



Lying During a Negotiation



Even though most people associate negotiating with some degree of lying, it is hardly ever advisable to go for this strategy during a negotiation. As a professional, one should be well aware of the fact that **reliability** (that is, **reputation**) is among one's chief assets. Putting it at stake just for the sake of sealing a deal may therefore have undesirable long-term consequences that are just **not worth the hassle**.

The smartest thing to do during a negotiation is always to **study the other party first**. **Cast a bait and see whether or not he/she will rise to it**: for example, casually mention in passing to your new potential supplier that the reason why you're looking for a new one is that your current supplier may be rigging prices, then **closely observe his/her reaction**. The importance of observing during a negotiation session cannot be emphasised enough – suffice it to say that is incomparably more important to its success than taking actual action. Among the signals you should be alert to are **oversympathetic reactions**, **long tirades**, **overstructured sentences** and **sudden switches to impersonal pronouns** – in principle, remember that, the more sincere someone is, the less structured and emphatic their sentences are. If in doubt about the sincerity of your counterpart, don't hesitate to **put it to the test** as many times as you deem it necessary and, once you have **detected this weak point** of his/hers beyond reasonable doubt, the best thing to do is to find a way to exploit it to your own advantage. In order to be able to be such a lucid observer, though, you'll need an important thing: **the courage of trusting your hunches** and following them. Bearing in mind that **your time is the most valuable thing you have** and that you can't waste it on unreliable business partners or on giving second chances may help you pluck up the courage to become a **detached** and **effective observer**.

Do you want to learn more about how to spot lie signals?

Click on the picture for an **HARVARD BUSINESS SCHOOL ARTICLE** on lie detection during negotiations