

You Deceitful Tongue!

Lying Journalists

Martin G. Collins

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Guy Christopher, a retired investigative journalist, published author, and former stockbroker, brings out an interesting characteristic of mainstream journalists in his blog post, "Media Study Warns: Don't Trust Us Dummies with Your Gold":

The astounding results of a groundbreaking, scientific study recently released confirms a lot we've suspected about mainstream journalists.

Journalists are different than the rest of us.

Researchers found journalists' brains just don't work as well as yours and mine. [This doesn't seem like a surprise for some reason.]

That's a polite way of saying journalists are dumber than you and I.

The study flatly says journalists have less brain power than others to "regulate emotions, solve complex problems... and think flexibly and creatively," although study findings say they are no more stressed than the average worker.

That means they understand less about what's going on than you and I. It also means they are not as competent to figure out what's wrong—or how to make it right.

There's one more stunner: the study found journalists have less ability to "suppress biases" than workers in other jobs and professions.

What? Isn't that part of the job description? [A curious thing.]

It certainly doesn't help matters that journalists stay a little drunker than the rest of us.

Researchers found journalists use alcohol more than average. The study concluded it is "likely" alcohol contributed to the study group's overall low scores.

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The London Press Club never meant to shoot journalism's self-image in the eye last year when it commissioned this scientific study by Dr. Tara Swart.

Dr. Swart, a neuroscientist and psychiatrist, educated at Oxford and King's College London, is on the staff at MIT, where she studies and teaches "team building" topics, including brain performance and stress management. Her pre-test protocols include physical and psychological analysis.

But Dr. Swart's work for the London Press Club was no short course. Her completed study of twenty-one journalists took seven months.

Before you complain that's not much of a study sample, you should know over ninety journalists initially signed up.

Some just couldn't go the distance, and gave up or flunked out.

Others were thrown out for using anti-depressants. That left forty making the cut for the study, but only half of those (i.e., twenty-one) sweated it out to the finish line. [They definitely don't stick to it, as a marathon runner must.]

In its own press statement, The London Press Club went from dumb to dumber trying to emphasize a positive finding. Journalists, said the press club, are sustained by strong beliefs in their work, and as a result, are willing to work for lower pay than they might make in other professions.

Press club honchos found it "surprising" that "journalists' brains" showed a "lower level of function" than non-journalists. The press statement laments that alcohol and brain power problems are holding journalists back, but doesn't address how those failings might influence their reporting, accuracy or honesty.

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A recently released Fox News poll found 65% believe reporters write fake news, making it up as they go along.

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So, what does Dr. Swart's study . . . tell us about the people society has allowed to corner mainstream news and information?

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One conclusion we can draw - while journalists aren't as bright as you and I, are no more stressed but are a bit more tipsy, and cannot comprehend bias as well as the rest of us, they can be relentless in what they believe is their exclusive calling to influence thought and opinion.

And they don't seem bothered at all that their life's work is not trusted.

Stupid people aren't necessarily liars, but liars are stupid and foolish. Psalm 52:2-5 condemns liars:

Psalm 52:2-5 Your tongue devises destruction, like a sharp razor, working deceitfully. You love evil more than good, lying rather than speaking righteousness. Selah. You love all devouring words, you deceitful tongue. God shall likewise destroy you forever; He shall take you away, and pluck you out of your dwelling place, and uproot you from the land of the living. Selah.

There is not a good end for those who lie, whether they are journalists or whomever they are in the world—any human being.

Are there often times when you wish you had a completely reliable, invisible lie-detector? Parents wish they had one when dealing with suspicious words coming from their child. We wish we had a lie-detector when buying a home or car.

In 2007, the International Journal of Speech, Language, and the Law published an article entitled "Charlatantry in Forensic Speech Science," which pretty much debunked the idea of machines identifying liars.

However, that does not mean that you can't tell when someone is lying. It just means that machines like polygraphs, voice analyzers, and software apps claiming to do this with certainty, are, well, lying.

There are many things that machines cannot do and at which people can excel. Only humans can compose music that will produce an overwhelming emotional response in the listener. Machines can cut down the number of job applications that an employer has to read, but only a human can sense the intangibles of hiring an employee who will be compatible with the organization.

Rabbi Daniel Lapin, in his May 10, 2016 *Thought Tools* blog: "Truth and Lies," explains

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how to detect a lie using principles from the Five Books of Moses.

Just as knowledge, training and practice make one a better composer and a better hiring manager, so they also make for better human lie detectors. Here are three of the most useful facts that the Old Testament reveals about distinguishing truth from lies.

1. Truth usually fits into a consistent sequence, whereas lies are more often isolated anomalies.

The Hebrew word for truth, transliterated EMeT, reveals this reality: It comprises, in sequence, the first letter of the Hebrew alphabet, the middle letter, and the final letter of the Hebrew alphabet. The message is that truth fits into the entire story from A to Z, as it were.

However, the Hebrew word for a lie, transliterated SHeKeR, looks like this: This word is made up of the second last, the fourth last, and the third last letters of the Hebrew alphabet.

[Think about the end of the alphabet. It is not the last three letters of the alphabet—it jumps around. It is the second to the last, the fourth to the last, and the third to the last of the alphabet.]

Since truth and lies are so incompatible, the last letter, having already been used for the final letter of EMeT, [that is] truth, cannot be used for falsehood.

[Since the last letter of the Hebrew alphabet is used in "truth," it cannot be used in the word for a lie.]

That leaves the next three letters, jumbled up to indicate that lies never go from A to Z but rather from Y to W to X.

[Isn't that interesting—how in the Hebrew, it actually shows that comparison between truth and a lie. In "truth," the first, middle, and last letters of the alphabet are found, and in a lie, it is the second, fourth, and third, which translates to y, W, and X in our alphabet—all jumbled up at the end. So lies are all jumbled up in the way the Hebrew word is made up, but truth is from A to Z.]

2. The 3 letters comprising EMeT [truth] each stand upon a firm broad base. Imagine them as

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solid wooden carvings. You'll see they easily stand upon their stable bases.

By contrast, the 3 letters of SHeKeR [a lie] stand upon a point. In other words, they are intrinsically unstable. Probe a bit...rock those letters and you should soon see if you are dealing with EMeT [truth] or SHeKeR [a lie].

3. The first three usages of truth, EMeT in the Five Books of Moses occur in one chapter and concern one issue—the marriage of Isaac. (Genesis 24:27, 48, 49)

However, the first three usages of falsehood, SHeKeR in the Five Books of Moses are diverse. They apply to different usages.

Genesis 21:23, for example, has Abimelech beseeching Abraham not to deal falsely with him.

Exodus 5:9 is where Pharaoh, while imposing heavier work on the children of Israel, told them to “not regard false words” from Moses.

Exodus 20:13 [The Ninth Commandment] says we must NOT bear false witness.

So, truth is single in its direction and consistency, whereas a lie jumps all over the place and has different meanings.

The Old Testament points out that there is only one way of telling the truth but many ways of lying. This beautiful idea is even embedded in the English language. We might ask a child, "Are you telling me THE truth?" but we would usually say, "Are you telling me *a lie*?" There is only one truth, but many lies.

In other words, we tell the truth completely naturally. However, we lie in countless different ways as we assume the different personalities of each lie.

So, apply these concepts to become a more effective human lie detector:

1. Determine if the story fits into a context. Are you being given a sequence from A to Z that makes sense? Lies don't make sense.
2. Rock the story a bit; probe here and push there. If the story you're being told starts to wobble like letters standing on points, you have your answer.
3. Develop alertness to the speaker's base line truth-telling mannerisms. What is the one way

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this speaker tells the truth? Now watch for any departures from this base line. Whether as a parent trying to raise upright children or as an effective business professional, you are sure to put biblical wisdom's lie-detector techniques to excellent use.

Each of us must question the shortcomings of all news and information, place confidence only where it is earned, and absolutely trust only the Word of God, which is wisdom from above. Then we won't be taken for a ride with the lies that are just flying around this nation. Someday, it may come to a point where we don't know if there is any truth to anything; after all, we in post-truth America.