

Behavior Dynamics Journal

A bi-monthly publication focusing on the Operational Application of Behavior



VERBAL AND NONVERBAL CUES THAT COULD INDICATE DECEPTION

STALLING: The research shows that generally speaking, when someone is asked a question and they are being truthful, their answers are **relatively quick, spontaneous** and without hesitation. On the other hand, when someone doesn't want to tell you the truth, they will often delay answering in an effort to buy enough time to come up with and fabricate what they think is a believable answer. When you're talking with someone, stay alert for stall tactics like stammering ("Uummm," "Aahhh," "Hhmmm..."), repeating the question back to you, asking you to repeat it, saying what do you mean? Excessive coughing, throat clearing, phony expression of "why would you ask me that or an overly dramatic response to a pointed question ("How dare you ask me if I'm carrying anything illegal! Are you accusing me? I won't even answer a question like that!") are all examples of stalling. Others try to buy time by launching a prolonged, irrelevant statements after your question is asked. This may involve extraneous information about how long a day they've had, how their car has been acting up or how hot the weather has been etc.; all which have nothing to do with the issue at hand!

CHANGING ANSWERS: When an individual gives you an answer to such questions as "Are you carrying anything illegal in your car?" "What are you doing in this area?" "What's going on here?", and you get a quick emphatic, nothing, No!!!) follow up with, "Are you sure?" If the individual backs away from the initially emphatic denial of any type of malfeasance to a wishy washy, "Well, maybe, but..." or "Actually, I'm not sure," red flags should go up. The delaying of qualifying an answer can be a key indicator of attempted Deception, possible guilt and an indication of buying time.

DIVERSION: Diversion techniques can be easy to spot and are crucial to note. This can take place in a variety of forms. Interrupting you, asking directions in the middle of your questions, or showing great interest in your work. You should always be aware of techniques used to take over the conversation, redirect the questioning or out right distract you from your original purpose. These techniques can be not so obvious or obvious in some cases with the goal being to throw you off.

QUALIFIERS: These are expressions that research shows are qualifiers before the answer is given. Statements like "to tell you the truth," "to the best of my knowledge," "believe me," "to be perfectly honest," etc. They are often used as part of an effort to deceive. If it's not the person's baseline use of those terms there is an excellent chance you are about to be lied to!

REPETITION: This involves the individual repeating his deceptive answer...like "No, no, no, no" or the long, drawn out "Nooooooo..." when asked a hot question. It can also involve the individual repeating a certain aspect of his story in a subconscious attempt to get you to believe it.

CONVENIENT INCOMPREHENSION: Watch for situations where someone who has had no trouble understanding you suddenly can't comprehend what you're saying. This behavior can be displayed through their inability to grasp obvious questions or a claim they suddenly don't understand English as clearly as they could moments ago.

BEING RUSHED: Someone transporting contraband is going to want the contact between the two of you to end as soon as possible. Don't be lured into pushy demands of, "Come on! Just hurry up, let me get out of here. I need to get going." He might be in a hurry...but for the wrong reasons.

INAPPROPRIATE FORGETFULNESS You should take note of memory lapses if they involve something that someone obviously wouldn't forget...like whether the guy in their car is a relative, their address or what they do for a living. If you ask a very simple question and an individual has trouble "remembering," you may be on to something.

BEING OVERLY POLITE: Is the person you are talking to being genuine or is their politeness laced with sarcasm? Be on guard of those who will seize every opportunity to be extremely polite to you. This can include an overly abundant use of "Sir" or "Ma'am", or an almost unbelievable level of willingness to cooperate with you. Most "normal" people will show some level of discomfort with a security or police engagement but someone with something bigger to hide than a speeding ticket for example, may try to convince you that he/she is "ok" with the police encounter, hoping the engagement will end soon!

MORE INVOLUNTRY CUES TO POSSIBLE DECEPTION AND ANOMALOUS BEHAVIOR

Nonverbal behaviors — there are some in the behavior community that believe nonverbal indicators are generally less reliable than verbal ones. However, when combined with verbal indicators such as saying "yes" while shaking the head "no" shows, at the very least, an inconsistency. Below are examples of nonverbal indicators.

Throat clearing

Face becomes flush

Begins to sweat

Trembling of voice or body *(not associated with a medical ailment)

Gestures conflict with verbal message

Changes in voice pitch, rate, volume, choice of words or dry mouth