Emotion at Work in Interview Techniques

Phil Willcox: Hello, and welcome to the Emotion at Work podcast where we take a deep dive into the human condition. Now I am fascinated by the role that deception plays in the workplace. Now you might think, well, how does that work Phil? How does emotion and deception go together? Well, for me, they go together really closely. Because how we feel often affects how honest we may be. And that could range from exaggeration or minimisation, in job interviews or on a CV, where we either want to make ourselves look really good or we want to minimise our mistakes. Or it can be about corporate fraud, as you know, sort of big, big ticket corporate fraud stuff. Or it could be day to day lives and emissions as well. And as my guest today, I will tell you, there is no Pinocchio's nose. So there is no single indicator of deceit. So when it comes to detecting deception, if we can find strategies that make life easier for truth tellers, that make life harder for liars, and help anybody trying to ascertain truth from deception to differentiate between the two, then I am really interested in that. Now, my guest today, has recently successfully defended her viva I'm not sure if it's viver or viva, but I'll ask her that in a minute, I think it's viver and is embarking on a new role in a new place. And I'm really, really grateful that she's given up her time to join me on the podcast today. So let's get our guest on the air. Welcome to the podcast, Cody Porter. Hi, Cody.

Cody Porter: Hi, Phil. It's great to be here.

Phil Willcox: It's wonderful to have you here as well. Thank you so much for coming on.

Cody Porter: Thank you for the invite, thank you for bringing me along today.

Phil Willcox: You're welcome. And is it viva or viver I think it's viva?

Cody Porter: Yeah, it is. I think it's viva.

Phil Willcox: Okay, okay, good. And as usual for this podcast, then we will open with an unexpected yet innocuous question. So Cody, what is your favourite season of the year?

Cody Porter: Oh, gosh. I mean, that's hard question narrowing them down. I mean, British weather I think is very much you know, you've either got that summer and you've got a little bit of heat or you go straight into the cold. At the minute, I'm going to go with the cold season. I'm quite looking forward to wrapping up in my coats get nice scarves, boots, jeans. I'm ready for winter. I think.

Phil Willcox: You're ready for winter.

Cody Porter: I am indeed, it's been it's been a nice summer. We've had a little bit of heat, but it's now time for the winter and the coats, scarves, everything nice to come out.

Phil Willcox: So is the heating on at home yet for you?

Cody Porter: No, not yet. Yeah, probably in the next week or so. I'm based in Portsmouth at the moment and it's been quite sunny. It's been quite warm. We've been quite blessed with the weather.

Phil Willcox: Well, so my wife's been saying is September now Phil, we can put the heating on and I'm like, no we can't. So right now, earlier on this week, I was in office all day, and I came out for lunch and she lit the fire and I was like, right I see, autumn has begun, because the fire has been lit. So yeah. You know, she's very much a winter she loves that snuggling, you know, kind of being

wrapped up in a blanket in front of the fire most glass of Bailey's or a glass of mulled wine or the smell of a Sunday roast cooking in the oven. Stuff like that. Yeah, she's a big fan, a big fan of the winter

Cody Porter: Absolutely, I mean, there's really nothing better than a nice walk with a warm hot chocolate, you know, your gloves on your hat your scarf can be wonderful.

Phil Willcox: I imagine though, it must make life a bit harder if you're doing some kind of behaviour analysis in the winter because there's so many layers on with hats and scarves and things that might make it a bit harder if you try to analyse somebody's behaviour with all of their layers, or layers on top.

Cody Porter: I think the trick there is to make sure you have a nice warm office.

Phil Willcox: Yes, absolutely. Definitely. Nice good central heating. Alright, okay, so well thank you very much. And yeah, yeah, winter. I see I'd go for I think summer is mine. But then a lot of that has to do with the fact that I love ice cream. I'm a huge fan of ice cream, especially like a Mr Whippy, 99, a twin one of those two flakes in.

Cody Porter: I'm going to be completely honest with you. I change I mean, when it's summer, I'm looking forward to the winter months, when it's winter, I'm looking forward to summer the summer months.

Phil Willcox: Okay, so it's about what, it's about looking forward to what you haven't necessarily got. Absolutely. Yeah, okay. Okay. All right. So our focus for today then, is around interview techniques. And because your research is around one type of methodology. That's right isn't it?

Cody Porter: That's correct. Yeah.

Phil Willcox: Yeah okay and in my introduction, I talked about lies and truth and deception and so on. So I wonder if it might be helpful to start with kind of some working definitions that we might then take through to shape the conversation that follows. So what would be your working definitions of truth and or deception?

Cody Porter: So starting off with deception, I think for me, the best definition to go for is for a definition, that deception is a successful or unsuccessful, deliberate attempt without forewarning, that created another belief that the communicator considers to be untrue. Now, I'm going to pick that apart. And you can tell I've just got my PhD viva recently, because I've got all of these quotes and things just stuck in my mind. Hopefully they stay there. But the key with this definition is it's very much successful or unsuccessful, it doesn't need to have you don't need to successfully deceived someone in order for lie to have taken place. The point here is that there's a deliberate attempt now without forewarning. So it just happens. Another key point that this is the communicator, so the person doing the deception considers what they're saying to be untrue, they have to know it's a deception in order for it to, you know, be classified as a lie. Now, let's sort of pick this apart a little bit more, because I appreciate this definition, it is very wordy, it is probably the most useful one. But let's take two people in a conversation, right, we've got one, we've got the deceiver, who attempts to lie about maybe a piece of work that they're doing or a big pile of work that they're supposed to have finished? Now, whether or not they've successfully convinced their boss, that they've done this work doesn't matter. The point is, they've tried to deceive the person, they've tried to make their employer believe they've done this work when they know, in fact, they haven't. That would be my working definition, I guess of a lie. Now, I guess, you mentioned truth

there as well. Yeah. So, for me a truth is very different. Now, a truth is very much when the person is providing the most accurate information, you know, to the best of their knowledge. And that's really important that bit about accuracy and that bit about, you know, to the best of their ability, because memory is quite weak memory is quite unreliable memory fades over time. So what we want to see from our truth tellers or from people that we think are telling the truth, we want to see that they've recalled information that they believe to be true. Hopefully, that gives our listeners a good idea of, of what a deception and a truth is.

Phil Willcox: I think so. Yeah. And I think the point you make about memory is really important. I remember on a previous episode of this podcast in a different context, we weren't talking about deception necessarily. So I had Nick a gentleman called Nick Shackleton-Jones and another gentleman called Sukhvindar Pabial and we were talking about memory and learning and within that, we were talking about the Fallibility of memory, we referenced and talked about some of Elizabeth Loftus seminal work in both recall and how recall can be influenced by the type of question that you asked. So I think within that we talked about the particular piece of research where the, I can't remember the word the verb, I think it was the verb was changed from collided, hit, smashed, and depending on how what was asked then what word was used, that would influence the approximated speed that those remembering witnessing the accident would give. So So yeah, absolutely. Memory is a very fallible thing. So I liked that aspect of the…I can't remember, he you didn't use the word sincere, I would have used the word sincere, but in a way, they were trying to give you the accurate information.

Cody Porter: Absolutely. It's interesting, that Loftus study, that the car crash one, because you know, in all those contexts the person, the participant is trying to be truthful, it's just that they're influenced by that word, you know, tapped is very much implying, well, there wasn't a lot of damage. So you could see how people might think, you know, the speed was slower, whereas crashed, you know that, that sounds like a powerful word. That that quite likely impacts a participant thinking, okay, Christ, that must have been awful. Surely it must have been doing a higher speed than what I thought and that's one of the problems of memory can be impacted. So misinformation is a big problem. It's so easy to introduce misinformation to memory.

Phil Willcox: Yes, definitely. Definitely. And the in some of the work I do, I talk to my clients about how mis-remembering is different to deception. So you might have an experience where some people have seen something in the office or they've experienced something in the workplace. And then when they recall it, they recall it differently. And so which one is closest to CCTV? Because therefore that one must be telling the truth. And well, maybe but memory is, as you say, a tricky thing, influenced and impacted by a number of different things, including an amalgamation of what may have happened in that episode. And also what may normally happen in that particular situation or that particular scenario, you can actually end up having a mix of the memories coming together. So yeah, no, I like that definition. And then within deception, the can't remember the exact word used, about, without forewarning was that right?

Cody Porter: Yeah, that's correct.

Phil Willcox: And that's important again, because you could argue that every time you go to the cinema, every time you go to the, to the theatre, that person is lying to you, because they are there, whoever's acting the role or acting in whatever way isn't, is telling you something that they don't believe that they know is dishonest, because you know that that's what you're watching, then isn't deception, because, you know, that that's what it is, you know, it's somebody acting on a stage or on a screen or, or whatever that might be. And I like the bit that then gets interesting, like, where's the middle ground in that? Because when you when you walk into, I use the classic example of a car

sales dealership, when you walk into a car sales dealership, and the salesperson says to you this car is the cost of this car is x, are they lying to you? Because everybody knows it isn't really x. Everyone knows it's up for it's up for debate in negotiation. So are they lying to you when they say the price is x or not? But that's just me having a bit of fun with the grey area.

Cody Porter: They're good examples. So go back to the active one, I think the key there is the communicator, the actor, you know, they're not deliberately trying to deceive as such. Sure, they're acting, they're playing a role. But they're not trying to, there's no intention behind it, I think, to deceive the person or maybe not to deceive the person in the same way. And that's a key word that I forgot to mention, intentions are really important here. When we think of a deception, a lie. It's, you know, the attention to deceive is there. When we think of a truth, the intention to report the information to the best of your ability is there when you said about the example of, you know, people may be given information from different perspectives? Again, it would be a truth in that scenario, because the intention to be informative is there, they might not remember everything correctly, they might make mistakes, we all make mistakes, but they're not deliberately trying to deceive.

Phil Willcox: Yea, definitely. And, and where would, so I mentioned about the grey area in the middle. And is it intent then that might differentiate one from another? So I'm a big fan of linguistics. And, and one of the areas that I enjoy playing with is this idea of implicature. Where people give themselves wriggle room where they leave some some flexibility around how, how an utterance can be interpreted. Because they might leave it with the way you're left with the impression that something, so if I think about the piece of work example, that you were giving this big pile of work that needs to be done. There are ways linguistically where you can play with that. And I think I've given an example I've given on the podcast before, was where a member of a leadership team was asked a very direct and pointed question of will this project be delivered on time and on budget? And the response was, I'm on it. And the CEO that asked the question was like, great, and then moved on. Afterwards, I went to sat down with the CEO said, right, you need to go and check in with that person. Because they didn't say yes. And they didn't say they didn't say yes. They didn't say yeah, they didn't say they didn't say, what they said was I'm on it. Which, for me linguistically is interesting, because it gives the impression of it does the impression management of yes, it will be, but it doesn't go so far as to saying yes, it will be and where that wriggle room exists, then I'd be interested to go find out what's what's going on. So my advice to the CIA was I don't want you to go in and going oh, you lied to me. I need you to go in and ask some questions to inquire and find out what's happening with the project, is there anything going? Is there anything they need some help with? Are there any blockers? Are there any things that are getting in the way? And then what we find out was yes, there were other members of the team weren't working as quickly or as effectively on linked aspects. So it was undermining the potential success of the project. And so I don't think so were they deceiving? Were they lying or not that? Because they were telling the truth in that they were on it. But they didn't give the the clarity in the answer that you might expect from a close yes/no question in that way. So what are your thoughts on that one? Sorry, I know that was a very long, kind of context setting before I asked the question, where would you put that one? Is that in a grey area, is that would you put it as truth or deception?

Cody Porter: That's a tricky one. I mean, it is definitely a grey area. But you know that I'm on it. That's a clear deflection, they're not answering the question and thinking about how I analyse my data. You know, if I was looking at that, I probably go, okay, well, you know, the core information, it's not really there. And they haven't actually answered it. So they've said, yeah, I'm on it. But I've got no detail. I've got nothing to work with, so, I would actually say that that's probably a lie. And go back to the definition of what deception is. I think there was a deliberate attempt there from that

person to deceive the boss. Now, granted, it sounds like their intention was to deceive because other people were the problem. But still, it sounds like they knew what they were doing.

Phil Willcox: Okay. All right, good. Because I guess that you get the, because there's the intention to deceive. And then there's the reasons behind it. So in that example, it was, or my interpretation of the event was it was a, it was a very face saving, evasion. So it was about trying to save their own face, but also trying to save the face of, of the other of their colleague who wasn't doing what they needed to do. Because if they'd have answered, no, it won't be because Phil isn't pulling his weight in and delivering what he needs to be delivering, then that had potential risks to embarrass Phil or to damage the relationship that Phil in this individual had, and, and some things like that. So, and I guess within those working definitions, we're not thinking about motives or reasons behind it, are we we're saying, this is what it is?

Cody Porter: Yeah, absolutely. I mean, we're stripping away a context, which is really important. But in that particular scenario, what I would say is, it sounds like there was more than, you know, just one or two people in the room. And that could be quite, quite important. Because if you're trying to ask someone a question, you're trying to ascertain, you know, if they're telling the truth, if they're being deceptive, if they've maybe got something to hide, I think the way I would advise people is to approach it in the nicest possible settings. So instead of asking someone in the middle of a meeting room, I would privately ask them, because you're more likely I'd say, to get the truth, you've got that one to one, there's no need, or rather, there's maybe less need for that face saving. It might have been a different response.

Phil Willcox: Yeah, definitely. Definitely.

Cody Porter: Which I think links in very nicely with your advice to go and speak to the person on their own, and maybe approach it by asking if there is anything you need help with, certain things that maybe are stopping the work from getting done. It's a much more pleasant way to do things. And I think people respond better, to pleasant reactions, as opposed to you know, interrogations, I don't believe you, I don't think you've done it, I think you're lying, those responses are just going to get people's back up, they're not going to be forthcoming, they're not going to be helpful. And you might even scare them and make the situation worse.

Phil Willcox: Yeah, one of the things I do a lot is try and keep the and this is something that so I've worked with a company called the Emotional Intelligence Academy up in Manchester. And one of the things that we talk about in the work that we do as well is this idea of you want to keep you want to keep people as calm as possible. Because the more agitated you make somebody, the harder it is for you to do your job. So the more suspicious you might, if your suspicion index is high, then that could work in your favour if somebody is lying, because they might think, oh, my goodness, this person is really suspicious, I need to work really hard to lie. But at the same time, if you're setting the truth, you're going to be thinking, oh my goodness, this person is suspicious. I don't know if they're going to believe me. What if they don't believe me? And so the anxiety of being disbelieved if you're a truth teller, the anxiety will look the same if it's anxiety of being caught in a lie, so that anxiety will count, will display itself in the same way in behaviours, whether you're the truth teller or the liar. Back to my introduction for me that then makes it harder, or makes my job harder if I'm trying to ascertain where the truth is, if I get, if I get the person I'm talking to agitated, it makes my life harder. And that's one of the things I really liked about your, about your technique. And we'll come on to the technique shortly. But that's one of things I really liked about when, when I was reading about it, and we spoke about it off air in our call, in our pre-recording call is the simplicity of it, I think is and the simplicity of it. And the frame that you put around it, I think is really helpful in making life easier for a truth teller and harder for liar.

Cody Porter: Absolutely. I mean, you want to support truth tellers, you don't want to frighten them, you don't want to put them in a situation where, you know, nerves get the better off them. And we see this in our lab studies, you know, we've got participants coming in, they're usually undergraduate students, many of which are studying psychology or related subjects. They're fully aware that they're in a lab situation, and the study is not real. It's all for research. And yet, I've had many participants come in, and I've had them do a task, you know, they might steal a mobile phone, or, or they might do a different task for the purpose of study to lie. Now, yeah, they're not really stealing this phone. And yet, some of them will come back. And they are so nervous about this. It's really interesting, because afterwards, the debrief stage, you know, that they'll often say, I knew it wasn't real, but it felt real. And I didn't know if the interviewer was going to believe me. And you really do see this nervous behaviour sometimes. It is interesting, because if people are nervous in settings that are clearly not real, you know that their lab base, their studies there not real world scenarios. If they're nervous in that context, then certainly they're going to be nervous in real interview settings. And it doesn't just have to be a police suspect interview setting, you know, think back to your last job interview, or at least think back to your first or second job interview. You know, when you've got that nervous feeling you're going in, you know the answers, you know, you've got the skill set. But it becomes difficult to talk, sometimes you trip over your words, a lot of the time I found when I was first interviewing for jobs, I'd leave and I think oh, no, why didn't I say that?

Phil Willcox: I wish I'd said this yesterday

Cody Porter: You know you should have said it, you know, it would have really, you know, helped get you that job. But you just didn't say it.

Phil Willcox: Yeah, and I think your examples there of things like a job interview, whether it be in a new organisation, or even a promotion. So I remember when I used when I was going for promotions within an organisation, I'd be equally nervous in that as I would be if I was applying for a role in a in a new organisation. And similarly, I think in in terms of, if there's workplace investigations, if there's allegations around inappropriate behaviour or conduct. And I don't know, maybe I'm taking it too far, but I think even in regular monthly one to ones and performance appraisals, and performance reviews, those things matter. Because the ratings that you get, or the outcomes of those discussions have stakes attached to them. They might be affecting things like pay rises, they might be affecting things like bonuses, they might be affecting things like career progression or promotions. And so in my experience, deception happens there as well. Because there are stakes attached. I know, am I saying that every single person is lying in every performance appraisal, a one to one conversation they have no, but at the same time, there are things that we know are rewarded in the workplace, things like working hard, being diligent, completing all of the tasks, not being sick too much. Some of these, these aspects are deemed by workplaces to be important, and therefore some things deemed to be important that brings stakes with it, and where their stakes, there's potential for deception.

Cody Porter: Absolutely.

Phil Willcox: Or am I being too dramatic?

Cody Porter: No, no, I think it's a really good point. I mean, thinking back to, before coming over to academia, I worked in the NHS and we would have superficial, no, that's very much clinical superficial, but even so it's a situation where you're going in, you're with someone who's you know, either your boss or who's more senior to you, and you're just discussing how things are going and how your work is, you know, how you're finding the job, how you're interacting with patients. And

even that in itself, you know, is quite important. If you're not interacting effectively with patients if you're not communicating well, you know, that this could go against you, especially when it comes to things like going for promotion or going for new roles. And I think the advice that I would give to people there is to make sure that the people you're interviewing, your supervisor or you know whatever the situation, make sure they're comfortable. Don't just jump straight into the question and you know, try to build that rapport, try to have that social dynamic first, ask them how life is outside of work, ask them, just general chitchat questions and put people at ease. It's always easier to talk to someone that you know, conversations flow naturally, you know the dynamic, you know, when to speak. When you're in a situation where you don't know the person very well, or if they're at a senior level, and it's a workplace scenario, then putting them at ease is really important.

Phil Willcox: Yeah, definitely. So in terms of your thinking about some of those examples that we're talking about there, then so whether they be day to day conversations, performance conversations, could be kind of absence or sickness based conversations, because I'm just going to go on a slight detour and then I'll come back. So one of the things I get interested in, partly because of my interest in emotion, is the reasons that people give for being off and being unwell. And, and what's the kind of the split between physical ailments and mental ailments? Because I get really interested in that, because I think one of the ways I think, anyway, this isn't backed up by any form of research that I've done, I think one of the ways that people deceive when it comes to absence related things on a regular basis is by saying, oh, I had a dodgy tummy or I had a headache or a migraine, because those things are a). easier to explain, b). more readily accepted, and c). less potentially damaging to your reputation or your credibility than saying, oh, I was struggling with, I am with some anxiety, I was really unhappy and just feeling really down or whatever those things may be. I'm not saying that's right, that those things happen, by the way. I think they do. So anyway, sorry, I digress. So…

Cody Porter: It's a good point. I mean, there's such a stigma associated with mental health, and even with some physical health conditions. So I mean, I'm sure most of us have been in situations where you might have been off for a certain reason. But it's too embarrassing. You don't want to tell the truth. Because you know, that's your employer, you'd rather say, actually, you know, it was a stomach bug, rather than say, the actual problem because you want to save face, you don't want to be embarrassed, and you don't want your employer looking at you in that way. Sure, by definition, it would be deception, it is a lie. But it's, I guess, a relatively harmless lie in that regard.

Phil Willcox: Okay. See, I was going to move on, I don't know if I can. And I guess I guess it's in for me, I get interested in, that then links into the, and we're not talking about what we were going to talk about at all, I will make it a short digression. Because then for me, it links into the culture of the organisation then, because it could be harmless in the short term. But it could be more damaging from a longer term perspective. Because if I, if the organisation or the manager doesn't understand the pressures or the situation or the context of the individuals in and there needs to be respective of privacy and sensitivity and so on, the organisation might be able to be more helpful if they know what's really going on, or the organisation or the manager may be able to be or may be able to help in different ways, or help in other ways if they know what's going on versus what they think is going on, if that makes sense. So…

Cody Porter: That's a really, really good point. No, I fully acknowledge that. You are right. If it's a long term potential problem that's going to keep coming up, then yeah, it would be better for the employer to know because then you can put support mechanisms in place. I guess, context is really important here, isn't it?

Phil Willcox: Yeah, I mean, I've got a mug that a friend of mine gave me once, which says context is everything on it, because it is, context is hugely important. Okay. All right. So for some of our

listeners, then whose day to day role may or tasks may not involve kind of the high stakes deception detection, that we're talking about. How do you think or feel your research with the aim technique in particular might be helpful or useful for them?

Cody Porter: Okay, well, high stakes perception. And you know, studying this area is really important, particularly for things like forensic interviewing are, in other words, police suspect interviewing, now what's nice is my research can be applied more generally. It's, I would say, my research takes place in in really relatively low stakes situations. So I'll have participants come into the lab. They'll take part in a task that will involve them lying so they might steal an item or they might have to lie about their whereabouts. Now the worst thing that's going to happen to them, if they're not believed is, you know, they might be asked to repeat their statement by another interviewer. So it'll be a consequence of their time. Or they might be asked to provide a handwritten statement about what they've just said, again, this is a consequence of their time, people don't like giving up their time, but it's a relatively low stake, as opposed to if we think of more police based interviewing, you've got someone in, you've accused him of a crime, this now becomes a really high stake, worst case scenario, they could go to prison. So they're very, very different. The nice thing about my research is it's low stakes, so it can be transferred to variety of different sectors. Now, one of the sets, of course, would be the workplace. So thinking about the other part of your question, how could it be helpful? I think my research is helpful in the workplace, because it really provides an opportunity to encourage truth tellers, or you know, people who are telling the truth to be more forthcoming with their information. In short, it really encourages people to talk more, and the more we can get people talking, the more we can find out about the problem or the issue. I think for me, that's that's the key part, encouraging people to say more, truthful people to say more I should add.

Phil Willcox: Yeah. Okay. So should we run through the technique, then that might be useful? Because we we've, we've talked, I've referenced it as the AIM technique, and you've mentioned it, so I guess it might be something to run through what it is. So what does the A and I and M stand for? And then what's the technique that you would use?

Cody Porter: So the AIM stands for Asymmetric Information Management, AIM technique for short. And it's essentially a set of instructions that are designed to be used in an interview setting. And the real purpose of them is to support truth tellers the same/or while encouraging liars to withhold more information. And this is really important, because we want people to hear these instructions, irrespective if they're telling the truth in lying. And we want them to behave differently, right? We want them to adapt different information management strategies, so we could detect their differences. Now, I'm just going to try and break it apart to give you an idea of where the AIM came from. So first of all, there's a thing in the lie detection field called the illusion of transparency. And this is very much the idea that if I'm telling the truth, my credibility is self evident. You'll know this, I'm telling the truth. So everyone will just know it. You know, truth tellers have this belief in a just world. They think that because they're telling the truth, it's automatically no, actually, that's not the case. We're not very good at detecting truths and lies. So the first set of instructions really are designed to target this. And I've called this the illusion of transparency component. And what these first instructions do is they explain to our interviewees that, you know, during interviews, individuals frequently overestimate how easy it is for an analyst to determine if they've been deceptive or honest, it's telling them that there's a little bit of a problem here. And it's sort of reinforcing it. So you know, it's explaining actually, lie detection is not easy, and I can't take your credibility for granted. But you can make easier for me to determine if you've been deceptive or honest, now that's really cueing our participants whether their truth tellers or liars to the fact that we don't know if they're being deceptive or honest. Now, the next set of instructions is very much built upon that what I call the disclosure credibility association component. It's essentially telling people what it is we're looking for. So we then tell our interviewees that the reason for this is because lie detection

techniques can become more accurate and more reliable, the more information you provide. So it's really encouraging them to say more, you know, remembering, we've just said, you can make it easier for us to detect if you're being deceptive or honest, we're now pairing it with this instruction, we're saying, and this is because our lie detection techniques become more accurate, and more reliable, the more information you provide. Now, if you say things, any setting where a person might be nervous, can have an impact on how much information they retain. So we just reinforce this again, with another instruction, we tell them, that is if you provide a longer, more detailed statement, I'll be better able to classify you as either lying or telling the truth. Now, that's the crux of the AIM instructions. And the nice thing about them is whether you're telling the truth or lying, people take on a different information management strategy. Truth tellers hear this and they think right, okay, you don't know I'm telling the truth. But if I provide more information, you can detect me, you'll be able to see if I'm a truth teller. And that's great, because what we see is the truth tellers they'll provide more information. Liars on the other hand, hear these instructions, they think you can't tell if I'm lying or telling the truth. If I say more, you'll be able to detect my lie. And they're in almost a little bit of a situation where they have to decide what they want to do. Usually what liars will do is they'll try to say a little bit more if they can. We've just told them that this will make it easy for us to detect. And what we found is actually as a result of this, they withhold information, they think, okay, I will say less information, and you can't detect me. Now, the nice thing about this is truth tellers are saying more, liars are withholding more so we have this nice asymmetric effect, we can see who's telling the truth and who's lying, based upon the amount of information that's provided. Now, that's very much the crux of the AIM instructions. And we've got one published study to date. It was it's been quite successful. We've been able to differentiate truth tellers and liars based upon the instructions. We're working on some more research that hopefully will be coming out in the next couple of months. But it does seem like a promising set of instructions. I mean, they're easy to implement, you know, you can change the language ever so slightly to adapt them to different situations.

Phil Willcox: And was it? Did you have any false positives or false negatives in there? So by false positive I mean, did you identify a liar as a, I mean, did you incorrectly identify a liar as a truth teller? Or did you have any false negatives? Which is where you incorrectly classified a truth teller as a liar? Or was there any, did you have any of those in our study?

Cody Porter: So that's an interesting question. And I guess in order to answer this, I'm going to have to give you a bit of an idea as to how we go about making these determinations. So okay, what I haven't done yet, is I haven't taken the transcripts and have had them read it by, you know, human readers to see what their views are. Instead, what we typically do with lie detection research, particularly for verbal lie detection research, is we look at a discriminant analysis. Now, this tells us, this gives us an idea of how likely it is for us to be able to detect truths and lies. And what I've done is I've looked at total detail. So the types of detail provided by interviewees based upon reality monitoring criteria. Now, what we found in the control condition, so when there's no AIM instructions, is that the lie detection serious were 48%. Now that's perfectly normal usually lie detection are randomly chanced marked, that's what we would expect to find, Now when the AIM instructions were introduced, what we seen was the accuracy rates increased 81%. So much, much higher when we use the AIM instructions. Now, what I will say is, there has been one published study to date, it is a brand new technique, we are still developing it, we are still testing it, but it does look like it's going to be quite a useful and promising technique to use. Does that answer your question?

Phil Willcox: It does, yes. And I said in my introduction, that there is no such thing as a Pinocchio's nose. So the the idea that, that the amount of detail, for example, or the amount of information given is going to get you 100% accuracy or 100% classification isn't going to work because it just it

doesn't, it wouldn't work in that way. And we can come on to potential countermeasures and things later, that's another area or aspects that I wanted to explore. So you mentioned, something you mentioned in there that the listener might not be familiar with is you mentioned reality monitoring criteria, I'm just thinking it might be useful just to say what that is just so people understand a bit more about, when you say you're assessing these statements against reality monitoring criteria, what is reality monitoring? And what sort of things will you be looking for?

Cody Porter: Absolutely and apologies, I probably should have started. No, no, it's fine. So reality monitoring criteria is, it's a set of criteria that is used for memory based research, but lie detection researchers have sort of adapted it and pulled it over to the lie detection field. And essentially, it's this idea that if you have a real experienced memory, you will have different you know, perceptual experiences of this. Now, what lie detection researchers are interested in is very specific types of detail. So we're interested in spatial detail. That's information about how a person moves through space. So for example, if I'm going to explain to you how I get from my office, downstairs to the reception area, I must say okay, so I walk through the door, through being an example of spatial detail. I turned left, left being what I turned through space and left being another example. I walk towards the elevator, towards, again being another spatial category. Now these types of details are found that more predominantly in truthful statements, because they have this real memory, whereas liars although they'll provide some spatial information, they will provide near enough the same level. So one of the other details were quite interested in is temporal information. Again, liars will provide a tiny bit of temporal information but truthtellers will be able to provide much more. Now, this isn't just reference to time, you know, it was 11 o'clock, you know, when this podcast started, for example, it's reference to temporal order. So, if I've given you an example of starting a podcast, I might say, well, first of all, first, given you temporal context, because it was the first thing we've done. First of all, we had an introduction, then, then an example of temporal, temporal information tells you, what we've done next. Next, another useful example of temporal details, again, truth tellers add these types of details into their statements, liars don't. And when they do, it's very few amounts. And then the other thing is perceptual information. And this is very much what the person's perceived. So it might be what they've heard, what they've seen, it might be, you know, anything that they've tasted, it's very much perceptual experiences. So when I say when I give you the example of leaving the office, they said, I walked through the office door, or I opened the office door, the door is the thing that you see, right? So that's your perceptual detail. And what we find is with these combinations of details, we put them together, we call them total detail, we find the truth tellers are able to provide more total detail compared to liars. And this is naturally what we find. So then when we use the AIM instructions, we find the truth tellers are saying even more than liars. And we can then detect these differences more easily. So that's when we think of our control condition that had 48% accuracy. That's quite normal, then we think with the aim instructions, this was increased to 81% accuracy. So hopefully, that gives you a little bit of context for where total detail comes from what reality monitoring is.

Phil Willcox: Yeah, really, that's, that's really useful. Thank you, Cody. So I was asking, because I think it's, it's important and useful for the listener to hear. Because the, I think one of the things that often happens is, we and I say this for being an interviewer for probably a bit longer than I would care to remember, it's really easy to, to pay attention to the overall impression that somebody gives rather than being, rather than being able to simultaneously think about the overall impression somebody is giving and to be able to ascertain some of the details and the specifics that either are present or absent in responses or answers that that somebody is giving. So the identification of those aspects in terms of the perceptual information, the temporal information, and the spatial information is a really useful way to look at it. So I add, I know this isn't from any research resources, and you may argue that this sits within the within the perceptual one. But I would add in cognitive and affective aspects as well. So when people are talking about what they were thinking, or what they were

feeling, as these different things were happening, or what other people might have been thinking or what other people might have been feeling along the way as well, because those kinds of details are more likely to be there if you've had the experience, as opposed to if it's something that you're creating and fabricating and making up.

Cody Porter: Sure sure, no, I can see why.

Phil Willcox: Okay, and so if I think about taking the AIM technique and applying it into the workplace, then is there a risk in the opening, you know, the the opening framing that we give where you talk about the illusion of transparency, and I can't remember where you framed the second one where you we're saying it was hard to detect, we can make it easier by, is there a is there a risk of offending or impacting the interviewee by outlining that at the outset, so let's say I was doing a job, a job interview might be easier to do but if I was doing a, yeah, I suppose I'm just thinking. Sorry, I'm not articulating my question very well, but my pondering was, with the framing, have a impact on the interviewee where they might go, oh, I can't believe you already think I'm lying? Or would it kind of, would it put any barriers up? Or put their guard up? Do you think?

Cody Porter: Yeah, absolutely. I mean, the first thing to point out is the AIM instructions initially, were designed for more forensic interviews, so that there has been a, you know, a crime, so to speak, has taken place. So, you know, you are going to have that slightly harsher language. Now, in the in terms of a recruitment setting, I think being, could be quite useful, could be quite helpful. Because recruitment interviews, they're not like everyday conversations. So you know, people are going to be nervous, but well very likely going to be nervous. And what that might mean is…

Phil Willcox: I certainly was, yeah.

Cody Porter: I'm absolutely the same, interviews, I'm quite nervous. And what that can mean for employers is you might miss candidates that are really skilled, really useful for that job. But you know, they're just too nervous to be forthcoming. What you might also find, you know, the flip side, and we think with more deceptive people, you might find that there's candidates who are really exaggerating their skill set. And as a result of that, you might end up with a candidate that actually doesn't know how to do the job. That's where the AIM instructions could be quite useful for differentiated, now the AIM instructions as they are, you wouldn't use them in a recruitment setting, they would need to be slightly reworded, they would need a softer approach. Because as you say, you don't want to get people's back up. You don't want people thinking, oh, but you don't trust me already. So they do need to be tailored. And of course, they do need to be applied at the start of a recruitment interview before you ask your technical questions about the job. Now, this is something I'm really interested in. And actually it is something I'm working on, so hopefully over the next year or so, we'll have more information about how the AIM could be introduced in recruitment settings. But I think it would be useful for differentiate those nervous candidates by highly skilled candidates, versus those who might be exaggerating about their experience and skill set.

Phil Willcox: Wonderful. Well, in that case, we'll definitely have to get you back on the podcast. Once that research has been, once that research has been completed, to find out what, how it went and the impact on that.

Cody Porter: Definitely, I look forward to it.

Phil Willcox: Okay. So I mentioned countermeasures earlier on. So countermeasures is a term that I've only ever heard used in two contexts. One is in deception research, and the other one is in submarine warfare, when when submarines are deploying countermeasures from the back of the

boat. So I should probably say what I mean by countermeasures. So countermeasures being then things that the liars may do, or techniques or strategies that liars may wield to, to increase the likelihood that they're believed. So if we go with some kind of classic examples that people may have seen in movies or otherwise, so I think it's in Oceans 13, one of the characters has to do a polygraph. And so what they do to countermeasure the polygraph is they put a drawing pen in their shoe, and when the control questions are being asked, the individual has to push the drawing pen into their toe. So they raises their autonomic nervous system. So raise their heart rate, and perspiration and so on, so that when they're asked the deceitful questions, then it doesn't, it doesn't show their autonomous nervous system is raised. So that would be an example of a countermeasure. So is there is there something within AIM where you think countermeasures could be deployed? And what they might be?

Cody Porter: So I think, yes, if you're not aware of them, then there are countermeasures that liars can use. And I think what's what's important here is to take that the aim of instructions, are designed to create this information management dilemma. But what needs to be used in conjunction with this is, you know, the analysis, we need to be looking for the types of detail people are providing. And what's important is that we look at how people are answering the questions. So if I asked you to tell me about your whereabouts yesterday between three and five o'clock, I'm interested in just that particular information. Sometimes what liars do is they go off on a tangent, they provide lots of irrelevant information. Now, this might make them look detailed. So they might say, for example, yesterday, you know, between three and five, gosh, can't really remember. Let me think about that. And then they might go into things like, right, okay. I remember yesterday, it was a really sunny day. And this is important because last week that was such a nice heatwave. Now I'm sounding detail to you, but I'm starting to talk to you about heat wave last week, which is totally irrelevant, it's it's not relevant the information that you need. And I think that's something to be aware of, is when liars provide irrelevant information, because it is something that we can work with, we can look at the core information provided in relation to that actual effect. And that's quite useful. Another thing to be aware of, I guess is that, you know, liars, sometimes they'll provide their information, they might repeat it for a second time. Again, this, this makes them look a little bit more detailed than what they actually are. So what I would say is that, when you're, if you're going to use the AIM technique, think about the instructions and think about how you look for the type of detail people are providing. Is it relevant to the questions that you're asking?

Phil Willcox: No, I like that a lot. Because there could be that I can give you lots of temporal or spatial or perceptual information. But if it's not to do with the question you've asked me, or the topic that you asked me about, or the example that you've asked me to discuss, or the time where it was, then that can be interesting. Yeah. So if you were to ask in a recruitment interview, in your CV, you mentioned that you did this particular thing. Tell me what didn't work well for you in that. And then you can look at it and then you get answers that aren't about that particular aspect or that particular thing, then you might get lots of temporal spatial and perceptual information, if it's not about the example or the occurrence that you're interested in. Yeah, that would be interesting.

Cody Porter: Absolutely, and what would be really, I guess, important for recruitment context is to be aware, if your relating something to their CV, they said they can do, if they're talking about a slightly different skill set that might be useful for the job, but you know that they keep deflecting on something else, I would try and pinpoint why that might be. Is it a case that they've mentioned in their CV the skill set that they just don't have?

Phil Willcox: In the research that you've run? Is it a? Is it like a single bite of the cherry? So what I mean by that is, we give the AIM instructions, and then we say, tell me what happened in that room, for example? And then do they just have one? Is it just one kind of account? Or are you asking

probing questions, or are you asking additional questions as well? Or is it, is the interviewee having like a single kind of bite of the cherry as it were?

Cody Porter: At the minute it's just one single free recall? Yeah. And that was very much so that we can assess the impact of these instructions are having, of course, for recruitment setting, you know, you are going to be asking lots of different questions. And I think the key is to put the AIM instructions at the very beginning of the interview, and know what effect that's going to have. And if it's going to have a long term effect, you know, when it gets into three, four, maybe five or six questions later, are they still going to remember? We don't know yet. But that is something that I plan on exploring this year. I'm hoping that because the aim instructions put people into almost Information Management dilemma, they have to pick their strategies initially. I think it'll have a lasting effect throughout all of the questions, meaning that our truth tellers will be able to say more our liars won't, they'll withhold. And the nice thing about these instructions is they're so simple and so easy to introduce that if you come across, you know, a technical job related question, and the candidate isn't answering, or maybe they're not being as detailed as you want them to be, you can go back the questions and you could say, you know, a little bit of a softer approach, but just remember that, you know, we're here to assess your skill set, we don't know your skill set, we only know the information that you provide. If you provide us with more information, we're going to be better able to assess how competent you are for the job, you know, that's off the top of my head, these instructions obviously need to be refined, but something like that's a nice soft way to reintroduce the instructions, and there's no reason that couldn't be done.

Phil Willcox: No, I agree. So the risk is that if I say this now, it sounds like we've planned it. So the instructions that I give before any interview that I run, especially if it's in a in a recruitment context is I want to be able to represent you in the best possible way against the other candidates. Because that gives you the best chance of securing the role that you want to do that I need to know as much about you as possible. So I want you to tell me as much as you can, as much as you remember without going too far don't want to make anything up that tell me everything that you can about your skill set your experience, your background that you deem to be relevant for this role, so that I can run to present you in the best way. What you may also notice is that I take lots of notes. And that's because I want to be able to represent you when comparing you with other candidates. So if there's a gap in between questions, or there's times where I might be writing things down, that's the reason why, again, to try and alleviate any nerves or concerns that people may have. Because what I, what I tend to do is ask the question, let the candidate answer and then write my notes down afterwards. Because that way I can analyse their behaviour, whilst they're answering the question, because if I'm writing my notes, while they're answering the question, it's harder for me to pay attention to what they may be doing or what they may be saying or how they may be moving or the type of information they're using. So yeah, I'm with you is the, help me help you make it easy for you to get the job is the frame that I use to wrap around it. But also that helps me identify if they might be the wrong person for the job. I just don't need to say that bit.

Cody Porter: Yeah absolutely. And it's a nice, soft approach to it's not going to get anyone's back up. It's going to have your truth tellers thinking, okay, great. You want to help me? I want this job. This is great. I'm going to be forthcoming.

Phil Willcox: Yeah, definitely. So are there any, what other pieces of advice would you give to the listeners then, to help them be effective in interviews or conversations where deception may play a part?

Cody Porter: I think the best piece of advice that I can give people is to focus on looking for the truth. Don't get fixated on trying to detect the deceit, focus on trying to elicit more information, more

information you can get, the easier it's going to be for you to make that judgement. And I think if we're framing ourselves in the way that we're going to look for truthful behaviours, I think we're going to be far better at detecting deceptions as a consequence of that.

Phil Willcox: I like that advice. That's good advice.

Cody Porter: Thank you.

Phil Willcox: I think other bits we talked about already, so you said about putting people at ease. I think that's, that's really important. Framing and positioning, what you might be doing, and why you're doing it. And thinking about that clearly, before you go in. I think that's, that's really important. I like the way that you kind of adapted the initial framing to something that's a bit softer, where it doesn't have that forensic or, or criminal aspects to it. I like that. Okay, so if I start to bring us together then and close the podcast off? Is there any kind of myths or misconceptions that you would like to address or you would like to put to bed?

Cody Porter: Any myths or misconceptions? Oh, gosh, this could be a podcast in itself.

Phil Willcox: Oh, okay.

Cody Porter: So I think lie detection is difficult. I'm not sure how much people realise that this is a difficult area, you know, as you said, rightfully, there is no Pinocchio's nose. And that's because detecting deception is complex. Sometimes people might decide to, I don't know, embed their lie within a truthful memory, that makes it really hard for us to detect. Other times people might provide limited information because they're nervous, or because, you know, they don't want to bore the person who's listening to them. It's not because they're trying to be difficult, they just don't know the level of detail required. I said to you about lie detection being quite complex, quite difficult. Just to give you an idea of the research, you know, research tells us it's our ability to detect deception is around about 54%, you know, it's around the chance level, we're not very good at it, at the moment, the field is of course progressing, but we're just not there yet. To give you some context to that. There's a meta-analysis by DePaulo and colleagues in 2003. And this is really important paper for all lie detection experts. Now, what they found is they examined 50 different cues. And they found that only 14 of these cues in their meta analysis were statistically related to deception. That's 28%. That's really low. But it gives you some idea of where the lie detection field is at or at least where it was in 2003. Since then, we've tried to create tools, new tools, new techniques that proactively elicit differences between truth tellers and liars, you know, to try and make this difference a little bit bigger. But my advice would be there isn't one single cue, focus on a cluster of cues, look at a range of them. Don't just look at one thing and do be aware of the limitations of the field.

Phil Willcox: Yeah, that's good. I like that. That's a really good advice. Okay. So is there anyone or is there someone that you would recommend that we seek out to get on the podcast as a guest do you think?

Cody Porter: Oh gosh, there are a lot of interesting lie detection researchers. Now for me, if I had to pick one, I would recommend the Adam Harvey, who is a social psychologist who founded the survivability bias. Now, the viability bias is really the idea that memory decays over time. And because of this, truth tellers and liars will behave differently. That's the key point, truth tellers and liars memories, their verbal reports will be different. Okay, I think this is really important for anyone that's interested about learning about deception, because it impacts most lie detection research. Most lie detection research we conduct is essentially, immediately after an offence, right, I will send

someone off, they'll steal a phone, they'll come back, they'll be interviewed about it. But actually, what Harvey and colleagues in their 2017 paper found was that after a delay, the amount of information changes. Truth tellers memory decays over time, so they provide less information, whereas liars, they just don't consider this. So if you ask a lair about an event immediately, or you ask them about an offence, say, over the course of what could have been two to three weeks, they provide similar levels of information. And this impacts lie detection research. And this impacts some of these tools and techniques that you might read about.

Phil Willcox: Wonderful, thank you aware, where's Adam based?

Cody Porter: University of West of England, Bristol, UE Bristol, the University that I will be, that I'm now joining.

Phil Willcox: So where you will be heading off too. So can you put in a good word for me, please, Cody?

Cody Porter: I'll put you both in touch.

Phil Willcox: Yeah, that'd be lovely. Please, that'd be fantastic. Thank you. And are there any books, videos or talks that you would recommend for someone's going to look at if they wanted to find out more whether that be around the AIM technique in particular, or more generally around interviewing and or deception? Is there anything you would say? Yeah, you know what, these are really good places to go?

Cody Porter: Absolutely. So I think the AIM technique, we've got one published paper so far, that's a really good starting point for giving you an idea of what the AIM technique is all about. And, Phil, I'll give you the reference for this, so that interested listeners can find it.

Phil Willcox: That would be fantastic, I'll put that in the show notes.

Cody Porter: And in terms of a book, the most useful book that I found for learning about lie detection was by Professor Albert Frey. In 2008. He published a book, and it's called Detecting Lies and Deceit, Pitfalls and Opportunities. And it's a really good starting point. It's a nice, easy read.

Phil Willcox: Yeah, what I like about that book it the chapters are, you can read it front to back, like you would do a typical traditional book if you want to, but also all those all the chapters standalone as individual reads. So if you're particularly interested in for example, body language, you can go with the body language chapter, or if you're interested in criteria based content analysis, then you can go read the chapter on CBCA. So yeah, I agree. That's a very well thumbed book on my bookshelf.

Cody Porter: Absolutely. It's a good choice.

Phil Willcox: Okay, and if people wanted to find out more than Cody, if they wanted to get in touch with you to find out more, or to kind of pick up a conversation, how would you like them to do?

Cody Porter: They can either reach out via social media, or they can contact me on my university email address, which is cody.porter@uwe.ac.uk. I'm more than happy to chat to answer any questions.

Phil Willcox: Wonderful, and is it okay, if I put links to both your Twitter, LinkedIn and your email in the show notes? Would that be okay?

Cody Porter: Yeah, absolutely.

Phil Willcox: Wonderful. Thank you, Cody. So the only thing I have then to do is ask my final wrap up question, which is there something else that you're thinking feeling or wants to say?

Cody Porter: No Phil, this has been a fantastic experience. So thank you very much for inviting me. It's been a really interesting chat. It's been really good to talk to someone else's interested in lie detection.

Phil Willcox: And thank you so much for coming on. When I read your, when I read your paper, I feel like you know what, the applicability of this is broad. So, yeah, I'm excited to see where your research goes. I'm delighted that you came on to join me. So thank you very much. So thank you. Let's just say thank you, Cody Porter for coming on to the Emotion at Work podcast.

You've been listening to the Emotion at Work podcast and if you've got this far you must be interested at the role emotions have in the workplace either within individuals, between people or in teams or in organisations as a whole, so head over to the Emotion at Work hub which you can find at https://community.emotionatwork.co.uk/groups. Thanks for listening.