



Student Cognitions: Trust Me, I'm Lying

Chelsea Vith

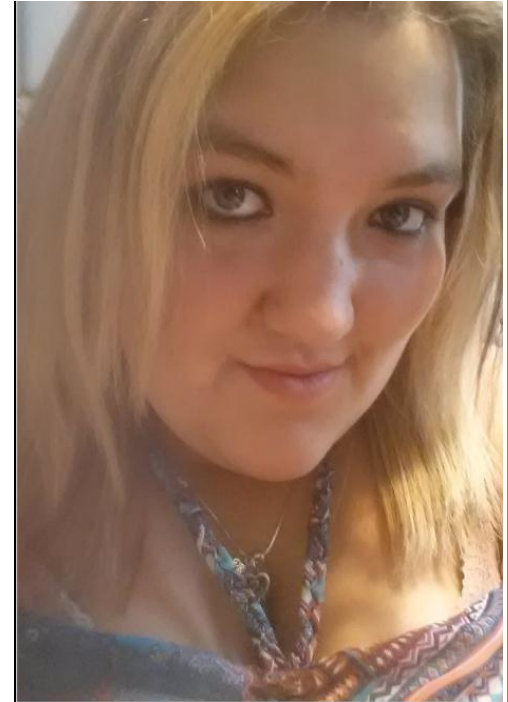
Why is it that in the 21st century we find ourselves lying more and more? Not even just to our peers, family, or colleagues; but to ourselves also. We constantly find ourselves lying to ourselves and others, but do we consciously do this?

I have heard the claim that one out of every five people lie at least once during every single interaction. If this claim is to be believed, then an average person will lie, or be lied to, as much as 100 times per day!

Why do we lie? We may lie to protect ourselves and others. What do we do when our current love interest seems uninterested? We tell ourselves that we are too good for them; this is self-protection. Self-protection is when we twist the truth to put ourselves forward and shed some positive light on our feelings.

Sometimes we may not even realize that we are creating a lie. When you are telling a story about a fight you had with your parents, do you only tell your version of the story? If you do, then you are lying by controlling your response. Very similar to omission and leaving out details where you look less desirable, controlling your response is the type of lying that we probably do on an unconscious level.

How do we stop lying? Stop listening to our inner voice! All the lies that shade the truth often come from our subconscious, so ignoring that inner voice seems like a good start.



Practice being honest with people. People will admire that you are open and truthful about your life. If you find yourself guilty of lying in any type of way, remember there are others like you out there; but it is up to you to reign in your fantasies and align them with reality.

Resources

Firestone, L. (2013, 09 23). Why we lie and how to stop. *Psychology Today*.

<http://www.psychologytoday.com/blog/compassion-matters/201309/why-we-lie-and-how-stop>.

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Important Dates

- ◆ Fall Finals: 12-9-2013
- ◆ Winter Break: 12-24-2013
- ◆ Spring Semester: 1-13-2014
- ◆ MLK - No Classes: 1-20-2014
- ◆ Deadline to Apply for May Graduation: 1-27-2014
- ◆ Spring Break: 3-10-2014
- ◆ Summer Registration Starts: 3-24-2014
- ◆ Fall Registration: 4-15-2014
- ◆ Easter (no classes): 4-18-2014

Psychology FACT or Psychology MYTH? (answers page 4)

1. Subliminal messages can persuade people to purchase products.
2. Adolescence is inevitably a time of psychological turmoil.
3. Individuals commonly repress memories of traumatic experiences.
4. Students learn best if teaching styles are matched to learning styles.
5. Ulcers are caused primarily or entirely by stress.
6. It's better to express anger at others than to hold it in.
7. Criminal profiling is helpful in solving cases.



Alumni Interview with Karianne Szpak (class of 2010)

By Lauren Szpak

Karianne Szpak graduated from RMU with a Bachelor of Science degree in psychology, clinical track, in 2010. She is currently living in Bradenton, Florida and is going to graduate school.

Lauren Szpak is currently a student in the psychology program at RMU and is Karianne's sister.

Ψ: Where do you go to school and what Master's program are you enrolled in?

KS: I go to school at Nova Southeastern University in Fort Lauderdale, Florida and I am in their Psy. S. Specialist Program for school psychology. I am also finishing up my final class towards BCBA certification, a certificate for Applied Behavior Analysis.

Ψ: How did you decide where you wanted to go to Grad school?

KS: It can definitely be a lengthy process deciding where you want to go to grad school. I think it is important to research a lot of different programs so you know what's out there. I did a lot of research when I was applying and I came across NSU, which has very strong psych programs. I was interested in NOVA because they offer their own psych clinic that allows students to gain relevant hands-on experience. I felt that I needed to branch out and go to a new area, and it has been beneficial to me on a personal and professional level.

Ψ: Upon entering graduate school, did you feel that your education at Robert Morris helped to prepare you?

KS: Absolutely, I truly feel that RMU prepared me for where I am now. I feel that I received a very solid education and I was able to feel confident in my understanding and application of the psychological material I learned. My cohort consisted of peers from very prestigious schools, and the foundation and preparation RMU gave me clearly put me ahead of them in the field of psychology.

Ψ: What made you interested in school psychology?

KS: I became interested in school psychology because I really enjoy working in the school system. However,



I wanted to take a path that would allow me to use my psychological training. School psychology involves both of these areas and is a perfect fit for me.

Ψ: I know you are a full time Graduate student, are you currently working in the field?

KS: Yes, I am a behavior therapist and provide ABA therapy to children with autism spectrum disorders. Prior to that, I worked in a Pre-K verbal behavior classroom in an elementary school with children that have autism.

Ψ: What are your future goals in the field of psychology?

KS: In August 2014 I will start my internship in a nearby school district. Upon graduation I hope to work in an elementary school as a school psychologist.

Ψ: What advice can you offer to psychology students at Robert Morris today?

KS: I would recommend psychology students to stay with it if they have a passion for psychology. I recommend going to graduate school because it will give you so many more opportunities to grow. Also, you are given experiences that you might not have otherwise and it shapes who you will become in the future.

"The foundation and preparation RMU gave me clearly put me ahead of my cohort in grad school."

New Psi Chi Members!

- ◆ Sarah Boward
- ◆ Trisha Bubenheim
- ◆ Alexandria Cox
- ◆ Charlsia Davenport
- ◆ Angelina Gasparo
- ◆ Alexxis Palumbo
- ◆ Dr. Mary Ann Rafoth
- ◆ Aubree Ray
- ◆ Rachel Ricciardulli
- ◆ Alexandra Salerno
- ◆ Catherine Scherer
- ◆ Stephanie Sims
- ◆ Kylie St. Louis
- ◆ Lauren Szpak
- ◆ Jessica Tanigawa
- ◆ Beth Trill
- ◆ Chelsea Vith
- ◆ Stacy Wade

Complete the Psychology Joke!

(Fill in the blank with the funniest word you can think of!)

A psychiatrist was conducting a group therapy session with four mothers and their kids.

"You all have obsessions!"

To the first mother he said, "You are obsessed with eating. You named your daughter Candy."

Turning to the next mom,

"Your obsession is money. Again, it manifests itself in your child's name, Penny."

He turned to the third mom.

"Your obsession is alcohol; your child's name is Brandy."

At this point, the fourth mom got up, took her little boy by the hand and whispered, "Come on, _____, this is stupid, we're going home."

Faculty Cognitions: *Yak Shavings*

Dr. Wheeler

Yak Shaving: paraphrased from http://en.wiktionary.org/wiki/yak_shaving:

- 1 Engaging in an APPARENTLY USELESS activity which actually helps you get the desired outcome.
- 2 Engaging in an ACTUALLY USELESS activity which does not help you get the desired outcome.

The idea of yak shaving comes from the episode of the cartoon *Ren & Stimpy* explaining the holiday of Yaksmas. In this cartoon, one of the characters is running around the house



engaging in frantic activity which is supposed to prepare the house for the arrival of the Gilded Yak in its enchanted canoe.

When all preparations are done, the Yak will pop up through the bathtub drain and find shaving supplies all laid out for it by the bathroom sink. In its delight, the Yak will shave and leave a coating of Yak shavings on the sink bowl for you to discover in the morning.

There are three things this story brings to light.

- (1) How many times in your life do you engage in activities where the goal is something as silly as the obtainment of yak shavings?
- (2) How many times in your life are you frantically running around doing things that you think will get you toward your goal but actually have no bearing on your desired outcome?
- (3) How many times in your life are

you frantically running around doing things that appear to have no value towards the outcome but actually do get you to your goal?

Let's reflect on the first point. Are your goals like Yak shavings? Are you frantically trying to get things done even though the final goal is silly?

It is important to evaluate your goals before you take them on. When I was an undergraduate, I interviewed professors to decide with whom I wanted to do research. One of them gave me this piece of advice, *"the 20's are a time when you will come up with a research project that will keep you busy for the rest of your life."*

What I discovered in graduate school was that it only took five minutes to come up with a research idea that would keep me busy for the rest of my life. It's not hard coming up with ideas. It's not hard generating goals. But, as you generate your goals, it is important to reflect on your goals. Is that goal you are about to commit to something you really want or is it something silly like Yak shavings?

"It is important to evaluate your goals before you take them on."

On the other hand, at the end of the cartoon, the character was thrilled that he got Yak shavings. Maybe the goals that look silly to others might be good goals for you. After all, it's *your* goal, it's *your* life, and if *you* want yak shavings, go for it! And, if you are going to go for the yak shavings, become the best yak shavings collector you can possibly be!

If you become a yak shavings expert, there will be somebody in the world who will pay you for those yak shavings. And if you shout your expertise in collecting yak shavings from every mountain top, that person will find you.

Have a Merry Yaksmas!

RMU Psychology Club Update (Emily Brazeau)

The RMU Psychology Club is a great way for ANY student interested in psychology - regardless of major - to get involved at Robert Morris University. You might even know or share classes with some of our club officers: Emily Brazeau and Jon Duong are the current co-presidents, Diane Gorog is the club secretary, and Alyssa Cass is the club treasurer. We are also fortunate to have Dr. Monda as our faculty advisor!

So far this semester the RMU Psychology Club has accomplished a community service project (with *Hope Grows*), participated in RMU's mural paintings, and presented *Identity* for a movie and discussion night. We also hosted the annual Psycho-Social (this year's theme was to make it a costume/Halloween party) which turned out to be a great way to mingle with other psychology majors and psychology professors.

The RMU Psychology Club looks forward to having another movie night soon, along with developing campus awareness of autism by coming up with Autism Awareness posters to place on various locations around campus. We are also planning to arrange study groups, and host panel speakers (e.g., last year we had an excellent career development panel of some of the psychology faculty along with Dean Rafoth to discuss graduate school, etc.)!

If you are interested in becoming involved in the RMU Psychology Club (even if you cannot make it to all of our meetings), please contact one of the co-presidents; either Emily Brazeau (ehbst1@mail.rmu.edu) or Jon Duong (jtdst6@mail.rmu.edu).

Psi Chi FYI

The symbols used for Psi Chi (ΨΧ) come from two Greek words: "Psyche" [psy-key], to symbolize enrichment of the mind, and "Cheires" [ky-race], to symbolize fellowship and research.

Titicut Follies (84 minutes)

Dr. Paul



A 1967 film-documentary directed by Frederick Wiseman about the patient/inmates of Bridgewater State Hospital. Located in Massachusetts, this institution for the criminally insane is still in operation today, housing nearly 400 patients. The film provides a brief glimpse of life in the facility which some may find disturbing (public humiliation; forced feeding; staff bullying).

Interestingly, there is no narration to this film. Viewers are left to form their own opinions and conclusions about what they observe. (If you get the chance to see this documentary [ask Dr. Monda], you will discover why the film was given the title it has.)

Probably due more to the upsetting nature of how patients were treated

than their stated (and contested) claim regarding violations of privacy, the Massachusetts government tried to have the film banned from release. The Massachusetts Superior Court eventually prevented the film's distribution calling for the destruction of all copies.

However, following appeal, the ban was partially lifted; doctors, lawyers, judges, health-care professionals, social workers, and students in these and related fields were the only persons allowed to view the documentary. These events represent the first known instance in American history of a film being banned from general distribution for reasons other than obscenity, immorality or national security. By 1991, the Superior Court lifted the restrictions allowing for open release.

Optical Illusion: The Teeter-Totter Seesaw

Charlsia Davenport

The image below is of a see saw better known as a "teeter totter" in which on side goes up and one down.

Over to the right, you see two more versions of the same configuration (labeled A and B). One obvious difference, though, is that there are now some diagonal lines filling the

beam and the base in opposing directions.

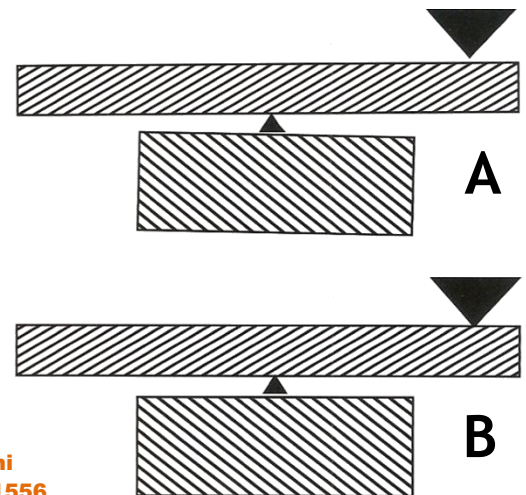
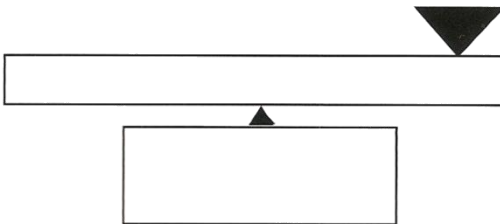
Which of the two (A or B) appears to be "off balance" and which seems to maintain the same balance as the original unfilled figure on the left?

Interestingly, figure A is actually out of alignment (tilted), whereas figure B is maintaining the same alignment as the figure without the diagonal lines to the left (not tilted)! Don't believe me? I'll prove it: Squint your eyes until you can only see the outlines of the images.

The spatial distortions produced by the diagonal lines affects perception of the relative alignment of the two rectangles making B (which is actually horizontal) appear to tilt.

Figure A "corrects" the perceptual error by tilting the plank in the opposite direction (~4 degrees) so that it now looks level.

See: www.moillusions.com/2009/02/slanted-seesaw-optical-illusion.html



Word Search

Find: PSY

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Psychology Myth/Fact? (from page 1)
 All 7 statements are *myths*!
 For more information, please read "50 Great Myths of Popular Psychology" by Lilienfeld, Lynn, Ruscio, and Beyerstein (2010) a Wiley-Blackwell publication.