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## Lies That Fail

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Lies fail for many reasons. Some of these reasons have to do with the circumstances surrounding the lie, and not with the liar's behavior. For example, a confidant may betray a lie; or, private information made public can expose a liar's claims as false. These reasons do not concern us in this chapter. What concerns us are those mistakes made during the act of lying, mistakes liars make despite themselves; in other words, lies that fail because of the liars' behaviors. Deception clues or leakage may be shown in a change in the expression on the face, a movement of the body, an inflection to the voice, a swallowing in the throat, a very deep or shallow breath, long pauses between words, a slip of the tongue, a microfacial expression, or a gestural slip.

There are two basic reasons why lies fail—one that involves thinking, and one that involves emotions. Lies fail due to a failure of the liar to prepare his or her line, or due to the interference of emotions. These reasons have different implications for the potential behavioral clues that betray a lie.

### LIES BETRAYED BY THINKING CLUES

Liars do not always anticipate when they will need to lie. There is not always time to prepare the line to be taken, to rehearse and memorize it. Even when there has been ample advance notice, and a false line has been carefully devised, the liar may not be clever enough to anticipate all the questions that may be asked, and to have thought through what his answers must be. Even cleverness may not be enough, for unseen changes in circumstances can betray an otherwise effective line. And, even when a liar is not forced by circumstances to

change lines, some liars have trouble recalling the line they have previously committed themselves to, so that new questions cannot be consistently answered quickly.

Any of these failures—in anticipating when it will be necessary to lie, in inventing a line which is adequate to changing circumstances, in remembering the line one has adopted—produce easily spotted clues to deceit. What the person says is either internally inconsistent, or at odds with other incontrovertible facts, known at the time or later revealed. Such obvious clues to deceit are not always as reliable and straightforward as they seem. Too smooth a line may be the sign of a well rehearsed con man. To make matters worse, some con men knowing this purposely make slight mistakes in order not to seem too smooth! This was the case with Clifford Irving, who claimed he was authorized by Howard Hughes to write Hughes' biography. While on trial, Irving deliberately contradicted himself (albeit minor contradictions) because he knew that only liars tell perfectly planned accounts. The psychological evidence supports Irving's notion that planned responses are judged as more deceptive than unplanned ones (DePaulo, Lanier, & Davis, 1983). However, we believe in general that people who fabricate without having prepared their line are more likely to make blatant contradictions, to give evasive and indirect accounts—all of which will ultimately betray their lies.

Lack of preparation or a failure to remember the line one has adopted may produce clues to deceit in *how* a line is spoken, even when there are no inconsistencies in *what* is said. The need to think about each word before it is spoken—weighing possibilities, searching for a word or idea—may be obvious in pauses during speech, speech disfluencies, flattened voice intonation, gaze aversion, or more subtly in a tightening of the lower eyelid or eye brow, certain changes in gesture, and a decrease in the use of the hands to illustrate speech (illustrators—Ekman & Friesen, 1969). Not that carefully considering each word before it is spoken is always a sign of deceit, but in some circumstances it is—particularly in contexts in which responses should be known without thought.

### LYING ABOUT FEELINGS

A failure to think ahead, plan fully, and rehearse the false line is only one of the reasons why mistakes are made when lying, which then furnish clues to the deceit. Mistakes are also made because of difficulty in concealing or falsely portraying emotion. Not every lie involves emotions, but those that do cause special problems for the liar. An

attempt to conceal an emotion at the moment it is felt could be betrayed in words, but except for a slip of the tongue, it usually is not. Unless there is a wish to confess what is felt, the liar does not have to put into words the feelings being concealed. One has less choice in concealing a facial expression, or rapid breathing, or a tightening in the voice.

When emotions are aroused changes occur automatically without choice or deliberation. These changes begin in a split second; this is a fundamental characteristic of emotional experience (Fridja, 1986). People do not actively decide to feel an emotion; instead, they usually experience emotions as happening to them. Negative emotions, such as fear, anger, or sadness, may occur despite either efforts to avoid them (Swann, Griffin, Predmore, & Gaines, 1987), or efforts to hide them (Ekman, Friesen, & O'Sullivan, 1988).

These are what we will call "reliable" behavioral signs of emotion, reliable in the sense that few people can mimic them at all or correctly. Narrowing the red margins of the lips in anger is an example of such a reliable sign of anger, typically missing when anger is feigned, because most people can not voluntarily make that movement. Likewise, when people experience enjoyment they not only move their lip corners upward and back (in a prototypical smile), but they also show a simultaneous contraction of the muscles that surround the eye socket (which raises the cheek, lowers the brow, and creates a "crows feet" appearance). This eye muscle contraction is typically missing from the smile when enjoyment is feigned or not felt (Davidson, Ekman, Saron, Senulius, & Friesen, 1991; Ekman, Davidson, & Friesen, 1991; Frank, Ekman, & Friesen, 1991). And, as in the case of the involuntary movement of the red margins of the lips in anger, most people cannot voluntarily make this eye muscle movement when they are not truly feeling enjoyment (Hager & Ekman, 1985).

Falsifying an experienced emotion is more difficult when one is also attempting to conceal another emotion. Trying to look angry is not easy, but if fear is felt when the person tries to look angry, conflicting forces occur. One set of impulses, arising from fear, pulls in one direction, while the deliberate attempt to appear angry pulls in the other direction. For example, the brows are involuntarily pulled upward and together in fear, but to falsify anger the person must pull them down (Ekman & Friesen, 1975). Often the signs of this internal struggle between the felt and the false emotion betray the deceit (Ekman, Friesen, & O'Sullivan, 1988).

Usually, lies about emotions involve more than just fabricating an emotion which is not felt. They also require concealing an emotion

which is being experienced. Concealment often goes hand in hand with fabrication. The liar feigns emotion to mask signs of the emotion to be concealed. Such concealment attempts may be betrayed in either of two ways: (1) some signs of the concealed emotion may escape efforts to inhibit or mask it, providing what Ekman and Friesen (1969) termed *leakage*; or (2) what they called a *deception clue* does not leak the concealed emotion but betrays the likelihood that a lie is being perpetrated. Deception clues occur when only a fragment leaks which is not decipherable, but which does not jibe with the verbal line being maintained by the liar, or when the very effort of having to conceal produces alterations in behavior, and those behavioral alterations do not fit the liar's line.

### FEELINGS ABOUT LYING

Not all deceptions involve concealing or falsifying emotions. The embezzler conceals that she is stealing money. The plagiarizer conceals that he has taken the words of another and pretends they are his own. The vain middle-aged man conceals his real age, dying his gray hair and claiming he is seven years younger than he is. Yet even when the lie is about something other than emotion, emotions may become involved. The vain man might be embarrassed about his vanity. To succeed in his deceit he must conceal not only his age but his embarrassment as well. The plagiarizer might feel contempt toward those he misleads. He would thus have to conceal not only the source of his work and pretend an ability that is not his, but also conceal his contempt. The embezzler might feel surprise when someone else is accused of her crime. She would have to conceal her surprise or at least conceal the reason why she is surprised.

Thus, emotions often become involved in lies that were not undertaken for the purpose of concealing emotions. Once involved, the emotions must be concealed if the lie is not to be betrayed. Any emotion may be the culprit, but three emotions are so often intertwined with deceit to merit separate explanation: fear of being caught, guilt about lying, and delight in having duped someone.

#### Fear of Being Caught

In its milder forms, fear of being caught is not disruptive and may even help the deceiver to avoid mistakes by maintaining alertness. Moderate levels of fear can produce behavioral signs that are noticeable by the skilled lie catcher, and high levels of fear produce

just what the liar dreads, namely, evidence of his or her fear or apprehension. The research literature on deception detection (DePaulo, Lanier, & Davis, 1983; DePaulo, Stone, & Lassiter, 1985; Zuckerman & Driver, 1985) suggests that the behavior of highly motivated liars is different from that of less motivated ones. In other words, the behavior of liars who fear being caught is different from the behaviors of liars who do not fear being caught.

Many factors influence how the fear of being caught in a lie (or, *detection apprehension*) will be felt. The first determinant to consider is the liar's beliefs about his target's skill as a lie catcher. If the target (i.e., the person being lied to) is known to be gullible, there usually will not be much detection apprehension. On the other hand, a target known to be tough to fool, who has a reputation as an expert lie catcher, will increase the detection apprehension.

The second determinant of detection apprehension is the liar's amount of practice and previous success in lying. A job applicant who has lied about qualifications successfully in the past should not be overly concerned about an additional deception. Practice in deceit enables the liar to anticipate problems. Success in deceit gives confidence and thus reduces the fear of being caught.

The third determinant of detection apprehension is fear of punishment. The fear of being caught can be reduced if the target suggests that the punishment may be less if the liar confesses. Although they usually cannot offer total amnesty, targets may also offer a psychological amnesty, hoping to induce a confession by implying that the liar need not feel ashamed nor even responsible for committing the crime. A target may sympathetically suggest that the acts are understandable and might have been committed by anyone in the same situation. Another variation might be to offer the target a face-saving explanation of the motive for the behavior in which the lie was designed to conceal.

A fourth factor influencing fear of being caught is the personality of the liar. While some people find it easy to lie, others find it difficult to lie; certainly more is known about the former group than the latter (Hood, 1982). One group, called *natural liars* (Ekman, 1985), lie easily and with great success—even though they do not differ from other people on their scores on objective personality tests (Ekman, Friesen, & Scherer, 1976). Natural liars are people who have been getting away with lies since childhood, fooling their parents, teachers, and friends when they wanted to. This instills a sense of confidence in their abilities to deceive such that they have no detection apprehension when they lie. Although this sounds as if natural liars are like

psychopaths, they are not; unlike natural liars, psychopaths show poor judgment, no remorse or shame, superficial charm, antisocial behavior without apparent compunction, and pathological egocentricity and incapacity for love (Hare, 1970).

Such natural liars may need to have two very different skills—the skill needed to plan a deceptive strategy, and the skill needed to mislead a target in a face-to-face meeting. A liar might have both skills, but presumably one could excel at one skill and not the other. Regretably, there has been little study of the characteristics of successful deceivers; no research has asked whether the personality characteristics of successful deceivers differ depending on the arena in which the deceit is practiced.

So far we have described several determinants of detection apprehension: the personality of the liar and, before that, the reputation and character of the lie catcher. Equally important are the *stakes*—the perceived consequences for successful and unsuccessful attempts at deception. Although there is no direct empirical evidence for this assertion, research on the role of appraisal in the experience of emotion is consistent with our thinking (Lazarus, 1984). There is a simple rule: the greater the stakes, the more the detection apprehension. Applying this simple rule can be complicated because it is not always so easy to figure out what is at stake; for example, to some people winning is everything, so the stakes are always high. It is reasonable to presume that what is at stake in any deception situation may be so idiosyncratic that no outside observer would readily know.

Detection apprehension should be greater when the stakes involve avoiding punishment, not just earning a reward. When the decision to deceive is first made, the stakes usually involve obtaining rewards. The liar thinks primarily about what might be gained. An embezzler may think only about the monetary gain when he or she first chooses to lie. Once deceit has been underway for some time the rewards may no longer be available. The company may become aware of its losses and suspicious enough that the embezzler is prevented from taking more. At this point, the deceit might be maintained in order to avoid being caught, and avoiding punishment becomes the only stake. On the other hand, avoiding punishment may be the motive from the outset, if the target is suspicious or the liar has little confidence.

There are two kinds of punishment which are at stake in deceit: the punishment that lies in store if the lie fails; and the punishment for the very act of engaging in deception. Detection apprehension

should be greater if both kinds of punishment are at stake. Sometimes the punishment for being caught deceiving can even be far worse than the punishment the lie was designed to avoid.

Even if the transgressor knows that the damage done if caught lying will be greater than the loss from admitting the transgression, the lie may be very tempting. Telling the truth brings immediate and certain losses, while telling a lie promises the possibility of avoiding all losses. The prospect of being spared immediate punishment may be so attractive that the liar may underestimate the likelihood that he or she will be caught in the lie. Recognition that confession would have been a better policy comes too late, when the lie has been maintained so long and with such elaboration that confession may no longer win a lesser punishment.

Sometimes there is little ambiguity about the relative costs of confession versus continued concealment. There are actions which are themselves so bad that confessing them wins little approval for having come forward, and concealing them adds little to the punishment which awaits the offender. Such is the case if the lie conceals child abuse, incest, murder, treason, or terrorism. Unlike the rewards possible for some repentant philanderers, forgiveness is not to be expected by those who confess these heinous crimes—although confession with contrition may lessen the punishment.

A final factor to consider about how the stakes influence detection apprehension is what is gained or lost by the target, not just by the liar. Usually the liar's gains are at the expense of the target. The embezzler gains what the employer loses. Stakes are not always equal; moreover, the stakes for the liar and the target can differ not just in amount but in kind. A philanderer may gain a little adventure, while the cuckolded spouse may lose tremendous self-respect. When the stakes differ for the liar and target, the stakes for either may determine the liar's detection apprehension. It depends upon whether the liar recognizes the difference and how it is evaluated.

#### Deception Guilt

Deception guilt refers to a feeling about lying, not the legal issue of whether someone is guilty or innocent. Deception guilt must also be distinguished from feelings of guilt about the content of a lie. Thus, a child may feel excitement about stealing the loose change off his parents' dresser, but feel guilt over lying to his or her parents to conceal the theft. This situation can be reversed as well—no guilt about lying to the parents, but guilt about stealing the money. Of course, some people feel guilt about both the act and the lie, and some people will

not feel guilt about either. What is important is that it is not necessary to feel guilty about the content of a lie in order to feel guilty about lying.

Like the fear of being caught, deception guilt can vary in strength. It may be very mild, or so strong that the lie will fail because the deception guilt produces leakage or deception clues (Ekman & Friesen, 1969). When it becomes extreme, deception guilt is a torturing experience, undermining the sufferer's most fundamental feelings of self-worth. Relief from such severe deception guilt may motivate a confession despite the likelihood of punishment for misdeeds admitted. In fact the punishment may be sought by the person who confesses in order to alleviate the tortured feelings of guilt.

When the decision to lie is first made, people do not always accurately anticipate how much they may later suffer from deception guilt. Liars may not realize the impact of being thanked by their victims for their seeming helpfulness, or how they will feel when they see someone else blamed for their misdeeds—as in the recent case of the “gentleman bandit” who felt so guilty about someone else being prosecuted for his robberies that he turned himself in to the police. Another reason why liars underestimate how much deception guilt they will feel is that it is only with the passage of time that a liar may learn that one lie will not suffice, that the lie has to be repeated again and again, often with expanding fabrications in order to protect the original deceit (Mullaney, 1979).

Shame is closely related to guilt (Tomkins, 1963), but there is a key qualitative difference. No audience is needed for feelings of guilt, no one else need know for the guilty person is his own judge. Not so for shame. The humiliation of shame requires disapproval or ridicule by others (Campos & Barrett, 1984). If no one ever learns of a misdeed there will be no shame, but there still might be guilt. Of course there may be both. The distinction between shame and guilt is very important because these two emotions may tear a person in opposite directions. The wish to relieve guilt may motivate a confession, but the wish to avoid the humiliation of shame may prevent it.

There exists a group of individuals who fail to feel any guilt or shame about their misdeeds; these people have been referred to as sociopaths or psychopaths (Hare, 1970). For these individuals, the lack of guilt or shame pervades all or most aspects of their lives. Experts disagree about whether the lack of guilt and shame is due to upbringing or some biological determinants (MacMillan & Kofoed, 1984; Schmauk, 1970; Vaillant, 1975). There is agreement that the psychopath's lack of guilt about lying and lack of fear of being caught will make it more difficult for a target to detect a psychopath's lies.

Conversely, some people are especially vulnerable to shame about



lying and deception guilt; for example, people who have been very strictly brought up to believe lying is one of the most terrible sins. Those with less strict upbringing, that did not particularly condemn lying, could more generally have been instilled with strong, pervasive guilt feelings. Such guilty people appear to seek experiences in which they can intensify their guilt, and stand shamefully exposed to others; this appears to be the case for psychiatric patients suffering from generalized anxiety disorders. Unfortunately, unlike the psychopathic personality, there has been very little research about guilt-prone individuals.

Whenever the deceiver does not share social values with the victim, odds are there will not be much deception guilt. People feel less guilty about lying to those they think are wrongdoers. A philanderer whose marital partner is cold and unwilling in bed might not feel guilty in lying about an affair. A similar principle is at work to explain why a diplomat or spy does not feel guilty about misleading the other side. In all these situations, the liar and the target do not share common goals or values.

Lying is authorized in most of these examples—each of these individuals appeals to a well-defined social norm which legitimizes deceiving an opponent. There is little guilt about such authorized deceptions when the targets are from opposing sides, and hold different values. There also may be authorization to deceive targets who are not opponents, who share values with the deceiver. Physicians may not feel guilty about deceiving their patients if they think it is for the patient's own good. Giving a patient a placebo, a sugar pill identified as a useful drug, is an old, time-honored, medical deceit. If the patient feels better, or at least stops hassling the doctor for an unneeded drug which might actually be harmful, many physicians believe that the lie is justified. In this case, the patient benefits from the lie, and not the doctor. If a liar thinks he is not gaining from the lie he probably will not feel any deception guilt.

Even selfish deceptions may not produce deception guilt when the lie is authorized. Poker players do not feel deception guilt about bluffing (but they do feel detection apprehension; Frank, 1989). The same is true about bargaining whether in a Middle East bazaar, Wall Street, or in the local real estate agent's office. The home owner who asks more for his house than he will actually sell it for will not feel guilty if he gets his asking price. This lie is authorized. Because the participants expect misinformation, and not the truth, bargaining and poker are not necessarily lies (Ekman, 1985). These situations by their nature provide prior notification that no one will be entirely truthful.

Deception guilt is most likely when lying is not authorized. Deception guilt should be most severe when the target is trusting, not expecting to be misled because honesty is expected between liar and target. In such opportunistic deceptions, guilt about lying will be greater if the target suffers at least as much as the liar gains. Even then there will not be much, if any, deception guilt unless there are at least some shared values between target and liar. A student turning in a late assignment may not feel guilty about lying to the professor if the student feels the professor sets unreachable standards and assigns undoable workloads. This student may feel fear of being caught in a lie, but he or she may not feel deception guilt. Even though the student disagrees with the professor about the workload and other matters, if the student still cares about the professor he or she may feel shame if the lie is discovered. Shame requires some respect for those who disapprove; otherwise disapproval brings forth anger or contempt, not shame.

Liars feel less guilty when their targets are impersonal or totally anonymous. A customer who conceals from the check-out clerk that he or she was undercharged for an expensive item will feel less guilty if he or she does not know the clerk. If the clerk is the owner, or if it is a small family owned store, the lying customer will feel more guilty than he or she will if it is one of a large chain of supermarkets. It is easier to indulge the guilt-reducing fantasy that the target is not really hurt, does not really care, will not even notice the lie, or even deserves or wants to be misled, if the target is anonymous (Wolk & Henley, 1970).

Often there will be an inverse relationship between deception guilt and detection apprehension. What lessens guilt about the lie increases fear of being caught. When deceptions are authorized there should be less deception guilt, yet the authorization usually increases the stakes, thus making detection apprehension high. In a high stakes poker game there is high detection apprehension and low deception guilt (Frank, 1989). The employer who lies to his employee whom he has come to suspect of embezzling, concealing his suspicions to catch him in the crime, also is likely to feel high detection apprehension but low deception guilt.

While there are exceptions, most people find the experience of guilt so toxic that they seek ways to diminish it. There are many ways to justify deceit. It can be considered retaliation for injustice. A nasty or mean target can be said not to deserve honesty. "The boss was so stingy, he didn't reward me for all the work I did, so I took some myself." Or the liar can blame the victim of his or her lies; for example, Machiavellian personality types tend to see their victims as so gullible that they bring lies upon themselves (Christie & Geis, 1970).

Two other justifications for lying which reduce deception guilt were mentioned earlier. A noble purpose or job requirement is one—as in the case of the diplomat or the spy. The other justification is to protect the target—as in the case of the doctor. Sometimes the liar may go so far as to claim that the target was willing. If the target cooperated in the deceit, knew the truth all along but pretended not to, then in a sense there was no lie, and the liar is free of any deception guilt. A willing target helps the deceiver maintain the deceit, overlooking any behavioral betrayals of the lie. People often cooperate in being misled, as in polite social encounters (Rosenthal & DePaulo, 1979). For example, politeness requires a hostess to accept without scrutiny a guest's excuse for an early departure.

An unwilling target may after a time become a willing one in order to avoid the costs of discovering deceit. Imagine the plight of the government official who begins to suspect that the lover to whom he has been trusting information about his work might be a spy. A job recruiter may similarly become the willing victim of a fraudulent job applicant, once the applicant is hired, rather than acknowledge his own mistaken judgment.

#### Duping Delight

The fear of being caught in a lie and the guilt aroused by lying are negative feelings. Lying can also produce positive feelings. The lie may be viewed as a proud accomplishment. The liar may feel excitement, either when anticipating the challenge or during the very moment of lying, when success is not yet certain. Afterward there may be the pleasure that comes with relief, pride in the achievement, or feelings of smug contempt toward the target. Duping delight refers to any or all of these feelings which can, if not concealed, betray the deceit.

An innocent example of duping delight occurs when kidding takes the form of misleading a gullible friend. The kidder has to conceal his duping delight even though his performance may in large part be directed to others who are appreciating how well the gullible person is being duped.

Like all emotions, duping delight can vary in strength. It may be totally absent, almost insignificant compared to the amount of detection apprehension which is felt, or duping delight may be so great that some behavioral sign of it leaks. People may confess their deception in order to share their delight in having put one over. Criminals have been known to reveal their crime to friends, strangers, even to the police, in order to be acknowledged and appreciated as having been clever enough to pull off a particular deceit. Virtually

every James Bond film features a scene where the villain, after capturing Bond, cannot resist divulging his entire diabolical plan to Bond before he has Bond put to death.

There are several factors that may enhance duping delight. If the person being deceived has the reputation of being difficult to fool, then this increased challenge adds to the liar's delight in duping this person. The presence of others who know what is going on can also increase the likelihood of duping delight. When the audience is present, enjoying the liar's performance, the liar may have the most duping delight and the hardest time suppressing any sign of it. When one child lies to another while others watch, the liar may so enjoy observing how he is entertaining his buddies that his delight bursts forth ending the whole matter.

Some people may be much more prone to duping delight. No scientist has yet studied such people or even verified that they do exist. Yet it seems obvious that, like James Bond villains, some people boast more than others, and that braggarts might be more vulnerable than others to duping delight.

While lying, a person may feel duping delight, deception guilt, and detection apprehension—all at once or in succession. Consider poker again. In a bluff, when a player has poor cards but is pretending to have such good cards that the others will fold, there may be detection apprehension if the pot has gotten very high. As the bluffer watches each player cave in, he may also feel duping delight. Since misinformation is authorized there should be no deception guilt as long as the poker player does not cheat. Yet an embezzler might feel all three emotions: delight in how he or she has fooled fellow employees and employer; apprehension at moments when he or she thinks there might be some suspicion; and, perhaps, guilt about having broken the law and violated trust shown in him or her by the company.

### CAVEATS

We maintain that there are no behavioral clues that are specific to lying. There are two recurrent errors that a lie detector can make when deciding upon the honesty of a potential liar; these have been called by Ekman (1985) the *Othello error* and the *idiosyncrasy error*.

The first error that a lie detector can make is the *Othello error*. Like Shakespeare's tragic hero—who misinterprets his wife's fear and distress over the possibility that Othello may kill her, as a sign that she is lying to him—the lie detector disbelieves the truth and fails to consider the stress that his or her disbelief puts upon the truthful

person. For example, the truthful person's fear of being disbelieved may be misinterpreted by the lie detector as a fear of being caught. Moreover, some people have such strong unresolved guilt about other matters that these feelings may be aroused whenever they are accused of any wrongdoing, and these signs of guilt may be misinterpreted as signs of deception guilt.

It may also be the case that truthful people will feel scorn toward those they know are falsely accusing them, or excitement about the challenge of proving their accusers wrong, or pleasure in anticipating their vindication. These feelings may produce signs that resemble signs of duping delight. Although the reasons would differ, either the liar or the truthful person might feel surprised, angry, disappointed, distressed, or disgusted by the lie detector's suspicions or questions.

The second error—the *idiosyncrasy error* (originally called the "Brokaw Hazard" by Ekman, 1985)—involves the failure of the lie detector to take account of individual differences in a potential liar's behavior. This type of error may cause the lie detector to both disbelieve the truth as well as falsely believe a lie. For example, many lie detectors believe that a liar cannot make eye contact while telling a lie, even though deception research has shown that eye contact is not related to deception (DePaulo, Stone, & Lassiter, 1985). Thus, a person who never makes eye contact when he or she speaks will appear deceptive to a lie detector when in fact this is the person's normal interpersonal style. Many of the thinking clues to deceit mentioned earlier fall into this same category; that is, many people normally speak in a circumlocutory fashion, make speech errors, or make either long or short pauses in speech. There are substantial differences among all individuals in all of these behaviors, and these differences may produce mistakes in both disbelieving the truth and believing a lie.

A partial solution to this problem is for the lie detector to base his or her decisions on the observed *changes* in a suspected liar's behavior. The lie detector must compare the person's usual behavior to his or her behavior when under suspicion. This is why a person is more likely to be misled in a first meeting with a deceiver as compared to ensuing meetings because in the first meeting there is no basis for comparing changes in a suspected deceiver's behavior (see Brandt, Miller, & Hocking, 1980; Frank, 1989; O'Sullivan, Ekman, & Friesen, 1988). However, it is not always the case that detecting deception is easier from those with whom we have more contact; spouses, good friends, and family members may develop blind spots or preconceptions that interfere with accurate perceptions of the behavioral clues to deceit.

Analyzing which emotions a particular deceiver is likely to feel and which emotions a truthful person might feel about being suspected

or disbelieved can help to identify a liar. Such an analysis may isolate unambiguous signs of honesty or deceit and may alert the lie detector to the behaviors that must be discovered.

### SUMMARY

Guilt, fear, and delight all can be shown in facial expression, the voice, or body movement, even when the liar is trying to conceal them. There are certainly specific and reliable signs of these emotions in the facial expressions and voices of these deceivers (e.g., Ekman & Friesen, 1974; Ekman, O'Sullivan, Friesen, & Scherer, 1991; Frank, Ekman, & Friesen, 1991). Even if there is no nonverbal leakage, the struggle to prevent it may also produce a deception clue.

Thus, a lie detector must be aware of the circumstances that may elevate or deflate the three factors which make a lie detectable, regardless of whether the liar shows thinking clues, is lying about feelings, or is having feelings about lying. Below is a summary listing of the situations in which evidence for the behavioral clues to deceit will be strongest.

The evidence of *thinking clues* will be greatest when:

- The liar does not anticipate when he or she will have to lie.
- The liar is not very clever or inventive.
- The liar should know the answer to the posed questions.

The evidence of *lying about feelings* will be greatest when:

- The lie involves emotions felt at the moment.
- The truly felt emotion is strong.
- The liar fails to show reliable clues to the emotion he or she is feigning.

*Fear of being caught* will be greatest when:

- The target has a reputation for being tough to fool.
- The target starts out being suspicious.
- The liar has had little practice and no record of success.
- The liar is especially vulnerable to the fear of being caught.
- The stakes are high.
- Both rewards and punishments are at stake; or, if it is only one or the other, then it is punishment which is at stake.
- The punishment for being caught lying is great, or the punishment for what the lie is about is so great that there is no incentive to confess.

- The target in no way benefits from the lie.

*Deception guilt* will be greatest when:

- The target is unwilling.
- The deceit is totally selfish, and the target derives no benefit from being misled and loses as much or more than the liar gains.
- The deceit is unauthorized, and the situation is one in which honesty is authorized.
- The liar has not been practicing the deceit for a long time.
- The liar and target share social values.
- The liar is personally acquainted with the target.
- The target cannot easily be faulted as mean or gullible.
- There is no reason for the target to expect to be misled; just the opposite, the liar has acted to win confidence in his trustworthiness.

Finally, *duping delight* will be greatest when:

- The target poses a challenge having a reputation for being difficult to fool.
- The lie is a challenge, because of either what must be concealed or the nature of what must be fabricated.
- Others are watching or know about the lie and appreciate the liar's skillful performance.

It needs to be reiterated that these behavioral clues which betray a lie are not specific to lying, and thus the lie detector must beware of making either the Othello error or the idiosyncrasy error. The simplest suggestion is for the lie detector to try to understand what reasons might the possible liar have for showing these signs of emotion besides lying. Ultimately, it is our hope that people who interpret potential clues to deceit or truthfulness would do so with great care because not only do lies fail, but people fail to lie.

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