

## Tips on how to detect lies

**Facial expressions** - watching facial expressions in order to determine whether a person is lying might just save you from being a victim of fraud, or it could help you figure out when somebody's being genuine. Jury analysts do this when assisting in jury selection. The police do this during an interrogation. Of course a polygraph does this, but it is a little heavy to carry with you. Therefore, you have to learn the little facial and body expressions that can help you distinguish a lie from the truth.

**Observe how the person smiles.** Forced smiles are often easy to spot since they only involve the muscles around the mouth. The person will appear as being overly relaxed and not really happy. Look at the mouth and see if the teeth are showing. A real smile will reveal a bit of teeth but a forced smile may or may not. In a real smile, more facial muscles besides the mouth are involved. A dead giveaway is tightening around the eyes, which sometimes causes crows' feet. Very few people can fake a smile and still control their eyes in this manner. People use different muscles for a fake smile vs a real smile. In fact it is near impossible to use the same muscles in a fake smile that you do in a real smile!

**Body Gestures** - Watch their hands, arms and legs, which tend to be limited, stiff, and self-directed when the person is lying. The hands may touch or scratch their face, nose or behind an ear, but are not likely to touch their chest or heart with an open hand.

**Check for sweating.** People tend to sweat more when they lie.

**Notice the person's eye movements.** Contrary to popular belief, a liar does not always avoid eye contact. Humans naturally break eye contact and look upwards when remembering something. Liars may deliberately make eye contact to seem more sincere. Liars also tend to blink more often – or the opposite to that is that someone may control their blinking

**Be sensitive to the person's emotional expression,** specifically the timing and duration, which tends to be off when someone is lying. Emotions can be delayed, remain longer than usual, then stop suddenly. Likewise, they might not match appropriately with verbal statements. And, as with smiling, facial expressions of a liar will be limited to the mouth area.

**Pay close attention to the person's reaction to your questions.** A liar will often feel uncomfortable and turn their head or body away, or even unconsciously put an object between the two of you. Also, while an innocent person would go on the offensive, a guilty person will often go immediately on the defensive.

**Listen for a subtle delay in responses to questions.** An honest answer comes quickly from memory. Lies require a quick mental review of what they have told others to avoid inconsistency and to make up new details as needed.

**Be conscious of their wording.** Verbal expression can give many clues as to whether a person is lying, such as:

- Using/repeating your own exact words when answering a question
- NOT using contractions
- Avoiding direct statements or answers
- Speaking excessively in an effort to convince
- Speaking in a monotonous tone
- Leaving out pronouns (he, she, it, etc.)
- Speaking in muddled sentences
- Equivocation. "Non-Answers" for example: Q:"Are these your drugs?" A:"I don't even smoke." Q:"Did you kill that man?" A:"I don't even own a gun." In essence, these subjects ARE answering TRUTHFULLY, however, the answers they are providing do not address the actual questions in any way.
- Using humor and sarcasm to avoid the subject

**Allow silence to enter the conversation.** Observe how uncomfortable and restless the person becomes when there is a pause.

**Change the subject quickly.** While an innocent person would be confused by the sudden shift in the conversation and may try to return to the previous subject, a liar will be relieved and welcome the change. You may see the person become more relaxed and less defensive.

**Watch his or her throat.** A person may constantly be either trying to lubricate their throat when he/she lies OR swallowing to avoid the tension built up

**Some important things to remember:**

- Just because someone exhibits one or more of these signs does not mean they are lying. The above behaviors should be compared to a person's base (normal) behavior whenever possible. Ideally we are looking for 'clusters' of behaviour, not just one isolated cue
- The more you get to know someone, the better you will become at recognizing their thinking style, and you will become better at knowing when they may be straying from the truth. In the ordinary course of events, you will see a consistent pattern of eye movements. If a person breaks their pattern, this may well suggest that they are deviating from the truth, though they may not be lying deliberately. To test the pattern break, ask more questions to try and clarify whether the pattern break was indeed an attempt to tell a lie.
- Some of the behaviors of a liar listed above also coincide with those of an extremely shy person, who might not be lying at all.
- Some of the behaviors may occur also when somebody is very concentrated on speech (for example when topic is sophisticated or person stressed)
- Botox or other plastic surgery may also interfere with 'tells' and give false positives.
- Some people may have reputations for lying; keep this in mind, but don't let it mask your opinions all the time -- you have to take it on a case by case basis.
- If you are holding the person's hand (boyfriend or girlfriend), you can often detect truth or lie by the increase of their pulse.
- Since lying typically causes tension, a person's voice may become higher pitched when they are lying.
- Be careful how often you use this with your friends. If you are always looking for lies, you may soon not have any friends. Use wisdom.
- Remember that eye contact is considered rude in some cultures, so this may explain why they are reluctant to look you in the eye consistently.
- Some people with developmental disabilities like Autism or Asperger's syndrome are very reluctant to make eye contact or do not make eye contact at all. This is a trait of the Autism spectrum and not an attempt to lie.

**Want to become better at detecting behaviour associated with lies and hiding the truth?**

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