

## “IS” of fiction

Liar! Liar! Pants on fire! Did you ever say that when you were younger to make a point? Well, prepare to say it again about the use of the verb “to be” as we use it in these examples. Technically, we call this the ‘is’ of predication. Actually, a more descriptive name for using “is” in this manner we call the “IS OF PROJECTION.” We create an idea in our mind, and then project it out onto a person or thing as a factual statement. We arbitrarily attribute attributes. We fail to speak truthfully. Look at this example.

You say, “Willa is stupid”

Really? Who decided that? What does this statement really say? Stupid equals Willa today, yesterday and tomorrow. Look at a more truthful way of expressing your thoughts.

“Willa acts stupidly at times.”

“Willa did a stupid thing today.”

Or let’s try another example.

“Pasquale is fat.”

What is fat? Can you quantitatively measure it? Or does it mean Pasquale has no bones or muscle, just the substance called fat. And then again, who decided just what Pasquale was? We try to be polite by changing “fat” to “obese”, but still use the is.

“Pasquale has a weight problem.”

“Pasquale weighs over 250 pounds.”

“Pasquale has a tendency toward obesity.”

Or,

“Martians are lazy.”

How did you arrive at this judgement? Have you seen all Martians? How many do you know? Do you make statements like this about other groups? Try modifying your statements.

“The Martians I know avoid work.”

“I have rarely seen a Martian do anything quickly.”

How often do you create something in your mind and speak as though you were making a factual statement? Listen to your friends. Listen to adults, including your parents. Do they make these types of statements? You need not try to correct them, just understand what has occurred. Be kind to your friends, to places, and to things. Don’t project your opinions onto them as fact. And when you are tempted to “IS” them, don’t.