

Sex, Men, Friends, Family *Heart & Soul*

The Rules Of Spotting A Liar



Worried you're being spun a yarn? Psychological coach Darren Stanton offers advice on how to tell for sure

Learn behavioural habits

To read a person's body language you have to be aware of their everyday habits – known professionally as their 'baseline' behaviour. This includes normal eye, hand and body movements during an honest conversation. You can then detect variations when the lie occurs. President Bill Clinton offered a classic example of this in 1998 when he stepped out of character and started jabbing the air with his finger as he denied having an affair with White House employee Monica Lewinsky.

If it's a man, keep asking questions

Men tell about three little white lies every ten minutes of social conversation, normally to enhance their achievements, or if put on the spot about something they've done and shouldn't have done or were supposed to do but forgot. Unlike a lot of women, many men struggle with details and will eventually hang themselves if you ask enough questions. Be persistent and listen carefully to his voice. Stress causes changes to vocal tone. High-pitch statements are the clearest sign he's unravelling.

Look beyond the obvious

A common belief is that if someone touches their face, scratches their nose, or covers up their mouth they are displaying signs of discomfort and are probably lying. Not necessarily. Body language experts now maintain that when men lie, body movement is reduced. The brain has to suppress the instinct to tell the truth, so men appear stiller because they are concentrating hard. Take accomplished liar Tiger Woods, whose lack of spontaneous

expressions during his public apology in February spoke volumes about what he was feeling. Tiger was tense and displayed all the emotion of a passport photo. It smacked of insincerity.

Study their eyes

In normal conversation, eye contact lasts three to five seconds before we look away. Liars are supposedly unable to 'look you straight in the eye'. But good liars overcompensate, maintaining eye contact for longer than normal to convince you they're telling the truth. They maintain eye contact throughout the lie, then look away after they've finished talking, giving a glance back at you to check if you've actually 'bought' the lie. Watch closely for this pattern which reflects a deceiver's psychological need to see if their victim has accepted the lie.

Prepare for a liar to switch the blame

A liar will often try to reverse the situation, putting the onus on you to prove they're lying. They may play the guilt card and accuse you of being unduly suspicious or ask why you don't trust them. So ask a direct question and look out for 'a contraction'. For instance, if a truthful person is asked, 'Did you go to the pub this evening instead of the gym?' they will reply, 'No, I didn't.' A liar will have no time to think, so will mirror your language and stretch out the sentence, saying, 'No, I did not go to the pub instead of the gym.'

For more information on Darren Stanton, visit darrenstanton.co.uk

Learn to read his body language



What's the worst lie you've been told?



STEPHANIE CLARKE
23, musician

'My friend pretended her brother had a girlfriend as she didn't want us to hook up.'



CLAIRE WESTON
26, brand manager

'A colleague took days off to care for her "sick husband" but had a freelance job on the sly.'



SARAH FLYNN
32, police officer

'My boyfriend let me carry on thinking he was heterosexual. We dated for months!'