

Can you tell when someone is lying? In the BBC programme on the human face this week John Cleese told us that only a small proportion of secret service agents have this ability, and not many others people. It's all to do with the movement of one particular muscle, apparently.

Politicians seem to develop a particular talent in the art of modifying truth and facts, and this week provides a good opportunity to practice our lie detection skills as we listen to the to-ing and fro-ing in the political reactions to the budget. Often otherwise disillusioned with politics, we join in en masse ourselves when our pockets are affected and phone and write in to TV and radio with our own authentic Jo Public reactions.

Andrew Samuels thinks typical therapists don't have much factual knowledge about politics, and when with politicians experiences himself (p6) as 'the silent suppressed "woman" figure in a group of factually switched on high energy dominant sort of men'. I wonder if he was perhaps thinking also of journalists, - I recall his recent appearance on Radio 4's Start the Week with powerhouse Jeremy Paxman, where programme participants seemed a bit less enthusiastic about the application of psychotherapy to the world of politics.

How do S&S readers experience themselves in political situations?

Might it be useful to learn about that little lie-muscle for our therapeutic work? How far is the therapeutic space really a haven of truth and authenticity? How congruent are therapists about their professional and personal values?

John Buckle invites us on the AHP page (p45) to register our support for Falun Gong practitioners in China, who are forbidden to carry out this practice, which encourages a truthful and compassionate attitude.

Althea Hayton maintains that truth in the food-therapy room (p43) is vital from the start if the therapy is to be of any use: better no information at all on the client's food intake if it be not the truth, otherwise work is not possible.

From external social truths, truth in couple and (step-) family relationships, to deep internal self-knowledge, truth runs through this issue as a motif. Robin Shoet, introducing The Work of Byron Katie says (p22) that she asks us 'if we really want to know the truth without in any way imposing what that truth is - just an investigation into our thinking'. My answer is affirmative, understanding this approach as a kind of valuable qualitative research (see the review of Mcleod's *Qualitative Research* p52).

Write in if you would like to review books and other media. Aaron Balick is joining S&S as Reviews Editor - see p51 for contact details. And we welcome comments and letters on any issues of interest to S&S readers, so reach for pen or mouse now.

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