

Liespotting Summary

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1-Sentence-Summary: *Liespotting* teaches you how to identify deceptive behavior with practical advice and foster a culture of trust, truth, and honesty in your immediate environment.

Read in: 4 minutes

Favorite quote from the author:



As a child, your parents likely taught you to tell the truth simply because lying is "bad" or "rude". But what we primarily think of as morally poor behavior also causes more quantifiable damage, for example in business.

Deception costs American businesses roughly \$994 billion per year. That's 7% of the country's gross domestic product. At the same time, entering business negotiations in full honesty is unimaginable for the majority of people.

In *Liespotting: Proven Techniques to Detect Deception*, Pamela Meyer postulates that mildly deceptive behavior is a social adaptation. It allows us to coexist with others on an everyday basis. Problems arise when we take our lies too far and harm one another, for example causing them to lose money or betraying their trust.

In times when we are flooded with information, it is impossible to cross-reference every fact that reaches us. That's why the skill of liespotting is invaluable in navigating our decisions.

But how to detect deception is not all this book teaches us. Even more importantly, it offers advice on how to interact with people so that they tell us the truth from the start.

You'll also learn more about body language, the psychology of human emotions, and trust-building techniques.

Here are 3 lessons I've learned about spotting lies and encouraging honesty:

1. The way we express our emotions is biological, rather than imposed by culture.
2. We all lie, no exceptions.
3. Instead of pointing fingers at the deceptive behavior of others, we should focus on creating conditions for trust.

Get ready to discover a whole new dimension of human interactions, but beware: once you start seeing these mechanisms, you cannot unsee them. Let's go!

Lesson 1: Our bodies express our emotions physiologically.

Common sense suggests that how a person expresses their emotions is largely based on their culture. Yet, over the past two centuries, scientists have proven the opposite. **They discovered that *all* basic human emotions have universal facial expressions attached to them.**

The first hint that emotional expression is innate and biological comes from the work of Charles Darwin. As he traveled the world, Darwin discovered that people from various cultures were able to correctly interpret the feelings behind facial expressions on pictures he showed to them.

Later studies confirmed his hypothesis: human expression of feelings is a product of evolution and, therefore, physiological. Culture merely dictates our efforts to *control* this display of our emotions.

The implications of these findings are huge for anyone willing to train their deception-spotting skills. Because emotional facial expressions are physiological reactions, it is extremely hard to exert total control over them. This means that, no matter how convincing a story someone is telling you may sound, if they are lying, their face will most certainly give them away.

Facial expressions, however, are just one of three areas of communication where you are able to spot deceit. The others are body language and speech characteristics. Interpreting people's faces, however, is a great way to start!

Lesson 2: Lying is more prevalent in everyday life than you would imagine.

An average adult can distinguish truth from falsehood 54% of the time. That's hardly better than a blind guess. Therefore, at least once in a while, you are lied to without ever realizing it.

Actually...it's not just once in a while. **Some studies indicate that you are being lied to anywhere from 10 to 200 times a day**. But how is this possible? Aren't your friends, family, and co-workers trustworthy?

A big part of the lies we hear (and tell!) are so-called "white lies" – the ones we utter in good faith. This is the kind of deceit that helps us maintain relationships and fit into societal norms. When a colleague at work asks whether you like her jacket, you're likely to say: "Yes, it's gorgeous!" Even if you don't mean it. You realize that, in this case, telling the truth would probably do more harm than good.

We also lie for a number of other reasons: to protect ourselves or others, to increase our odds of getting a job, or simply to bridge the gap between who we are and who we would like to be.

But do we lie more nowadays than we did centuries ago? I mean, surely human nature won't have changed all that much, right?

Well... Since we nowadays rely on technology for communication, lying is a lot more prevalent. It is easier to deceive somebody on the phone or even a video call when we don't need to look them in the eye. A lack of physical contact, for example during business negotiations, opens more opportunities for dishonesty. Ouch!

Lesson 3: Most people prefer to tell the truth. Your job is to make it as easy for them as possible.

The last part of Meyer's book focuses on how to use your new skills in practice. Usually, it is not enough to just realize that somebody is deceiving you. What you really need is to find out the truth.

However, that doesn't imply playing the sort of detective we often see in movies: oppressing the suspect, making her uncomfortable, and practically forcing her to say what we want to hear. No. The approach Mayer promotes is best summed up in her own words:

"Back an opponent into a corner, and he'll almost always lie to you. Find a way to connect with him and he's far likelier to tell you the truth. Trust and truthfulness can't be forced; they can only be fostered."

The bottom line is to remind you about a good old rule: if you want to see a change in the world, you have to be that change. That's why the ultimate purpose of detecting deception is not being able to point your finger at somebody and say: "Hey, I know you're lying!" Identifying deceptive behavior is merely the first step.

The big goal should be creating a culture of trust and honesty – starting with yourself and the people around you. Your job is to provide conditions for this kind of culture because, in general, people prefer to tell the truth. They only lie when they think they have no other choice. And really, in life, we *always* have a choice.

Liespotting Review

Liespotting is the kind of book that permanently changes your perception of other people and yourself. It is not just about knowing whether someone is lying to you. This book offers so much more than that: deep insight into the world of human motivations, emotions, and desires. I recommend it to anyone who, well, interacts with other people. And, who doesn't?

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Who would I recommend the Liespotting summary to?

The 50-year old executive, who wants to better understand their employees, the 33-year old startup founder determined to play honest in the brutal business world, and to anyone interested in the psychology of human interactions.