

HAMLET'S MIND

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During times of universal deceit, telling the truth becomes a revolutionary act. ~ George Orwell

Before We Get Started:

Budgets are strapped and travel costs are rising. Consequently, if you would like to explore the possibility of having any of the courses listed below conducted in your area, please contact me. The sessions can be structured toward a specific group or delivered via an open enrollment format.

NEW: Private Sector Interviewing: Minimizing the Potential for Civil Litigation

NEW: Incorporating Digital Technology into the Interview Process

Elicitation Techniques

The Narcissist, the Fraud and the Subsequent Interview

Storytelling, Metaphors and Similes: The Gentle Art of Gaining Compliance

Rapport and the Interview Process

Interviewing for Quality Information

Fraud Related Interviewing

Is That the Truth?

Interviewing from Head to Toe

Interviewer Personality Dynamics

Interviewing Generation **ME!**

Interviewer Ethics

The Concept of Persuasion

Investigative Discourse Analysis

How to Interview like the Dickens

Finding Shakespeare in the Interview

Huh? Staying Focused during the Interview

Some of the upcoming open enrollment courses to be held in North Carolina

Interviewing and Interrogation: Feb 10 – 14. Greensboro. Saneal@gtcc.edu

Advanced Interviewing: The Concept of Persuasion: Mar. 4 – 5. Greensboro. Saneal@gtcc.edu

Interviewing and Interrogation: Mar 24 - 28, 2013. Greenville. dwrabon@msn.com

Investigative Discourse Analysis: Apr 7 – 11. Greensboro. Saneal@gtcc.edu

Investigative Discourse Analysis: Apr 21 – 25. Hickory. dwrabon@msn.com

Advanced Interviewing: The Concept of Persuasion: May 14 – 15. Raleigh. Javaughan@waketech.edu

Transition – Now to the Point

Advice from an Interviewer

In one sentence, you will find an interpersonal communication tip that interviewers know for a certainty has application to the world at large.

14. The other person is the most important person.

Interviewer Personality Dynamics

An Examination Thereof – Part Two

We continue with our examination of the persuasion component of the interview and the importance of the interviewer – as the stimulus – to manage the process to a successful outcome. From a meta-communication perspective, we are looking closely at the personality of the interviewer and its subsequent influence on the ability of the individual, functioning as an interviewer, to *make it happen* on a consistent basis. In Issue 31, we dealt with a more formal definition of personality and its conceptualizations. You can go back and check that out, if you are just now coming into the discussion.

Recently, I was conducting a course titled, “Advanced Interviewing: The Concept of Persuasion”. In the opening session, the participants provided their take on the positive personality attributes of effective persuaders. The range of attributes was what would be expected and I will list and examine some of those in subsequent issues.

But what really caught my attention and channeled the flow of discussion, was the comment from one particularly insightful participant. That comment was, “The ability to overcome self-imposed barriers to communication”. I followed up with, “Well, as the philosopher said, “Know thyself”” and we were off and running from there. We explored just what could constitute *self-imposed communication barriers* and what actions we might take to overcome them. Subsequently, a participant shared, that the agency had one individual that they never let go into the interview room because of his personality and its detrimental impact on the interviewee and proportionally, the outcome of the interview. I followed with, “That’s like saying we have a car salesman that we never let talk with potential buyers. Why would the individual even be on the sales team?”

Now, we could get *lost in the weeds* on some psycho-philosophical discussion vis-à-vis attitude and personality but we are not going to - at least not here and now. Our current, pragmatic, rubber-meets-the-road examination brings us to this conclusion: the interviewer with compliance-gaining responsibilities has to start with self-examination. That self-examination includes, but is not limited to:

- What are my strengths and weaknesses, particularly in stressful situations?
- How do I feel about this act or the person that would conceivably commit this act?
- What is my honest assessment of my compliance-gaining capabilities?

Let me go one step further: I believe organizations, which place people into compliance gaining responsibilities, would be well advised to have a formal assessment made of this individual prior to doing so. As I have shared with you in the past, every time I have gone to bat for an organization, it has involved the compliance gaining process. Every person that functions well within some levels and applications of the interview process does not automatically operate well as a persuader. An ounce of prevention I'm just saying. More in later issues, but in the meantime, **What do you think? Don't be shy. Remember, it is not necessary to agree with me. As my Dad always told me, "If we all thought alike, everyone would be in love with your mother"**.

I Opine:

There are no *soft skills* attached to the interviewing process

A goodly amount has been written recently regarding employers seeking those candidates possessing "soft skills" (read: interpersonal communication) in addition to the technical skills that are attached to the specific job task function. As conceptualized, these skills relate to abilities to successfully lead, work in partnership and creatively respond to challenges.

I am not a fan of the term *soft skills* as I believe it frames the concept as a marginalized function, when in fact, it is primary, or at least **as** important, as the technical skills. Unless one is a solitary code-writer, firmly ensconced in the basement of their parent's home, clinging tenaciously to the delayed onset of adulthood (the term is *mandolesence*), directly communicating with others, toward a predetermined end, is very much a part of the equation. When you think about it, everyone interviews – not just investigators - also: sales professionals, attorneys, auditors, teachers, trainers, etc. And they had better do it well or the employers will find someone who can. Consequently, let's reframe *soft skills* into *requisite abilities*.

Make no mistake, no matter how it is framed, interpersonal communication skills are critical and are, I believe, diminishing rapidly as regards to a societal perspective. Eighty-three percent of American adults own a cell phone. A recent report by the Pew Research Center's Internet & American Life Project indicated that seventy-three percent of American adults have a preference for text messaging as opposed to directly communicating with another. Young adults (eighteen – twenty-four) have an even higher preference with the average being 109.5 text messages per day. Considering a sixteen hour (conscious) day, that is roughly seven texts per hour or one every nine minutes. Note: I am no mathematician, so check behind me.

In collaboratively developing an interviewing session for an auditing firm, one emphasis they wanted for me to make, was when conducting an audit, should the auditor have a question or need additional information, **walk down the hall and meet with the individual directly**, rather than texting the question to the representative. Additionally, I have had more than one auditing firm share with me that their newer hires question as to why they have to meet directly with people when conducting an audit, the question that develops most often is, “Why can’t we just send them a questionnaire as an email attachment and let them fill it out and send it back?”

In previous decades of conducting interview training, I and others doing similar training, started with the presumption that there were innate communication skills, inculcated by social modeling, possessed by the participant, for which there was no need to go over plowed ground. Let me illustrate with another example: if someone were going to embark on a quest to learn how to play golf, there would be some presumptions that the golf coach would make: the individual could move their arms, were ambulatory, capable of holding something in their hands, move their head down and look at the ball. What was needed was the ability to direct and fine tune many of the capabilities they already possessed toward moving the ball from one point to another.

Similarly, in training people how to interview, we made the presumption that the individual has internalized a level of acceptable eye contact, has previously experienced the process of listening, could implicitly process facial expressions, voice intonation and had some level of interpersonal communication wherein the sharing of the conversation to include meta-communication was all in place. In many cases what was needed was to focus and enhance the communicative skills they already possessed toward moving the conversation from one point to another. Now that presumption is no longer valid. Using still another metaphor, you can’t teach higher math to someone who has not learned to add, subtract, multiply and divide.

I believe I have an option to address this dearth of interpersonal communication abilities. I will put it out there for your perusal in a subsequent issue.

Challenge: Can you find the following interviewing related terms in the puzzle below?

Interview, interrogation, question, open, closed, tag, concealment, falsifying, equivocation, distortion, directive, nondirective, verbal, vocal, nonverbal, leading, primary, secondary, calibrate, control, change, phatic, willing, unwilling, discourse, narrative.

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Interviewing the Interviewers

In this section I want to take the opportunity to interview those persons, competent not only in their field – auditor, attorney, investigator, etc. – but also most capable as an interviewer. If you would like to be a part of this series, please contact me @ dwrabon@msn.com

Interview with Steven Peterson

I want to introduce you to my longtime friend and associate, Steven Peterson.

DR: Steve, if you will, please tell us about yourself.

SP: I had been a Special Agent (SA) of the United States Department of Justice, the Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA) for nearly three decades. During this time I had been stationed in Boston, New York, Atlanta, retiring in Charlotte in 2010. For over eleven years I had been the DEA Atlanta Field Division Training Coordinator (DTC), responsible for coordinating and conducting training to over 80,000 law enforcement officers, social workers,

civilians and parents. Prior to training, as a street agent, I worked undercover for over 17 years. In 1987 I was appointed as Lead Investigator in the investigation of the murder of DEA SA Ray Stastny in Atlanta by then United States Attorney, Robert Barr. I also served as the President of the National Drug Enforcement Officers Association (NDEOA) for three years, the longest term of any President in the NDEOA's 42 year history.

When I retired in 2010, I took over the National Law Enforcement Speakers Bureau, LLC, a network of retired DEA Special Agents providing training in the law enforcement community. I'm an adjunct instructor for the DEA Academy, at the Office of Training in Quantico, VA; the DHS Federal Law Enforcement Training Center in Glynco, GA; the North Carolina Justice Academy in Salemburg, NC and several community colleges in NC. In November 2013, I became the first American recipient of an award from the Ministry of Interior, State of Qatar, for Outstanding Contributions in the area of Law Enforcement Training. Most importantly, I'm the husband of a beautiful wife and father of three great daughters. In actuality, I'm just an ordinary guy battling the forces of evil in extraordinary ways.

DR: Well, I have known you too long to buy into the "ordinary" descriptor. I want to get your perspective on the correlation between drugs and crime, most especially fraud.

SP: Perhaps you do know too many of my "secrets"...

There is a HUGE connection between drugs and fraud.

If you understand that there are two types of drugs, legal & illegal, then think back to your childhood (for some of us, that takes more work than for others). Most adults have at least experimented with the legal drugs; alcohol and nicotine. How did you first experiment with these drugs? Most did by stealing small quantities from their parents. Maybe slip a cigarette from their parent's pack, or taking a beer out of the refrigerator. When questioned, what did you do? You lied. This is the first step in deception regarding drugs.

If your use remained only experimental, you might have even gotten away with it. But if your use increased, at some point you either got caught, or you moved up to illegal drugs that you bought off the street. Again, you lied about using drugs. You lied about what your money was used for and a whole host of other lies.

Now, move ahead to adulthood. If you still use, why would the lies stop? And since most users are employed, most users feel no remorse in lying to an employer, as they've been lying to family for years. Jobs that offer access to cash, are especially susceptible to fraud. Even those positions that don't provide access to cash, will provide access to other company assets that can be stolen and sold to purchase drugs.

Over the years I have participated in the arrests of well over a thousand drug traffickers. Most of them were employees of someone, at some point. Successful traffickers work for themselves and use their drug proceeds to fund their lives, but not all traffickers are successful. During the last year of my tenure with DEA, I focused specifically on heroin users. Charlotte has the privilege of having the largest influx of Mexican heroin east of the Mississippi River. This results in a lot of heroin addicts. Many of these addicts are functioning addicts; which means they are

employed. In almost every case, the employers had no idea their folks were heroin addicts. In almost every case, the addict was severely under the influence of heroin while working. In almost every case, the addict had stolen merchandise or cash from their employer to purchase heroin. I realize that this is an extreme example, but it happens on all levels of drug use. It's all relative.

The huge problem I see on the horizon is the legalization of cannabis. Take Colorado for example. As on January 1st, residents can purchase up to 1 ounce at a time of cannabis for recreational use, while non-residents can only purchase 1/4 ounce. Dispensaries are packed with lines out the doors. The users are paying 4 times the street value for this cannabis and greedy traffickers are raking in huge profits. But cannabis is still illegal under Federal law and any drug proceeds deposited into US banks are subject to seizure by Federal agents. Since the cannabis business is a cash business, this is resulting in dispensaries collecting huge quantities of currency that cannot be deposited into the banking system. Dispensary owners will be prime targets for theft and violence as soon as criminals figure this out. This forces the dispensary owner to commit fraud to protect their cash and get it into the banking system. So the Colorado law allowing for use of cannabis is forcing fraud into the banking system. It will only get worse.

DR: Okay, let's transition to the interview itself. I want to know, when it comes to conducting interviews, what is it that you know now, that you wish you had known, when you first started to interview?

SP: I should have taken my Dad's advice. He always said that God gave me 2 ears and 1 mouth. I should listen twice as much as I talk.

Early on I was too concerned with impressing the interviewee with my knowledge than extracting information from him/her.

Over the years I learned that it was more important to listen than to talk. My job is to gather information, not dispense it. When I look back to my earlier times when I bragged how great I was, I was actually providing intelligence to the interviewee. I was actually being the subject of the interview, by voluntarily providing information to prove how "street smart" I was. What I found was the often, cops want to impress potentially great informants with how knowledgeable they are. Cops think that they need informants more than informants need the help of police. This is completely wrong. Informants need us more. Sadly, sneaky informants will play one agency against another and cops tend to be very egotistical. I know, I was and I couldn't stand the thought that a potentially great informant would snitch for the FBI rather than for me. So I might not be as strict or not manage this informant as closely as I should, as to not upset the informant. In other words, I allowed the informants to run wild, because I wanted them to provide me with their great informant and make me a star.

Today, as I sit in on debriefing with other officers, I sit back and listen. More often than not, the cop gives away more informant than the informant does. The informant walks away knowing more about what we know, than we know about what the informant knows. We need to listen more and talk less. This has become a crucial part of my teaching about informants and sadly, I have too many examples to prove my point.

DR: That being the case, I want to take what you have learned and transition that knowledge into a particular venue: what interviewing advice would you have for those fraud related

interviewers, finding themselves in a circumstance, wherein drugs may be a causative factor in the commission of the fraud?

SP: As I said before, there are thousands of functioning addicts. They have permeated nearly every workplace, including the medical profession and law enforcement. Prescription drug abuse is an epidemic now, so the stereotypical bum shooting up heroin in a New York City alley, isn't realistic. These addicts are working in all industries and they have to continue to supply their addiction. They pay cash for their doctor visits and medication, even if their employer provides them great health benefits, to avoid detection. This leads many to the "dark side". Not because they're drug traffickers, but because they have a secret illness that they have to fund. Addiction is an illness, just like diabetes. The biggest difference is addiction is an illness that can completely be prevented or managed.

I would tell them to educate themselves about drugs. What they are, what they do, how addictions begin, trends, trafficking and costs. The best way to determine if a subject is being truthful, is to already know the truth.

If you aren't well schooled on drugs, you won't be able to determine the extent with which your subject is being truthful with you. And of course, that's what I do...

DR: I know this is a leap of a question, but I want to ask it: do you think that there is any distinction between interviewing someone who is a functioning addict and someone for whom drugs are not an issue?

SP: It's not that great a leap. A functioning addict will demonstrate different physical characteristics than someone not using drugs.

Initially, as drug dependence grows, the clues will be small behavioral changes and slow to appear. Increased sick days, coming in late or returning late from lunch, missing meetings, increased bathroom breaks or not socializing with co-workers. Their moods will change abnormally and they will have a list of excuses for lowered productivity or tardiness. Depending on the severity of their addiction, their personal grooming will diminish. True addicts focus their energies on obtaining the next dosage, not their hygiene. Therefore, this will be the first noticeable difference in appearance. Clothing may be worn days in a row, hair is messy and their breath bad. Next, their pupils may be either dilated or constricted, depending on the drug, their skin may or may not be spotted with sores or small scabs (again depending on the drug). They may try to mask this with makeup or an allergy excuse. They may become easily irritated and unable to sit still for periods of time, they will fidget or their legs or fingers will always be in motion.

Of course, not all indicators will exist with all people. Also, there could be legitimate reasons for people demonstrating some of these indicators, so please don't interpret these as addiction symptoms.

DR: Thank you Stephen. How can people get in contact with you regarding training or consultation?

SP: They can email me at: batmanofdea@gmail.com, or call my cell at: 704/ 999-3091, visit the National Law Enforcement Speakers Bureau, LLC website at: www.nlesb.org If all else fails, shine the bat signal into the sky...

Think about it

Below are two recent headlines. Take a moment, read the headlines and think about what your responses are to the questions that follow.

“Sell my company's data? Make me an offer: A new survey says that if the price is right, nearly half of employees would happily sell their company's information and confidential data.”

“Two-Thirds of Americans Can't Be Trusted: Only one-third of Americans say their fellow countrymen can be trusted according to a recent AP-GfK poll, down from over half 40 years ago.”

01. Regarding the first headline, how wide of an application net might this imply? For example, would a proportional percentage of educational professionals sell the answers to the end of grade tests if the price was right? What about information regarding national security? Would a proportional percentage of auditors falsify the audit findings if the price was right? Who else comes to mind?
02. How might the second headline and the first headline become synergistic? What are the implications for the fraud fighting professional? What are the implications for the subsequent interviewing process?
03. Do you think the findings of the two surveys are valid? If not, what do you think the two percentages might be?

One more reason as to why I get up in the morning:

Don: I had an opportunity today to talk with another company about an ethics matter. They were an unwilling participant at the beginning of the call asking that I provide them with specific questions to which they could respond yes or no. Initially, I complied with their request but eased into some of the techniques I learned from you. Eventually, we conducted a very open conversation and they agreed to share additional information with me from their internal inquiry of the matter (even with lawyers on the call!).

Submissions from Professionals in the Field

My thanks once more to Dr. Tim Naddy for his participation:

The Bleating Edge:

When Innovation Velocity Affects Social Viscosity – Part III

By: Dr. Tim Naddy, CFE, CPA and Taylor Herndon

Cheating in the Matrix

In the previous two installments of *The Bleating Edge*, we delved into a couple ways that the rapid advancement of today's technology has essentially impacted every aspect of our lives. The one we are most concerned with here in this community is the fraudster's ability to leverage new technology to commit fraud. In this, our third and final installment of the *The Bleating Edge*, we are shifting our focus from the boardrooms to the classrooms and uncovering how students are finding more inventive ways to leverage technology in their quests to be the best, even if they may be disingenuous in their methods. This is the article that looks into the social viscosity side of the equation.

Is cheating a crime? Okay, let's soften that up a bit. Is cheating...wrong? It would seem that it depends on which side of the test you are on. If you studied hard and realize that another who didn't may get a leg up on you because *they* cheated, then yes, of course it is. But, let's say you weren't the studious one. Could you rationalize it away as "nobody's going to get hurt" or "this will be the only time"? Then perhaps, in your current situation and current ethical situation, you might say no, or at least understand at that point why folks decide to cheat. So, whether that coin lands on head or tails, it really doesn't matter because ideally the coin itself should have never been flipped. Cheating is wrong and from what we heard on every cartoon growing up, apparently "Cheaters Never Win." However, if you believe that, then I've got a bridge to sell you.... Yes, we've all heard it before and we've all been dissuaded from dabbling in the dark arts of cheating. However, CFEs may be the only ones out there who are towing the ethical line. Cheating is rampant and its increasing trend is telling us that cheaters are not losing. In fact, they are *winning*. Which makes my job as a professor and the moral compass of my classroom that much more difficult. Why? It's not that I know they *are* cheating. It's *how* they are cheating that concerns me. Enter the digital deceiver.

In 2012, several high profile learning institutions were exposed as having had major cheating scandals on their campuses. Of all the institutions hit by this growing behavior trend, the one that appeared to take the biggest PR hit was Harvard. Of the 279 students enrolled in Government 1310 - Introduction to Congress class (the irony here I can't help but point out), over half were suspected in a cheating scandal that was performed on a take home test. By the end of the internal investigation, about 70 of those students had been required to withdraw for a year as punishment for their cheating, a few teaching fellows were caught up in the discipline and the Assistant Professor was denied his promotion to Associate Professor (Perez-Pena, 2013ⁱ). So how did this occur? Well, we all know as Fraud Examiners that behavior drives everything. Our ability to identify the behavior that differs from the norm, or the baseline, is what sets us apart. But, what happens when those who are supposed to be identifying and calling out the wrong behavior are the very ones who by their silence are actually encouraging the activity? According to Richard Perez-Pena, reporter for the NY Times covering cheating in higher education, one of the main reasons why cheating has become the new norm is it's "relatively simple: Cheating has become easier and more widely tolerated, and both schools and parents have failed to give students strong, repetitive messages about what is allowed and what is prohibited" (Perez-Pena, 2012ⁱⁱ). In fact, in studies of student behavior and attitudes, he says that they, "show that a majority of students violate standards of academic integrity to some degree, and that high achievers are just as likely to do it as others." Why? You guessed it: technology.

It appears that the ability to quickly access the Internet has made cheating easier, "enabling students to connect instantly with answers [to tests], friends to consult and works to plagiarize" (Perez-Pena, 2012ⁱⁱ). In a 2012 moral reasoning study conducted at Duquesne University, Drs. Roberts and Wasieleski set out to examine "the relationship between cognitive moral development (CMD), productivity features of information technology (IT) and unethical behavior or misconduct" (Roberts and Wasieleski, 2012ⁱⁱⁱ). They found that in their sample, their results showed that "*both* higher levels of CMD and increased levels of IT productivity features at one's disposal have a significant role to play in explaining observed behavior" and that these results "demonstrate the significant role of technology in enabling negative behavior and the relative inability of subjects' use of principled moral reasoning to overcome it" ^{iv} (Roberts and Wasieleski, 2012). In layman's terms, as technology increases the relative ease with which we gain access to vast stores of comprehensive information, our perceptions of how we assimilate that information into our daily lives also changes. In some cases, this may be interpreted in a negative way because college students who have been conditioned by technology (and their teachers) to quickly research and

regurgitate information are only doing what they've been groomed to do. However, they are being told they can't do that anymore because *now* it's cheating.

Remember when everyone used to tell you to "Work Smarter; Not Harder"? It appears we don't have a problem with technology helping us appear smarter. But, it seems to be an entirely different story when the deft use of that technology gives us the perception that those around us aren't working harder. So, where is the line drawn? When did ingenuity become cheating and at what point did cheating become a "crime"? Where your morality stands on this issue is only one side of the tug of war rope. The other side is, not surprisingly, the rationalization of the cheater.

Some students cheat. Why? Well, the reasons may vary, but I guarantee you that each one, at least in the student's mind no matter to whom they are speaking, is as genuine as it comes. Perhaps it's a case of situational ethics. What is clear though is that we can't complete a fraud triangle without Rationalization and it appears they can't cheat without it as well. To rationalize is to "ascribe (one's acts, opinions, etc.) to causes that superficially seem reasonable and valid but that actually are unrelated to the true, possibly unconscious and often less creditable or agreeable causes" (Rationalize, n.d.^v). Pay specific attention to the words *possibly unconscious* because another definition from the psychology side alludes to it as well, "to indulge, often unchallenged, in excuses for or explanations of behaviour about which one feels uncomfortable or guilty". According to Brent and Atkinson, "if students believe they are being rational and that their actions are excusable or justified, then they are recognizing the legitimacy of some form of constraints on their behavior" (Brent and Atkinson, 2011^{vi}). So it looks as if students, for the most part, understand at some unconscious level that they are committing an act that actively violates trust, yet they continue to cheat. So what then exactly is compelling our younger generation to become digital deceivers? Perhaps it's a new mindset that is trending the wrong way.

Some students view cheating no differently than not cheating. It's this trending mindset that is helping to cement cheating into the academic setting and is propelling students with new academic values through school. In both high school and university systems academic dishonesty is taken seriously and can subject a student to a range of disciplinary measures such as failure of the course, suspension from school, and, depending on the severity and pervasiveness of the dishonesty, possible legal actions. Despite knowing these harsh punishments, more and more students still choose to engage in academic dishonesty even though these same students are the ones who supposedly read, signed and agreed to be bound to policies and guidelines that specifically defined the unacceptable behavior and the potential consequences they would face

should they decide to push the envelope. These policies were developed by school administrators to whom the concept of cheating is both clear and concise; however, to some, namely the students, they are seen as a bit antiquated.

Boundaries that defined cheating in earlier years have evolved and broadened in ways that have altered the perspectives of today's students which now vary drastically from our previous generations. Findings from a study on the perceptions of cheating conducted by Jurdi, Hage, and Chow (2011^{vii}) showed that students, in general, have a high propensity toward dishonest behaviors, particularly those of plagiarism and helping someone else cheat. In the study they also noted that certain student attributes helped to either diminish or bolster their cheating mentality, such as their perceived adherence to academic ethical standards, their known strengths/weaknesses of academic ability, and the frequency of witnessing peers successfully cheat. All appeared to be main contributors to the students' perception of dishonesty. Interestingly, students today show a proclivity towards cheating not so much from an individual standpoint, but more so as group effort. Speaking specifically of social viscosity, we are now introducing the concept of social currency. It seems that copying someone else's work or helping another student cheat appears to be above board because while the student still may perceive such actions to be dishonest, they don't perceive them to be morally wrong. So, again, our underlying value systems are being challenged, but how do we as their parents, bosses, instructors and mentors communicate those value systems effectively when the students feel like their stakes are higher and their competition is fiercer than what we ever had to deal with? Information is everywhere beckoning them to tap into it at their leisure and convenience, so the position to which students default is to use the information when they need it. However, almost like an addiction, it seems that they *feel* like they need it more frequently to stay in the hunt with other students; almost like it's the academic version of survival of the fittest.

In some situations, students may feel as though cheating is the only way to achieve success. To the Colleges of Business throughout the country this trend is of particular concern because according to Simkin and McLeod, "the ones who are teaching business ethics are finding that cheating is even more prevalent among business students than among non-business students" (Simkin and McLeod, 2010^{viii}). This observation has far reaching implications for us as Fraud Examiners as it pertains to the mindset of the next generation of business men and women graduating by the thousands. As a professor, I can tell you that business professors aren't too excited about the notion that one of their students could very well be the next fraudster splashed

across the Internet headlines. That won't be a proud moment for them. Still, today's business students are our future economic and financial leaders and if *they* are the ones who are found to be cheating their way through school, sometimes without remorse, then what does that say about the ethical attitudes that they will bring with them into the business communities they lead? For those who have gotten away with cheating in the past, the "cheating is okay" mentality, especially when perceived, internalized and accepted as the only way to achieve success, becomes quite a motivating factor in the decision process to either take the high road or opt for the road less traveled. If left unchecked, it will most likely soon become the most common trait listed in fraud circles when discussing the Pressure side of the fraud triangle. The ability to manipulate technology may just be the most common Opportunity, too.

Today's students appear to be taking advantage of the wealth of information that is literally sitting at the end of their fingertips as they are using their hand held technologies to locate and buy papers and test answers. Ask any professor and they will tell you that cell phones are, whether they like it or not, being used inside their classrooms. The thing is, these gadgets "ain't your Daddy's mobile phones", but rather mini supercomputers with all the full functionality one would have on their laptop and/or desktop. This instant and constant access to the Internet creates an underground market where students of all backgrounds and creeds actively engage in the buying, selling, and trading of test answers and academic papers. One cell phone with a camera can destroy the academic integrity of an exam and the academic careers of many students. While the cheating behavior isn't new, *per se*, the way that students go about it is and because of their 24/7 connectivity it has taken on a life (and profit margin) of its own. It doesn't always occur in the open, but rather in the shadows of the Halls of Academia.

Don Mullinax, a former inspector general in the Los Angeles Unified School District, says that while there is no hard data related to fraud in the general school he believes that, "there is a lot more [fraud out there] than administrators are aware of because they aren't looking for it, and if you aren't looking for it, you aren't going to find it" (Dessoiff, 2009^{ix}). Now, Mullinax is a leader at Forensic/Strategic Solutions, a forensic accounting firm that has worked with Southern California School districts. In his experience, Mullinax believes that most school leaders merely lack ways to uncover fraud, and when they do, they don't always report it. "What's scary is that a lot of administrators figure that's not their job. They are hired to be educators, and they don't have a background in financial management or accounting or auditing, so they don't focus on fraud. They

wouldn't see it if it walked up and hit them in the face" (Dessoiff, 2009^{ix}). I know we all pride ourselves from being able to recognize it when we see it, but could we really?

While that sounds unbelievable, think back at the Bernie Madoffs and the Enrons of the world. Even long-time professionals in public accounting and regulation were duped. So saying that a professor isn't bulletproof is not a new revelation, but it does make us in Academia take a long hard look at what kind of environments we are fostering and, ultimately, what kinds of intellectual products we are molding. In academic circles, teachers and professors are not oblivious to the fact that so many of our students participate in some form of academic dishonesty, so why we are still shocked when it happens is an interesting crossroads to travel. We still want to believe that they still want to learn and when we find out that at the end of the day they still just want that good grade, well, it hurts. It hurts professionally and personally. However, we soon grow a thick skin because we realize what is really happening. Donald L. McCabe, a professor at the Rutgers University Business School and a leading researcher on cheating, summed up the issue in his best Dr. Seuss cadence when he commented, "There have always been struggling students who cheat to survive. But more and more, there are students at the top who cheat to thrive" (Perez-Pena, 2013ⁱ). We are not fighting the new and inventive ways that information is delivered and facilitated; we are fighting an underlying ethical shift that has been long in the making.

As a professor, I am not shocked. As a CFE, I am reminded to be watchful of those mortarboard and gowns entering the workforce. Sure, I'll give them the benefit of the doubt. But what was it that George W. Bush said at his September 17, 2002 Pledge Across America speech in Nashville, Tennessee? "There's an old saying in Tennessee — I know it's in Texas, probably in Tennessee — that says, fool me once, shame on — shame on you. Fool me — you can't get fooled again." (YouTube, n.d.^x). My sentiments exactly.

In conclusion, as Certified Fraud Examiners we have many irons in the fire that must be constantly attended to so not to allow one to go without a turn here and there. Whether we are learning how to navigate the whos, whats, whys and hows of the latest technological gadgets and software so we can mitigate their fraud risks to our clients, dealing with the interpersonal investigatory advantages and disadvantages inherent within the behavior of narcissists and sociopaths, or identifying and breaking the disturbing trend in our lackadaisical society that cheating is what "everyone else is doing", we must remain vigilant in our assignments. Why? Because if we aren't playing the sentry, then who is?

The challenge that today's thinker faces is that they must stay ever vigilant to make sure that a particular technology's point of diminishing returns does not suddenly become society's point of no return. As such, we originally asked ourselves two very important questions: "At what point will innovation velocity irreparably affect social viscosity?" and "If that point were to come, would we even recognize it early enough to sound the warning bells?" As CFEs, we know that innovation velocity has already affected social viscosity. Just look around during your coffee break. See anyone actually *talking* to someone else? No. They are all standing next to each other engrossed in their own digital masters. While this introverted behavior is upsetting, to say that it's irreparable is perhaps not giving people the benefit of the doubt. They can, and are beginning to, shut off their electronic leashes and are slowly matriculating back into society, only now more informed about their surroundings and events that affect them. Know this though, if we keep listening and watching like we've always done, we will be the ones they depend on to sound the alarm. We will ring the bells. And if they don't listen, well, when something does eventually happen we'll have their digital audit trails to lead us right to their crimes.

Now, that's the kind of evidence I like.

Thank you for reading The Bleating Edge. It has been my pleasure to bring it to you.

¹ Perez-Pena, R. (2013, September 16). Students accused of cheating return awkwardly to a changed harvard. *The New York Times*. Retrieved from http://www.nytimes.com/2013/09/17/education/students-accused-of-cheating-return-awkwardly-to-a-changed-harvard.html?_r=0

¹ Perez-Pena, R. (2012, September 7). Studies find more students cheating, with high achievers no exception. *The New York Times*. Retrieved from <http://www.nytimes.com/2012/09/08/education/studies-show-more-students-cheat-even-high-achievers.html>

¹ Roberts, J. A. and Wasieleski, D. M. (2012). Moral reasoning in computer-based task environments: exploring the interplay between cognitive and technological factors on individuals' propensity to break rules [Abstract]. *Journal of Business Ethics*, 110(3), 355-376.

¹For those of you interested, the authors of the study include the implications of the research findings for academics and business managers, as well as, recommendations for mitigating misconduct in both academic and workplace environments (Roberts and Wasieleski, 2012.)

¹ rationalization. (n.d.). *Collins English Dictionary - Complete & Unabridged 10th Edition*. Retrieved January 18, 2014, from Dictionary.com website: <http://dictionary.reference.com/browse/rationalization>

¹ Brent, E., & Atkisson, C. (2011). Accounting for cheating: An evolving theory and emergent themes. *Research in Higher Education*, 52(6), 640-658. doi:<http://dx.doi.org/10.1007/s11162-010-9212-1>

¹ Jurdi, R., Hage, H. S., & Chow, H., P., H. (2011). What behaviors do students consider academically dishonest? Findings from a survey of canadian graduate students. *Social Psychology of Education*, 15, 1-23.

¹ Simkin, G., M., & McLeod, A. (2010). Why do college students cheat? *Journal of Business Ethics*, 94, 441-453.

¹ Dessoiff, Alan. (2009). Fighting fraud in schools. *District Administration*, 45 (7). 32-36.

¹ Bush, Fool Me Once. Retrieved from <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eKgPY1adc0A>

Book Recommendations

My texts (and no one should ever be without them): The texts I have currently in publication are: *Interviewing and Interrogation*, 2nd edition. *Fraud Related Interviewing*, *Persuasive Interviewing* and *Investigative Discourse Analysis 2nd Edition*. They can be ordered directly from Carolina Academic Press. (919) 489-7486 or online at <http://www.cap-press.com> or www.amazon.com

Below are the books I have read since the last issue:

What Our Stories Teach Us, Linda K. Shadiow;

The Dancing Wu Li Masters, Gary Zukav;

The Doodle Revolution, Sunni Brown.

Note: Stay tuned as I will be announcing courses that will be delivered via webinars, online, blended and one-on-one interview coaching. I am striving to make 2014 a most exciting year.

Until the April issue, keep asking, keep looking and keep listening. The answer **is** there.

And hey, you do know, that of the entire readership, you're my favorite.

Don
