

[« Ask the Coach: Screening the Screeners | Main | Ask the Coach: Be Found, Be Flexible »](#)

August 16, 2012

Go Ahead! Lie to Me!

I am not a great fan of network television but up until last year there was an interesting crime show called [Lie to Me](#), in which Tim Roth played Dr. Cal Lightman, a consulting psychologist who had the uncanny ability to be able to tell when people were lying through their facial expressions. I always thought such a super-human lie detector was wasting his abilities on crime solving; he should be a hiring manager!

This premise of the television series is actually based on science. The main character uses the [Facial Action Coding System](#), which was developed by a team of psychologist to standardize the physical characteristics of emotion. There is a science to detecting lies, including in a job interview. For a better understanding of how to spot liars, I suggest you read [Spy the Lie](#), which was written by three former CIA analysts. These three former interrogators have some real insights about human deception.

First of all, understand that most people are prone to believe everyone. No one likes to think of the other party as a liar. No one feels comfortable judging other people, and even law enforcement officials tend to take statements at face value. However, if you watch carefully, you can use telltales that may indicate when you shouldn't trust what the other party is saying.

If you are looking to catch someone in a dishonest act or a lie, most of what you need to know comes out in the first five seconds of asking the hard question, "Did you do this?" If the person is innocent, chances are they will respond in straightforward language. If the other party is guilty, he or she will go to extremes to prove his innocence, such as the man who insisted he walk his inquisitor to the trunk of his car to see the carton of Bibles he had for his church as a way to reinforce his denial that he stole \$40 from a coworker. (Her later confessed to stealing the cash.)

Then there's the misdirection tactic, where rather than answering a direct question, the liar will provide the truth to a question that wasn't asked. The example from the book cites Vice President Dick Cheney dropping the "F" bomb on Senator Patrick Leahy on the Senate floor. Although the legislative session was not recorded, a number of reporters heard it, and when asked about the incident later, Vice President Cheney replied, "That's not the kind of language I usually use" - classic non-denial, denial. Liars also will repeat a question to buy time, or they will flip the question around and use it to accuse or misdirect the questioner.

Although there are many physical cues for lying, averting eye contact isn't one of them. More telling are behaviors such as hiding the mouth or hiding the eyes, throat-clearing, swallowing, and biting or puckering the lips. There also is what the authors call "anchor point movement," where the subject shifts his or her weight, such as fidgeting in the chair, to reduce anxiety. Grooming gestures like straightening a tie or brushing the hair can be a signal of anxiety. And, of course, nervous perspiration is also a dead giveaway.

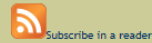
So how can you apply these insights in a job interview? Here are some thoughts:

1. Ask some direct questions and watch for signs of deceptive behavior and responses within the first five seconds.
2. Remember that if they answer a question immediately and plainly, chances are they are telling the truth.
3. Liars will often respond to a question with another truthful statement that casts them in a more favorable light.
4. Liars also will repeat a question as a stall for time. They also will start attacking their inquisitor to cover up, or they will try to butter them up with compliments.
5. Nonverbal cues can be instructive, so watch for hiding the mouth and eyes, throat clearing or swallowing, grooming gestures, and fidgeting.

So try your own lie detector test the next time you find yourself interviewing a candidate. You might find the results enlightening.

Posted by [Kathy Simmons, CEO Netshare](#) at 12:00 PM in [Interviews](#), [Recruiters](#), [Science](#), [Television](#) | [Permalink](#)

Technorati Tags: [job interview](#), [liars](#), [lie detector](#), [resume](#)



PAGES

[About The Executive Update](#)

[Email Me](#)

RECENT POSTS

[Ask the Coach-Dont Get Caught in the Net](#)

[Ask the Coach: How ATS Systems Affect Hiring Decisions](#)

[Ask the Coach: Providing References](#)

[Ask the Coach: Be Found, Be Flexible](#)

[Go Ahead! Lie to Me!](#)

[Ask the Coach: Screening the Screeners](#)

[How Do You Find the Right Career Coach?](#)

[Honesty is the Best Hiring Policy](#)

[Your Gadgets May Be Cool, But NOT at a Job Interview](#)

[The Growing Need for Unsocial Networks for True Networking](#)

BLOG ROLL

[Ask The Headhunter? | Nick Corcodilos](#)

[Blue Sky Resumes Blog](#)

[Career Hub](#)

[Senior Success](#)

[JobDig Blog Network](#)

[Career Chaos](#)

[The CFO Coach](#)

[William Arruda on Personal Branding](#)

[Knock em Dead Blog](#)

CATEGORIES

[Web Presence](#)

[AESC](#)

[Ageism](#)

[Ask the Coach](#)

[Books](#)

[Career Management](#)

[Current Affairs](#)

[Film](#)

[Interviews](#)

[Members](#)

[NetShare](#)

[Networking](#)

[New Rules](#)

[Openings](#)

[Opportunities](#)

[Personal brand](#)

[Portfolio](#)

[Recruiters](#)

[Resume](#)

[Science](#)

[Sports](#)

[Television](#)

[Video](#)

[Web Presence](#)

[Web/Tech](#)

[Weblogs](#)

ARCHIVES

[December 2012](#)

[October 2012](#)

[September 2012](#)

[August 2012](#)

[July 2012](#)

[June 2012](#)




TrackBack

TrackBack URL for this entry:

<http://www.typepad.com/services/trackback/6a00e54efb5ca0883401676950ad5e970b>

Listed below are links to weblogs that reference [Go Ahead! Lie to Me!](#):

Comments

Comment below or sign in with  TypePad  Facebook  Twitter and [more...](#)

(URLs automatically linked.)

Email address is not displayed with comment.

POWERED BY  TypePad

May 2012

April 2012

March 2012

January 2012

[More...](#)



TWITTER UPDATES

[follow me on Twitter](#)

