

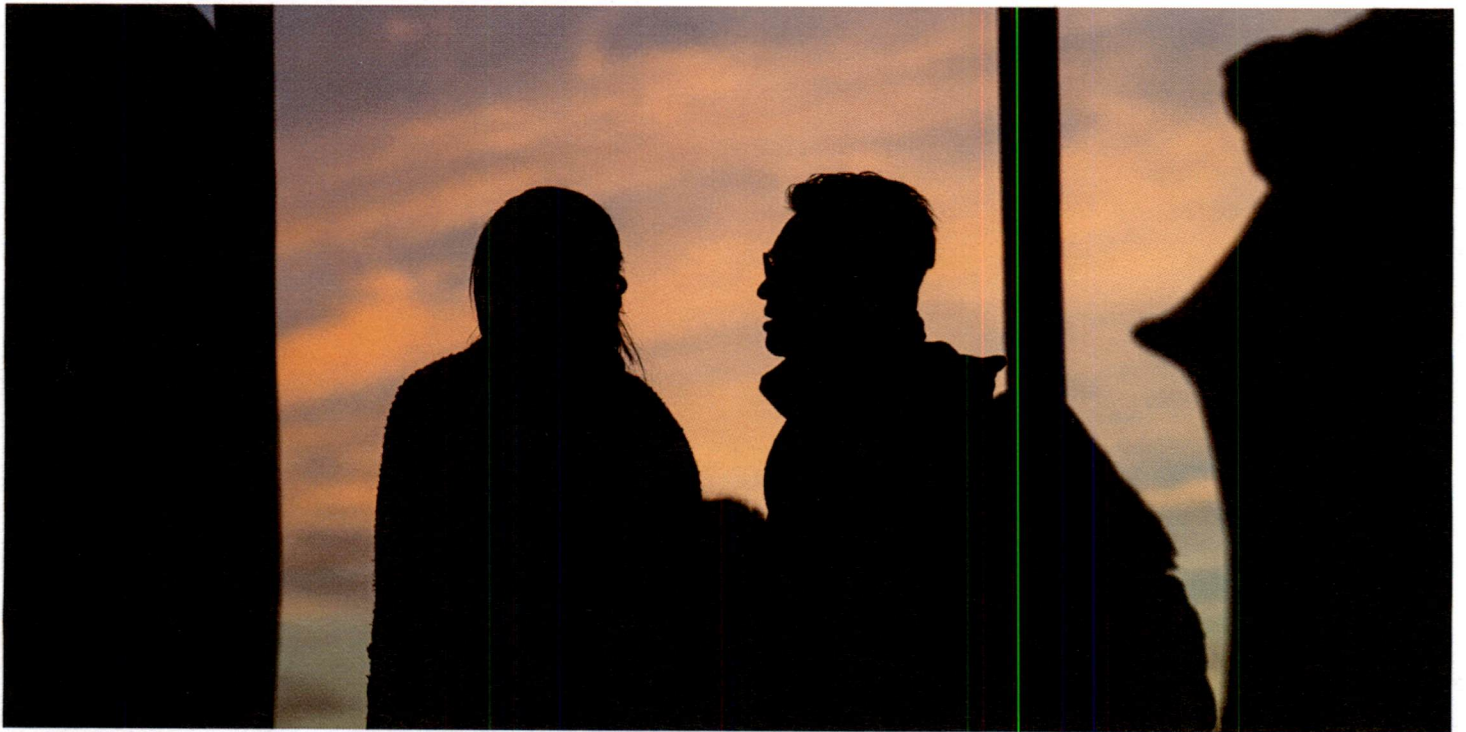


THE ETHICS OF WHITE LIES

SHOULD YOU? SHOULDN'T YOU?



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Have you ever bought into something to only find out that it is not entirely true? Lying is typically known to be harmful in all aspects, at least that is what is commonly thought to be true. The irony of that belief is that lies are used excessively in the world of design. With the prominent use of lies, the real question remains: is it wrong? There are many conflicting opinions in the world of design; some say that honesty is the best policy, whereas others believe that convenience trumps the truth. The ethics of this topic are debated often, is it false advertising or playing to people's mental placebos? The ethical dilemma between

these two topics has been a focal point in the digital age.

In October of last year, the executive director of National Elevator Industry Inc. revealed that the "close door" button does not close the door. The button does not do anything at all, unlike the "open door" button. As Ellen J. Langer of Harvard University put it: "Perceived control is crucial... It diminishes stress and promotes well-being." When the effects are laid out, the lies seem harmless, but they are still lying. In a society that cries out for open information and truth, is being a lie enough to be considered unethical?