

TRUST

The saga of former Scottish Secretary Alastair Carmichael and the leaked memo has been continuing in our news for some days.

Mr Carmichael admitted initially lying about the issue, has now apologised, and seeks to move on with his work as a newly re-elected MP.

Yesterday Sir Malcolm Bruce spoke up to defend his Party colleague, suggesting that if *“every politician had to resign for lying we’d clear out the House of Commons very fast.”*

Now it may be that statement is quite true, but if it is, it illustrates a problem we have with our political system!

All relationships depend on trust, and where trust is absent at a national, local, or even personal level, our relationships become less than they should be.

Honesty has always been seen as essential.

In classical times the Greek writer Aesop wrote fables about its importance.

In the Ten Commandments God calls on people not to bear false witness, and of course that is echoed in other faiths around the world.

Honesty is a virtue that few would decry.

Now it can't be easy being a politician, and being subject to intense scrutiny by the media. And it's true that we sometimes have unreasonable expectations of our elected representatives.

Watching the televised leaders debates during the last election campaign the emphases tended towards the negative – never admit other people's ideas are as good as your own, and don't slip up - and don't say anything that can be picked up and used against you.

It's easy of course, to single out politicians for criticism when we ourselves can be at times economical with the facts, refuse to give straight answers, fail to tell the whole story.

A lack of truthfulness leads to a lack of trust, which, in turn, can sour organisations, and tear apart friendships and families.

Most of are tempted to lie in some situations. It can seem like the easy thing to do, but lies have a habit of catching up with us.

Perhaps what we have to do is to continue to expect the same standards for everyone from our politicians to our partners, from our cousins to our colleagues.

We need to accept that people slip up,
to realise that no-one has **all** of the great ideas,
to appreciate that as long as we are human, mistakes *will* be made.

But we also need to look for (and expect) honesty at all times.
Because trust is vital for all healthy relationships.

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