

Sizing people Up

A veteran FBI agent's user manual for behavior prediction

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Few of the most serious problems in life are as common as not being able to read people accurately predict what they will do.

Even good people feel the need to hide things, because nobody's perfect and everybody's vulnerable. A high percentage of people break rules and lie when they are desperate.

Decent, moral people also shade the truth because each of us wants to be loved, and sometimes we're afraid that our true selves aren't worth it.

People hide the whole truth for reasons that are far darker- such as greed, manipulation, power, control and deception. It's particularly likely when people rise to positions of power, even if it's a petty form of power.

Trust is a lofty value. Trust is the active form of faith. It demonstrates in real time and in the real world – a belief that people will not only try to do what they say they will, but also have the competence and diligence to make it happen.

To function effectively, humans must be able to predict what the others will do, and trust them accordingly. But, if you hand your trust like candy, you can lose the things you treasure most.

When you are sizing people up, you learn a lot about their character, traits, tendencies, desires, affections, strengths, weaknesses, but all that feeds into the single most attribute that you're invariably looking for : trustworthiness.

The one thing you can almost always predict is for people to act in their own best interests.

**Trust therefore is not a matter of morality,
trust is a predictability.**

Predicting behavior isn't rocket science, but it is a social science, and requires you to apply the right equation of logic, strategy, skepticism, observational skills, and the ability to accept unwelcome truths.

To find out if someone is a good ally, talk to them about their immediate goals, necessities, concerns and passions, and see if they fit with yours. The urge for partnership is a primal need.

Unreliable and unpredictable people often try to say the right things with the right words, but are usually exposed by subtle signs of the disconnect between their words and actions.

Effective communicators ask a lot of questions, are easy to understand, don't try to manipulate, and are always looking for ways to connect.

When you are sizing up people, your greatest sources of information will be through conversation. Conversation tells, speech tells, non verbal tells from the rest of the body, and factual information.

The reality is, very few people are looking to hurt you. They are just trying to take care of themselves and their families as you are- so its against your best interests to judge them for that.

10 negative tells to watch for

1. Supervisors pass you over for a promotion and give it to someone else whom you work with
2. Your bosses point out ways you are different from them
3. Your bosses leave you out of meetings that your peers attend
4. People in power over you exaggerate your trivial errors
5. Your immediate supervisor points to other departments where you might excel
6. Executives engage in negative non verbals while you are offering ideas.
7. Your boss asks you about rumors that you've done something wrong
8. Your organizations decision makers text or send e mails when talking to you
9. Leaders never say ' I want you to succeed here'
10. People challenge your thoughts and ideas.

I've also found that as a rule, the farther people go back into their lives, the more they lower their shields.

One of the toughest demands of maintaining a personal relationship in a business situation, since business situations change far more often than people do.

A good boss is totally mission oriented. He is reliable at whatever he chooses to do, because his personality is about competence and diligence.

One of the most ironic ingredients of power is that it grows faster when you let it go.

Reliability is synonymous with trust. But don't overlook the need for both competence and diligence.

There is also a classic , unchanged factor at play – the so called ‘curse of competence’. Some people are actually punished for their competence, because less competent workers sabotage their success or dump their own work on them.

Competence should be a quality to be judged rationally but has become qualitative because of antiquated techniques of judging it.

Even though lack of competence is a deal breaker in most issues of trust, competence without diligence can be more insidious because it will catch you off guard.

Diligence is one of our primary rudders. It guides us through days of doubt, it course corrects when we go off track, and it contributes tremendously to the predictability and reliability creates and reflects.

Diligent people work without drama, don't play politics, don't get into last minute glitches and don't shirk responsibility.

The primary driver of character driven people is not financial, it is sincerity, consistent respect.

10 negative tells for reliability

1. Unreliable people micromanage without offering help
2. Unreliable people disappear and play hard to find
3. Unreliable people have chronic punctuality problems
4. Unreliable people grab the credit of others
5. Unreliable people are careless about appearance
6. Unreliable people depend on others to fix their problems
7. Unreliable people have a hard time picking up new concepts
8. Unreliable people don't keep adequate records
9. Unreliable people plan more than act.
10. Unreliable people don't take their mistakes seriously

10 positive tells for reliability

1. Reliable people carry themselves with genuine confidence
2. Reliable people speak with specifics
3. Reliable people are transparent about their mistakes
4. Reliable people welcome tough jobs and hard deadlines
5. Reliable people hit the ground running and then speed up
6. Reliable people are inquisitive
7. Reliable people accept blame graciously
8. Reliable people measure their contribution not by their sacrifices but by their productivity
9. Reliable people nonverbally remain stable in times of stress and strain
10. Reliable people don't have enemies, they are their own best enemy.

The hardest element to isolate is the awkward intersection of thought and emotion. Human beings are often dreamy and call it optimism, or too fearful and call it prudence.

The changes that affect character most are threats and temptations, which sometimes occur simultaneously.

We see this happen in politics and business. This is the power paradox.

A history of honesty is usually considered one of the most valuable indicators of strong character and trustworthiness, watch out because many business executives are adept at telling the truth but rarely the full truth.

People often wield the tool of integrity to attack people they oppose.

In meetings, company guys usually remain silent but are gung ho when the boss gives the go.

Its hard to robustly trust anyone who has direct power over you, because too much is at stake to be complacent about it.

**Humility is one of the things all of us want,
but don't always like it.**

Fear is necessary to survive, and love is necessary to thrive. The same cannot be said of any other emotion.

Love in the broadest sense must be present for trust.

Trusting and liking are not at all synonymous, but in all cases they are simultaneously present, simply because you cannot trust someone if you don't like them.

Emotional stability exists on a continuum and most people are adequately stable while others have abundant emotional stability.

10 negative tells about emotional stability

1. People learn to be helpless
2. People surrender their right to positive perceptions
3. People catastrophize
4. People show signs of permanent personalization of problems
5. People see them selves as victims
6. People have a sense of entitlement
7. People wait to be rescued
8. People think in blame terms
9. People are volatile
10. People are manipulators.

10 positive tells about emotional stability

1. People show an abundance of appreciation
2. People are hard to scare
3. People are impeccably rational
4. People adhere to a code of trust
5. People offer you choices
6. People are happy with themselves
7. People have power but don't love it or misuse it
8. People are flexible
9. People are calm
10. People don't look for problems

Life rarely travels in a straight , unbroken line. life unfurls at abrupt right angles created by choices we make, to trust or doubt, to accept or reject. These are the moments that define us

With logic, discipline, and information, you can spot flakes and phonies, defy the forces of manipulation, get to the bottom of complex situations.