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Detecting Deception

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Why you can't tell when politicians are lying to you

Humans are very bad lie detectors

In everyday life, humans are awful at knowing when someone else is lying. Across all cultures, educations and personalities, people can only detect lies about 50% of the time.

Verbal and nonverbal cues

Despite popular misconceptions, it is very hard to tell a lie from nonverbal cues; liars don't shift their gaze or act more nervously than non-liars, and their posture isn't any different. Most cues to lying are verbal, such as simplifying the story or giving contradicting statements. Therefore, if you learn to avoid these cues, it is easy to lie and go undetected.

Politicians and social persuasion

Due to natural biases, we tend to trust authority figures and people who believe the same things we do, making charismatic politicians easy to trust.

Fake news

Lies spread quicker than the truth, so knowing about the psychology of lies is especially important today. Check the facts before you take something your candidate says at face value!

The takeaway

As a voter, know that you can't tell when someone is lying, be aware of your natural biases towards politicians, and verify the truth before you spread it.