

“Drawing on real-life examples, the authors give you specific, practical coaching on how to detect deception. The lessons will sharpen your overall observation skills and supercharge your personal BS detector.”

—PETER EARNEST,
founding executive director of the International Spy Museum and a 35-year veteran of the CIA



HOW TO SPOT ALIAR

Revised Edition

**Why People Don't Tell the Truth...
and How You Can Catch Them**

GREGORY HARTLEY & MARYANN KARINCH

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REVISED EDITION

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Pompton Plains, NJ

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—Greg Hartle

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—Maryann Karim

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INTRODUCTION

WHY YOU NEED THIS BOOK

Our bodies, including our brains, have remarkable similarities and striking differences. We have the same fundamental physical structures—heart, mouth, neck, cerebral cortex, and so on. But I’m a lanky, red-headed male with big ears and beady eyes, and you’re probably not. Add religion, culture, education, and other non-physical characteristics to the distinctions between us, and you and I seem even more dissimilar. Could it be true, then, that we broadcast the same signals when we tell lies or feel stress? No and yes. It’s not true that the eyes of *all* human beings wander off to the right when they’re lying, but some of them do. It’s not true that *all* people cross their arms when they don’t want someone to invade their space, but some of them do. We can make a firm statement about only a few things, such as the fact that humans in a state of high anxiety smell really foul.

Zoologist Desmond Morris, author of classic works on behavioral links between people and our primitive ape ancestors, offered us a framework for documenting how we’re *likely* to respond to certain stimuli. His conclusions should not be taken as absolutes, however, and that’s why I can’t offer you a simple checklist of ways to spot a liar. What I can do is teach you to determine on a case-by-case basis whether or not someone is lying by what they are saying, or by what they’re not telling you. I can also give you the steps to extracting the truth, as well as resisting efforts to make you divulge information you want to keep to yourself.

This book is a practical guide to learning and using the sophisticated psychological tools of interrogators. You need this book if someone has lied to you, manipulated you, or backed you into a corner. You need this book if you have an important relationship, with a spouse, boss, parent, client, child, employee, or friend, that lacks honesty. You don’t want to go through life wearing a sign that reads “victim” or “patsy.” To make sure you don’t, you need the techniques covered in this book that give you what I call “extreme interpersonal skills.”

The book isn’t just about managing your relationships with a cheating spouse or manipulative boss, however. The same techniques that help you turn those situations around are the ones that help you gain the upper hand in a salary negotiation, to draw a prospective client toward the outcome you desire, and, in some cases, to find out why you need to end a business or personal relationship. They will help you conduct or succeed at job interviews and reel in prospective customers. Litigators who need to read character and establish truthfulness will find dozens of reliable ploys. Anyone who is trying to survive the dating scene, has teenagers at home, or works on Capitol Hill will find ways to cope and win.

People often ask me if I use these skills on my family and friends. The answer is, “No—as long as I have reasons to trust them.”

—Greg Hartle

SECTION I

CONTEXT

CHAPTER 1

WHERE DO THESE TECHNIQUES COME FROM?

WHY YOU SHOULD LEARN THIS

In daily life, I use the tools covered in this book when I don't trust someone or when I need to get the upper hand for a purpose. Using them constantly to manipulate loved ones and business associates would make me a sociopath. Using them wisely means that I understand I have entitlements—the right to humane treatment, honesty, and fair play.

In your daily life, you have a range of choices about where you go and what you do; that allows you to operate with certainty. In the past, when I have used the tools of interrogation, I created dilemmas so that prisoners had only two ugly options. They found themselves having to choose between doing something in their nature that they did not want to do, or doing something against their nature that they wanted to do. For example, truthful people divulge secrets even though it means betrayal of comrades, and loyal soldiers defect because they want to stop the bloodshed. In the first case, I forced them to solve a problem by putting their needs before the needs of the group, and in the second, I pushed them to put the needs of the group before that of an individual. All I did was exploit the human tendency to take the path of least resistance. This ability is an integral part of what you will learn.

Being an interrogator is a little similar to being a schoolyard bully: finding somebody's soft spots and pushing on them. That's why you have to be careful practicing the skills of an interrogator. Your life isn't war, so don't go around treating your kids and business associates as though they're enemy combatants you'll never see again. Your goal is to insist on honesty or detect stress so you can use it to get the result you want, not to manipulate those around you for sport.

Very few people know how to use the techniques described in this book—consciously, that is. Most of these skills exist in your repertoire, but you can't necessarily draw on them at will or use them in conjunction with related talents. Even most of the so-called interrogators who handle terrorism suspects are really questioners who do not have the training to influence human motivation, read body language, and orchestrate interrogation techniques. Asking good questions is one of the skills you're about to explore, but it's only one of many.

So, when you learn how to combine tactics of interrogation effectively—baseline, read body language, minimize, question effectively—you will be unique: The set of experiences and traits you bring to the game are different from mine or anyone else's who reads this book. When you understand the mechanics of stress and master the techniques to manipulate someone's fears and dreams, you will be powerful. You may not be adept with these tools as soon as you put the book down, but give yourself time. This skill set grows throughout the years, as does the human mind.

WHY I LEARNED THIS

I started to develop interrogation skills in 1989 (and I'm still learning) with Army instruction that began with a desire to learn Arabic. Many Army interrogators want to learn a foreign language far more than they wanted to go head-to-head with prisoners. They are genuine romantics, and that's a big reason why most wash out. In fact, the attrition rate has been high throughout the years, with more than half of those in the program not making it to the end. I, on the other hand, got excited when the Army told me I was going into a branch of the intelligence business. I found out that being part of the intelligence world is only a technical designation, though. Interrogators of the Cold War era, as did

other Army intelligence officers, handled classified material behind a firewall that shielded them from the rest of the Army. In other words, interrogators did not have to see frontline action.

The U.S. intelligence machine in at-war mode, as it has been since the September 11, 2001 attacks encompasses a prisoner collection operation with tiered prisoner-handling capacities. Prisoners wind their way from the front to collection sites and eventually to prisoner holding cages in the rear. Young soldiers with nothing more than a desire to use their language skills, with limited training in psychology, and with no capability to read body language populate the process from front to rear. Mostly, these are in-language questioners; a talented few will become what I call an interrogator.

Interrogators need an operational knowledge to be effective; they can't function as other people in the Army intelligence business do. They need to know in a real way, not just a theoretical one, how enemy and friendly soldiers go about doing their jobs in order to ask questions that dig out essential facts.

In short, I needed to be put in harm's way in order to learn how to interrogate enemy soldiers who are forward-deployed. Fortunately, I was deployed with the 5th Special Forces Group to Operation Desert Storm. This taught me a valuable lesson that I'll pass along as you begin your "training": If you don't know what you're talking about, you put limits on what kind of information you'll be able to get. If you have ever been interviewed by a human resources screener who knew almost nothing about your skill set, you understand the limitation.

These techniques are not classified because they are not taught. Approaches (that is the interrogator term for psychological ploys) and questions fit into the curriculum for a military interrogator, but the sophisticated techniques of soft interrogation in the book come from years of practice, teaching, and independent study. Army interrogation school is a 10-level course, meaning it's entry level. There is no follow-on instruction. Think back to the most boring math or history course you ever took. This was just as dreary—day after day of questioning and report writing, practicing approaches in a sterile environment. Repeat *ad nauseam*. We got just enough skill to get in the face of the enemy and rattle him, hopefully with purpose and direction. And often, the more advanced skills the Army does teach don't become practical tools for the young soldiers who use them. Their emotions and cognitive processes are still evolving rapidly, so how can we expect them to manage their own stress and thought patterns, much less someone else's? This makes the enemy prisoner-of-war cage in the rear all the more important to the way the U.S. Army conducts business: The young interrogator needs a safe place to practice.

From interrogation school, I went to SERE (Survival, Evasion, Resistance, Escape) school. There, interrogated for eight hours a day, three days a week, every other week, for three and a half years—a total of hundreds of interrogations—to help our Special Forces learn how to resist interrogation. I was working at SERE when the war broke out and therefore deployed as a Special Forces asset. It was at SERE school that I met one of the most formative forces in my life, Don Landrum, well-known as a founding member of Project Delta and of SERE. Don, *aka* "the Bearded One," was not an interrogator but he knew more about the tools and methods than I ever learned from the interrogation community. The particular expertise he taught me is the one I mentioned at the beginning of this chapter (how to pare down a prisoner's sense of his options to two: bad or worse).

When the first Gulf War started, I was assigned to the Special Warfare Center at Ft. Bragg. There were only 55 Arabic-speaking interrogators in the entire U.S. Army, and we had six of them. In my class, just two of us spoke Arabic; everyone else spoke Russian, Czech, Polish—the languages of people who were America's Cold War enemies. This is one reason why I got so much experience and contact with Iraqi soldiers. When I was picked for the 5th Special Forces Group, my initial assignme

took me to a team supporting the Saudi Arabian Army. Shortly thereafter, I began working with a team supporting the Kuwaiti brigade. I screened more than 100 enemy prisoners during Operation Desert Storm and interrogated a couple of dozen of them.

During this period is when I really learned how to read body language and first discovered how to teach the techniques of interrogations. I also began to see the analogous relationship between using them in war and applying them in my daily life. By the way, just because I know these things does not mean I'm impervious to emotional outbursts, or that I intimidate my friends by "reading" them and using words to back them into a corner. I do have a greater awareness of my emotions, however, and when my friends have stress in their lives, I'll probably notice it before other people will. I also have substantially more power than other people in most business situations, and arguments with the woman I love tend to be sane and productive instead of crazy and misdirected. Even so, I am still human.

INTERROGATION HISTORY

Where does interrogation come from? As a science, it's relatively new, but people have interrogated prisoners forever. Roman soldiers wanted to know where their comrades were being held by locals during an invasion. Soldiers would pull captured enemies and torture them to get information, but there was no system. Even in the Civil War, we didn't have a method for interrogating prisoners. We thought of them simply as combatants removed from the battlefield. We kept prisoners in massive compounds as if they were cattle in a pen, doing nothing more than keeping troops out of combat. Eight thousand people died of cholera in Andersonville, Georgia, where the national POW monument now stands. The Elmira, New York, compound, known as Hellmira during the Civil War, had comparable tragic deaths resulting from abuse and neglect. Jump ahead to World War II, and the time from a commander's decision to troop movement and weapons deployment accelerated so rapidly that the value of interrogating prisoners could not be overlooked. Prisoners suddenly had value while alive. But the United States was among the many countries that lacked a specially trained interrogation force.

Modern war operations are predictive on a scale unlike anything in history. So, interrogators who grew up in this modern era found themselves trying to be like Superman: to hear conversations that went on far away, to see through walls into strange buildings. Where the analogy melts is in verifying the information. Superman personally hears and sees, whereas interrogators have to rely on what someone else has seen or heard. What they learn can therefore be information or disinformation.

The only way to do this was to understand the psychology of why people talk, when they talk, and how they talk—to know whether they lie or tell the truth, how to tell when they're lying, and how to tell when they're telling the truth. These needs drove the development of the science of interrogation which must have the aura of "witchcraft." That is, you can't figure out why it works, but it does.

Interrogators had a bad reputation for a while, too, just as the witches at Salem did. That has shifted over the past few decades when the concept of collecting intelligence directly from human sources has gained respect. During the Cold War, people who interpreted radio signals and satellite imagery surpassed interrogators in their value to military operations. These people used equipment worth millions of dollars. It was more cost-effective and covert to use technology to collect strategic and tactical information than it was to nab scientists and political officials, and interrogate them. By the time of the first Gulf War, however, something approaching 85 percent of intelligence came from human sources. One reason: Saddam Hussein relied on couriers more than electronic means. The idea of a Cold War enemy with advanced technology and a sophisticated communications net dissolved

when dealing with developing nations. Add to this the complexity of our modern war on terror and clandestine communications, and you can see why an interrogator is in high demand today.

In 2006, the breaking news of the Abu Ghraib images shattered the image of the American soldier. The subsequent investigations determined that the system had veered away from the standards developed in post–World War II by Haans Scharff, whose work I describe a little more in [Chapter 2](#). The tools I discuss here are the non-coercive type that rely on heavy psychology and manipulation as well as simple observation. Leaving all politics out of the discussion, I truly believe these skills work, are legal, and are portable to your world.

YOU ARE A PRISONER

Fundamentally, the tools of interrogation that I’ve used with prisoners have value in your everyday life because you have a lot in common with a prisoner of war. First and foremost, you both have a box inside you that makes you who you are, and there are many forces at work that could potentially destroy what’s inside it. Second, the stress of being captured and then being a captive has corollary in your daily life.

You’ve no doubt heard at least one story of a hard-charging soldier who died at enemy hands because he refused to talk. For him, the most sacred part of himself, that little box inside that contained his core identity, was the duty to protect others’ lives by protecting certain information. Another soldier, just as devoted to duty, might crack under pressure and violate that sacred part of himself. He might still be alive, but he is no longer alive as the same person.

Everyone has a box. You may not even know what it contains, but if you lose it, you face a kind of personal extinction. Essentially, you become a stranger to yourself when you ravage a core belief or value, or when someone else manipulates you toward the same end. On a regular basis—just as a captured soldier does—you face situations and individuals that have the potential to cause that destruction.

SHOCK OF CAPTURE (OR, TURNING YOUR BOX UPSIDE DOWN)

When a person is captured, his stress levels go through the roof. If capture comes after a firefight, he knows many of his friends have just died, which adds emotions such as grief and anger to the fear that runs through his entire body. This is the most dangerous moment in that person’s life. Adrenalin levels are high; conscious thought is not. I, the enemy, have just killed people he cares about, so his pores ooze hatred for me, my comrades, my commander, and my country. He has just as much terror about what I might do to him.

Another scenario has him on patrol; we abduct him quickly with no one getting killed. Capture never feels good, so his hostility will rise. Suddenly, he becomes truly helpless because his captors are screaming orders—“You #\$%^, get on the ground! Put your hands behind your head!” He’s like a dog who only hears, “Blah, blah, blah! Blah blah, blah!” The tone of voice is clear, but the directions aren’t. He is so overwhelmed, he has lost his ability to comprehend what is said to him. If he does the wrong thing, will he die? That’s possible, and he knows it. Anxiety, a by-product of fear of the unknown, shuts down the thinking brain and turns on the body-protecting, or reacting, brain. Interrogators are brokers of anxiety; it is the product we sell.

In a taping I did for British television, a group of people associated with Team Delta, a school founded by one of my former students, abducted seven volunteers at breakfast—not when they

expected it. Our participants included Britain's fittest fireman. Adam is a bright, engaging man who is accustomed to stress. His response to capture is demonstrated on the video when he is told by multiple people to look right, look at me, look left. The orders obviously confuse him. Finally, he hears, "Look down," at which point he gets to his knees. Adam is trying to predict what we want so hard that he projects what we want. This is a man accustomed to high stress with English-speaking captors. Imagine the stress when your captors speak a foreign language and you are an 18-year-old conscript.

What are his psychological defenses in either situation? He brings his wealth of experiences, or dearth of them, and his identities to the situation. He is a soldier, husband, son, and guitarist in a garage band. Nowhere in that spectrum of defining roles is he a captive, so he has to learn to be a captive rather than draw from memory. Human brains function well when they have areas to store information, and they falter when information invades and has no place to go. Every time we experience something new, we create a space in our head for related, future knowledge and experience. This makes it much harder to suffer displaced expectation in the future.

Think of the collapse of the World Trade Center's Twin Towers. You might have been able to envision a plane crashing into a building, but could you absorb the magnitude of what happened on September 11, 2001? That sight shocked me, as it did millions of people. Our minds did not include a box for that information; it overwhelmed us. The first time you saw a dead body or rear-ended a car you probably had the same reaction, just to a different degree.

The captive, therefore, confronts the dual trauma of direct exposure to the enemy and a new, overwhelming experience. Notable exceptions would be people such as the Special Forces troops that we trained in SERE school. Building on the premise that the more you become accustomed to an experience, the more you are able to cope with it, we subjected those soldiers to hundreds of capture scenarios. In wartime, they have "only" the trauma of exposure to the enemy and his alien horrors.

You can understand, therefore, why a captured front-line infantry soldier would suffer more confusion and shock than an intelligence officer. His frame of reference is different; he goes into the situation with a profound disadvantage, unprepared for a particular kind of enemy assault. He probably doesn't speak the language of the enemy, has just been busy shooting his captor's friends, and instantly plummets from being a powerful guy with a gun to someone subdued, cuffed, and at the mercy of a man with a gun. The moment he experiences such displaced expectations—not having a box in his head to place and process what's happened to him—he is extremely vulnerable.

The essence of this man comes from a complex interplay of connections in his daily life. "Self" embodies input from others and from situations. "Frame of reference," or a picture of the outside world, is prejudiced by experiences. This man has just suffered a severe blow to both self and frame of reference. No longer the rifle-carrying soldier, he is now the helpless captive who failed his mission. All of his defined traits for that role begin to fill his head. Most of these definitions are negative and have been driven into him by military superiors and movies. He's now a loser, and the captor won't play the role of counselor unless it fits the captor's needs.

EFFECTS OF CAPTIVITY

The *shock of capture* seems to be the worst thing that will ever happen to the prisoner at the moment it occurs, but there is more. After the initial terror and fear for his life, the prisoner starts to adapt. He gets a box in his head to help him cope with the stress. Prisoners sometimes even feel cavalier and try to make demands. Most prisoners are segregated and silenced so there is no opportunity to console or collaborate. The prisoner is left alone with his need to talk about failure and

feelings of inadequacy. In many cases, the prisoner is blindfolded and cuffed to allow the limited number of captors or escorts to manage him and his comrades safely. The deprivation of sight, though important for controlling an enemy combatant, creates the need for a guard or captor to become the eyes and guide for the prisoner. This begins a cycle of dependence that will only get worse as captivity progresses. When the prisoner encounters his first interrogator, it will be in the form of a screener. Screeners have one purpose, which is to answer these two questions: Can this guy answer my requirements? How hard is it going to be to get him to talk? There is something obviously different about the interrogator from the moment the prisoner meets him: He speaks the language. The cycle of dependence is becoming more entrenched.

The interrogator may or may not be interested in the prisoner. The guards are interested only in safety and control. Their job is to follow a clearly defined doctrine on how to handle the prisoner. The result is a dance. The guard gives input to the prisoner and the prisoner responds. The guard uses this stimulus of the prisoner's response to flesh out his newly found role as all-powerful caretaker. The guard responds with whatever tools are in his repertoire and the prisoner takes this input to help define his new role as prisoner. New prisoners and new guards continually create steps for their dance. Without diligent supervision, the guard and prisoner can become unwitting participants in a field version of the Stamford Prison Experiment, the disastrous 1971 exercise in which middle-class kids assumed the roles of guards and prisoners.

When the prisoner encounters someone who speaks his language, there is a natural affinity. He's desperately in need of companionship. Humans are social creatures and need reinforcement. The self-portrait the prisoner had has now become blurred. The picture has voids for the roles he filled in his unit as a soldier. The newfound role of prisoner takes him off-balance. The prisoner gets into a cycle of dependence that resembles regression, or drops back to the last time in his life that someone made all decisions for him. The prisoner becomes wholly dependent on the guards and interrogators to tell him what the correct answer to every question is. If shock of capture turned the toy box upside down, this can be likened to moving the playground.

All of the details that have been validated in the past about the prisoner's intelligence and good looks now need nurturing. There is no source for this data. The prisoner begins an internal conversation, one aimed at regaining equilibrium. In this conversation, the prisoner is the standard, so any self-doubt becomes magnified. If the prisoner has a fault or failure, it becomes the primary focus. If he and four others were captured by 250 enemy soldiers, the internal dialogue centers on which of the four is to blame. The prisoner personalizes everything that happens, and the welfare of others becomes less important. Any threat to health in the compound is only perceived in terms of how it can injure him.

The stress that was the shock of capture takes on new meaning when interrogations begin. Being captured and removed from the battlefield removes a warrior from the random, haphazard attacks of the battlefield and into a battlefield that is personalized and designed for one-on-one combat. These feelings of inadequacy will be preyed upon. Whether the interrogator compounds or allays these feelings is dictated by the psychological makeup of the prisoner.

Pandering to the captor to keep him happy results in Stockholm Syndrome. The prisoner starts to identify with the captor and even emulate behaviors and speech patterns. Stockholm Syndrome can occur in a few days.

What does this have to do with you? You aren't behind bars in an orange jumpsuit. You eat good food, not stale rations. You walk about freely and bathe daily. But you're in a kind of captivity. You wake up and wonder why you'll get yelled at today. You look out the window and dream of running

away—from school, from home, from your job. You choke on each meal that you have with someone who has locked you up emotionally. Captivity. You answer the phone and are too polite to hang up on a fundraiser. Rather than have to say “no,” you make a promise you can’t keep.

Clearly, you do understand captivity to some degree if you live in this civilized society. We are trapped by things our parents teach us. We are trapped by society’s rules. We are trapped by everything we know. For example, Mormons are typically very trusting people, so many Utah communities passed stringent laws against door-to-door solicitation to protect them from exploitation. Utah legislators didn’t want their neighbors “trapped” in their homes. When a telemarketer keeps you on the phone for any length of time, he’s preying on your manners. It’s not any different from what interrogators do when they use cultural norms against an enemy combatant.

A variation on this is how interrogators at a compound might manipulate societal norms on a daily basis to create a system of *displaced expectations*. This process may sound familiar to anyone familiar with the situation of a battered spouse. In the case of the prisoner, he might think that behaving in a certain way will buy him some relief from questioning, or earn him a piece of favorite food, because that’s what happened on a Monday. On Tuesday, that same behavior will lead to endless push-ups or name-calling. It is not substantively different from the woman who lives in fear every day because nothing she does seems to please her husband. He makes the rules and, try as she may, she can’t figure out what they are from day to day, so she “earns” a beating.

I could look at many more parallels between military and civilian situations in which interrogation tools cause or relieve stress, but the basic point is this: Stress is stress is stress. An altercation with an employer, a fight in a bar, an argument with your lover—your mind can’t tell the difference between that and gunfire. In mechanical terms, you are dealing with responses linked to self-preservation. When the conditions of captivity, as I described them here, are the same as those of a prisoner of war, your response is the same as a prisoner of war.

Go a step further. Any conditions that create unease, restlessness, instability, and/or unpredictability give you experiences in common with a prisoner of war. What if you came back from vacation and found that someone had rearranged your office, moved the coffeemaker, and put in a new phone system? You experience a temporary loss of control that may overwhelm you. You lose your ability to function at your peak because you move out of cognitive thought and into an emotional state, or *limbic mode*.

YOU ARE AN ANIMAL

Are you a primate, a lower mammal, or a reptile?

In *The Owner’s Manual for the Brain: Everyday Applications from Mind-Brain Research* (Bard Press, 1999), Pierce J. Howard discusses the three brains:

...the lizard brain was simple, geared only to the maintenance of survival functions: respiration, digestion, circulation, and reproduction. ... Extending out of the lizard brain stem, the leopard brain (now called the limbic system) added to the animal’s behavioral repertoire the capacity for emotion and coordination of movement. This second phase of brain evolution yielded the well known General Adaptation Syndrome (GAS), or fight or flight response. The third phase of evolution was the learning brain—the cerebral cortex. This third and most recent phase of brain evolution provided the ability to solve problems, use language and numbers, develop memory, and be creative. (pp.37–39)

I interpret Howard's categories as reptilian, mammalian, and primate.

When you use your cerebral cortex for language, calculations, and other logical functions, you are primate. Your limbic system, which enables you to experience and express emotion, belongs to your mammalian self. And the reptilian brain cares only about the basics: hunger, sex, survival.

As a person's stress level rises—even without touching or screaming—hormone production increases. It's the onset of the cortisol cycle. In short, two small glands near the kidneys called the adrenals, or "stress glands," kick in. We couldn't survive stress without them because they fuel us for fight, which can be verbal or physical, or flight to escape the danger.

The human peripheral nervous system contains two components for regulating conscious mind: sympathetic and parasympathetic. The sympathetic agitates the body and prepares the human for fight or flight; the parasympathetic is responsible for resting and relaxing the human body. See these as a sort of upper and downer set of controls for the human mind.

HIGH STRESS AND THE SYMPATHETIC NERVOUS SYSTEM

The sympathetic system engages in response to a perceived threat within milliseconds of the initial shock that triggers the cortisol cycle. Everything that the stress hormones (cortisol, DHEA, and adrenaline) are going to do to your body to prepare it for fight or flight happens in that sliver of time. The body, not the mind, decides which systems are needed for the perceived threat. These systems turn on at the cost of others that are deemed unnecessary. In rapid fire, the body takes these actions:

- » Routes blood away from the face and skin and to the muscles.
- » Diverts blood away from the digestive and reproductive systems.
- » Sends blood to the reptilian and mammalian brains at the expense of the primate brain.
- » Raises heart action in order to get this blood to all the right places.
- » Loses the capability to contract the bladder and expel waste.
- » Floods with glucose from the liver to prepare for physical activity.
- » Increases respiration in response to the heart pushing glucose through the systems and fueling the muscles with oxygen.
- » Heightens metabolic requirements, so the body starts to sweat.
- » Dilates pupils to collect data about the threat.

This is your mind at war.

There are inward and outward signs of this activity. Inwardly, the signs are the jittery, hypersensitive feeling signaling you are poised for action. Due to the lack of blood to the digestive system, you may get butterflies or a sick feeling. Your heart races with blood, leaving the skin so you get the feeling of a high core temperature and cool skin (that is, you feel clammy). Your breathing is elevated, but constricted, so your heart and lungs race. This increased metabolism—as much as 100 percent—results in you feeling flushed and hot. Your focus becomes narrow and your hearing directed to the target. You can hear your heartbeat. Your mind recedes into the primitive state and emotions come to the fore. This explains why so many people cry when confronted and angry. Don't perceive this as weak or fragile.

Outwardly, there are noticeable signs as well:

- » The body's decision to take blood from the skin results in a pallid complexion.

- » Being part of the digestive system, the mucosa of the lips and mouth have dramatically reduced blood flow; lips and other mucosa shrink, resulting in pale, thin lips and drooping lower eyelids.
- » The increased heart rate may show in the pounding of the chest or rise and fall of the shoulders.
- » Hands may shake in response to increased metabolism.
- » The increased need for air results in flared nostrils and audible breathing.
- » The eyes have focused on the cause of the stress and this can result in a squint or wide-open eye depending on the situation.
- » The brow clinches and draws downward. Lips tighten to a thin, colorless line.
- » Shoulders draw higher in preparation for defense or escape.
- » The body's increased need for glucose can start to scavenge from the mucosa and leave white residue in the corners of the mouth.
- » Elbows go close to the ribs.
- » Palms turn down and the hands close to form fists. In extreme terror this can go even further, resulting in the elbows drawing to the ribs and the hands moving to protect the face, in a reflexive effort to protect the area around the vital organs—ironically enough, leaving the top of the head unprotected.
- » The increased need for cooling causes the body to sweat, and in this sweat are massive amounts of byproducts; the fight-or-flight body odor is noticeable.
- » Ultimately, the person collapses.

These are the effects of the sympathetic nervous system forcing us into man's most primitive reaction: fight or flight. At this point, most of us function more similar to the leopard or other mammal than a human. We operate in limbic mode and only limbic memories are truly available for processing.

It's not a joke that dogs can smell fear, by the way. The body generates a complex odor—sticky sweet, metallic, bitter—from the kind of particle breakdown triggered by high stress. When I first got into this line of work, I used to think that the smell related to hygiene and diet. We'd send soldiers into the woods for eight days with no toilet paper or toothbrush and very little food. I figured the stink came from lack of washing and from ketosis, a process in which the body robs proteins and fats to make up for a carbohydrate deficit. Ketosis plays a role in the odor, but isn't triggered by bad diet. Stress makes the metabolic system ramp up and starts attacking proteins in the mouth and other areas where the material is easiest to break down. The result is that sickly smell—you can even taste it—that we call "prisoner funk." I've worked with prisoners and trainees from the United States, United Kingdom, Middle East—all over the world. Regardless of diet, the smell is remarkably similar from person to person. Now that you're aware of it, you would recognize it immediately. It's so thick, a single washing won't even take it out of your clothes.

The most serious symptom of high stress is collapse. First, the subject goes pale and has to go to the bathroom. Next, the body runs out of adrenaline, and cortisol enters the picture. Cortisol regulates blood pressure and cardiovascular function. If the adrenal glands madly secrete it, the person will eventually collapse into a fetal position and go into shock.

Practicing a sport or fight sequence under stress can make up for the fact that cognitive abilities are gone when high performance is needed most. This is why martial artists, for example, practice moves

with the aggression and sounds associated with battle: When the time comes, their bodies automatically know what to do. ~~This applies to any athlete who competes seriously.~~ Simulating the stress conditions of competition in addition to practicing specific moves prepares them to succeed even when their ability to think is diminished.

As the cortisol cycle continues, your brain regresses from primate to mammalian to reptilian. It dehumanizes, starting at a minimal level and moving all the way to reducing you to nothing but the basest cravings. Prisoners under stress lose their ability to function logically, and so do you. They also leak emotions, just as you do.

In *The Feeling of What Happens* (Harcourt, 1999), neurologist António Damásio points out the difference between “feeling” and “knowing that we have a feeling.” He suggests, that, by the time we know we have a feeling, it’s too late to do anything about it (p. 26). The body has already started giving responses to the emotions, whether they are primary ones such as surprise, or secondary emotions—Damásio calls them “social emotions”—such as guilt. He also cites the telltale signs of “background emotions,” which include states such as calm, a general feeling of well-being, and tension:

...overall body posture and the range of motion of the limbs relative to the trunk; the spatial profile of limb movements, which can be smooth or jerky; the speed of motions; the congruence of movements occurring in different body tiers such as face, hands, and legs; and last and perhaps most important, the animation of the face. (p. 92)

Damásio’s categories of behaviors that we all share point out where to look for the differences in the way people express stress. Just how “smooth or jerky” you move your arms, or how you twist your face into a disgusted look add variations to basic patterns. Add to that the genetics, culture, training, and so on that go into making each of us unique, and it becomes impossible to be certain what specific body responses mean—with two exceptions. The first exception is, if you know what a person does with her arms, hands, legs, and face under normal circumstances (the baseline), then you can spot deviations. As long as you know what to look for—and this is a big part of what I’m going to share with you in this book—those deviations can tell you for certain that she’s under stress. The second exception is a human being’s range of reactions to very high stress.

You can’t do much to counter or cover up flashing pupils, flaring nostrils, dilated facial pores, and sagging facial muscles—all the result of intense stress. You can easily see why people become unattractive when they’re under stress for a long time. The condition of the skin deteriorates, facial muscles lose their tone, lips get thin—not a good time for the prom. On the other hand, when someone is charged up sexually, blood flow increases to the mucosa. Lips get thicker, the salivary glands gear up, and the entire face takes on a softer look. You’re more sexually appealing, and your arousal is obvious. I’ve tried to explain this many times to my friends who complain that they can never tell if a person is attracted to them.

RECOVERY AND THE PARASYMPATHETIC NERVOUS SYSTEM

After the sympathetic dumps adrenaline into your system and reduces you to the mental state of a lizard, the parasympathetic levels you out by introducing other hormones.

The parasympathetic brings your body back to a state of relaxation. Systems that were turned off begin to function again. The body decides to allow those “unnecessary” systems such as reproduction, digestion, and waste removal to function again. Your body is now akin to a war zone after the war: It

clean-up time. You start to think rationally as blood returns to the primate brain. You realize that the result of that super-charged metabolism and overly active kidneys and adrenal cortex has filled your bladder to much higher than normal. You now have the capacity to contract your bladder as well as the urge to do so. All of the activities that you took for granted begin to return and you realize that your mouth is dry; you want a drink. The results of the adrenaline and heightened glucose leave your hand shaking; you become cognizant of this. Blood returns to your skin. Your face flushes and you feel warm. As the primate brain goes back to normal you start to realize that you were out of control. This preys on your need to conform to social norms and you feel guilty. In the truest of human fashion, you are a social animal and you need to communicate.

As the interrogator, I have seen that and taken advantage of it. I am here to help.

You've probably heard that someone red in the face is dangerous. Not true. Pale is more dangerous. A pale person is in fight-or-flight mode. His lips are thin because all of the blood's gone from his mucous membranes, his muscles are pumped, and he is ready to fight. When the parasympathetic nervous system kicks in, blood returns to the face.

Exercise

Dress oddly, and then go to a shopping mall or a well trafficked city street, and walk around. I don't mean wear a costume. I mean wear clothes that reflect bad taste—so bad that you don't feel comfortable appearing in public in them. When people look at you out of pity, curiosity, or amusement, take note of how you feel. Notice how your stress level shifts in response to others' reactions to you.

YOU ARE AN INTERROGATOR

I began this chapter by asserting that you have interrogation skills in your repertoire, but that you probably don't use them consciously or in concert with one another. I'll give you a couple of examples of why this is a fact, so you can move ahead with the confidence that you're building on existing abilities, not learning entirely new ones.

You routinely screen people to get various types of information from them—that is, you match your question to both your source and your specific need for information. What you probably don't do is evaluate information in terms of its strategic, tactical, or quick-fix role. In other words, is it important for your big picture? Steps toward achieving some goal? Or does the information just fill an immediate need, such as telling you where the bathroom is?

When I was forward-deployed, I would interrogate recently captured soldiers. I'd go after low-ranking guys and had minutes to find out the key bits of information at that moment, such as "What else is dangerous to us here?" Strategic information about battle plans couldn't be my focus, although I'd certainly put any indication that a prisoner had that knowledge in my report so someone could dig for it after we found out where the land mines and snipers were.

A low-ranking soldier, generally the easiest to milk, represented a source of this tactical "level-C" information to me. In business, the analogous person is the receptionist. When you enter a prospect's office, you connect with the person at the front desk and pick up tidbits about the company. Your level-C information doesn't give you weighty insights about the executive you'll be meeting, which would be level-B or -A information, but it does give you details that could help give you connect better with the executive or maybe even get leverage with him or her.

You routinely establish rapport with coworkers, prospective mates, and other new acquaintances. ~~By~~ doing so, you unknowingly use the same tools an interrogator uses. You ask questions about subjects you have no interest in—non-pertinent questions in the parlance of interrogation—to get the conversation started. The answers can also give you a feel for the person’s likes, dislikes, rate of speech, mannerisms, and cadence. It’s natural to reflect some of that back to the person; this is a form of mirroring.

Desmond Morris points out in *Manwatching: A Field Guide to Human Behavior* (Harry N. Abramson, 1979) that all people in all cultures will begin to adopt the body language of others in their small groups. Mirroring is a natural way to show a connection with the person with whom you’re talking. I watched two young people out on a date recently who were clearly too young to have been out on too many dates. The boy would lean into the table to talk, as if telling the girl a secret. The girl would respond in kind and then tilt her head to match his. No one taught them these signals of interest, respect, flirting, or however you would categorize them.

You can consciously mirror, too, to convey those positive feelings and raise the other person’s comfort level. As long as it doesn’t look contrived, it advances the process of getting the person to talk.

Questioning is natural for humans, too. It has been said that what makes us humans is the desire to explore. Who cannot remember a child asking “why?” When I heard Arab children in Kuwait doing the same thing, I realized it’s probably a trait that little kids have in common all over the world. Most of us never outgrow it; our curiosity constantly surfaces in the form of questions. The difference between that natural, spontaneous questioning and interrogation is the clarity of the questions. Interrogators design their questions in advance for a specific purpose.

YOU ARE A LIE DETECTOR

You will probably be a little mechanical when you first try out the techniques I’m teaching. After a while, though, you’ll find yourself sensitized to the signals of deception and stress; your new skills will be second nature. You’ll become a lie detector. And then, when people around you fall for the charisma of a devious politician, for example, you’ll be able to give them solid reasons why the person has no business tampering with your democracy. The techniques of interrogation can help you distance yourself from fuzzy auras such as “charisma” and ask critical questions that spotlight deception, or at least reveal inconsistencies. Even on a non-verbal level, you will pick up that a person is too slick, is too glossy, and therefore must be hiding something. Little bells will go off in your head that signal “Lie. Lie. Lie.” And people will pay attention to you because they’ll know you’re telling the truth.

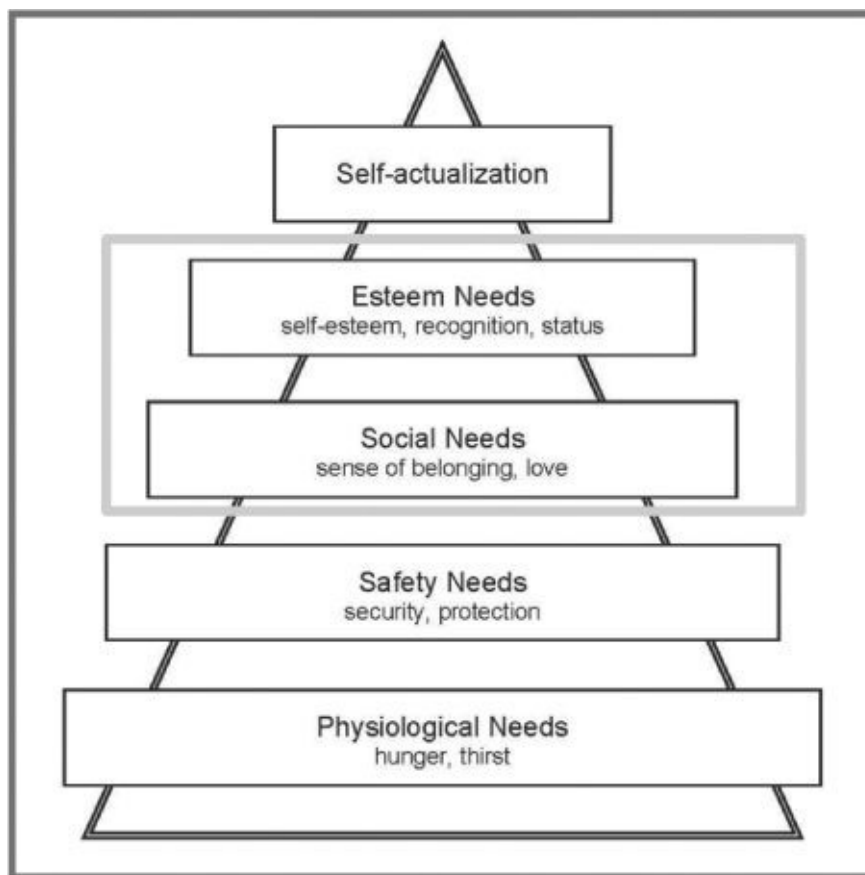
CHAPTER 2

WHY AND HOW DO PEOPLE LIE?

WHY YOU LIE

I have long maintained that people lie out of love, hate, or greed. That certainly applies to lies serving the human desire to protect or damage that is, to protect self, a loved one, assets, a reputation and so on, or to damage or destroy others or what belongs to them. Another way to talk about these motivations is in terms of basic human needs as defined by famed psychologist Abraham Maslow in his Hierarchy of Needs.

Let's focus on the middle bands of Maslow's Hierarchy: social needs (in my terms, the need to belong) and esteem needs (in my terms, the need to differentiate). A person lies to attract connection with another human being, gain the upper hand, maintain current status, or damage someone else because that person severed a connection or distinguished himself in a way that made the liar feel belittled. The desire to belong or differentiate reflects self-love. Here's a diagram, with emphasis on the middle tiers:



Jane works in a nursing home, where people need her physical therapy skills every minute she's on duty. Not someone who feels comfortable initiating contact with people, this is a perfect job for her; the connections are arranged for her. At social gatherings, she generally feels out of place and often lies. She doesn't contrive for the simple reason of deceiving people, but to make herself sound more interesting than she perceives herself to be. It's a social strategy. In short, Jane lies to gain acceptance. Once she gets that, she lies to differentiate because it gives her more clout. Good liars prey on your drives. At a Fourth of July party, Jane lied because people at the event were there for entertainment. They had come for a skydiving exhibition, spectacular barbeque, and fireworks. Her addition of a few

tall tales fit in perfectly. More importantly, they made *her* fit in or belong more effectively.

In addition to the “normal” reasons that people such as Jane would lie, there are several other possible reasons why someone would deliver a falsehood, whether through statement or omission of the truth. Before taking a closer look at a few these so-called “normal” reasons, consider the alternate possibilities about why someone says something that is inconsistent with the facts:

▶▶ **The game:** Humans have an endorphin release related to getting away with something.

For example, party crashers lie for fun. And even though they aren’t the only ones who turn deceit into a game, they may be the most recognizable. Maryann went to college class-reunion events in Washington, D.C., a few years ago, with the kickoff party being a reception in a private room at a restaurant. A short time after arriving, she noticed a very tall man that she’d known when she lived in the city. She immediately confronted him, “You didn’t go to school with us! What are you doing here?” He and his friend tried to smooth over their mooching, but once a few more people became aware of the party crashers, they embarrassed them out the door. Maryann asked her friend that she’d seen talking with the man what he’d said to her. “He said he was an art major and because I didn’t know any art majors when we were in school, I figured I’d just never met him.”

Think about the rush you get from any difficult thing you accomplish. That release is addictive. If you do it enough, it becomes a habit.

▶▶ **Brain malfunction:** Head trauma, disease-related brain deterioration, and mental illnesses of various kinds can cause a person to lie. As a corollary, they can cause them to not be able to discern if fiction is coming out of their mouth. A woman I knew in the Army had earned a security clearance prior to an accident that involved a bad head injury. After she came back to work, we realized pretty quickly that she no longer had a grasp of the facts. It wasn’t her fault, but there’s clearly something wrong with having an inveterate liar in Army intelligence.

Memories can also become locked away due to mental illness, with a person honestly asserting “I didn’t do that!” when he actually did do “it.” In 2009, Dr. Saroj Parida got a visit from the FBI one day in his home in Central Pennsylvania. They came armed with evidence and certainty that he had committed insurance fraud, which he confidently denied. He was truthful, in a way. The fraud was actually the work of Randy, Kumar, and Ravi, who are three of his alternate personalities. Even after his unusual disorder was diagnosed, Dr. Parida took full responsibility for his actions rather than trying to hide behind his illness. He had no idea that, for decades, he likely told lots of lies and never even realized it because the host personality is generally unaware of the antics of alters.

▶▶ **Distorted memory:** Human memory is tricky. Two different people can remember different details of the same event to such a great extent that their stories contradict each other. Eyewitnesses to a crime can be unreliable sources of information because of the combination of stress, point of view, influences from other eyewitnesses, and so on. No one is lying, but no one is telling the truth. Perception means reality.

All of this relates to the fact that memory is *contextual*. You may recall that Fred’s Christmas party last year had watered down punch and cheap appetizers, but then you run into Mary. “I can’t wait until Fred’s Christmas party—it was so much fun last year!” she says. “Remember that great conversation we had about jazz musicians?”

A day later, you run into John, who mentions that he just got an invitation to Fred’s Christmas

party. You note that you received yours, too, and you looked forward to going. “I thought you hated his party last year,” John says as he thinks there is a little part of you that’s a liar. This is the same phenomenon that takes over with soldiers who reminisce about how the war “wasn’t so bad” or “was pure hell” depending on what buddy they happen to be talking with. You can apply the same principle to memories about dating, high school, or your first job at a fast-food joint. For this reason, when we interrogate prisoners, we are very cautious to separate them until questioned. The mind does three things well: delete, distort, and generalize. The last thing I want is the well-meaning prisoner trying to tell me the truth with bits of his better-storytelling cellmates’ escapades.

The reason for this distortion can even be very simple: While you were thinking of the food at the party and how awful it was, you were likely forgetting the people who were there. Take into account the action that led you to focus on the food. You missed lunch because of a rough day at work, and rushed to make the party, only to find really bad food. So your perception was the food, not the guests. On the other hand, had you shown up not starving, the riveting conversation in the corner about jazz musicians might have led you to feel like Mary, looking forward to this year’s party.

In none of those cases is the person whose story has shifted—even 180 degrees—lying deliberately. There is no intent to deceive or mislead; the memory itself actually morphed because of the context.

Memory can also be *state-dependent*. This is a variation on the concept of it being contextual. In this case, it’s possible to store a memory while in a very particular state and then either have it disappear or become seriously warped when you’re not in that state. You walked your dog when you came home drunk from the party at 2 a.m. The next morning, you wake up to a call from a friend and the first thing out of your mouth is, “Can’t talk! I forgot to walk the dog last night. Poor thing’s probably miserable.” You aren’t lying—or at least you don’t think you are—but the next time you get drunk, you just might remember that walk with the dog. Returning to the state in which the memory was formed can trigger recall.

It’s most important to note that *shadowy memories* can involve a kind of lie as well. If you aren’t trained to think under stress and you’re raped or captured, your brain has the capacity to create shadowy memories. The limbic system transfers information into memory—that’s normal—but, if that happens in a highly emotional state, then the way you recall the memory could happen in unpredictable ways. A climate change or odor that reminds a rape victim of the event might elicit a shadowy memory, the details of which could be profoundly affected by feelings. A shadowy memory isn’t necessarily bad, however. The temperature of the air could remind you of your first skydive and lead to a story that isn’t exactly built out of facts, but, to you, that’s the way it was.

Questioning a person about shadowy memories especially soon after the event can prove frustrating as the person cognitively grasps pieces of the facts, yet “feels” the rest. As she tells the story over and over again, key pieces of it can morph, so that when asked, the “thinking brain” recites the distortion she has grown accustomed to; eventually, that distortion overwrites the original story. For this reason, I always say to listen to “war stories” for the storyline and not all the details. That is the reason I start all of my *real* war stories with “As I remember it....”

Returning to the so-called normal reasons why people lie, do a little experiment. Enter the search term “lying to” in your search engine. Here are some of the answers that popped up when I did it:

- » Lying to be perfect.
- » Lying to my kids about Santa Claus.
- » Lying to get the truth.

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