

Liking and Lying

Kathy L. Bell

*Department of Psychology
Texas Tech University*

Bella M. DePaulo

*Department of Psychology
University of Virginia*

Do people lie more to people they like than to people they dislike? Forty-eight female participants were experimentally induced to like or dislike an art student who had painted one of the paintings that participants liked and one that they disliked. According to their own self-reports and objective measures of the content of the discussions, participants favored the art students they liked with kind lies. When discussing the paintings with liked (compared to disliked) artists, participants conveyed more liking for all of the paintings, exaggerated their liking for the paintings they disliked that were the artists' own work, and were especially unlikely to say explicitly that they disliked those paintings. Participants favored the art students they liked not only by what they said or did not say about the artists' own work, but also by what they communicated about the other artists' work. This was the case even though they liked the paintings equally in both conditions and were explicitly instructed to be polite to *all* the art students. Judges who watched videotapes of the discussions noticed many of the differences in the ways that participants communicated about paintings that were and were not the artists' own work, but they did not notice differences in communications with the liked versus the disliked artists even though these interactions did objectively differ.

One of the first and most important reactions to an initial encounter with a person is a feeling of liking or disliking toward that person. Liking for other people predicts important interpersonal processes and outcomes, such as the desire to affiliate with

that person and to develop and maintain a relationship (Berscheid, 1985; Lott & Lott, 1972). But does it also predict telling the truth to that person?

The question of whether to lie, tell the truth, or squirm away from the truth without necessarily lying can arise in virtually any situation, but it may be especially likely to occur in situations in which a person is asked for an opinion or evaluation. These kinds of situations can be especially challenging to truth-telling when the person seeking the appraisal is personally invested in it (DePaulo & Bell, *in press*). If, for example, an acquaintance asks your opinion of a painting on her wall that you think is hideous, it can be difficult to say so directly. It will be even more difficult if she painted the picture herself. Even when you do like her painting, however, it may still be tempting to tell something other than the complete and simple truth. For example, you might be inclined to pretend that you like the painting even more than you really do. The central question addressed by this research is: Are we more inclined to lie, or to stray further from the truth, when discussing our evaluative reactions with people we like or does liking instead predict greater truthfulness?

In longer-term relationships in which liking has matured into deep affection or love, there is often an expectation of honesty and openness. Relationship partners often believe that they have an obligation and a commitment to tell each other the truth, even in situations in which other people with no such commitment might be tempted to tell easy and gutless lies. The whole truth, even a painful truth, might be more tolerable to a relationship partner than to an acquaintance because it can be cushioned and buffered by the other positive and supportive experiences that are part of the relationship history. History invites truthfulness in another way, too. Partners who have had many experiences with each other also have much of the information they might need to know when the other person is lying. Thus, relationship partners may be less inclined to tell each other lies because they are less likely to expect to get away with them.

At the same time, the deep caring that relationship partners experience for each other might tempt them to tell the kinds of lies that spare each other's feelings. The expectations that relationship partners develop for each other also act as lures for lies. When one person feels that their behavior violates the high expectations and standards that the other person holds for them, they might just lie about their behavior (Millar & Tesser, 1988).

But the initial wisps of attraction that characterize the earliest encounters with other people are associated with different psychological dynamics relevant to truth-telling and lying. There are no feelings of obligation to tell the truth, no store of experiences to cushion painful truths or to discourage lies, and no expectations to be violated. There may, however, be some incipient forms of caring. How much people like a new acquaintance may affect how much they care about that person's feelings. This concern with feelings could predict greater lying, especially in situations in which the truth might hurt. There is another potentially important

dynamic, too. People who like another person often want their liking to be reciprocated (e.g., Berscheid, 1985). This wish can also motivate the telling of kind lies in place of painful truths. In sum, although we think that honesty and openness become important in long-term relationships, we believe that in the early stages of acquaintance, liking is more likely to encourage lying than truth-telling.

We know of no experimental research that has directly tested the effects of liking on lying, but there is literature on the role of closeness in other communicative behaviors relevant to openness and honesty. For example, research in the symbolic interactionist tradition (e.g., Blumberg, 1972) has sometimes addressed the question of the degree to which evaluations are communicated freely to the people they concern and to others. Findings indicate that evaluative appraisals of the target person and of other people are more likely to be communicated to friends than to acquaintances and that these appraisals are more likely to be communicated to people other than the people they concern than to the target persons themselves. That research has also shown that more positive than negative appraisals are communicated about people who are liked and more negative than positive appraisals are communicated about people who are disliked. However, because people have more positive than negative feelings about the people they like, and vice versa, it is not clear whether those findings indicate that there are barriers to open communication or whether they instead indicate that people simply say what they feel. The research in this tradition is also problematic in that liking is typically confounded with closeness. The "close" targets are well-known and well-liked, whereas the other targets are disliked and not well known.

A second body of literature is the research on politeness theory (Brown, P., & Levinson, 1987), which grew out of Goffman's influential writings on facework (1967, 1971). Politeness theory predicts people's tendency to use direct communications as compared to more polite ones. Polite communications include lies, but they also include indirect ways of saying things that fall short of outright deceit. For example, people who want to be polite while discussing a painting they dislike might simply lie and say that they like the painting, or they might attempt any of a wide variety of ways to soften and obfuscate their negativity. For instance, they might sneak in some mention of what they really do dislike about the work amidst a string of praises (e.g., "I really like the colors and the textures but I'm not sure that the perspective is exactly right").

Politeness theory (Brown, P., & Levinson, 1987) predicts that people communicate to close (compared to less close) others in more direct and less polite ways. It also predicts that people who use more direct and less polite communications will be perceived as closer to each other than those who use the more polite forms of speech. Across numerous tests of these hypotheses, results have been inconsistent (see Holtgraves, 1992, for a review). Several problems may account for the ambiguity of the data. First, many of the studies involved people's reports of what they thought they would say in various hypothetical situations or their perceptions

of hypothetical (rather than actual) communications. Second, and perhaps more importantly, closeness and liking have often been confounded. In studies in which some attempt was made to separate liking from closeness (such that the liked people were not more familiar than the disliked ones), the results were contrary to the predictions from the theory. People were more polite to the people they liked than to the people they disliked (Brown, R., & Gilman, 1989; Slugoski & Turnbull, 1988).

In this research, participants first picked out paintings they liked and disliked from a gallery of choices, and they indicated how much they liked each of their selections and what exactly they liked and disliked about each. Then they discussed those paintings with an art student who mentioned that she had painted one of the liked paintings and one of the disliked ones herself. To manipulate participants' liking for the art student, we used the Byrne (1969, 1971) attitude similarity manipulation which has been used successfully in dozens of previous studies. Thus, before they met the art student, participants learned that they were attitudinally either very similar or very dissimilar to her. Immediately following each discussion of each painting, participants indicated how honest they had been and how much liking they had tried to convey about each of the paintings.

If participants simply want to seem more likable to the liked art student than to the disliked one, they might use the "everyone likes a liker" rule (Folkes & Sears, 1977) and try to convey more liking for all of the paintings when talking to an art student they like—that is, there would be a main effect for liked versus disliked art student. If they want to favor the liked art student herself, then they might try to convey especially more liking for the liked art student's own work than for the paintings that are not the art student's own—that is, there would be an interaction between liking for the art student and whether the painting was the art student's own. Both of these strategies qualify as untruthful because the experimental design ensured that participants' overall (averaged) liking for the four paintings was no greater when participants liked the art student than when they did not, and it also ensured that participants actually did like the liked art student's paintings no more than the disliked art student's. Finally, if participants save their deceptions only for the most difficult situations, then they might try to convey more liking for the liked art student's paintings than the disliked art student's only when the paintings are ones they dislike.

Participants can influence the art students' perceptions of how much they like the paintings not only by what they say about the paintings that are the art student's own work, but also by what they say about the paintings that are not the art student's own (DePaulo & Bell, in press). For example, participants who like the art student (compared to those who do not) may be more inclined explicitly to say that they like that art student's paintings and less inclined explicitly to say that they dislike them; in addition, they may be more inclined explicitly to say that they dislike the other paintings and less inclined explicitly to say that they like them.

OVERVIEW

To test the effects of liking on lying we used three different sets of dependent variables: participants' self-reports, objective measures of lying, and judges' assessment. In Part 1 of this study we tested the effects of liking on lying using participants' reports of their own behavior. In Part 2, we gleaned objective measures of participants' verbal strategies from transcripts of their discussions. We determined for each discussion whether participants said explicitly that they either liked or disliked the painting. This provided the most direct measure of lying. If, for example, the participants said explicitly that they liked a painting that they had just indicated in writing (before meeting the art student) that they detested, then those participants lied. We also counted the total number of aspects they said that they liked about each painting and the total number they said that they disliked. We also compared their stated likes and dislikes to the ones they had described in writing before meeting the art student, to see how many new likes and dislikes they mentioned during the course of the discussion. In Part 3, we showed videotapes of the discussions to uninvolved and uninformed judges, to see if they could discern differences in truthfulness depending on whether the art student was liked or disliked.

PART 1

Method

Participants and Art Students

Participants were 48 women from an introductory psychology course who participated for partial fulfillment of a course requirement in an experiment that was ostensibly about psychology and art. They were randomly assigned either to like or dislike the art student (24 each).

Three women took turns in the role of the art student, and three other women took turns as experimenters. Preliminary analyses showed no significant effects of art student or experimenter.

Procedure

Participants were run in individual sessions. When they arrived for the experiment they were greeted by an experimenter and told that the experiment was designed to help art students learn more about how art is perceived by people who are not experts. Participants were then left alone in a room to choose the 2 paintings they liked the most and the two they liked the least from 21 paintings displayed in

the room. (The paintings were ones that had been painted by undergraduates in an introductory painting course.) Participants rated each of these 4 paintings on 9-point scales of liking, with higher numbers indicating greater liking. The experimenter then returned and gave the participant a second questionnaire on which she was asked to describe briefly, in an open-ended format, what she liked and disliked about each of the 4 paintings. This experimental paradigm was adapted from DePaulo and Bell (in press).

The experimenter next introduced the key manipulation: *liking for the art student*. The participants were told that previous participants had found it easier to begin talking to the art student if they learned something about each other first. Therefore, they would each fill out a 20-item attitude scale and exchange answers with each other before they met to discuss the paintings. Following Byrne's (1971) attitude similarity procedure, participants received an attitude scale supposedly completed by the art student in which 17 of the 20 responses were either the same as the participant's (*liked art student*) or different from the participant's (*disliked art student*). At the end of the study, participants completed the standard measure of liking used in the Byrne paradigm: two 9-point scales assessing the degree to which the participants enjoyed interacting with the art student and the degree to which they thought the art student enjoyed interacting with them. Higher numbers indicated greater enjoyment.

The experimenter then told the participant that she would now discuss the four paintings with the art student. The experimenter mentioned that the art student may have actually painted some of the paintings herself and that she would tell the participant if she had. The experimenter also informed the participant that the art student would not know that the four paintings were ones that the participant selected and that she would not ever see the participant's ratings of liking for the paintings nor the brief descriptions of what the participant liked and disliked about the paintings.

In previous research involving this paradigm (DePaulo & Bell, 1993), it was shown that women who are given no special instructions act either indistinguishably from those who are instructed to be polite or more similarly to participants given polite instructions than to those urged to be honest. Therefore in order to achieve greater standardization and control than we would have if we gave participants no special instructions, we instructed our participants, all of whom were female, to be "polite." Specifically, they were told:

If it turns out that the student did paint some of these paintings, try to convince her that you really did like the ones she painted so that her feelings won't be hurt. It is OK to mention things you dislike about her paintings when she asks, but just try to convey the impression that, overall, you like the ones she did. This study is supposed to be a learning experience for the participants, but we don't want any of them to end up feeling badly because of it.

After determining that the participant understood the instructions, the experimenter left the room, turned on a hidden video recorder, then returned with the art student. After introducing the participant to the art student, the experimenter left the room.

The art student, who was unaware of the manipulation of participants' liking for her, then proceeded to interview the participant about each of the four paintings, in counterbalanced order. She asked the following questions about each painting, giving the participant ample time to answer each question before moving on to the next: "What do you think of it? What are some of the specific things you like about it? (Anything else?) What are some of the specific things you dislike about it? (Anything else?)" Participants were instructed by the experimenter not to ask the art student about her opinions. The art students were trained to deflect any such questions.

The art student always claimed that one of the participant's two most favorite paintings (randomly selected) and one of the participant's two least favorite paintings (also randomly selected) was one that she painted herself. She introduced this information just before asking the participant what she thought of the painting.

After the discussion of each painting, the art student left the room while the participant completed a questionnaire about the discussion. On 9-point scales, participants indicated how much liking they tried to convey to the art student, how honest and straightforward they had been, and how confident they felt while discussing the painting. Participants were debriefed and all of them signed a consent form allowing us to use their videotapes.

Results and Discussion

Manipulation Checks

Liking for the art student. Participants' reports at the end of the study of how much they enjoyed interacting with the art student and how much they thought the art student had enjoyed interacting with them were highly correlated, $r(46) = .71, p < .001$. Therefore, those ratings were averaged to form a single index of liking for the art student. The participants who were led to believe that they had very similar attitudes to the art student did in fact like her more, $M = 5.92$, than the participants who were led to believe that their attitudes were very dissimilar, $M = 4.98, t(46) = 2.42, p < .05$.

Liking for the paintings. A main effect for painting in an analysis of participants' ratings of the paintings indicated that the participants liked the liked paintings, $M = 7.73$, far more than they liked the disliked paintings, $M = 2.14, F(1, 46) = 1237.64, p < .001$. Participants should not have liked the paintings painted

by the liked art students any more than the ones painted by the disliked art students, and in fact they did not, $F(1, 46) = 1.16$, *ns*. Also, because the paintings described as the artists' own work versus other artists' work were randomly selected, participants should not have liked the artists' own paintings any more than the other artists' paintings, and again, they did not, $F(1, 46) < 1$.

Procedural details. All participants correctly recalled that some of the art students may have painted some of the paintings and that they would not know whether the art student they would meet had painted any of the paintings until they met her. All of the participants correctly indicated that they would be discussing the paintings that they selected. All of the participants thought that the art students would believe that the paintings picked for discussion were selected at random by the experimenter. All participants also understood that the art student would not see what they wrote about the paintings.

Design

The basic design was an Art Student (disliked/liked) $\times$ Painting (disliked/liked) $\times$ Investment (other artists' work/art student's own work) mixed-design analysis of variance, with repeated measures on the last two factors. The dependent variables were participants' self-reports of their honesty and confidence and the degree of liking they tried to convey to the art student during each of the discussions. We also determined the degree to which the participants tried to convey more liking than they really did feel. These exaggeration scores were computed by subtracting their ratings of their initial liking for the paintings from their reports of the amount of liking they tried to convey during the conversations (conveyed liking).

Effects of Participants' Liking for the Paintings and Artists' Personal Investment

The basic paradigm that we used in this research involves the two major factors of participants' liking for the paintings and artists' investment in the paintings. In our initial study (DePaulo & Bell, in press), the results of those factors (as well as several other factors not included in this design) were described. In this section, we report replications of effects involving those two factors.

Table 1 shows that participants reported less truthfulness in their discussions of the disliked paintings than the liked ones, an effect that was especially strong when the paintings were the art student's own work. Participants reported being less honest when discussing the paintings they disliked compared to the ones they liked, $F(1, 46) = 63.43$, $p < .001$. They were also less confident when discussing the disliked paintings than the liked ones, $F(1, 46) = 33.74$, $p < .001$. Participants tried

TABLE 1
Effects of Participants' Liking for the Paintings and Artists' Involvement on
Participants' Self-Reports

Factor	Self-Report Measures			
	Honesty	Confidence	Conveyed Liking	Exaggeration
Liking of painting				
Disliked	6.17	5.44	4.41	2.27
Liked	7.64	6.48	6.54	1.19
Artists' investment				
Own work	6.36	5.55	5.94	1.04
Other artists'	7.45	6.38	5.00	.04
Liking × Investment				
Disliked				
Own work	5.30	4.77	5.10	3.02
Other artists'	7.05	6.11	3.71	1.52
Liked				
Own work	7.42	6.32	6.77	-.94
Other artists'	7.85	6.64	6.30	-1.45

Note. Ratings were made on 9-point scales. Higher numbers indicate more of the quality.

to convey more liking for the paintings they liked than for the paintings they disliked, $F(1, 46) = 105.66, p < .001$; however, they exaggerated their liking more for the disliked paintings than for the liked ones, $F(1, 46) = 310.14, p < .001$.

Table 1 also shows that participants reported that they were less truthful when discussing the paintings in which the art students were personally invested compared to the ones in which they had no personal investment. Specifically, participants said that they were less honest when discussing the paintings in which the artists were personally invested, $F(1, 46) = 39.28, p < .001$. They also said that they were less confident when discussing those paintings, $F(1, 46) = 26.63, p < .001$, and that they tried to convey more liking for them, $F(1, 46) = 25.36, p < .001$, even though they did not in fact like them more. Participants also said they exaggerated more when discussing the artists' own work, compared to the other artists' work, $F(1, 46) = 21.35, p < .001$.

The degree to which participants were less honest when discussing the artist's own work than when discussing the other artists' work was especially great when the paintings were ones that the participants disliked, $F(1, 46) = 31.21, p < .001$. Similarly, the interaction for confidence showed that the participants were especially insecure when discussing paintings they disliked that were the artist's own work, $F(1, 46) = 9.83, p < .01$. The participants said that the degree to which they tried to convey more liking for the artist's own work than for the other artists' work was especially great when they disliked the paintings, $F(1, 46) = 8.52, p < .01$.

Participants also said that they exaggerated more when they disliked paintings that were the artists' own work than when the paintings were other artists' work; they also understated their liking less for the paintings they liked that were the artists' own compared to the other artists' work, $F(1, 46) = 9.24, p < .01$. All of these effects replicate those reported by DePaulo and Bell (in press).

Effects Involving Liking for the Art Student

A main effect for art student for the measure of conveyed liking indicated that the participants said that they tried to convey more liking for the paintings when they liked the art student, $M = 5.72$, than when they disliked her, $M = 5.22$, $F(1, 46) = 4.60, p < .05$, even though they did not actually like the liked art students' paintings any more than the disliked art students'. Participants also said that they exaggerated their liking more when interacting with the liked art students, $M = .85$, compared to the disliked art students, $M = .22$, $F(1, 46) = 7.39, p < .01$.

The interaction between art student and investment was nearly significant for the measures of confidence, $F(1, 46) = 3.67, p = .06$, and exaggeration, $F(1, 46) = 3.22, p = .08$. Participants said that they felt less confident discussing the paintings that were the art student's own, compared to the ones that were not her own, both when they disliked the art student, $M_s = 5.82$ and 6.34 , and when they liked her, $M_s = 5.27$ and 6.41 , but the difference was bigger when they liked her. Similarly, the participants reported exaggerating more when discussing the artist's own work compared to the other artists' work, both for the disliked artist, $M_s = .53$ and $-.08$, and for the liked artist, $M_s = 1.55$ and $.16$, but again the difference was greater for the liked artist.

The three-way interaction of art student, painting, and investment was significant for the exaggeration measure, $F(1, 46) = 14.99, p < .001$. The means in Table 2 show that the participants always exaggerated their liking more (or understated it less) when discussing the artist's own work than the other artists' work; however, the difference was most striking when participants were discussing paintings they disliked with art students whom they liked.

The means in Table 2 also show that the interactive effect of participants' liking for the art student with the art students' investment in the paintings was more important when participants were discussing paintings they disliked compared to ones that they liked. A contrast testing the prediction, for the disliked paintings only, that participants would exaggerate more when discussing the artist's own work (relative to the other artists' work) when they liked the art student (compared to when they disliked her) was significant, $F(1, 46) = 14.24, p < .001$. The analogous contrast computed for the liked paintings only was not significant, $F < 1$.

It is also noteworthy that participants managed the difficult situation of discussing paintings they disliked not only by manipulating what they said about the artist's

TABLE 2
Participants' Self-Reports of Exaggeration in Discussions of the Four
Kinds of Paintings

Paintings	Art Student		
	Disliked	Liked	Liked Minus Disliked
Disliked			
Other artists'	1.88	1.17	-.71
Own work	2.35	3.69	1.34*
Own minus other	.47	2.52**	
Liked			
Other artists'	-2.04	-.85	1.19*
Own work	-1.29	-.58	.71
Own minus other	.75	.27	

* $p < .01$. ** $p < .001$.

own work, but also by what they said about the other artists' work. When the disliked paintings were the art student's own, the participants exaggerated their liking more when they liked the art student than when they disliked her. But they also exaggerated their liking less to the liked art student than to the disliked one when the disliked paintings the participants were discussing were not the art student's own.

In summary, when participants were discussing the paintings with artists they liked, they were especially unlikely to describe their true feelings for the paintings. Instead, they tried to convey more liking to these liked artists than to the disliked ones, and they also exaggerated their liking more. They were especially likely to favor the liked artists with their exaggerated expressions of liking when discussing the paintings that the artists had painted themselves. Moreover, when those paintings were ones that the participants themselves actually detested, the participants tried to convey almost 4 scale points more liking than they really did feel.

PART 2

Method

Transcripts and Coders

Exact typed transcripts were made of all of the discussions of all of the paintings. Four undergraduates coded the transcripts in pairs. Within each pair, each person coded the transcripts independently. Then the pairs resolved any disagreements by discussion.

Verbal Strategies

Each coder coded three different verbal strategies from the transcripts. They coded each of the strategies separately for each discussion of each painting.

1. *Explicit evaluations of liking and disliking.* Coders indicated whether the participants explicitly said that they liked the paintings and whether they explicitly said that they disliked them.

2. *Total number of liked and disliked aspects.* Coders counted the total number of different aspects of the paintings that participants said that they liked and the total number that they said they disliked. For example, if participants said they liked the color, the shading, and the originality, they would get a score of 3 for total number of liked aspects.

3. *Number of new liked and disliked aspects.* Coders counted the number of aspects of the paintings that participants said they liked and disliked that were different from the aspects that the participants had described in writing before they knew that they would be meeting an art student. To code this variable, coders first identified each of the liked and disliked aspects that participants described in writing, then they identified the liked and disliked aspects from the transcripts of the discussions, and, finally, they compared the two sets.

Reliabilities

There were two intraclass correlations for each variable, one for each of two pairs of coders. For explicit evaluations of liking, the reliabilities were .84 and .88; for explicit evaluations of disliking, they were .88 and .64; for total number of liked aspects, .90 and .66; for total number of disliked aspects, .80 and .86; for new liked aspects, .66 and .61; and for new disliked aspects, .74 and .65.

Results and Discussion

Design

The design was the same as for Part 1 except that one within-participants factor of professed affect (liking/disliking) was added. For the measure of explicit

evaluation, the levels were the proportions of participants who explicitly said that they (a) liked or (b) disliked the painting. For total aspects mentioned and new aspects mentioned, the levels were number of liked aspects mentioned and number of disliked aspects mentioned.

Initial Likes and Dislikes

To be sure that participants who liked the art student did not like or dislike more aspects of the paintings than participants who disliked her, even before they had met her, we analyzed the number of liked and disliked aspects of all of the paintings that participants had described in writing. Participants listed almost exactly the same number of liked and disliked aspects when they liked the art student as when they disliked her, $F < 1$.

Effects of Participants' Liking for the Paintings, Professed Affect, and Artists' Personal Investment

Replicating DePaulo and Bell (in press), there was a significant main effect of painting for the measures of explicit evaluation, $F(1, 46) = 18.06, p < .001$, and total aspects mentioned, $F(1, 46) = 10.28, p < .01$. When participants disliked the paintings, they were less likely to make any explicit evaluation at all—whether positive or negative—than when they liked them, $M_s = .24$ and $.41$. They also mentioned fewer aspects that they liked or disliked when they disliked the paintings than when they liked them, $M_s = 4.40$ and 5.15 .

DePaulo and Bell (in press) also reported significant main effects of professed affect and interactions of professed affect with painting and with investment for all three measures. We replicated all of those effects in this study, and the means for these effects are shown in Table 3. The main effects of professed affect indicated that across all of the discussions, participants were much more likely to say explicitly that they liked the painting than to say that they disliked it, $F(1, 46) = 81.56, p < .001$. They also mentioned significantly more aspects of the paintings that they liked than disliked, $F(1, 46) = 61.55, p < .001$, and they thought of significantly more new things to like than to dislike over the course of the discussions, $F(1, 46) = 46.98, p < .001$.

The interaction of professed affect with painting showed that when participants liked a painting, they very often said so explicitly and almost never said that they disliked it; however, when participants disliked a painting, they were almost as likely to say explicitly that they liked it as to say that they disliked it, $F(1, 46) = 108.76, p < .001$. Participants always mentioned more things that they liked than disliked about the paintings, but the difference was especially striking when they

TABLE 3
Effects of Participants' Liking for the Paintings, Professed Affect, and Artists' Personal Investment

Factor	Explicit Evaluation ^a		Total Mentioned ^b		New Mentioned ^c	
	Liked	Disliked	Liked	Disliked	Liked	Disliked
Overall means	.50	.15	5.98	3.56	3.65	2.03
Liking of painting						
Disliked	.20	.29	4.85	3.94	3.11	2.52
Liked	.81	.01	7.11	3.19	4.19	1.54
Artists' investment						
Own work	.52	.06	6.60	2.79	4.30	1.64
Other artists'	.49	.24	5.36	4.33	3.00	2.42
Liking × Investment						
Disliked						
Own work	.23	.12	5.75	2.96	3.94	1.98
Other artists'	.17	.46	3.96	4.92	2.29	3.06
Liked						
Own work	.81	.00	6.77	3.75	3.71	1.77
Other artists'	.81	.02	7.46	2.62	4.67	1.31

^aEntries are proportions of participants who explicitly said that they liked or disliked the painting.

^bEntries are the total number of liked or disliked aspects of the paintings that participants mentioned in the discussion but had not previously listed.

^cEntries are the number of liked or disliked aspects of the paintings that participants mentioned in the discussion but had not previously listed.

really did like the paintings compared to when they disliked them, $F(1, 46) = 29.93$, $p < .001$. Similarly, participants always thought of more new things to like than to dislike about the paintings, but this was especially true when they actually did like the paintings compared to when they disliked them, $F(1, 46) = 18.60$, $p < .001$.

The interaction of professed affect with investment indicated that participants were especially more likely to say explicitly that they liked a painting than that they disliked it when the paintings were the artists' own work than when they were the other artists' work, $F(1, 46) = 11.73$, $p < .01$. They also mentioned especially more liked than disliked aspects when the paintings were the artists' own than when they were the other artists', $F(1, 46) = 35.96$, $p < .001$. Also, participants mentioned especially more new liked than disliked aspects when the paintings were the artists' own than when they were the other artists', $F(1, 46) = 29.68$, $p < .001$.

Finally, in the current study, the three-way interaction of professed liking with painting and investment was significant or nearly so for all of the three measures: for explicit evaluations, $F(1, 46) = 7.54$, $p < .01$; for total aspects mentioned, $F(1, 46) = 4.72$, $p < .05$; and for new aspects mentioned, $F(1, 46) = 2.97$, $p = .09$. For all measures, the means shown in Table 3 indicated that participants strayed furthest

from the truth in describing paintings they detested that were painted by the art student herself. In their explicit evaluations of the liked paintings, it did not matter to the participants at all whether the paintings were the artist's own work or other artists' work; in both cases, 81% of the participants said that they liked those paintings and either 2% or 0% said that they disliked them. When evaluating the paintings that they disliked that were not the artist's own work, 46% of the participants explicitly acknowledged that they disliked those paintings, whereas 17% of them said explicitly that they liked them. When the detested paintings were the artist's own work, participants were more likely to say explicitly that they liked them (23%) than that they disliked them (12%). For the measure of total aspects mentioned, participants discussing paintings they really did like mentioned more aspects that they liked about the paintings than they disliked, both when the paintings were the artist's own work, and when they were the other artists' work. When discussing paintings they disliked that were not the artist's own work, they mentioned relatively more things that they disliked than liked. However, when discussing paintings they disliked that were the artist's own work, they mentioned more things that they liked than disliked. The patterning of means was similar for the measure of new things mentioned.

Consistent with the implication that when the truth is hard to tell, people tend to refrain from making any evaluation at all, were several other significant findings. First, participants were less likely to make any explicit evaluation when the artists were invested in the paintings than when they were not, $M_s = .29$ and $.36$, $F(1, 46) = 6.03$, $p < .05$. Second, the degree to which participants made fewer explicit evaluations of the disliked paintings than the liked ones was especially marked when the artists were personally invested in the paintings, $M_s = .18$ and $.41$, than when they were not, $M_s = .31$ and $.42$, $F(1, 46) = 4.06$, $p < .05$.

Effects Involving Liking for the Art Student

The three-way interaction of art student, professed affect, and investment was significant for the measure of explicit evaluation, $F(1, 46) = 4.22$, $p < .05$. As shown in Table 4, there was only one condition in which the artist's personal investment in the paintings influenced participants' explicit evaluations, and that is when participants were explicitly saying that they disliked a painting when discussing it with an art student they liked. In that condition, participants were significantly less likely to say explicitly that they disliked the painting when it was the artist's own work than when it was another artist's work. In contrast, when the participants disliked the art student, their tendency to express their disliking for the other artist's work, but to keep their disliking for the present artist's own work to themselves, was not significant. The results also show that participants in all conditions were significantly more likely to say explicitly that they liked the painting than to say that they disliked it. When participants liked the art student, they showed this

TABLE 4
Proportions of Participants Who Explicitly Said That They Liked or Disliked the Artists' Own Paintings and the Other Artists' Paintings

	<i>Disliked Art Student</i>			<i>Liked Art Student</i>		
	<i>Professed Affect</i>					
			<i>Liking Minus Disliking</i>			<i>Liking Minus Disliking</i>
<i>Paintings</i>	<i>Liking</i>	<i>Disliking</i>		<i>Liking</i>	<i>Disliking</i>	
Other artists'	.54	.19	.35**	.44	.29	.15*
Own work	.54	.10	.44**	.50	.02	.48**
Own minus others'	.00	-.09		.06	-.27**	

* $p < .05$. ** $p < .001$.

TABLE 5
Proportions of Participants Who Stated Explicit Evaluations of the Four Kinds of Paintings

	<i>Disliked Art Student</i>			<i>Liked Art Student</i>		
	<i>Other</i>	<i>Own</i>	<i>Other</i>	<i>Other</i>	<i>Own</i>	<i>Other</i>
<i>Paintings</i>	<i>Artists'</i>	<i>Work</i>	<i>Minus</i>	<i>Artists'</i>	<i>Work</i>	<i>Minus</i>
			<i>Own</i>			<i>Own</i>
Disliked	.27	.23	.04	.35	.12	.23**
Liked	.46	.42	.04	.38	.40	-.02
Liked minus disliked	.19*	.19*		.03	.28**	

Note. Entries are averaged across the two kinds of evaluations—professed liking and professed disliking.
* $p < .01$. ** $p < .001$.

positively bias significantly more when discussing her own work than the other artists' work, $F(1, 46) = 14.68, p < .001$. In contrast, when participants disliked the art student, they were no more likely to favor the art student's own work in this way than they were to favor the other artists' work, $F(1, 46) = 1.09, ns$.

The three-way interaction of art student with painting and investment was also significant for the measure of explicit evaluation, $F(1, 46) = 4.06, p < .05$. As shown in Table 5, when participants were discussing paintings they disliked, compared to ones they liked, they were significantly more likely to refrain from making any explicit evaluation at all (whether positive or negative). The one exception to this was the condition in which participants were talking to an art student they liked about paintings that were not her own. In that condition, they were just as likely to verbalize their evaluation of the disliked paintings as the liked ones. The table also

shows that there was only one condition in which the art student's personal investment in the work significantly affected the participants' inclination to make explicit evaluations; that was when the participants were discussing paintings they disliked with art students they liked. In that condition, participants were more likely to make no explicit evaluation at all when the detested paintings were the art student's own work than when they were the work of other artists. Participants did not show the same differential restraint when they did not like the art student.

Finally, the interaction of professed affect with art student was nearly significant for the measure of new aspects mentioned, $F(1, 46) = 2.73, p = .10$. Participants always thought of more new things that they liked than disliked about the paintings during the discussions, but this tendency was stronger when the participants liked the art student, $M_s = 4.12$ and 2.11 , than when they disliked her, $M_s = 3.18$ and 1.95 .

In summary, participants' reports in Part 1 that they flattered the artists they liked by manipulating their expressions of liking for the paintings were underscored and extended by the results of Part 2. The objective measures of participants' verbal behaviors also showed strategic use of the expression or withholding of affect in ways that favored the liked artists over the disliked ones.

PART 3

Method

The discussions of the paintings were edited onto seven videotapes of about 1 hr each. An approximately equal number of participants from each condition appeared on each tape. After each discussion of each painting, there was a 10-sec rating pause. During the pause, judges rated the participant on 9-point scales of honesty, actual liking for the painting, degree of liking that the participant was trying to convey to the art student, and comfort, with higher numbers indicating more of each attribute.

Judges were 12 undergraduate women, each of whom rated all of the videotapes in different orders. Judges worked individually when they made their ratings. Because the art student's comments indicating whether the painting was one of her own were edited out of the tapes, the judges were unaware of that manipulation. They were also unaware of the participants' painting preferences and liking for the art student.

Results and Discussion

Design

The design was the same as for Part 1. Dependent measures were judges' perceptions of the participants' honesty, comfort, actual liking for the paintings, and degree of liking that they seemed to be trying to convey. Exaggeration scores

paralleled those computed for the self-report data. Perceptions of actual liking were subtracted from perceptions of conveyed liking.

Effects of Participants' Liking for the Paintings and Artists' Personal Investment

In the DePaulo and Bell (in press) research, judges who watched the interactions on videotape thought that the participants seemed to stray further from the truth when discussing the disliked paintings (compared to the liked ones), when discussing paintings that were the artists' own (compared to the other artists'), and when discussing the disliked paintings that were the artists' own. These two main effects and the interaction were significant on most measures in this study, too.

Judges realized that the participants really did like the liked paintings more than the disliked ones, $M_s = 5.99$ and 4.07 , $F(1, 46) = 167.40$, $p < .001$, and that they also tried to convey more liking for the liked paintings than for the disliked ones, $M_s = 6.66$ and 4.96 , $F(1, 46) = 123.95$, $p < .001$. Judges also thought that the participants were exaggerating more when discussing the disliked paintings, $M = .89$, than the liked ones, $M = .67$, $F(1, 46) = 11.77$, $p < .01$, and that they felt less comfortable discussing the disliked paintings, $M = 5.89$, compared to the liked ones, $M = 6.16$, $F(1, 46) = 20.88$, $p < .001$.

Judges thought that the participants really did like the paintings in which the art students were invested, $M = 5.41$, more than they liked the paintings in which the artists had no personal investment, $M = 4.65$, $F(1, 46) = 49.76$, $p < .001$, even though the participants in fact liked the two sets of paintings almost exactly the same amount. The judges also thought that the participants were trying to convey more liking for the artist's own work than for the other artists' work, $M_s = 6.20$ and 5.42 , $F(1, 46) = 69.33$, $p < .001$.

Judges thought that the participants were less honest when discussing the artist's own work compared to the other artists' work only when the participants disliked the paintings, $F(1, 46) = 11.19$, $p < .01$. The means for own and others' were 6.56 and 6.69 for the disliked paintings, and 6.78 and 6.63 for the liked paintings. The Painting $\times$ Investment interaction was also significant for the measures of actual liking, $F(1, 46) = 4.94$, $p < .05$, conveyed liking, $F(1, 46) = 10.56$, $p < .01$, and exaggeration, $F(1, 46) = 3.98$, $p = .05$. Judges thought that the degree to which the participants really did like the paintings, were trying to convey liking for the paintings, and were exaggerating their liking was greater when the paintings were the artist's own work than when they were the other artists' work and that this effect was especially strong when the participants disliked the paintings (compared to when they liked them). For actual liking, the means for the own and other paintings were 4.55 and 3.58 for the disliked paintings and 6.26 and 5.72 for the liked paintings. For conveyed liking, the corresponding means were 5.51 , 4.42 , 6.90 , and 6.42 , and for exaggeration they were $.96$, $.84$, $.64$, and $.70$.

Effects Involving Liking for the Art Student

None of the effects involving liking for the art student were significant. Thus, even though the participants admitted that they communicated differently to the liked art students than to the disliked ones, and the objective measures of their verbal behavior supported their reports, the judges did not notice any differences. This was not because they were unattuned to important communication processes, for they noticed the same kinds of differences in the ways that participants discussed the different kinds of paintings as did the participants in the previous study involving this paradigm (DePaulo & Bell, in press), and their patterns of sensitivities and insensitivities were comparable to those documented in many previous studies of nonverbal communication and deception (e.g., DePaulo, 1992; DePaulo, Stone, & Lassiter, 1985).

Discussion

The little dab of liking that we induced in half of our participants, compared to the touch of disliking that we induced in the others, was enough to push them significantly astray from the truth. When participants liked the art students, compared to when they disliked them, they tried to convey significantly more liking overall for all of the paintings, even though they liked the paintings almost exactly the same amount in both conditions. This expands on the work of the symbolic interactionists by showing that not only are more positive statements made about people who are liked (Blumberg, 1972) but that their work is more likely to be praised. They also are more likely to hear this favorable assessment than persons who are disliked even when they are interacting with virtual strangers. Perhaps participants hoped that their more generous appraisals of all of the paintings would endear them to the artists they liked (Folkes & Sears, 1977).

Consistent with politeness theory our participants were especially polite when they liked the artists (Brown, R., & Gilman, 1989; Slugoski & Turnbull, 1988). They fine-tuned their expressions of liking so as to single out the liked artists for their deceitful praises. Participants always tried to convey more liking than they really did feel for the paintings they disliked, but the degree to which they exaggerated their liking was especially striking when they were talking to an artist they liked about her own work.

The objective measures of the participants' verbal behaviors indicated that often, what participants did *not* say was just as important a consequence of their liking for the art student as what they did say. Of all of the participants who were induced to like the art student, only one of them ever said explicitly that she disliked one of the art student's own paintings. Instead, when participants disliked a work of art that was painted by an artist they liked, they were inclined to make no explicit

evaluative statements at all. In contrast, the same participants (i.e., those who liked the art student) were especially eager to state in no uncertain terms their evaluations of the paintings they disliked that were painted by *other* artists. The participants who disliked the art student, on the other hand, showed no special lust for trashing the work of the other artists. Instead, they evenhandedly offered the same proportion of kind and unkind sentiments about the artists' own work and the other artists' work. Their communications were relatively honest, but not particularly flattering or kind even though they had been instructed to be kind to the art student.

There was one other hint of a way in which the participants treated the liked artists more kindly than the disliked ones. Over the course of their conversations about the paintings, participants came up with relatively more new things to like about the paintings (that they had not mentioned in writing just before meeting the art student) when they liked the art student than when they disliked her. It is not clear whether participants, in doing this, were actually lying or distorting the truth. Instead, it may be that when the participants liked the art students (compared to when they disliked them), they were more motivated to find things that they liked about the paintings, and as a consequence, they succeeded. If so, then what the liked artists heard was not necessarily deceitful, but it was different—and in a more positive way—from what they could expect to hear from someone who was not quite so fond of them.

In sum, participants communicated more kindly, but also more deceitfully, to the artists they liked than to the artists they disliked. Perhaps they did so because they cared about the liked artist's feelings, or because they wanted the liked artist to know that they cared about her feelings, or because they wanted the liked artist to like them in return. Perhaps, then, the telling of kind lies is used as an entree to the development of a desired relationship. Interestingly, if the strategy is a success and a relationship develops and blossoms, lie-telling may then be regarded as a violation of the sanctity of the relationship.

Appraisals of the Other Artists' Work

In their studies of the lies that are told to people who are personally invested the topic of the lies (e.g., the paintings), DePaulo and Bell (in press) unexpectedly discovered that one of the best indicators of what participants really did think about the artists' own work was what they said about the *other* artists' work. In this study, too, liking for the artist predicted not only what participants said about the artists' own work, but also what they said about the other artists' work. For example, when participants were discussing paintings they disliked that were the art student's own work, they exaggerated their liking more to the artists they liked than to the artists they disliked. When the disliked paintings were the work of other artists, liking for the present art student still mattered, but in just the opposite way. Participants

exaggerated their liking for the other artists' work relatively *less* when they liked the art student with whom they were interacting than when they disliked her. Both effects flatter the art student whom the participants like, and both together probably communicate to her a more powerful message about the participant's sentiments than either would alone.

The importance of what participants said about the other artists' work was also apparent from the objective measures. Whether participants liked or disliked the art student was of no consequence whatsoever in predicting the explicit evaluative statements of liking or disliking that participants offered about the art student's own work. But liking made a substantial difference in participants' explicit evaluations of the other artists' work. Participants were relatively less likely to say explicitly that they liked the other artists' work and relatively more likely to say explicitly that they disliked it when they liked the artist with whom they were interacting than when they disliked her. When the explicit statements of liking and disliking were considered together, there was still another way in which communications about the other artists' work were especially telling. When participants were discussing the artists' own work, they were more likely to make explicit evaluative statements about that work when they liked it than when they disliked it; this was true both when participants liked the art student and when they disliked her. Similarly, when discussing the other artists' work with the art student they disliked, participants were more likely to make explicit evaluative statements about the liked paintings than the disliked ones. However, when discussing the other artists' work with the liked artists, participants were no more likely to make explicit evaluative statements when they liked the paintings than when they disliked them. Again, this was a strategy that flattered the liked artist. In fact, the percentage of participants who explicitly said what they thought of the paintings they disliked was highest when the participants were talking to artists they liked about the other artists' work. In sum, participants flatter the artists they like not only by exaggerating their liking for her work or withholding expressions of disliking for it, but also by showing relatively more restraint in their expressions of liking for the other artists' work and relatively less restraint in their expressions of disliking for that work.

Clueless Judges?

After learning from participants' self-reports as well as our own measurements of their objective verbal behaviors that participants strayed further from the truth when discussing the paintings with the artists they liked (compared to the artists they disliked), we were surprised to find that the judges who watched the videotapes of the discussions in Part 3 noticed no differences whatsoever in the communications to the liked versus the disliked art students. This did not occur because we happened to recruit especially undiscerning judges, for the judges did notice

differences that were documented in previous research using the same paradigm (DePaulo & Bell, in press). Specifically, they realized that participants communicated less truthfully about the paintings that were the artists' own, compared to the ones that were not their own; that they were less truthful in their discussions of the disliked paintings than the liked ones; and that they were especially less truthful in their discussions of the disliked paintings when those paintings were the artists' own work. The effects of liking for the art student were in some ways fairly subtle ones. For example, the pattern of self-reported exaggeration for the disliked paintings was similar for both liked and the disliked artists; in both cases, participants exaggerated more when the paintings were the artists' own than when they were the work of other artists'. But the degree to which participants favored the artist's own work with their exaggerations was greater for the liked than for the disliked artists. Similarly, the objective measures of participants' verbal strategies revealed some rather subtle strategies. Sometimes what mattered most was not what participants said about the artists' own work, but what they did *not* say about it, or what they *did* say about the other artists' work.

Still, the fact that our dispassionate judges could not discern any differences in the communications to the liked and disliked artists does not necessarily mean that the artists themselves would not be able to see the differences. Because the artists in this research were confederates, we could not examine that question in this research, but it is an interesting question for future research. Perhaps participants turn up their expressions of liking to the liked artists just enough to make them discernible to exactly those people they want to notice them (i.e., the artists themselves), but not so much as to make them seem biased and sycophantic to disinterested observers.

The Power of Bogus Strangers and Subtle Manipulations

Now that the study of naturalistic and long-term interpersonal relationships is becoming more prominent in social psychology, it is especially interesting to revisit the power of subtle laboratory manipulations and short-term interactions. It is exactly those features of this experiment that render these findings remarkable. The liked and disliked art students were separated in participants' hearts by just one scale point. Yet this one little point of difference in their perceptions of strangers pushed participants to communicate in gentler and less honest ways with the strangers they were induced to like. The participants indicated as much in their own self-reports, and those self-statements were corroborated by our objective measures of their verbal behaviors.

The experimental paradigm we used also allowed for another very important design feature. We were able to ensure that participants who liked the art students liked the paintings almost exactly as much as the participants induced to dislike the art students. Thus, when participants tried to convey more liking for the paintings

in their discussions with the liked art students, or when they thought of more new things to like about the paintings when they were discussing them with the liked art students, or when they engaged in any of the other strategies we documented, we knew they were not doing so simply because they liked those paintings better in the first place.

Limitations

The limitations of our work are readily apparent. First, because we did not have a control condition in which neither liking nor disliking was induced, we do not know whether our effects are attributable to participants' liking for the liked art student, their disliking for the disliked art student, or both. Second, both the participants and the art students were women, and the kinds of lies they told in this research were kind lies in which they pretended to feel more positively than they did in fact. Diary studies of everyday lying indicate that when women are interacting with other women, the rate of telling kind lies is higher than in any dyad in which men are involved (DePaulo, Kashy, Kirkendol, Wyer, & Epstein, 1996). Therefore, in this study, the overall rate of straying from the truth may have been higher than it would be in other situations. Another factor may have also increased the overall rate of lying. All participants were urged to be polite and to avoid hurting the art student's feelings. We think that these factors influenced the degree to which participants generally exaggerated and distorted the truth, but we do not think they affected the specific link between liking and lying. Still, the question is best answered empirically in future research.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

This research was supported in part by a Research Scientist Development Award and an R01 Award from NIMH to Bella DePaulo.

We thank Robert Cooley, Irene Dalton, Joan Hairfield, Tracey Lumsdane, Traci Mann, Sean Robinson, Lisa Stevenson, Greg Swaim, Lee Walke, and Benita Watson for their help with this research.

REFERENCES

- Berscheid, E. (1985). Interpersonal attraction. In G. Lindzey & E. Aronson (Eds.), *The handbook of social psychology* (Vol. 2, 3rd ed., pp. 413–484). New York: Random House.
- Blumberg, H. H. (1972). Communication of interpersonal evaluations. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 23, 157–162.
- Brown, P., & Levinson, S. (1987). *Politeness: Some universals in language usage*. Cambridge, England: Cambridge University Press.

- Brown, R., & Gilman, A. (1989). Politeness theory and Shakespeare's four major tragedies. *Language in Society*, 18, 159–212.
- Byrne, D. (1969). Attitudes and attraction. *Advances in Experimental Social Psychology*, 4, 35–89.
- Byrne, D. (1971). *The attraction paradigm*. New York: Academic.
- DePaulo, B. M. (1992). Nonverbal behavior and self-presentation. *Psychological Bulletin*, 111, 203–243.
- DePaulo, B. M., & Bell, K. L. (1993). *Lying kindly: What people do when the truth is hard to tell*. Unpublished manuscript, University of Virginia.
- DePaulo, B. M., & Bell, K. L. (in press). Truth and investment: Lies are told to those who care. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 71.
- DePaulo, B. M., Kashy, D. A., Kirkendol, S. E., Wyer, M. M., & Epstein, J. E. (1996). Lying in everyday life. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 70, 979–995.
- DePaulo, B. M., Stone, J. I., & Lassiter, G. D. (1985). Deceiving and detecting deceit. In B. R. Schlenker (Ed.), *The self and social life* (pp. 323–370). New York: McGraw-Hill.
- Folkes, V. S., & Sears, D. O. (1977). Does everybody like a liker? *Journal of Experimental Social Psychology*, 13, 505–519.
- Goffman, E. (1967). *Interaction ritual*. Garden City, NY: Anchor.
- Goffman, E. (1971). *Frame analysis*. New York: Harper Torchbooks.
- Holtgraves, T. (1992). The linguistic realization of face management: Implications for language production and comprehension, person perception, and cross-cultural communication. *Social Psychology Quarterly*, 55, 141–159.
- Lott, A. J., & Lott, B. E. (1972). The power of liking: Consequences of interpersonal attitudes derived from a liberalized view of secondary reinforcement. *Advances in experimental social psychology*, 6, 109–148.
- Millar, K. U., & Tesser, A. (1988). Deceptive behavior in social relationships: A consequence of violated expectations. *The Journal of Psychology*, 122, 263–273.
- Slugoski, B. R., & Turnbull, W. (1988). Cruel to be kind and kind to be cruel: Sarcasm, banter, and social relations. *Journal of Language and Social Psychology*, 7, 101–121.

Copyright of Basic & Applied Social Psychology is the property of Lawrence Erlbaum Associates and its content may not be copied or emailed to multiple sites or posted to a listserv without the copyright holder's express written permission. However, users may print, download, or email articles for individual use.