

PsychoBabble!

Psycho-babble: derived from two of our favourite words, we not sure if you will actually find this word in the dictionary. So we will go ahead and give you our interpretation of what this newsletter is going to be about!

The human mind is so complex, so vast and such an interesting study that all of us are constantly trying to learn more about it!

So, we the Psychology Club will search high and low for articles that would entertain and enlighten you! For this we have chosen Psycho-Babble as a platform!

"Happy reading !

Happy thinking !"

The Science of First Impressions (and How to Use It to Your Advantage)

Jory MacKay , Gawker Media, Jan 10 2015

If there's one thing I've learned over the past five years of working as a journalist, it's that success can come down to the two seconds after you first meet someone. First impressions can make or break your career. I've had key interviews go to hell just because something didn't *feel* right from the start. It's frustrating because it's out of your control and no matter how hard you try, once someone has passed initial judgment on you, there's almost no way to change their mind.

But it's not just journalists that deal heavily in the trade of first impressions—our happiness, success, and even careers are all based on how we get along with other people. But what controls the way we feel about someone (or the way they feel about us) within those first few moments?

Playing Well with Others

Despite what business classes or seminars might tell you about decision-making, not all choices can be made rationally. You might think you're just following your intuition but what happens in those initial moments isn't just coming from your gut. It's a type of unconscious thinking called rapid cognition that author Malcolm Gladwell describes as something that "moves a little bit quicker and acts slightly more mysterious than the deliberate decision-making style of thinking we're more accustomed to."

Beyond the immediate instinctual fight or flight response that occurs when we are under stress, rapid cognition is the ability to dig deeper and gauge what is really important from a very quick experience.

Thin Slicing Through Life: Making Decisions at a Glance

Rapid cognition plays a powerful part in our day-to-day lives. These are people with a powerful ability to rapidly parse through the huge amount of available information and decide what is most important without taking the time to engage in slower, rational ways of thinking. And they're doing it unconsciously. Psychologists have been calling this phenomenon 'thin-slicing' and studies have shown that what we perceive in just a few seconds might take months or years of evaluation with the rational part of our minds. As Gladwell put it in his book, *Blink*:

"Thin-slicing is not an exotic gift. It is a central part of what it means to be human. We thin-slice whenever we meet a new person or have to make sense of something quickly or encounter a novel situation. We thin-slice because we have to, and we come to rely on that ability because there are lots of situations where careful attention to the details of a very thin slice, even for no more than a second or two, can tell us an awful lot."

Navigating Strange Encounters with Mental Shortcuts

So how does our unconscious mind thin slice when we first meet people and how does that affect our impression of them? Well, we're not totally sure, yet. But what scientists have found out is that the unconscious mind is powerful enough to create a lasting impression of a new person.

In the 90s, Harvard-educated psychologist Nalini Ambady and her colleague Robert Rosenthal undertook a series of experiments comparing the ratings given to college professors by classes at the end of the semester with ratings that another group of students gave the same professors based only on three ten-second silent video clips shown prior to any actual lectures.

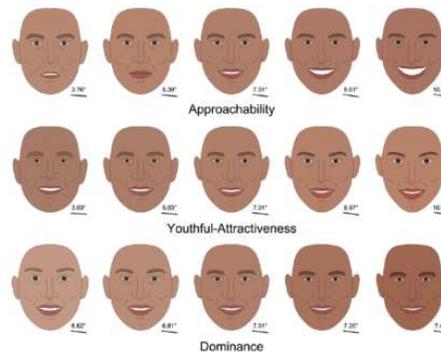
What the researchers found was that both groups basically agreed on how good or bad the professors were. As far as their performance ratings were concerned, the first impression gleaned from ten-seconds of silent video counted for almost as much as a whole semester's worth of interaction. But if we're not consciously and rationally judging people, what causes us to initially like or dislike them? Nobel Prize-winning author and psychologist Daniel Kahneman believes the answer lies in heuristics-the 'mental shortcuts' that we use to help us make decisions. According to Kahneman one of the most powerful mental shortcuts is one he calls What You See Is All There Is-the idea that when the mind makes a decision it deals only in 'known knowns' and largely ignores facts that might make the decision more complex.

The problem is, when we meet someone and we only know a limited amount about them, our mind looks to affirm those beliefs and ignores other complexities. We turn people into an embodiment of the few facts we know about them.

It's why 'so what do you do' is the worst question to ask when you first meet someone. Falling prey to these unconscious biases can have a lasting affect on your relationship too, as gathering more information about the person, in most cases, will only serve to reinforce our original, biased judgment. We believe what we first see because it's the easiest option-even if it ends up being false.

It's What's on the Outside That Counts

We have unconscious biases that affect what we think of new acquaintances but what's even more strange is that our appearance can immediately determine the way people think of us. A recent study out of the University of York showed that we associate specific facial traits with someone's personality. Faces that are more feminine or that naturally appear happy are consistently rated as being more trustworthy, while competence, dominance, and friendliness are also regularly attributed to certain facial traits. The study went as far as to create cartoon-like faces that produced predictable first impressions when shown to new participants



How to Make a Good First Impression

While it may seem impossible to get past these unconscious biases (short of reconstructive surgery), there are some ways you can help your cause. Preparation is key when meeting new people and certain actions can increase your chances of quickly getting into someone's good books.

Get Out of Your Shell

Studies have shown that people who communicate in an expressive, animated fashion tend to be liked more than difficult-to-read people. Psychologists call this the Expressivity Halo- the idea that we feel more at ease with people who are easy to read. It might also explain why you "hated that guy until you got to know him." When we feel shut out emotionally by other people we automatically attribute it to a sense of egoism when really it can often be racked up to insecurity or plain old shyness.

Find Commonalities

According to the Similarity Attraction Hypothesis, we're also more inclined to like people we have something in common with. When you go to meet someone influential find out what their hobbies are or what books or movies they enjoy. Connecting on this level is a great way to solidify a good first impression. And it can even help salvage a bad first impression. When we find out we share

something in common with another person we react on a reflexive level rather than an analytical one. Our mind may know that rationally we don't like this person, but we still can't help feel a sense of affection for them, which could lead to a change in our initial impression.

Learn to Listen

It's probably common sense at this point, but being a good listener can also help put you into someone's good graces when you first meet them. Much like sharing in any common hobbies or likes, showing someone that you care about what they're saying creates a lasting positive impression in that person's mind. Here's one of my favourite quotes from Chuck Palahniuk's *Fight Club*:

"This is why I loved the support groups so much, if people thought you were dying, they gave you their full attention... people listened instead of just waiting for their turn to speak."

It shouldn't take someone dying to make you a good listener, and if it does it's probably a safe bet to say you're not well liked. We may have been conditioned over the years to unconsciously judge others but that doesn't mean there is no way to give yourself a leg up when making a first impression. Understanding the weird unconscious workings of the brain can help to ensure you have a healthy start to any relationship.

What do confident people say to themselves before giving a speech?

Wednesday, 21 January 2015

Before you speak to an audience, can you first talk yourself out of feeling nervous? One step towards this strategy is to find out how confident people speak to themselves in their heads (their internal "self-talk"), compared with others who are more anxious.

Xiaowei Shi and his colleagues surveyed nearly 200 students on a public speaking course. The researchers approached the students after they'd given two public presentations on the course and were soon to give their third. The students answered questions about how much they'd engaged in self-talk in the preceding days, and about how much anxiety they feel towards public speaking.

The women tended to be more nervous than the men. Once this gender influence had been



accounted for, the students' frequency of various types of self-talk over the last few days explained 20 per cent of the difference in their anxiety levels. Specifically, the more confident students tended to say they'd engaged in less self-critical self-talk (e.g. chastising themselves about their poor preparations) and less self-talk related to social assessment (e.g. replaying ways people had reacted in the past), whereas they had engaged in more self-talk related to self-reinforcement (e.g. talking to themselves about how pleased they were with their own preparations).

In other words, the students who were more self-confident tended to be less self-focused and less self-critical in the way they spoke to themselves, and when they were self-focused, this tended to be with a positive bias.

This study assumes people are able to remember and recognize their own past self-talk, which some readers may question. Of course, it's also just as likely that anxiety triggers particular categories of self-talk, as it is that the wrong kind of self-talk fuels anxiety. Nonetheless, the researchers said their insights could help inform interventions aimed at helping people overcome fear of public speaking.

"As we know that high public-speaking-anxiety individuals engage in higher levels of self-critical and social-assessing self-talk than low anxiety individuals," Shi's team concluded, "instructors can intervene in the early phases of the speech preparation process by helping these students to attend to, recognize, and adjust the frequency and nature of their self-talk."

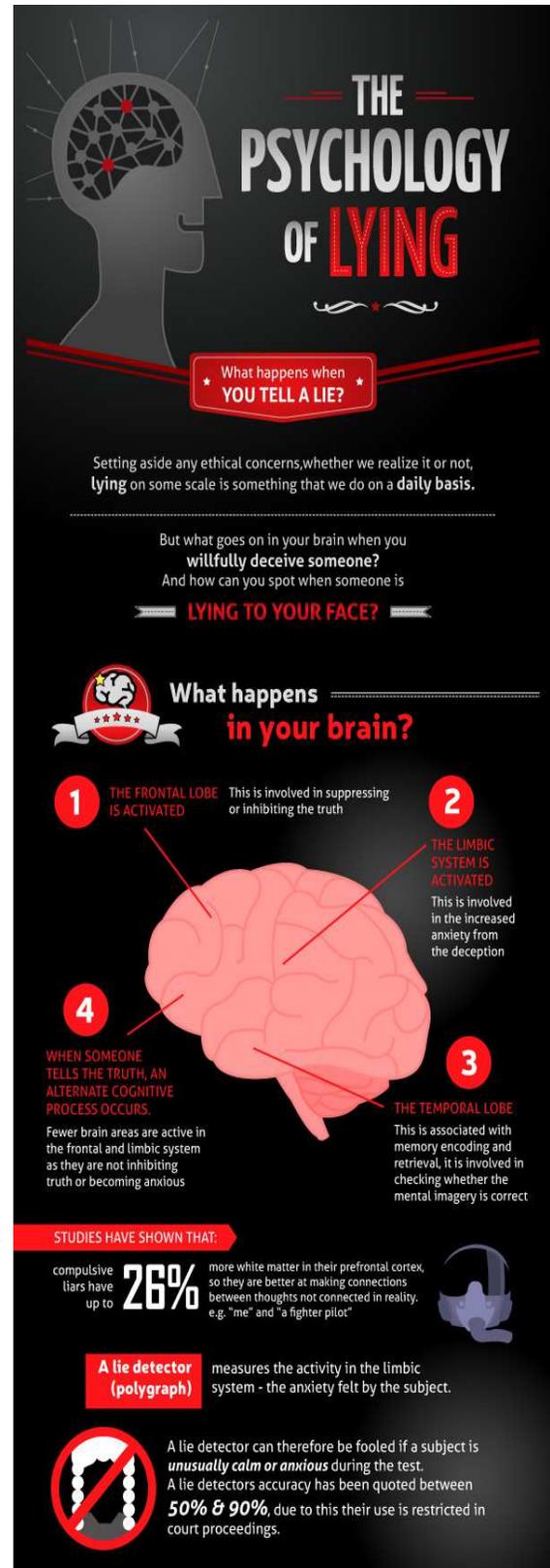
The Psychology of Lying – Infographic

How many people have you spoken to today? Do you know if one of them was lying to you? If it was a one-on-one chat then the chances are that the conversation involved at least one lie.

This infographic shows us exactly what happens in our brain when we tell a lie. From the little white lies we tell our mothers to the enormous porkies we reserve for our bosses, this piece shows us what happens and also how we can tell if we other people are lying to us.

When we tell a fib, 3 sections of the brain fire up. The frontal lobe creates the lie and suppresses the truth, the limbic system is involved in the increased anxiety from the deception and the temporal lobe, which is associated with memory encoding, checks whether the mental imagery of the lie is correct.

This process happens in one fifth of conversations that last more than 10 minutes and every other conversation between a college student and their mother. We also found out that 15% of people admitted telling a lie at work in the last month and, of that, 59% did not feel guilty.





Eye movement and lying

THE MOVEMENT OF SOMEONE'S EYES can tell you what part of the brain they are accessing



You can try and tell if someone is constructing made up information or genuinely recalling what happened by which way they look:



UP AND LEFT: Indicates visually constructed images (a purple buffalo)



TO THE LEFT: Indicates auditory constructed sounds (the highest sound of a pitch possible)



DOWN AND LEFT: Indicates feeling, smell or taste (Can you remember the smell of a campfire?)



UP AND RIGHT: Visually Remembered Images (What colour was the first house you lived in?)



TO THE RIGHT: Auditory remembered sounds (What does your mother's voice sound like?)



DOWN AND RIGHT: Internal Dialogue (As they talk to themselves)

This is the most common model but is *not the same with everyone*. Before relying on it, do some groundwork to see which way people look when creating or remembering information.



Daily Dose of lying

Most people lie *once or twice a day* - almost as often as they snack from the refrigerator or brush their teeth.



BOTH MEN & WOMEN LIE EQUALLY

A fifth of social exchanges lasting 10 or more minutes involve at least 1 lie



Over a week, people deceive about 30% of those with whom they interact one-on-one.

COLLEGE STUDENTS lie to their mothers in one out of two conversations



Who Is Lying?

65% of people think we have become less honest in the last decade, compared with 2% that think more honest



15% of people admitted to telling a lie at work in the last month - of that, 59% DID NOT FEEL QUILTY

79% of people think that most regard Personal Gain over Integrity & Honesty

94% of people think that Politicians are likely to lie in their job, compared with ...



92% for Business Leaders



91% for Celebrities



77% for Lawyers



27% for Doctors



How to Spot a Poker Bluff



How to Spot a Poker Bluff

Being able to spot a lie can be difficult but is an enviable skill

Poker is one of the only situations in which lying is encouraged and so it's a great way to go one on one with people who are possibly lying to you.



The neocortex section of the brain

which is made up of the Frontal and Temporal Lobes, is intellectual and *capable of dishonesty*. It's therefore unreliable in telling if you're being lied to. The limbic system however compels a person to react subconsciously to situations, these thoughtless reactions are very honest and can reveal a person's true feelings or when a player is concealing a bluff.

Establish a baseline

Is the person a pro or an amateur?

This may mean that they intentionally throw you off, or are easier to read. What is their normal behaviour? This will help you spot differences in actions that are caused by a lie.



Feet are the biggest revealers

Primitively our feet react to environmental threats first,

by running freezing or kicking, this happened instantaneously and without thinking. Wiggling or bouncing feet usually means a good hand, whilst a sudden freeze indicates a bluff.



Shoulder crunching



The stress of a lie creates tension in a person's shoulders,

you might see a slight crunch or roll in their shoulders to release this - if you're observant enough

Hand to Body Touching



Touching your face or neck is a pacifying action,

which means it helps calm us down during stressful situations. Watch for players massaging their neck, stroking their faces or licking their lips

Heavy Breathing

Increased blood pressure

due to the stress of lying means more oxygen is needed for the body. Watch for any slight increases in your opponents breathing rate which might indicate a bluff



High vs Low confidence Displays

The body language is very different between

someone who had a good hand vs one who has a bad hand. Wringing of hands or interlocked fingers is a sign of low confidence, whilst steepled fingers are indicative of confidence.



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