

# LIE DETECTION TIPS



Delving into facial expressions, unlike macro expressions, 'micro expressions' can flash across the face in as quickly as 1/25th of a second, and people may or may not be unaware they have displayed them (Dr Paul Ekman). They are involuntary and happen to us through our autonomic system (responsible for your body's 'fight or flight' reaction).

These fleeting expressions are noticeable to the trained eye and can reveal the hidden emotions, feelings and intentions that are genuinely felt 'before' a person may attempt to voluntarily or involuntarily mask it with a 'different' expression.

For example if you were passed over for a promotion at work, you might flash a micro expression of anger or disgust, before masking it with a smile as you offer your congratulations to the person who got the job that should have been yours. Or a new business partner might flash a micro expression of contempt if they have misrepresented information and knowingly sold you a poor investment, and then as they shake your hand to confirm the deal they mask it with a smile or even duping delight!

## Some useful scientific facts about deception:

- Lying takes time and effort (cognitive load is increased) as the person has to 1) make up a story and 2) deliver it in a convincing manner. It's useful to look for changes in behaviours. When a person is under stress/discomfort there may be visual signs of increased sweating, a sudden shift in eye blink rate, sudden shift in posture, increased fidgeting and touching another part of the body such as playing with a watch, scratching the head or nose, running fingers through hair or a beard, and increased blood flow which can cause redness in the ears, cheeks and neck.
- A common way we try to conceal our real emotions is with a smile, and this is sometimes accompanied by a fake or social laugh/forced humour.
- You won't find Deception Science part of any high school curriculum and aside from that, we often struggle to recognise when we're being lied to because we sometimes only choose to selectively listen to what we want to hear, we believe other people wouldn't lie based on our biases towards them and we genuinely feel uncomfortable judging other people.
- It can be easier to tell if someone is lying if you know them really well as you'll have a baseline of behaviour to work with and you'll be familiar with any behavioural characteristics that are unique to them. So if these behaviours suddenly change from their baseline when a stimulus is applied, these changes may be more noticeable to you and are clues which require further investigation.
- Genuine emotions have a smooth onset and a smooth offset. With the exception of contempt, the other six universal emotions of happiness, sadness, anger, fear, disgust and surprise are symmetrical, showing evenly on both sides of the face. People often confuse the facial expressions of fear and anger.

When it comes to observing and recognising emotions and deceptive behaviour, reading and understanding facial expressions, body language, gestures and words are all key and play an interconnected role with communication.