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Instant Fact: How To Get The Truth Out of Anyone!
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Never Be Lied To Again
By David J. Lieberman, Ph.D.
St. Martin's Press, New York 1998
DD: 158.2
ISBN: 0-312-18634-7

Introduction:

In an ideal society there would be no need for lies. But we live in a world of deception. And whether you want to play or not, you're in the game. The question is, do you want to win?

I. Signs of Deception

Once you realize that you're being lied to, should you confront the liar immediately? Usually not. The best approach is to note the fact in your mind and continue with the conversation, trying to extract more information. Once you confront someone who has lied to you, the tone of the conversation changes and gathering additional facts becomes difficult. Therefore, wait until you have all the evidence you want and then decide whether to confront the person at that time or hold off to figure how you can best use this insight to your advantage.

Section 1: Body Language

- The person will make little or no eye contact. A person who is lying to you will do everything to avoid making eye contact.
- Physical expression will be limited, with few arm and hand movements. What arm and hand movements are present will seem stiff, and mechanical. Hands, arm and legs pull in toward the body; the individual takes up less space.
- His hand(s) may go up to his face or throat, especially to the mouth. But contact with his body is limited to these areas. He is also unlikely to touch his chest with an open hand gesture. He may also touch the nose or scratch behind the ear.
- If he is trying to appear casual and relaxed about his answer, he may shrug a little.

Section 2: Emotional States: Consistency and Contradiction

- The timing is off between gestures and words. If the facial expression comes *after* the verbal statement ("I am so angry with you right now" ... pause ... and then the angry expression), it looks false.
- The head moves in a mechanical fashion without regard to emphasis, indicating a conscious movement.
- Gestures don't match the verbal message, such as frowning when saying "I love you." Hands tightly clenched and a statement of pleasure are not in sync with each other.
- The timing and duration of emotional gestures will seem off. The emotion is delayed coming on, stays longer than it should, and fades out abruptly.
- Expression will be limited to the mouth area when the person is feigning certain emotions – happiness, surprise, awe, and so on – rather than the whole face.

Section 3: Interpersonal Interactions – When we are wrongfully accused, only a guilty person gets defensive. Someone who is innocent will usually go on the offensive.

- He is reluctant to face his accuser and may turn his head or shift his body away.
- The person who is lying will probably slouch; he is unlikely to stand tall with his arms out or outstretched.
- There's movement away from his accuser, possibly in the direction of the exit.
- There will be little or no physical contact during his attempt to convince you.
- He will not point his finger at the person he is trying to convince.
- He may place physical objects (pillow, drinking glass, et cetera) between himself and his accuser to form a barrier, with a verbal equivalent of "I don't want to talk about it," indicating deception or covert intention.

Section 4: What Is Said: Actual Verbal Content

- He will use your words to make his point. When asked, “Did you cheat on me?” The liar answers, “No, I didn’t cheat on you.” In addition, when a suspect uses a contraction – “It *wasn’t* me” instead of “It *was not* me” – statistically, there is a 60% chance he is truthful.
- He may stonewall, giving an impression that his mind is made up. This is often an attempt to limit your challenges to his position. If someone says right up front that he positively won’t budge, it means one thing: He knows he can be swayed. He needs to tell you this so you won’t ask, because he knows he’ll cave in. The confident person will use phrases like “I’m sorry, this is pretty much the best we can do.”
- Watch out for the good old Freudian slip.
- He depersonalizes his answer by offering his belief on the subject instead of answering directly. A liar offers abstract assurances as evidence of his innocence in a specific instance. Example: “Did you ever cheat on me?” and you hear, “You know I’m against that sort of thing. I think it morally reprehensible.”
- He will keep adding more information until he’s sure that he has sold you on his story. The guilty are uncomfortable with silence. He speaks to fill the gap left by the silence.
- He may imply an answer but never state it directly.

Section 5: How Something Is Said

- Deceitful response to questions regarding beliefs and attitudes take longer to think up. However, how fast does the rest of the sentence follow the initial one-word response? In truthful statements a fast no or yes is followed quickly by an explanation. If the person is being deceitful the rest of the sentence may come more slowly because he needs time to think up an explanation.
- Watch out for reactions that are all out of proportion to the question. May repeat points that he has already made. May also be reluctant to use words that convey attachment and ownership or possessiveness (“that car” as opposed to “my car”).
- The person who is lying may leave out pronouns and speak in a monotonous and inexpressive voice. When a person is making a truthful statement, he emphasizes the pronoun as much as or more than the rest of the sentence.
- Words may be garbled and spoken softly, and syntax and grammar may be off. In other words, his sentences will likely be muddled rather than emphasized.
- Statements sound an awful lot like questions, indicating that he’s seeking reassurance. Voice, head and eyes lift at the end of their statement.

Section 6: Psychological Profile

- We often see the world as a reflection of ourselves. If you’re being accused of something, check your accuser’s veracity. Watch out for those people who are always telling you just how corrupt the rest of the world is. Beware of those asking you if you believe him. They may respond with, “you don’t believe me, do you?” Most people who tell the truth expect to be believed.
- Look at whether his focus is internal or external. When a person is confident about what he’s saying, he’s more interested in your understanding him and less interested in how he appears to you.
- In a liar’s story, he will usually not give the point of view of a third party. To illustrate giving a point of view of someone else, “My roommate was so shocked that I would...”
- In relating a story, a liar often leaves out the negative aspects (unless the story is used to explain way he was delayed or had to cancel plans). The story of a vacation, for example, should have both positive and negative aspects of what happened.
- A liar willingly answers your questions but asks none of his own. For example, during their first intimate encounter, Randy asks his new girlfriend if she’s ever been tested for AIDS. She responds with “Oh, yes, certainly,” and continues on a bit about annual checkups, giving blood, etc. And then nothing! If she was concerned about her health, as her answer implied, then she would have asked him the same question. The liar is often unaware that coming across as truthful means both answering and asking questions.

Section 7: General Indications of Deceit

- When the subject is changed, he's in a better, more relaxed mood. The guilty wants the subject changed; the innocent always wants a further exchange of information.
- He does not become indignant when falsely accused. While he is being accused the liar will remain fairly expressionless. The liar is more concerned with how he is going to respond than he is with the accusation itself.
- He uses such phrases as "To tell you the truth," "To be perfectly honest," and "Why would I lie to you?"
- He has an answer to your question down pat, such as giving precise detail to an event occurring two months ago.
- He stalls by asking you to repeat the question or by answering your question with a question. "Where did you hear that?" "Could you be more specific?" or even repeating your question back to you, at an attempt at sounding incredulous. For example, "Did I sell you a puppy with a heart condition? Is that what you're asking me?"
- What he's saying sounds implausible, such as "During the past ten years, I have never used a specific racial epithet."
- He offers a preamble to his statement starting with "I don't want you to think that..." Often that's exactly what he wants you to think. Whenever someone makes a point of telling you what they're *not* doing, you can be sure it's exactly what they *are* doing. Such as, "Not to hurt your feelings, but..."
- He implies through a form of denial. You hear, "He's having marital problems, but it has nothing to do with his wife's new job." What's the first thing you ask? "What does his wife do?" Suddenly you're in the exact conversation that is "supposed" to have no bearing on the facts.
- He uses humor or sarcasm to defuse your concerns, rather than responding seriously.
- He offers you a "better" alternative to your request when he is unable to give you what you originally asked for. Before you accept someone at his word that he has something better to offer, first see whether he has what you originally asked for. If he doesn't, then you shouldn't believe him.
- All of his facts relating to numbers are the same or multiples of one another. Watch out when facts, figures, and information have unusual similarities.
- There is evidence of involuntary responses that are anxiety based. Anxiety causes many things. His breather may appear as a deep, audible inhaling in an attempt to control his breathing to calm himself. Swallowing becomes difficult; he may clear his throat. His ability to focus on something is often diminished, unable to pay attention to what's going on.
- He uses an obvious fact to support a dubious action. For example, let's say that a guard is standing watch over a restricted area. It's his job to check ID's of those who enter. "I'm not sure you have authorization," he says to a man attempting access. "I'm not surprised," answered the man, "only a few people are aware of my clearance level. My work here is not supposed to be known by everyone."
- He casually tells you something that deserves more attention.
- He exclaims his displeasure at the actions of another who has done something similar so that you will not suspect him. For instance, if he is trying to throw you off track of his embezzlement scheme, he may openly chastise another employee for "borrowing" some office supplies for personal use at home. Your impression is that he is moral person who objects to something as minor as stealing office supplies. Certainly he cannot be responsible for a large-scale embezzlement scheme.
- He may casually tell you something that should deserve more attention. "Oh by the way, I've got to go out of town next weekend on business." If he doesn't usually travel for work on the weekends, then you would expect her to make a point of how unusual the trip is. Her downplaying the trip makes it suspicious. When something out of the ordinary happens and the person doesn't draw attention to it, it means that he is trying to draw attention away from it. Another tactic is running off a long list of items in the hope that one will remain unnoticed.
- If he lies about one thing, everything he says is questionable.
- His story is so wild that you almost don't believe it. But you do, because if he wanted to lie, you think that he would have come up with something more plausible.

II. Becoming a Human Lie Detector:

The clues to deception can be used with great reliability in everyday situations and conversations. However, if you must know the truth in a given situation, this part provides you with a sequence of questions that virtually guarantees that you will know (a) if you're being lied to and (b) what the truth is if it's not obvious from the lie. When used in order, all three phases offer you the greatest opportunity to get at the truth.

Phase One – Three Attack-Sequence Primers

Primer 1

The objective here is to ask a question that does not *accuse* the person of anything but *alludes* to the person's possible behavior. The key is to phrase a question that sounds perfectly innocent to an innocent person, but like an accusation to the guilty.

Suspicion: You feel that your girlfriend was unfaithful the night before.

Question: "Anything interesting happen last night?"

Suspicion: You think a coworker told your secretary that you have a crush on her.

Question: "Heard any good gossip recently?"

Any answers such as "Why do you ask?" or "Where did you hear that?" indicate concern on the person's part. He should not be seeking information from you if he does not think that your question is leading. He should also not be interested in why you're asking the question unless he thinks that you may know what he doesn't want you to know.

Primer 2

The objective here is to introduce a scenario similar to what you suspect is going on, using specifics.

Suspicion: You suspect one of your salespeople has lied to a customer in order to make the sale.

Question: "Jim, I'm wondering if you could help me with something. It's come to my attention that someone in the sales department has been misrepresenting our products to customers. How do you think we can clear this up?"

Suspicion: A hospital administrator suspects that a doctor was drinking while on duty.

Question: "Dr. Marcus, I'd like to get you advice on something. A colleague of mine at another hospital has a problem with one of her doctors. She feels he may be drinking while on call. Do you have any suggestions on how she can approach the doctor about this problem?"

If he's innocent of the charges he's likely to offer his advice and be pleased that you sought out his opinion. If he's guilty he'll seem uncomfortable and will assure you that he *never* does anything like that. Either way, this opens the door to probe further.

Primer 3

The objective here is to introduce a scenario similar to what you suspect is going on, using general terms.

Suspicion: You think a student has cheated on his exam.

Question: "Isn't it amazing how someone can cheat on a test and not realize that I was standing behind him the entire time?"

Suspicion: You suspect a coworker of bad-mouthing you to your boss.

Question: "It's amazing all the backstabbing that goes on around here, isn't it? And these people doing it think that it won't get back to the person involved."

Suspicion: You think that your girlfriend may be two-timing you.

Question: "It's amazing how someone can be unfaithful and expect not to get caught."

A change in subject is highly indicative of guilt. However, if he finds your question interesting and he's innocent, he might begin a conversation about it since he's unafraid to discuss the subject.

Phase Two – Eleven Attack Sequences

Attack Sequence 1: Direct Questioning

- Stage 1. *Ask your question directly.*
 - Give no advance warning of the subject you're about to bring up or of any feelings of mistrust.
 - Never reveal what you know first. Ask questions to gather information to see if it's consistent with what you already know.
 - The way you present yourself can greatly influence the attitude of the other person. Three powerful tips for establishing building rapport:
 1. Matching posture and movements – if he has one hand in his pocket, you put your hand in yours.
 2. Matching speech – if he's speaking in a slow, relaxed tone, you do the same.
 3. Matching key words – if he's prone to using certain words or phrases, use them when speaking.
 - Ask a question that you know will produce a response similar to how you expect him to react. In other words, if he waves his arms around no matter what he's talking about, you want to know this.
 - Use a relaxed and non-threatening posture, and square off so that you're facing each other.
 - Never, ever interrupt. You can't learn anything new while you're talking. Ask open-ended questions.
- Stage 2. *Silence.*
- Stage 3. *Really?* At the end of his answer respond with "Really?"
- Stage 4. *Sudden Death.* Follow with "Is there anything you want to get off your chest?"

Attack Sequence 2: Lead and Confine

- Stage 1. *Ask a leading question.* For example, "you were back by two A.M. last night, weren't you?"
- Stage 2. *Reverse course: You've got to be kidding!* For example, "I was hoping you did, so you would have gotten it out of your system. Please tell me that you've done it, so I know that it's over with."
- Stage 3. *This is not going to work.* For example, "I thought you were somebody who had a sense of adventure. Someone who knows how to live a little."

Attack Sequence 3: Time Line Distortion

- Scenario: You suspect several employees in your store of stealing money
- Stage 1. *Setting the scene.* Let the conversation turn casually to stealing and say, "Oh, I knew right from the start what was going on."
- Stage 2. *It's no big deal.* "You had to know I knew. How else do you think you could have gotten away with it for so long? I hope you don't think I'm a complete idiot."
- Stage 3. *I appreciate what you've done.* "I know that you were just going along with it because you were scared of what the others would do. It's really okay. I know you're not that kind of person."

Attack Sequence 4: Direct Assumption / Shot in the Dark

- Stage 1. *Set the scene.* Be somewhat curt and standoffish, as if something heavy-duty is bothering you. This will cause his mind to race to find ways to explain the "error of his ways."
- Stage 2. *I'm hurt.* Say, "I've just found something out and I'm really hurt [shocked/surprised]. I know you're going to lie to me and try to deny it, but I just wanted you to know that I know." You establish that (a) he's guilty of something and (b) you know what it is.
- Stage 3. *Holding your ground.* Say, "I think we both know what I'm talking about. We need to clear the air, and we can start by your talking."
- Stage 4. *Continue to hold your ground.* Repeat phrases such as "I'm sure it will come to you" and "The longer I wait, the madder I'm getting."
- Stage 5. *Apply social pressure.* "We were all talking about it. Everybody knows." Now he begins to get curious about who knows and how they found out. As soon as he tries to find out, you'll know he's guilty.

Attack Sequence 5: The Missing Link

- Scenario: You think that your mother-in-law may have hired a private investigator to follow you around.
- Stage 1. *List facts.* Tell her something that you know to be true. "I know you're not very fond of me, and that you objected to the wedding, but this time you've gone too far."
- Stage 2. *State your assumption.* "I know all about the investigator. Why did you think that was necessary?"
- Stage 3. *The magic phrase.* "You know what, I'm too upset to talk about this now." The guilty person will honor your request because she won't want to anger you further. An innocent person will be mad at you for accusing her of something that she hasn't done and will want to discuss it *now*.

Attack Sequence 6: Who, Me?

- Stage 1. *Setting the scene.* He suspects that his ex-girlfriend broke into his house. He phoned to let her know in a very non-accusatory way that that there had been a break-in and some items were missing. The following type of conversation would ensue:
 - Winston: The police are going to want to talk to everyone who had access to the house. Since you still have a key, they're going to want to speak with you. Just routine stuff, I'm sure. Of course you're not a suspect.
 - Ex-Girlfriend: But I don't know anything about it.
 - Winston: Oh, I know. Just policy, I guess. Anyway, one of my neighbors said that she got a partial license-plate number on a car that was by my house that day.
 - Ex-Girlfriend: *(After a long pause)* Well, I was driving around your neighborhood that day. I stopped by to see if you were home. But when you weren't, I just left.
 - Winston: Oh, really? Well, they did a fingerprint test too. That should show something.
 - Ex-Girlfriend: What test?
 - Winston: Oh, they dusted for prints and...
- Stage 2. *Inform non-accusatorily.* Casually inform your suspect of the situation.
- Stage 3. *Introduce evidence to be rebutted.* As you introduce the evidence, look to see if every one of your statements is met by explanations from him as to how the evidence could be misunderstood. For example, you suspect that a co-worker had shredded some of your files. You would first set the stage by letting him know that you can't find some important files. Then say, "Well, it's a good thing my new secretary noticed someone by the shredder the other day. She said she recognized his face but didn't know his name." An innocent person would not feel the need to explain in order to avert the possibility that he might be wrongly accused.
- Stage 4. *Continue.* Continue with more facts that the person can try to explain away. But in actuality, as soon he starts to talk about why the situation might "look that way," you know you have him.

Attack Sequence 7: Outrageous Accusations

- Stage 1. *Accuse him of everything.* In a very fed-up manner, accuse him of doing every imaginable dishonest and disloyal act.
- Stage 2. *Introduce the suspicion.* Now introduce the one thing you feel he really has done, and in an attempt to clear himself of the other charges, he will offer an explanation for his one slip-up. Say, "I mean, it's not like you just stole a file, that would be fine. But all these other things are unspeakable." He responds, "No, I just stole that one file because of the pressure to get the job done, but I would never sell trade secrets!" The only way to prove his innocence to all of your outrageous accusations is to explain why he did what you really suspect of him of doing.
- Stage 3. *Step in closer.* This increases anxiety in the guilty. He feels he's being closed in on.

Attack Sequence 8: Is There a Reason?

- Stage 1. *Introduce a fact.* For example, if you want to know if your secretary went out last night when she said she was sick, "I drove by your house on the way home. Is there a reason your car wasn't in the driveway?" Had she been home sick, she would simply tell you that you were wrong – the car was in the driveway.
- Stage 2. *One more shot.* "Oh, that's odd, I called your house and I got your machine." If she's guilty she will look for any way to make her story fit your facts.
- Stage 3. *Stare.* Staring makes someone who is on the defensive feel closed in; your glare is infringing on her personal space, inducing a mental claustrophobia. Lock eyes with her and ask again.

Attack Sequence 9: Third-Party Confirmation

- Scenario: You suspect one of your employees is having someone else punch out on the time clock for him.
- Stage 1. *Accuse outright.* After gaining the assistance of a friend or coworker, you have this person make the accusation for you. Such as "Mel, I was talking to Cindy, and she told me she's getting pretty tired of your having someone else punch out for you so you can leave work early." At this point Mel is concerned only with Cindy's disapproval of his actions. Your friend is thoroughly believable because we rarely think to question this type of third-party setup.
- Stage 2. *Are you kidding?* "Are you kidding? It's common knowledge, but I think I know how you can smooth things over with her." See if he take the bait. A person who's innocent would not be interested in smoothing things over with someone else for something that he hasn't done.
- Stage 3. *Last call.* "Okay. But are you sure? At this point, any hesitation is likely to be sign of guilt because he's quickly trying to weight his options.

Attack Sequence 10: The Chain Reaction

- Scenario: You suspect several employees in your store of stealing money
- Stage 1. Setting the scene. In a one-on-one meeting with the employee, let them know that you're looking for someone to be in charge of a new internal theft program for the entire company.
- Stage 2. *The iron is...* "We're looking for someone who knows how it's done. Now don't worry, you're not going to get in trouble. As a matter of fact we've known about it for some time. We were more interested in seeing how efficient you were. Quite impressive. Anyway, we feel that since you know how it's done, you'll know how to prevent it. Granted, it's pretty unusual, but this is an unusual instance."
- Stage 3. *I told them so.* "You know, I told them that you would be too afraid to have an open discussion about this. They were wrong, I was right." Look for hesitation on his part. If he's guilty, he will be weighing his options. This takes time. An innocent person has nothing to think about. Only the guilty have the option of confessing or not.

Attack Sequence 11: Condemn or Concern

Stage 1. *I'm just letting you know.* The key with this sequence is not to accuse, just to inform. Let's say that you're working in the customer service department of a computer store. A customer brings back a non-working printer for an exchange, claiming that he bought it just a few days before. He has the all-important receipt and the printer is packed neatly in the original box. Upon inspecting the contents you find that a necessary, expensive, and easily removable component of the machine is missing, a clear indication of why the machine was not functioning properly. Here are two possible responses you might get after informing the customer of your discovery.

Response 1. "I didn't take it out. That's how it was when I bought it." (Defensive)

Response 2. "What? You sold me a printer that has a missing part? I wasted two hours trying to get that thing to work." (Offensive)

The person who utters Response 2 has every right to be annoyed; it never crosses his mind that he's being accused of anything. The person who gives Response 1 knows he never even *tried* to get the printer to work because he took the part out. It doesn't occur to him to become angry. He assumes that he's being accused of removing the part and become defensive when you inform him the part is missing.

Phase Three – Eleven Silver Bullets: How To Get The Truth Without Beating It Out Of Them

To convey honesty and truthfulness in your message, use the following techniques:

- Look the person directly in the eyes.
- Use hand movements to emphasize your message.
- Use animated gestures that are fluid and consistent with the conversation.
- Stand or sit upright – no slouching.
- Don't start off with any statements such as "To tell you the truth..." or "To be perfectly honest with you..."
- Face the person straight on. Don't back away.

Liars need an incentive to confess. The payoff for confessing needs to be immediate, clear, specific, and compelling. You can't just tell a person what he'll gain by being truthful or lose by continuing to lie; you must make it real for him – so real, in fact, that he can feel, taste, touch, see, and hear it. Make it his reality. Let him experience fully the pleasure of being honest and the pain of continuing the lie. Involve as many of the senses as you can, particularly visual, auditory, and kinesthetic. Create images for the person to see, sounds for him to hear, and sensations that he can almost feel. You want to make this experience as real as possible. First state the positives, then state the negatives, and then present the choice.

Silver Bullet 1: If You Think That's Bad, Wait Until You Hear This!

This bullet works well because it forces the liar into thinking emotionally instead of logically. It alleviates his guilt by making him feel that he's not alone, and it throws him off by creating a little anger and/or curiosity. Plus he thinks that you and he are exchanging information, instead of his giving you something for nothing.

Sample question formation: "The reason I'm asking you these questions is that I've done some things that I'm not too proud of, either. I can understand why you might have... In a way I'm almost relieved. Now I don't feel too bad." At this point he will ask you to get more specific about your actions. But insist that he tell you first. Hold out and he'll come clean.

Silver Bullet 2: It Was An Accident. Really!

This is a great strategy because it makes him feel that it would be a good thing to have you know exactly what happened. He did something wrong, true, but that is no longer your concern. You shift the focus of your concern to his intentions, not his actions. This makes it easy for him to confess to his behavior and “make it okay” with the explanation that it was unintentional. He feels that you care about his motivation. In other words, you let him know that the source of your concern is not *what* he’s done, but *why* he’s done it.

Sample question formation: “I can understand that maybe you didn’t plan on its happening. Things just got out of control and you acted without thinking. I’m fine with that – an accident, right? But if you did this on purpose, I don’t think that I could ever forgive you. You need to tell me that you didn’t do it intentionally. Please.”

Silver Bullet 3: The Boomerang

This bullet really throws a psychological curveball. With this example you tell him that he did something good, not bad. He’s completely thrown off by this. For example, you want to see if your interviewee has lied on her resume.

Sample question formation: “As we both know, everybody pads his resume just a bit. Personally, I think it shows guts. It tells me that the person isn’t afraid to take on new responsibilities. Which parts were you most creative with on this resume?”

Silver Bullet 4: Truth or Consequences

With this bullet you force your antagonist to work with you or you both end up with nothing. This is the exact opposite of the boomerang. Here the person has nothing unless he cooperates with you. Since you have nothing anyway (the truth), it’s a good tradeoff for you. Let’s say you suspect that your housekeeper has stolen from you.

Sample question formation: “I’d rather hear it from you first. I can live with what you did/what happened, but not with your lying to me about it. If you don’t tell me, then it’s over. If you tell me the truth, things can go back to how they were. But if you don’t, then we have no chance here, and you’ll have nothing.”

Silver Bullet 5: Speak Now or Forever Hold Your Peace

Human beings place a premium on that which is scarce. Simply put, rare equals good. You can dramatically increase your leverage by conveying that this is the only time that you will discuss this. Let him know that (a) this is his last chance he’ll have for explaining himself, and (b) you can get what you need from someone else. Try increasing the rate of your speech as well. The faster you speak, the less time he has to process the information, and it conveys a stronger sense of urgency. Give a deadline with a penalty for not meeting it. Deadlines force action. If the guilty party think that he can always come clean, then he will take a wait-and-see approach before tipping his hand. Let the person know that you already know and have proof of his action. And admitting his sins now will give him the opportunity to explain his side.

Sample question formations: “I want to hear it from you now. After tomorrow, anything you say won’t make a difference to me.” — “I know what happened/what you did. I was hoping I would hear it from you first. It would mean a lot to me to hear your side of it. I know there are two sides to every story, and before I decide what to do, I want to hear yours.” Hearing this gives him the feeling he still has a chance if he confesses. After all, what really happened can’t be as bad as what you heard. Confessing now is a way of cutting his losses.

Silver Bullet 6: Reverse Course

You convey to him what happened or what he did was a good thing insofar as it allows you and he to establish an even better relationship – personal or professional. You give him an opportunity to explain why he took that choice. You also blame yourself.

Sample question formation: “I understand why you would have don’t that. Clearly you wouldn’t have unless you had a good reason. You were probably treated unfairly or something was lacking. What can I do to help so that it doesn’t happen again?” Keep interjecting the following phrases: “I take full responsibility for your actions. Let’s work together to see how we can avoid this from happening again. I understand completely. You were right to do what you did.”

Silver Bullet 7: I Hate To Do This, But You Leave Me No Choice

This is the only strategy that involves threat. You let him become aware that there are going to be greater ramifications and repercussions than just lying to you – things that he never thought about. You rely on his imagination to set the terms of the damage that you can inflict. His mind will race through every possible scenario as his own fears turn against him.

- *Sample question formation I:* “I didn’t want to have to do this, but you leave me no choice.” This will propel him to respond: “Do what?” At this point he’s waiting to see what the tradeoff will be. But do not commit yourself to an action. Let him create in his own mind scenarios of what you will do unless he confesses.
- *Sample question formation II:* “You know what I can do, and I’ll do it. If you don’t want to tell me now, don’t. I’ll just do what I have to do.” After this statement, pay close attention to his response. If he focuses on what you will do to him, the odds lean more toward guilty. However, if he reasserts that he’s done nothing, he may in fact be innocent of your accusation. The guilty person needs to know the penalty to determine if it makes sense for him to stick to his story.

Silver Bullet 8: I Guess You’re Not Allowed

Never underestimate the power of appealing to a person’s ego. Sometimes you want to inflate it, and others times you want to attack it. This bullet is for attacking. It’s truly saddening how fragile some people’s egos are.

Sample question formations: “I think I know what it is – you’re not allowed to tell me. Somebody else is pulling the strings and you’ll get in trouble. You’d tell me the truth if you could, but you don’t have the power to do so.”

Silver Bullet 9: Higher Authority

As long as the person believes that you are on his side, he’ll take the bait. All you have to do is let him know that anything he’s lied about can now be cleared up in seconds. However, if anyone else finds out about it later, it’s too late. Let’s say that you want to know if your secretary leaves early when you’re out of the office.

Sample question formation: “The vice president from corporate is coming in today. He’s asked about your hours, so I’m going to tell him that you come in early on the days that you leave early. Do you remember what days last month you finished up early and took off?” This is disarming, and you’re not yelling at her or demanding answers. You’re on her side, and you’re going to work together to smooth things over.

Silver Bullet 10: The Great Unknown

You can obtain maximum leverage by explaining how the ramifications of his deceit will be something that the suspect has never known before. Even if he believes that you are limited in what you can do to him and in what the penalty will be, the severity of the penalty can be manipulated in two major ways to make it appear much more severe: time and impact.

- *Time:* Give no indication of when the penalty will occur. When things happen unexpectedly, the degree of anguish is more potent.
- *Impact:* Convey that his entire life will be disrupted and drastically altered for the worse. He needs to see that this event is not isolated and will instead have a ripple effect. When bad things happen we are often comforted in knowing that it will soon be over and the rest of our life will remain intact and unaffected. But if these things are not assured, we become increasingly fearful and concerned.

Silver Bullet 11: I Couldn’t Care Less

A primary law governing human nature is that we all have a need to feel significant. Nobody wants to be thought of as unimportant, or feel that his ideas and thinking is irrelevant. Take away a person’s belief that he has value and he’ll do just about anything to reassert his sense of importance. Your apathy toward the situation will unnerve him immensely. He will begin to crave recognition and acceptance, in any form. He needs to know you care what happens, and if talking about his misdeeds is the only way he can find out, he will.

Sample question formations: “I know and I just don’t care. This is not for me.” — “I’ve got other things to think about. Maybe we’ll talk some other time.” — “You do what you have to do, that’s fine with me.” To be more powerful, stare at him. When you stare at someone he often feels less significant and will seek to reassert his value.

III. Tactics For Detecting Deceit and Gathering Information In Casual Conversations

General Conversations

1. Ask-a-Fact

- During the conversation simply ask general, clear questions pertaining to your suspicion. This causes the person you are questioning to recall information. If he's lying, he'll take a while to answer because he first has to check his response mentally to be sure it makes sense. Made-up stories do not have details because they never happened!
- Ask questions that will give you an objective, not a subjective response. For instance, if you think an employee was home when he said he would be away on vacation, don't ask him how he enjoyed the weather in Florida, but rather ask "Did you rent a car?" Once he answers yes to any question, ask for more detail. If he's lying, he'll try to keep the facts straight and will take his time answering further questions.

2. Add-a-False Fact

- Add a fact and ask the person to comment on it. This fact is one that you've made up, but one that sounds perfectly reasonable. For example, if you wanted to know if someone really indeed went on a safari to Africa, you mention that your uncle who works as a customs officer at the Nairobi airport told you that everyone going to Africa was given special instructions on how to avoid malaria. As soon as he validates your claim in an attempt to back up his assertion that he has gone to Africa, you know that his story is untrue. Otherwise he would simply say that he doesn't know what your uncle is talking about.

Here are the criteria:

- Your statement has to be untrue
- It has to sound reasonable
- Your assertion has to be something that would directly affect the person, so he would have firsthand knowledge of this "fact."

3. Support-a-Fact

- In this sequence you take what the person says and request proof, but in a very non-threatening manner. For example, in the case of the person who claimed he had gone on safari, you might let him know that you would love to see pictures of the trip. If he offers up a reason why you can't see the pictures, then this should arouse some suspicion.

4. Expand-a-Fact

- Use this clue to determine how far someone is willing to go to get what she wants. All you do is expand on a fact that she has already offered. If she just goes on without correcting you, then you know that she may be lying about what she's said so far and/or is willing to lie to get you to see her point. For example, your secretary asks you for the rest of the day off because she's not feeling well. You might say, "oh, of course, if you've got a fever and a bad headache, by all means take off." She never claimed to have these symptoms. You merely expanded on her statement.

Special Occasions

1. Third-Party Protection

- This tactic is used if someone is reluctant to tell you something that involves another person. You have to appeal to his ego and let him forget that he's telling tales out of school. The conversation needs to be positive. The other person must feel as if he's doing a good thing by answering your question.
 - *Scenario A:* Your attorney is telling you about a case that a fellow attorney screwed up on. Simply asking, "What did he do wrong?" would probably get you nowhere. However, by turning it around you create an incentive for him to tell you. Ask, "Had you handled the case, what would you have done differently?"
 - *Scenario B:* While chatting with Brad, one of your sales people, you would like to find out why Susan's sales figures are low. But simply asking him why she's not doing well might prove fruitless. Ask, "What areas do you think Susan can improve in?"

2. The Power Play

- Sometimes the person reluctant to tell the truth is in a position of power. In these situations it's usually inappropriate and futile to become argumentative. In these instances you want to bring the conversation to a personal level.
 - *Scenario:* You're trying to sell to a buyer who doesn't want to buy and is not giving you a reason that you truly believe. Your objective will be to get to the real objection. "I do this for a living. My family relies on me to support them. Clearly we have a fine product and you're a reasonable man. Would you mind telling me what I did to offend you?" Now your buyer is caught off guard and will undoubtedly follow with "Oh, you didn't offend me. It's just that..."

3. Hurt Feelings

- Someone is lying to you to protect your feeling – perhaps one of those little white lies. A touch of guilt makes the other person reevaluate his approach.
 - *Scenario:* You feel that the truth is being withheld from you for your own benefit. “I know you don’t want to offend me, but you’re hurting me more by not being perfectly honest.” “If you don’t tell me, no one else will. If I can’t count on you for this, I don’t know what I would do.”

4. It’s A Matter of Opinion

- The following is an excellent method for detecting deceit in a person’s opinion.
 - *Scenario:* You’re not sure if your boss really likes your idea for a new advertising campaign, even though she says she does. “Do you *like* the concept for my new idea?” “Sure. It’s very original.” “Well, what would it take for you to *love* the idea?”

5. I Don’t Know

- This response can stall a conversation and leave you searching for answers. Sometimes it’s just easier to say, “I don’t know,” which is often why we say it in the first place. Either way, when you hear “I don’t know,” try some of the following responses:
 1. “Okay, then why don’t you tell me how you’ve come to think the way you do?”
 2. “I know you don’t know, but if you were to guess, what do you think it might be?”
 3. “What emotion best describes what you’re thinking right now?”
 4. “What one word comes closest to describing what you’re thinking?”
- In all these responses, you’re taking the pressure off. You acknowledge the person’s difficulty in answering. You then seem to be asking her to provide something else, when in reality your new question is aimed at getting your initial question answered.

6. I’m Simply Embarrassed

- The person may lie to you out of embarrassment. The usual tactics don’t work here because the person probably isn’t obligated to tell you and more than likely will have nothing to gain by doing so. Therefore you need to create an incentive for telling the truth in an environment that makes him feel comfortable.
 - *Scenario:* You think the new intern mixed up two piles of papers and shredded the documents that were supposed to be copied. “Nelson, if you’re the one who did this, it’s all right. I remember when I first started here. What I’m going to tell you is between you and me, okay? Good. I once made copies of a confidential memo instead of the lunch menu and placed a copy in each person’s mailbox.” This instantly puts the other person at ease. It shows that you trust him, and he also feels obligated to share with you something he’s done that he feels uncomfortable with.

7. Divide and Conquer

- This is situation where there are two or more people from whom you can get the truth.
 - *Scenario:* Several of your sorority sisters pulled a practical joke and you want to find out who is responsible. “Jennifer, who did this is not important. I don’t even care. What is important is our friendship. I want to know that I can trust you. I think I can, but I need for you to speak honestly with me. It’s not that I’m so concerned with who did it – only that you are truthful with me about it.” If you don’t get anywhere with her, go to someone else with the same speech.

8. Professional Reliance

- When dealing with professionals:
 1. Always, if possible, get a second opinion. It’s easy to do and can save you a lot of heartache.
 2. Make sure the person is licensed, insured, and registered to do the actual work.
 3. Have your agreement drawn up in writing. Oral contracts aren’t worth it.
 4. Ask for referrals or testimonials.
- If he balks at any one of these points, you might want to take your business elsewhere. Finally, the following strategy should give you an accurate insight into the person’s intentions. The key is to ask for the opposite of what you really want.
- *Scenario:* Let’s say that your travel agent suggests the Five-Day Cruise Getaway vacation package for you. You’re looking to really let loose; you want a trip that will be nonstop fun, but you’re not sure if she’s pushing this package for the commission or if she really believes that it’s a great deal. “The brochure looks great, Sandy. I just want to make sure that this is not one of those party boats. I’m looking for some rest and relaxation. Is this that kind of trip?” By asking your question this way, you will know the intentions of your travel agent and the answer to your question. If she answers yes, then you know that the cruise is not for you or she is lying to get your business.

9. I Don't Know and I Don't Care

- Few things are more frustrating than dealing with someone who just doesn't give a damn. Why? Because you don't have a whole lot to work with. You've got zero leverage. He's got nothing at risk, so you've got little bargaining power. You simply have to change the equation so he's got something at stake.
- Scenario: You take your car to the mechanic and he tells you it will be fixed by Friday. But you just know that something's going to come up and it will be sitting in his garage all weekend. "Okay, Joe. Tomorrow's fine. Just so you know, my wife is pregnant and she's due any day. That's our only car, so if you can think of any reason why it may not be ready by Friday, you've got to let me know now."

10. I Just Heard

- Most people who lie usually confide in at least one other person. It's important to let this person believe that you already know the truth and then add your emotional reaction to it. For example, some general statements that would be said to the person whom you believe knows the truth:
 1. Sympathy: "I can't believe what Sam did. I am truly very sorry. If there's anything I can do for you or whatever, please just let me know, okay?"
 2. Humor: "Mary, is Joe a magnet for odd things or what? He just told me and I still can't believe it."

Directing The Conversation

You can steer a conversation in any direction that you choose. You can do this very efficiently with just a few well-chosen words. After he makes a statement, you can use the following key words to direct the flow of information in any way that you choose. They can be used to extract information from any conversation.

1. *Meaning* ... Saying this word after he speaks directs his thinking and the conversation toward the larger picture, giving you a better look at his overall position. He will offer the reason for the position.
2. *And* ... This response gives you more lateral information. You'll be able to gather additional facts.
3. *So* ... This response makes him get more specific, giving you the details of his position.
4. *Now* ... This response makes him translate his position into a specific action. He will proceed to tell you exactly what he means and how it applies to you.

Getting Specific

Sometimes you'll get an answer, but it doesn't do you much good. Here are a couple ways of narrowing it down.

1. In Response to an Opinion or Belief
 - "I don't think the meeting went very well." – "Compared with what?" or "How poorly did it go?"
2. In Response to a Reluctance to Commit
 - "I don't know if I could." – "What, specifically, prevents you?" or "What would have to happen for you to be able to?" or "What would change if you did?"

Let The Truth Be Told

These simple words work better than any others do:

1. Because: We're programmed to accept an explanation as valid if it follows this word.
2. Let's: This word generates group atmosphere and initiates a bandwagon effect; it's positive and creates action.
3. Try: This little word is a powerful motivator because it has a "what's the harm" mentality.

For example, "Let's give it a try because if it doesn't work we can always go back to the way it was." Clearly you haven't introduced any reason for the person to take action, yet it seems to make sense just the same.

Don't accuse someone as by saying, "Why did you take five dollars from petty cash?" If you want to know if he took the money, simply say, "The money that we take from petty cash? Let's try to keep it fewer than ten dollars at a time, because it works out better that way."

Taking Control

If in a situation where you are unable to speak because the person keeps talking or interrupting, use some zingers like these. They play on two susceptible angles of human nature – ego and curiosity.

1. "You're a smart person; let me ask you a question."
2. "I know that you would want me to ask you this."
3. "You're the only person who would know the answer to this."
4. "I hope this news doesn't upset you."
5. "Along those lines..." It's easy to change conversation when you begin with the other's last thoughts.

IV. Mind Games

A Strong Defense: Avoiding The Lie

The best time to deal with a lie is before it turns into one. The following is a technique for cutting a suspicion off at the pass before it turns into deception.

Method 1

This is the method you use when you want the truth as it relates to a person's previous behavior. Here is a possible scenario: a parent suspects that her twelve-year-old son is smoking cigarettes.

Approach: "I know all about the smoking and the sneaking around. You know I'm not happy about that, but I just want you to promise me that you won't drink alcohol until you're twenty-one."

This is by far the finest approach because it works on so many levels. First, it takes a forward assumptive stance – the parent "knows all about the smoking." Second, it uses two truisms. The phrases "sneaking around" and "you know I'm not happy about that" set the tone for honesty. The child hears two things that he knows to be true: He was sneaking around and his mother is unhappy about his smoking. He is therefore willing to accept at face value what follows. Third, the mother gives her son an easy out. All he has to do is promise not to drink and he's home free. There's no threat or punishment, just honest statements followed by a deal that he believes to be true as well.

The guidelines to keep in mind for this procedure are as follows:

- Assume your suspicion as fact
- State at least two truisms (facts that you both know to be true)
- Switch the focus from a threat to a request
- The request should be easy for him to accept and sound reasonable

Method 2

This method is used when you want the truth as it relates to a new decision. It is a simple but highly effective strategy to avoid being deceived. Oftentimes someone wants to tell us the truth, but it's easier to tell a lie instead. The person knows the answer you want to hear and will give it to you whether he believes it or not. However, if he doesn't know what you want, then he won't be able to deceive you. Read the following examples and notice how well the second phrasing masks your true question.

- "Would you like me to cook for you tonight?" — "Do you feel like eating in or out tonight?"
- "I'm thinking of asking Rhonda out. What do you think of her?" — "What do you think of Rhonda?"

Know Thy Enemy: Knowing The Liar and His Intentions

The following example illustrates a process that is becoming very popular in employee screening tests. The questions below are asked the prospective employee to determine if he is an honest person. If you really wanted the job, how would you answer these questions?

Have you ever stolen anything in your life?

Have you ever run a red light?

Do you have a friend who has ever shoplifted?

Many of us would have to answer yes to most of these questions. And that is precisely the answer a prospective employee is looking for. Why? Because the honest answer is yes for most of us. The employer's task is finding those who are honest about it. Stealing a pack of gum when you were twelve years old doesn't make you a bad person or an undesirable employee.

Let's say that Martha's teenage son, who has been away from home and living on the streets for the past two years, wants to come home. Knowing that her son is addicted to cocaine, she is worried about whether he can actually clean up his act. She could tell him that he can move back in only if he enrolls in a drug rehabilitation program. He will probably agree to this whether he plans to do it or not. Instead, she tells her son that he can move back in if he quits cold turkey – never doing another drug whatsoever. Her son's answer will reveal his commitment to getting well, which is the real concern. Obviously her son can hardly get rid of his addiction instantly. So if he indicates that he can, she knows that he's lying about his intention to get well. However, if he says that he can't but will make strides toward getting better, she will know that he is sincere in his pursuit of wellness.

V. Advanced Techniques For Getting The Truth

Embedded Commands:

This technique is very simple and has only two criteria. First, for maximum effectiveness the command should start with an action verb, because you're telling the mind to do something. Second, the entire command should be separated from the rest of the sentence using what is called an analog marker. You set the command portion off by one of the following:

1. Lower or raise the volume of your voice slightly while speaking the command.
2. Insert a short pause right before and then right after the command. For instance, "Sometimes we just ... become fascinated ... with what we're reading."
3. Gesturing with your hand while you are giving the command momentarily distracts the conscious mind, and the embedded statement is received by the unconscious mind as a command.

Unconscious Creations:

You give a suggestion that creates a perceivable action so you can observe the signs of deceit without continuing to question him. Watch for the behaviors that you embed in the sentences. They will usually occur at some point during your conversation.

- "I'm not saying that you should *stiffen up your body if you're lying*."
- "I don't know if you're lying. Unless you *feel like blinking your eyes fast if you are*."
- "If you ... *like what you're reading* ... you may ... *smile ... now*."

Disassociation:

It's the old person who would lie versus the new person who would never hurt you. In your conversation, continue to repeat phrases like the ones below. Make sure that they contrast the old him and the new him.

- "Perhaps the old you was capable of this. But I know you would never do that now."
- "You're a different person than you used to be. I'm sure that you're even more upset with the old you than I am. But you're not that person anymore."
- "You're only responsible for who you are today. You are someone who is honest and trustworthy."

Eye-Accessing Cues:

This technique works on the following principle. When a person thinks, he accesses different parts of his brain depending upon the information that is being accessed. This process can be observed watching the eyes. For right-handed people, visual memories are accessed by the eyes going up and to the left. For a left-handed person, it's the reverse: the eyes go up and to the right. When a right-handed person seeks to *create* an image or fact, his eyes go up and to right. And the reverse is true for the left-handed person. You can use this technique in any conversation to determine if the person is *creating* or *recalling* information. Simply watch his eyes and you'll know whether he's recalling an event that's already occurred or making up a story about something that has never happened.

Advanced Conversation Stoppers: Trance Phrases:

These conversation stoppers use phrases that are mild trance inducers. They cause the listener to zone out temporarily while his brain tries to process the information. They give you some time to collect your thoughts while others lose their train of thought.

1. "Why are you asking me what you don't know for sure?"
2. "Do you really believe what you thought you knew?"
3. "If you expected me to believe that, you wouldn't have said it."
4. "Do you believe that you knew what you thought?"
5. "Why would you believe something that's not true?"
6. "Why are you agreeing with what you already know?"
7. "Are you unaware of what you forgot?"

See For Yourself:

The power of expectation and suggestion can be used with tremendous results. The key to using this technique is to implant an artificial suggestion and let it manifest inside the person's mind. This technique may induce a temporary state of mild paranoia, especially if two or more people make the same suggestion.

Scenario: You think that a coworker has been stealing office supplies. "Samantha, have you noticed that people seem to be looking at you a little funny?" You can be sure Samantha will "see" everyone looking at her, and it will consume her attention until she stops.

VI. Tricks Of The Trade

These are the psychological secrets of the experts, the tricks of the trade – factors that can affect your judgement in objectively evaluating information.

Rule 1: Wow! You're Just Like Me

- Watch out when you're asked about your hobbies, hometown, values, favorite foods, etc., only to be followed with the obligatory "Me too, what a coincidence."
- Another aspect of this rule is that if someone is nice to us, we not only like him more but also are more likely to agree with him. If he's agreeing to everything you say, whether or not it makes sense, watch out.
- Rapport creates trust. It allows the other to build a psychological bridge to you. You feel more comfortable and your gullibility increases. Take note if your movements, rate of speech or tone are echoed.

Rule 2: Beware the Stranger Bearing Gifts

When someone gives us something, we often feel indebted to him. When you are presented with a request, make sure that you're not acting out of a sense of obligation. This rule can take many forms – it's not limited to gifts. You could be offered information, a concession, or even someone's time.

Rule 3: It's Half Price! But Half of What?

This principle states that facts are likely to be interpreted differently based upon the order in which they're presented. In other words, we compare and contrast. An example of this principle are price markdowns. An item that's been reduced from \$500 to \$200 certainly seems like a better bargain than something that sells for \$150. The contrast on the sale item makes it more attractive, even if it's not as nice as the item that sells for less. The key is to only consider each decision by itself. This can best be accomplished by letting time pass between decisions and by independently determining the value of the object.

Rule 4: Just Do This One Little Thing For Me?

Beware if you are asked to commit to something, even in a small way. This request is usually followed by a slightly greater request, and over time your sense of commitment is built up to the point where you feel locked into your decision. When you make decisions, notice if your best interests are being served.

Rule 5: The Bandwagon Effect

This principle states that we have a tendency to see an action as appropriate if other people are doing it. Do we think that something is funnier if others are laughing? Absolutely. The key to avoiding the influence of this rule is to separate your level of interest from other people's desire. Just because you're told that something is the latest, best, hottest, or biggest seller doesn't make it right for you.

Rule 6: Rare Doesn't Always Mean Valuable

This principle states that the harder something is to acquire, the greater the value we place on its attainment. In essence, we want what we can't have and want what is hard to obtain even more. The key to avoid this rule being used on you is to ask yourself this question: would I still want it if there were a million just like it and no one wanted any of them?

Rule 7: I'm on Your Side

This technique is used to gain credibility. When used effectively, you would swear that you've just made a new best friend who has your best interest at heart. For example, let's say that you're in a mattress store and considering buying the Super Deluxe – a top-of-the-line bed. The salesman tells you that if you want it he'll order it for you, but he feels you should know something first. He tells you that while the consumer would never realize it, this manufacturer uses recycled materials on the inside. He has thus gained your complete confidence. He's risking a sale to tell you something that you'd never find out otherwise. Now you'll be inclined to trust anything he says.

Rule 8: Well, Can You at Least Do This?

If you're asked to do a rather large favor for someone only to decline his request for help, beware. A smaller favor, the one he really wants you to do, may follow. We are more likely to agree to a smaller request if we're first presented with a larger one. There are three psychological motivations at work:

- You feel that in contrast to the first request, the smaller one is no big deal.
- You feel bad for not coming through on his original favor, and this seems like a fair compromise.
- You don't want to be perceived as unreasonable. A small little favor isn't going to kill you.