delicious." "Wow, you look great with bangs." "Of course I drove the speed limit." You know, that sort of lie.

That changes now. As of 2011, I resolve to stop telling lies, even of the white variety. I've learned my lesson, that even if a lie seems innocent, it can come back to haunt you. Here's my story.

It all started in 2007. I was a freshman at Amherst College in Amherst, Mass., and I was loving

Drumroll Please

Written by Jes-c Brandt

life. Classes were interesting, friends were fun, and I even landed a sweet job on campus. I worked in the theater and dance department as an office assistant, and my boss, Linda, was like my mom away from home.

Linda is one of the most caring individuals I have ever met, and that year she always went out of her way to make sure I was doing OK.

One day I was sitting at my desk in the office when Linda came over and offered me some chocolate. Now I don't remember the exact details of that day, but for some reason I didn't want any chocolate. I really do love chocolate, but I guess I just wasn't in the mood that day.

I politely declined and turned back to my work. Linda, like any good mother, is always trying to make sure her employees are well fed. When I turned down her chocolate, she would not take no for an answer. "Come on Jess, don't you like chocolate?"

When those words came out of her mouth, the little devil that sits on my shoulder had the perfect solution. If you tell her you don't like chocolate, she'll just drop it and leave you alone. Problem solved. So I delivered the lie without batting an eyelash.

Shoulder devil was right—Linda dropped the subject and didn't offer me chocolate again. Unfortunately, there were a few things shoulder devil didn't think of. You know, consequences, the future, that kind of thing.

A few weeks passed, and Christmas was in the air. In true Linda fashion, she brought some goodies for the office assistants, and for Linda, goodies always mean chocolate. She loves the dark, decadent treat almost as much as I do.

As I took my place in the office, I noticed the chocolaty tidbits and my mouth started to water. I could hardly contain my excitement as I thought about the moment when she would wish me a Merry Christmas, deliver the chocolate and I would indulge in a heavenly snack.

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Next thing I knew, my daydream was coming true, as Linda approached my desk. With her usual smile, she offered me an assortment of Christmassy hard candies. My heart sank. My previous lie came rushing back into my memory. I mumbled a thank you to Linda, and tried frantically to assess the damage I had done.

By my calculations, Linda would be bringing in treats several times a semester for the next seven semesters. That is a lot of chocolate to be missing out on. After a few deep breaths and a piece of chocolate from my secret reserve, things no longer looked so bleak.

I could easily survive without Linda's chocolate, and all I had to do was keep up my chocolate-hating facade. So I did. Every time I was in the office and chocolate was an option, I refused. I even let my friend in the office in on the secret so she wouldn't slip up and offer me any.

Fast forward now to my senior year of college. Over three years had passed, and I kept up the lie so long, even I was starting to believe it.

In October, my parents came to visit for family weekend, so I took them to meet the woman who was like my Amherst mother. Conversation was going great, and we started discussing Linda's dinner recommendations. She mentioned one restaurant in particular, and told me I'd love it because they had good chocolate-free desserts.

My mother actually laughed out loud. With an oblivious smile, she said, "Oh, Jes-c likes chocolate!" Between looking daggers at my mom and trying to slow my racing heart, I casually tried to correct my mother. I'll eat something if it has a little chocolate in it, but I prefer other sweets, I lied.

Even after the trouble the first lie got me into, I lied again. I sure can be so foolish sometimes.

This year for Christmas, Linda brought me a bag of white chocolate truffles. She told me she was sure my mom was just getting my tastes confused with the tastes of one of her many other children. Bless her heart.

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To think I spent five seconds telling this lie three years ago, and I'm still seeing the ramifications. I don't know if my heart can take the stress of being caught in another lie. So for the sake of my own well-being, and to return to what my parents have told me all along, this year I will really do my best to lie no more.