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

**Meeting 2: Monday, October 5, 2015 in room M391 at 3pm**

**Discussion Questions for *Liespotting* by Pamela Meyer**

In ***Chapter 3: Reading the Face*** Meyer cites Dr. Paul Ekman’s research, “Ekman found that the American students showed the same shock and horror whether they were alone or with other students. The Japanese students, on the other hand, kept their faces more impassive when they than they did when they were alone. Schooled to avoid strong emotion, they were more concerned with not revealing their emotions than the American students were” (p. 53).

* How should cultural differences, such as those described above, affect how we read people for signs of deception?
* Paul Ekman identified seven basic emotions (happiness, sadness, anger, fear, surprise, disgust, contempt) universal to all cultures and the facial expressions needed to identify them. Why are these emotions so essential to social life?

In ***Chapter 3: Reading the Face*** Meyer lists the nine clues to deceit including (1) micro-expressions (e.g., a fragment of a smile through sadness indicates deceit), (2) squelched expressions (e.g., freezing the face shows deception), (3) muscle patterns (e.g., scrunched eyes for true smiles), (4) blink rates increase in deception, (5) pupil dilation can show emotions that are concealed, (6) tears (e.g., question their sincerity), (7) asymmetrical expressions can indicate deception, (8) timing (e.g., true expressions happen spontaneously) and (9) durations (e.g., short durations of five seconds or less are more truthful) (pgs. 63-69).

* Which of these, or are there others, that you rely upon in your own personal relationships to detect deception?
* By publishing these ideas widely Meyer gives honest people some tools to help protect themselves from deception but doesn’t this also give liars more tools with which to lie?
* Meyer notes the importance of intuition. Is intuition a special sense or is it just the result of us reading these nine areas of people but doing it subconsciously, without thinking about it?

In ***Chapter 4: Reading the Body*** Meyer notes that actions can speak louder than words when detecting deception because “liars tend to rehearse their words not their gestures” and “stillness is unnatural” and can indicate deception. Meyer also says we should look for emblems or wanting to gesture a message but not speak it, illustrators or the expressions that accompany our speech because they should be as emotionally expressive as our words not less and mirroring because when someone is reflecting our body language back to us they might be trying to influence us (pgs. 75-83).

* How aware are you of the body of the other person who are communicating with and what it is doing? How can we become more aware?
* Do we think of listening to body language when we think of listening? Why or why not?
* How can paying attention to body language both enhance and detract from the quality of our interpersonal relationships?
* How can our emotions, states of mind and even just engaging in communication distract us from the body language we are meant to see?

In ***Chapter 5: Listening to the Words*** Meyer points out that how we structure our words can indicate deception such as - **parroting** (e.g., repeating the question), **dodgeballing** (e.g., ignore or deflect/question your question), **guilt-tripping** (e.g., guilting you for asking), **protesting** (e.g., “I have a spotless record”), **Too little/much detail** (e.g. “Jimmy what are you doing?” “*Nothing mom*!”), **bolstering** (e.g., “Let me be honest” or “I swear to God”), **distancing language** (e.g., “It broke” vs. the more truthful “I broke it”), and **euphemisms** (e.g., saying the softer “I didn’t touch her” vs. the more accurate “I didn’t punch her”) (p. 91-98).

* What do you look for in people’s words that make you think that they’re lying to you? How successful have you been with that approach?
* When people avoid involving themselves in a situation though they admit that something happened (e.g., “It broke”) but avoid personal involvement (e.g., “I was there”) or they use **euphemisms** that are technically true (e.g., Bill Clinton’s “I did not have sexual relations…”) but don’t tell the whole story (e.g., I engaged in one act that is technically not …) is this still lying?

In ***Chapter 5: Listening to the Words*** Meyer notes lie indicators in verbal leaks including **slips of the tongue** (e.g., misspeaking, verb tenses), **non-contracted language** (e.g., do not vs. don’t), **specific denials** (e.g., being specific “I did not intend to hide that file” vs. categorical “I’ve never lost or misplaced a file in the ten years I’ve run your office. Not on purpose or by mistake. Even if you asked me to get rid of a file I wouldn’t do it”) and **more disfluencies than usual** (e.g., eh, uhm, ah, er, sigh, cough, laugh, mmmm). She also says to look at potential liars’ **attitudes** (e.g., uncooperative and quick disappearing flares of anger), **vocal quality different from baseline** (e.g., monotone, pleading) and **story structure** (e.g., streamlined stories, told in strict chronological order, lacking sensory detail) (p. 98-108).

* Given that there is so much deception in the world should we ask if we are doing things in our relationships and in our communication that put people in positions where they feel they have to lie to us?
* Telling and listening to stories is a big part of relationships. Sometimes in the rush to entertain or connect with friends we are selective in the way we tell our stories? Should we worry about this as a form of deception?

Please join us for our next meeting on **Monday, October 26 @ 3pm in M391**

to discuss **chapters 6-7**