

Experiential Exercise

Who Can Catch a Liar?

Earlier in the chapter we discussed how people determine emotions from facial expressions. There has been research on whether people can tell whether someone is lying based on facial expression. Let's see who is good at catching liars.

Directions:

Split up into teams, and follow these instructions:

1. Randomly choose someone to be the team organizer. Have this person write down on a piece of paper "T" for truth and "L" for lie. If there are, say, six people in the group (other than the organizer), then three people will get a slip with a "T" and three a slip with an "L." It's important that all team members keep what's on their paper a secret.
2. Each team member needs to come up with a true or false statement depending on whether he or she holds a T or an L slip. Try not to make the statement so outrageous that no one would believe it (for example, "I have flown to the moon").
3. The organizer will have each member make his statement. Group members should then examine the person making the statement closely to try to determine whether he is telling the truth or lying. Once each person has made his statement, the organizer will ask for a vote and record the tallies.
4. Each person should now indicate whether the statement was the truth or a lie.
5. How good was your group at catching the liars? Were some people good "liars"? What did you look for to determine if someone was lying?

Ethical Dilemma

Is There an Emotional Double Standard for Men and Women at Work?

Although we all have emotions, norms moderate the display of emotions at work. You might wonder whether this informal rule applies more to one gender than another. Are there norms against men displaying “feminine” emotions such as compassion or tearfulness, and are women discouraged from displaying “masculine” emotions such as angry hostility or bravado?

Although evidence continues to accumulate, there is some support for existence of this double standard—at least for the few emotions that have been studied. Research consistently shows that displays of anger raise men’s status and lower women’s. One study found female managers who displayed anger were viewed as having an angry personality (“She’s a witch,” “She’s out of control”), whereas men’s anger was attributed to external circumstances (“He was under pressure,” “His colleague’s behavior caused his anger”).

What about crying at work? Stereotype theory would suggest that crying hurts men more than women, but that does not appear to be the case. A Penn State study found that crying on the job was more damaging to a woman’s career than a man’s.

These studies suggest that, to some degree, women are in a no-win situation. They are expected to be more emotional than men, but when they show those emotions they are punished for it.

Questions

1. Nancy Albertini, chairwoman of an executive search firm, said flatly: “Tears don’t work in the workplace.” On the other hand, Tory Johnson, CEO of a New York recruitment services firm, thinks crying at work is natural and people should be themselves. She says: “You have to let people know you can react naturally to a situation.” Whose advice do you think is right?

Answer: The answer to this question will depend greatly on a student’s opinion. In a Web article <http://www.womensmedia.com/work/193-there-is-no-crying-in-business.html> published in October 2009, Linda Poverny and Susan Picascia wrote, “the workplace is one of those environments where most tears are viewed as inappropriate and can have negative or detrimental effects on performance reviews, promotions, and executive presence. In other words, tears make us look bad and lead to a personal undermining of our sense of competence and confidence. As Lois Frankel notes in her book, *Nice Girls Don’t Get the Corner Office*, most women know they shouldn’t cry at work, but there are times when you can’t help it.”

2. If one of your coworkers cried at work, would it influence your opinion of him or her? What factors might be relevant to your appraisal?

Answer: Again, the response by students will vary greatly based on their personal opinions. Factors that might be relevant to an appraisal of someone who cries at work could include the type of situation leading to the behavior, the degree of emotion elicited, the closeness of a person affected by the situation and the degree of anger produced by the situation.

3. If you were concerned about a possible no-win situation for women displaying emotions at work, what specific things might you do to change the culture if you were in charge?

Answer: Poverny and Picascia, <http://www.womensmedia.com/work/193-there-is-no-crying-in-business.html>, recommend five concepts for managing the emotional environment in the organization that are closely related to the chapter's discussion of Emotional Intelligence.

1. Anticipate situations when possible. Not all situations that bring tears to our eyes are the same. Some emotionally charged encounters can be anticipated. In these instances it is extremely useful to spend time rehearsing various responses with someone else. Be prepared. Use what you know about the person and situation to construct likely scenarios. And practice. If you can hear yourself responding to what you fear most, you will lessen your anxiety and defuse your fear while developing confidence that you can respond effectively.

2. Increase your self-awareness. Women often cry without really knowing why. We cry when, actually, we are angry. Devote some energy and time to identifying your feelings more accurately. The more able you are to distinguish one feeling from another, the more you will feel able to control tears. You will find yourself less overwhelmed by feelings and thereby less likely to cry.

3. Cultivate a sense of optimism—things generally work out. Women often cry when they feel overwhelmed with work, unrecognized, or anxious and fearful about their performance. If this is you, remember, crying will not make a dent in what is really wrong. Make a list of the actual and perceived issues and problems creating your feelings. Seek out others such as a mentor, outside friend, business coach or networking group. Use them to assist with gaining a broader perspective that includes a healthy dose of optimistic alternatives. Few things in the workplace are life and death issues. Back up and give yourself some perspective.

4. Compartmentalize. If you well up frequently or easily cry at the office, your personal life may be intruding on your business life. Although somewhat artificial, it is important to create and then maintain a boundary between your personal and professional worlds. Being at work can be a great diversion. Think of work as a rest stop from the personal issues. Give yourself permission to focus on something other than your personal life. Away from the office, seek support and help from friends, family, religious leaders, a psychotherapist, family counselor, or the employee assistance program. Don't forget that it took time for the problem to develop; it will take time to solve.

5. Acknowledge your feelings or excuse yourself. If you find yourself starting to cry when you don't want to, say, "As you can see, *I feel strongly about this*." Let's focus on how we might get along better through this tough time." Or, if you're feeling you can't gain control—say, "As you can see *I feel strongly about this*. I'd like to take a time out and talk about it again later. I appreciate your understanding." Then leave and book another appointment at a later time.

Source: V. L. Brescoll and E. L. Uhlmann, "Can an Angry Woman Get Ahead?" *Psychological Science* 19, no. 3 (2008), pp. 268–275; S. Armour, "Tears at Work Not Recommended," *USA Today* (January 18, 2008), p. 9B; and L. R. Warner and S. A. Shields, "The Perception of Crying in Women and Men: Angry Tears, Sad Tears, and the 'Right Way' to Cry," in U. Hess and P. Philippot, Pierre (eds.), *Group Dynamics and Emotional Expression* (pp. 92–117), New York: Cambridge University Press, 2007.