



# Liar, liar pants on fire

## How to Detect lies with nlp

Alan Anderson, C Ht  
nlpSeminarSpeakers.com

**K**nowing who to trust is vital in business. And the ability to detect lies, even little white lies, can give you a great advantage in your business dealings. It's easy to do when you know a few simple NLP techniques.

I find that the best way to learn any new skill is to model the behavior of someone I know to be a master at that skill. So let's borrow some tricks and techniques from a master: your mom.

Most people find it difficult to pull one over on their moms. Your mother is especially good at catching you in a lie because she has seen every kind of mood play across your face and has heard the stress of a lie in your voice and watched your body language as you have grown up. Also you know that she can tell, and you know that she knows that she can tell when you're lying. So when you display a "tell" (in Poker minute facial and body movements, that signal a bluff are called a "tell") she sees it, hears it, and most likely feels it in her body. Mothers everywhere will attest to this truth. So don't lie to your mom; it's not nice and more than a little dumb.

In order to model Mom's behavior, we need to know what that effective behavior is. First a mother trusts in her ability to know when she is being lied to by her child. She pays special attention to the child's face, voice and body language. Finally she notices what she hears her internal voice saying to her, what pictures are generated by what the child is saying, and how she feels about what is being said. So let's break the behavior down into its learnable, component parts.

### Trusting that you know

Many people believe that one can never really know what others are thinking. To a certain extent this is true. However with the use of these techniques, you can sharpen your intuition and learn to trust your sense of knowing to your advantage by trusting that you can know. If that doesn't work for you, try employing what we call the "as if frame", which boils down to simply making believe it is true and behaving as if it were.

As youngsters, we learn to translate the body movements and facial expressions of our caretakers as an instinctual part of our need to be cared for. We also learn to translate the signals from our playmates to know if they will be cooperative or aggressive. As we grow up, we learn signals having to do with dating: the flip of her hair or the way he leans forward slightly in his chair. We also learn to pay

special attention to skin color and the dilation or contraction of the iris of the potential mate.

While we don't usually have need of this type of hyper awareness with people in our business or social world, our subconscious mind continues to track all kinds of details about the people around us all the time. You can utilize this ability to help you detect when someone is telling you the truth or not by simply knowing that you are taking in this information and allowing your subconscious mind to bring it to the forefront of your awareness.

### Paying special attention

A mother pays special attention to her child instinctively, watching for signs of good health and whether the child has a need that it can't verbalize. She learns to understand the tiniest signals from her baby. She pays attention to movements, posture, skin color and the sound of her baby's voice. She knows the difference between a fussy cry and one that tells her the baby needs changing or is hungry. This becomes a life long habit, one that she becomes so accustomed to that she may find it difficult to stop fussing over her children even when they no longer need her vigilance. And this is the reason that she instinctively knows a lie from the truth. Fathers also develop this ability, albeit to a somewhat lesser degree, unless they become the primary care taker of the child. Sorry men: even then women still have a greater capacity to multitask and perceive emotion built-in to their brains by evolution than we do, so you'll have to pay even greater attention to a speaker to detect a lie.

### The "tell" of a lie is in the face, eyes and body

It is also important to know what the tells or signals of a lie are. These are the things to watch and listen for.

The face is our best clue as to what is going on inside the brain. It tells us by its expression. We know when someone is discussed, happy, sad, interested, surprised and so forth. What we tend not to do is pay special attention to micro-muscle movements. No matter how hard a person may try to hold a "straight face" his or her subconscious mind will betray their inner emotions through micro expression. These are fleeting movements that might be missed when you are not watching for them. This is where our subconscious mind comes into play. If you remind yourself to notice them, you will become aware of these small but telling expressions.

The eyes of the speaker will tell you a lot about the truthfulness of what is being said. If someone is fabricating a story, their eyes will tend to flick to their right (your left). Sometimes this is just a matter of figuring out how to phrase what they want to say, but if it happens over and over they may be creating a story. If their eyes look down they are retrieving a feeling, up and to their left (your right) they are seeing something they have seen before but up and to their right (your left) they are creating a picture to tell you about. Known as eye accessing in NLP, a confident translation of eye movement takes a little study and practice but can still be an important tell.

The next thing to watch for is changes in skin color around the eyes. If someone is telling you a lie the skin around their eyes may lose color if they fear their lie may be detected.

The body language of a liar may also shift. Fear may cause the muscles of the shoulders and legs to tighten slightly in a fight or flight response to their untruth. Also a more overt shift in posture may occur designed to protect the speaker from being found out. These would be protective gestures such as shifting their body away from yours, crossing their arms, covering their front with their arms, or a evasive moves like jamming the hands into pockets. The opposite moves that indicate truth would be holding their relaxed body squarely to yours and keeping an open body posture as well as displaying the palms of their hands.

Pathological liars are harder to catch in a lie. The reason for this is that they are telling a story based on a practice lie and in their mind the thing they are telling you may seem true because they are looking at a “true memory”.

## Internal dialog, & pictures

Notice the pictures your subconscious is showing you as you listen to the speaker and pay attention to your internal dialog. Our subconscious is very vigilant; it keeps track of all kinds of information that you are barely, if ever, conscious of. If you doubt this, just notice if you are aware of your breathing. Having read the last sentence you probably shifted your attention to your breath. But that awareness will slip away quickly.

## Go with your gut

Lastly, and possibly most importantly, pay attention to the feelings your subconscious mind generates in your body. Body sensations can be our most reliable source of information. Just like those rough and tumble detectives in fiction, you can go with your gut. If you have trouble accessing your feelings just make believe that you do know what your body is telling you. Try saying, “what I feel is \_\_\_\_\_”, to yourself and then pause. Your subconscious will fill in the blank.

## Practice makes perfect

Now that you realize you can know when someone is telling you a lie, the thing to do is practice opening your perception. This sounds complicated, and it really isn't. It's simply a matter of reminding yourself that you want to notice. You can practice this open perception with a friend.

Sit down with a friend and practice telling each other lies and truths in turn guessing which is which. You'll be amazed at how often you guess correctly once you get going.

Take a page from your mother's play book and model her behavior. You'll be amazed at how much better you will become at knowing the truth from a lie when you hear it.

© 2009 Alan Anderson, C Ht  
nlpSeminarSpeakers.com

You can read other articles and find out more about up-coming events and seminars at <http://www.nlpSeminarSpeakers.com>