**KCTL Interpersonal Communication Reading Group: Fall 2015**

**Meeting 1: Monday, September 21, 2015 in room M391 at 3pm**

**Discussion Questions for**

***Liespotting***

In ***Chapter 1: The Deception Epidemic*** the author discusses, “Are we really living in a more dishonest era? Are people fundamentally less trustworthy now than they were a century ago? Unlikely. Human nature doesn’t change much over time. The art – if it *is* an art – of lying appears to be hardwired into the human brain. In fact, people who cannot lie or spot lies are at a social disadvantage; there’s some evidence that this inability to deceive or spot deception indicates atypical brain development” (p. 11).

* Do you agree with the author that those individuals who are able to deceive are at a social advantage? Why or why not?
* Why do people think that deception is more of a problem today than it was in previous decades and generations?

In ***Chapter 1: The Deception Epidemic*** Meyer argues, “Two hundred ten billion emails are sent daily which is more than a whole year’s worth of letter mail. Three million images – enough to fill a 375,000 page photo album – are uploaded to flickr.com each day. Bloggers post 900,000 new articles a day …[This means that] Our reliance on derivative information and sophisticated hearsay is increasing … [Thus] we face the danger of becoming overly dependent on advice and information from people we’ll never meet, who have manufactured advice and information from people they have never met” (pgs. 16-17).

* Does the increasing social circle that social media creates increase the opportunities for deception or is technology a convenient scapegoat?
* As academic professionals do we suspend our critical judgments when interacting over social media or are we more crucial and discerning?

In ***Chapter 1: The Deception Epidemic*** Meyer argues, “No one can lie to you without your approval. The liar and the recipient participate in a fabric of mythmaking together. A lie does not have power by its utterance – its power lies in someone agreeing to believe the lie” (p. 22).

* In what ways do you recognize yourself participating in the lies that are told to you and why do you participate?
* Is this always a negative process – participating in the lie with the liar – are there instances where this is the best option for communication?

In ***Chapter 2: Deception 101 – Who, When and Why*** Meyer notes research that indicates that lying is learned early. Six month old babies will cry to get attention when nothing is wrong or laugh to delight the adults, eleven month olds would try to divert their mother’s attention away from their bad behavior and 90% of five year olds would peek at a toy they were told not to look at but none would admit that they peeked. Meyer cites Canadian researcher Kang Lee who states, ‘Our findings showed that even the parents who strongly promoted the importance of honesty with their children engaged in parenting by lying” (pgs. 29-30).

* How aware are parents of this contradiction of asking children to be truthful while at the same time role modeling dishonesty?
* Besides role modeling dishonesty, what is happening in the relationships between authority figures and young people that is encouraging dishonesty? Are there relationship elements we could change to encourage honesty?

In ***Chapter 2: Deception 101 – Who, When and Why*** Meyer notes research that says that men lie about themselves eight times more than they lie about others while women lie more to protect others’ feelings or to make others feel better about themselves. Women it seems are better than reading female friends’ deception efforts than are men with their male friends. Research also indicates that we lie in 1 out of 3 interactions with someone we are dating while we lie in only 1 out of 10 interactions with our spouses (though we save the biggest lies for spouses) (pgs. 31-32).

* Do you agree with the differences research finds in how men and women do deception? What do you think the reason for this difference is?
* Related research says that women suffer more emotionally and psychologically from being on the receiving end of lying. Why do you think researchers believe this and is it a valid finding?

In ***Chapter 2: Deception 101 – Who, When and Why*** Meyer gives four defining criteria of a lie including: a lie must include a false statement or appearance, a lie must have a recipient otherwise it is self-deception, a lie requires intent to deceive and a lie must have (take place in) a context of truth (pgs. 41-42).

* Do these criteria cover the full extent of what is a lie?
* What, if anything, is missing or left out of this criteria?
* Do you consider self- deception to be a form of lying?

Please join us for our next meeting on **Monday, October 5 @ 3pm in M391**

to discuss **chapters 3-5**