

CHAPTER 3

THE DAMAGE THAT DECEPTION CAN CAUSE

*¹⁴ Justice is turned back,
and righteousness stands afar off;
for truth has fallen in the public squares,
and uprightness cannot enter.*

*¹⁵ Truth is lacking,
and he who departs from evil makes himself a prey.
The Lord saw it, and it displeased him
that there was no justice.*

Isaiah 59:14-15 (RSV)

*¹⁶ Take heed lest your heart be deceived, and you turn aside and serve other gods and worship them,
Deuteronomy 11:16 (RSV)*

*Arrogant men have hidden a trap for me,
and with cords they have spread a net,
by the wayside they have set snares for me.
Psalm 140:5 (RSV)*

*Their tongue is a deadly arrow;
it speaks deceitfully;
with his mouth each speaks peace to his neighbor,
but in his heart he plans an ambush for him.
Jeremiah 9:8 (ESV)*

*There are those who hate the one who upholds justice in court
and detest the one who tells the truth.
Amos 5:10 (NIV)*

*For such persons do not serve our Lord Christ, but their own appetites, and by fair and flattering
words they deceive the hearts of the simple-minded.
Romans 16:18 (RSV)*

*“.....and all nations were deceived by the sorcery”
Revelations 18:23 (b) (RSV)*

*¹⁶ For all who do such things, all who act dishonestly, are an abomination to the Lord your God.
Deuteronomy 25:16 (RSV)*

*The godless besmear me with lies,
but with my whole heart I keep thy precepts;
Psalm 119:69 (RSV)*

*So put away all malice and all deceit and hypocrisy and envy and all slander.
1 Peter 2:1 (ESV)*

The extent of people’s capacity to lie is enormous.

People have an astonishing capacity to lie, either directly, with express words, or indirectly, by being phoney, two-faced, and seeming to be something they aren’t. As a result of managing so many staff, I

have detailed written records of the many different ways in which people have deceived me or others. A lot of these emerged in my own investigations and disciplinary meetings at work.

But they also come from clients' files, where my firm acted for the employer or employee. Therefore I have been able to see the devious things that people do in many other businesses, not just my own. I can also give examples of such lies, hypocrisy and phoniness within churches. Whatever view you have as to the amount of deception in the world, it is probably an under-estimate. See how strongly Jeremiah puts it:

⁴ *Let everyone beware of his neighbor,
and put no trust in any brother,
for every brother is a deceiver,
and every neighbor goes about as a slanderer.*

⁵ *Everyone deceives his neighbor,
and no one speaks the truth;
they have taught their tongue to speak lies;
they weary themselves committing iniquity.*
Jeremiah 9:4-5 (ESV)

*Their tongue is a deadly arrow;
it speaks deceitfully;
with his mouth each speaks peace to his neighbor,
but in his heart he plans an ambush for him.*
Jeremiah 9:8 (ESV)

The dreadful damage that lies can cause

Lies cause far more damage than most of us imagine. Lives are blighted, careers harmed, and relationships ruined. Lies are powerful weapons, especially for those who know how to use them skilfully. A person who lies regularly is either wicked or well on the way to becoming so, especially if they claim to be a Christian. Lying is one of the main identifying features of those who are *already* wicked. It is also one of the main things that makes a person *become* wicked. In other words, lying is both *evidence* of, and a *cause* of, wickedness. Therefore, God hates lies and He says He will destroy those who lie:

*Thou destroyest those who speak lies;
the Lord abhors bloodthirsty and deceitful men.*
Psalms 5:6 (RSV)

The example of a secretary called Tracey, and the damage her lies did

An example of the terrible damage that lies can cause is 'Tracey', a former secretary of mine, who was an habitual and skillful liar. She was also a Christian, or at least she *said she was*, but her lying was extensive. She caused colleagues to fall out by saying things to get them to suspect or resent one another. She achieved this by means of what she *told them* about each other. She created a web of lies about people in the office with the aim of destroying relationships.

One reason why she convinced people so easily was that she *looked so innocent*. She seemed a weak, vulnerable, shy, introverted little person and not the least bit aggressive. That is partly why nobody realised she was lying at all, let alone how much damage she was causing. Then, one day, she went too far and a chain of events began which caused her wickedness to be exposed. 'Susan', who had worked

with me for many years, and with whom I had an excellent relationship, suddenly became sour towards her work and to me in particular.

Susan changed overnight and became silent, unresponsive and resentful, though without saying why. It affected her productivity too. She did less work than she had always done before and suddenly lacked enthusiasm. She no longer went the extra mile or volunteered for tasks. She also started avoiding me, which was a major problem, as I was her boss and she had a key role in the firm. It got so bad that I called her in and asked her what was wrong. She was stony-faced, but denied that anything was wrong. She refused to open up, though it was obvious there was a problem.

Things continued to get worse and I was at a loss as to how to handle it. I would be a lot wiser today if I was faced with a situation like that. I would immediately suspect that lies were involved somewhere and would start to search for them. However, this was years ago and I understood far less about the art of deception than I do now. It all came out when I called Susan in to give her a written warning about her dramatic decline in performance, motivation and output.

She sat in front of me with a sullen face and I told her my concerns, especially that she was avoiding me. I said we couldn't go on like that. Perhaps it was the gravity of the situation, or perhaps God prompted her to open up. Whatever it was, Susan then said: "*But I feel upset about what you've said about* (the name of her step-daughter). I was confused and asked what she meant, as I had no idea what she was talking about. She was reluctant to say at first, because she thought I was just pretending not to know what she meant.

She was also trying to protect Tracey who had told Susan, "*in confidence*", that I had been critical of her step-daughter. We spent a few minutes going to and fro, with me urging her to spell out what she was saying. Susan eventually said that she "*had been told*" (she wouldn't say by whom) that I had said insulting things about her step-daughter. After staring at her blankly for a moment, in amazement, I reassured her that I had never criticised her step-daughter. Indeed I barely knew her.

I urged her to tell me where she had got this strange idea from and was amazed when she said it came from Tracey! I had to ask her to repeat herself and to explain exactly what had been said. It then all tumbled out and Susan told me the details of some insulting things I had supposedly said. Because this had been told to her by my own PA, she had believed it. Most would say she had good reason to believe Tracey. It is also very significant that Tracey had said to her: "*I am telling you this in strict confidence*".

She had then asked Susan *never to tell me anything about what had been told to her*, in case Tracey might "*get into trouble*" for disclosing it. She had told Susan that she was only revealing these things to help her, "*as a friend*" and claimed "*I am putting my own neck on the line to help you.*" Take careful note of all those words in italics. I have learned, by repeated experience, that such phrases are frequently used by people who use lies as a tool of their trade. The lie is presented as if they were doing you a "*favour*" and "*taking a risk*" in disclosing the information.

That makes the victim feel beholden to the person who is lying to them. They feel they owe a debt of gratitude, and a duty of care, to the very person who is doing them harm. That being so, they are much less likely to check the truth of what is being said. Any checking up would betray the confidence and let down the person who had taken such a risk to help them. However, the story Tracey told was a lie. More precisely, it was a distortion of a conversation which had taken place, in which *Tracey, not I*, had made comments about Susan's step-daughter.

Tracey had falsely attributed her own words to me. She saw Susan as a rival and wanted her to believe the lies and then act to her own detriment by becoming resentful and ineffective at work. Ideally, she

wanted Susan to leave the firm completely, so as to reduce the competition amongst those who worked for me in managing the business. It was calculating and cold, yet it was done by a little mouse of a woman who seemed pathetically weak. She was the last person I would have suspected (at the time) of being such a wicked liar.

Today, I would be much more on my guard for this kind of deception from someone like her. In fact I would be *especially* expecting it from someone as timid and introverted as she was. Such a person is actually a prime candidate for the role of office manipulator and liar. They can't get their own way by talent, or strength, as they don't have any. I called Tracey in afterwards and she was already anxious, because she knew I had previously called Susan in. She knew something was wrong and must have been wondering whether the '*confidentiality*' of her lies to Susan had held.

When I confronted her she saw that her plan had failed and that there was no way of getting away with it. Therefore she quickly admitted it all and even wrote a letter of apology to Susan and others. However, she only wrote it because I asked her to and also because she had been caught and the game was up anyway. Tracey had intentionally tried to get Susan to resign, so as to make herself more senior within the firm after her departure. When her plan failed, Tracey realised her best policy would be to limit the damage by owning up to it and *appearing* to apologise.

There was nothing genuine about her apology, and no real remorse, so far as I could tell. Her sudden openness was not an indicator of conviction. She just thought it would be the best tactic when dealing with a Christian boss like me. There *had* actually been a conversation, many weeks before, between Tracey and me, and it had concerned Susan's step-daughter. But it was entirely different from how it had been portrayed to Susan. Tracey had been chattering away to me about Susan's step-daughter and I had simply listened to her.

However I had not made the statements which Tracey said I made, or said anything at all. There is an important point here. Liars will often twist *real* events and conversations and use them as their subject matter, rather than completely invent them from nothing, like a novelist. To invent an entire story, with all the associated little facts and peripheral details is very difficult. It is also easier for people to see through, so that they detect the lies, because the details are unlikely to fit perfectly at every point.

Deceivers know that. They also prefer to make life easier for themselves, and avoid unnecessary effort. Therefore they take real life events and conversations, which actually happened, but *amend the facts* by adding, removing or altering little details. They end up with a story which is 80%, 90%, or even 99% true. Yet it is still a lie. Moreover, that lie is all the more believable, and damaging, *precisely because most of it is true*. Thus, in the story which Tracey had told Susan, the following parts were true:

- a) Tracey *had* been in my room
- b) She and I *had* discussed Susan's step-daughter
- c) The step-daughter *had* been criticised
- d) Susan's difficulties with her step-daughter *had* been spoken about

Tracey had profoundly altered the meaning, nature and significance of that conversation by saying that *I had made* these negative remarks rather than *hearing her making* them. Therefore, the entire meaning was reversed. Instead of being an account of *Tracey* speaking about of the step-daughter, it became an account of *me* doing so. It was spiced up as well, though not too much. She added and exaggerated just enough to make it hurtful, but not too much, in case it became incredible.

Therefore when you are told a story, do not assume that just because many of its component parts are true, even 90% or 99%, that that must mean the story as a *whole* is true. That does not follow. Therefore your cross checks, and also your cross examination of parties and witnesses must be very thorough. That is especially so if you are considering taking legal or disciplinary action against someone, or even altering your view of them, based on what someone has said. Therefore, before believing or acting upon anything you are told, do ten times as much investigating and cross-checking as you might otherwise have done.

While telling all these lies, Tracey was, or at least claimed to be, a Christian.

I can't be certain that Tracey's repentance was false, but I believe it was. That is for God to decide, not me. But her story illustrates the kind of lies which are told in churches, workplaces and families every day. Remember also that Tracey *claimed to be a Christian*. She had genuine Christian parents and had been brought up in the church. I knew her Dad and he was undoubtedly a real Christian. So, never think that just because someone claims to be a Christian, or *even if they really are one*, that they would never lie to you or about you.

There are many people in churches, both ordinary members and leaders, who will do so and think nothing of it. One of the difficulties of dealing with lies is that, until the lie is exposed, you don't know you are being lied to. Therefore you don't know what you are up against. I recall a previous occasion when Tracey succeeded in getting another secretary to resign and got away with it completely. I had no idea at the time what was going on and only understood it later, after her deceptive ways came to light in relation to the Susan incident.

Harriet's story - driven from her job by a colleague's lies

This is the earlier incident, in which Tracey's lie succeeded. An experienced secretary, 'Harriet' joined us. She was a Christian and had been the PA to the Chief Executive of a major organisation. She joined us as my new PA, with Tracey working under her as my secretary. Harriet and I knew each other very slightly from church connections and I also knew of her track record, which is why I appointed her. However, within a few weeks of joining us, Harriet started to be reluctant to have any dealings with me, despite being my own PA.

She became really scared of me and seemed to be under the impression that I disapproved of her, which I didn't. I never managed to get Harriet to open up and tell me what the problem was. She became very nervous and stressed, quite unlike her usual self. She got to the point where she couldn't function as a PA. So, she resigned, after only two months. At the time I was very puzzled, but let her go, thinking she must have complicated emotional problems. It never occurred to me that Tracey had anything to do with her paranoid behaviour.

If it happened today I would know that if a person is refusing to say what is worrying them, they have probably been lied to by somebody about something. I only realised later, after the 'Susan' episode, that Tracey had been behind it all and had whispered lies into Harriet's ear, on the same '*confidential*' basis. She had deliberately lied to Harriet to unsettle her and get her to resign, so that she could get her job. Her scheme was 100% successful that time. Harriet's resignation left the way clear for Tracey, my secretary, to step straight into Harriet's job and become my PA.

So, she created a vacancy and a promotion for herself, simply by telling lies to get a more talented colleague to leave. It really was that cold and calculated and yet that simple. One of the points I am trying to get across in this book is that this kind of deception is wickedness, even though it does not involve famous or powerful people doing spectacular things that make the TV news. Most of us would

not even realise it is going on, let alone classify it as wickedness. Yet we need to see it as such, and deal with it accordingly.

If we don't, we will never identify and overcome the people who act in these devious ways. But the problem is there are very many of them. There is nothing unusual about any of the examples I have given. Similar things are going on in families, workplaces and churches all the time, and those affected by it are usually entirely unaware. Also, although I am writing from the perspective of a boss and employer, these stories are equally applicable whether you are a boss or not.

Even if you are in a junior position, you still need to know about the things that people do, and the techniques they use. Then you can be on the alert, on your own behalf, to protect yourself from being used, manipulated and lied to. However, it is of wider relevance as well. Whatever job you do, however lowly, you can help the boss and also the other managers within that business. In particular, you can protect them from being lied about and undermined.

That's not just an opportunity. It is a responsibility and a duty. If you are an employee you owe your boss, and the company as a whole, your full loyalty. That includes helping them to avoid being deceived. So, you have a duty to act in the utmost good faith towards your own boss, the managers in general, and the wider business. That includes watching out for people who are seeking to harm that business, or anybody who owns it or works in it. When such things arise, you may need to report what you've seen and heard to the management.

That may be a new idea to you, and may sound alien if you are not thinking biblically about what it means to be an employee, or a colleague, and the duties implied by those roles. At any rate, the examples given in this book are of relevance to everybody, not just bosses. That being so, please read them with a view to seeing their wider relevance to your own situation and to how they can help you to protect yourself, your boss, your colleagues and the firm as a whole.

The story of Belinda and the dishonesty and malice she showed, despite claiming to be a Christian

This story occurred in a church, and shows how devious and nasty some Christians can be. We have to come to terms with the fact that wickedness really is a problem in churches, not only amongst unbelievers. This story concerns 'Belinda' who was in a church that I was part of. It used to organise monthly teaching days, with invited speakers, to which large numbers would come from many other churches. A problem arose concerning one particular speaker, due to some things he had been teaching elsewhere, which were felt to be unsound.

Therefore the organisers decided, at short notice, to withdraw his invitation to speak. That meant the forthcoming teaching day had no speaker. So, they asked me to step in, at the last minute, as a replacement speaker. However, Belinda liked the speaker who had been cancelled, and didn't approve of the invitation being withdrawn. So she decided to sabotage it. She rang around the people on the mailing list for the teaching days and told them that the advertised speaker wasn't coming and that instead "*They have invited some student to come and speak*".

Belinda knew when she rang those people that she was lying. She knew me, and knew perfectly well that I was not a "*student*". She said it because she wanted to hit back at the organisers for cancelling the previous speaker and to punish me for being the replacement. Moreover, she succeeded. She persuaded many people not to come by disparaging me, albeit without naming me. The attendance on that day was lower than usual, due to those who stayed away because of what she told them.

You might think it is going too far to classify Belinda as 'wicked, but consider what she did. Firstly, she was an old lady, with many decades in the church. So she must have been fully aware at all times of the wrongness of what she was doing. Secondly, she was deliberately causing people to miss a teaching day, from which they would have benefitted. Thirdly, she did it purely out of spite, to satisfy

her desire for vengeance. Fourthly, she was intentionally lying to those people in pretending that she didn't know who the new speaker was, and that I was "*some student*".

Fifthly, she was also doing it out of a desire for control. She had, in the past, been in charge of organising the teaching days but had to give it up due to ill health and she wanted that feeling of being in command. Lastly, it was not the first, or the only, devious, spiteful thing she had ever done. She was well known for behaving in those ways. Accordingly, given all that she knew, having been a Christian, or at least a 'churchgoer', for decades, I would say Belinda was wicked.

In fact, she may well have been more wicked than many of the non-Christians about whom I write in this book. For an unbeliever to act deviously is bad enough. He knows nothing, has never read the Bible, and does not have the Holy Spirit. But for a believer, with an abundance of knowledge, to do those same things is a far more serious sin. That is one reason why I believe that many Christians will be shocked and disappointed at the Judgment Seat of Christ. Some will be astonished to find that Jesus has some severe words of rebuke to say to them, which they had not been expecting at all.

The wicked behaviour of Julie, my former PA

An ex-employee of mine called Julie began as a secretary but worked her way up until she became my PA. In the end, she was effectively the office manager. She was an expert in the art of deception and was probably the most skilful and convincing liar I have ever come across. She wasn't a Christian but, towards the end, she even pretended to have become one, as she thought that would impress me. Her account of her supposed conversion seemed odd, and I didn't think it was real, but I didn't realise it was a lie either. I assumed she was sincere but confused.

I had previously explained the Gospel to her and invited her to Bible studies that I ran. She came along, but I always knew something wasn't right about her allegedly having become a Christian. It just didn't feel genuine to me. Even so, I never suspected that it was all a complete act. However, things developed and she was eventually exposed as an all-round liar. It came out because another member of staff, 'Terry', was beginning to see through her. She realised that he was on to her and sensed the danger to her own position.

Julie therefore tried to cause Terry to lose his job, before he could get a chance to expose her. She deliberately damaged a valuable boardroom table and then tried to get me to think that Terry had done it through carelessness, while moving it from one office to another. It was a risky tactic, but she had got away with so many things by then, that she had become over-confident and thought she could achieve anything. Such people usually do become over-confident in the end, and go too far.

On top of that, she was also getting desperate. Therefore she took a major risk, as desperate times call for desperate measures. The snag was that, on this occasion, she didn't do it quite cleverly enough. I am an ex-police officer and also a commercial litigation lawyer, so I have an eye for detail. I sensed that something wasn't quite right about the logistics or 'forensics' of this damaged table, or how it was discovered. I also felt something was odd about the things Julie told me about Terry. A number of details didn't fit.

Accordingly, having employed her for five years, my eyes began to open. I started to wonder whether Julie was yet another false person, on top of all those who had gone before her. I therefore investigated the table incident very closely, which she had not expected. When I did, the evidence came together quickly and it all pointed to Julie having deliberately scratched the table herself with some sharp instrument. She had pressed on hard enough to cause the varnish to scrape off, forming a neat little mound of dust.

Yet that little mound of dust had *not* been there when I had looked at the table, earlier. Julie wasn't aware that I had briefly been in to my office and had seen the table already. That was *after* Terry had

brought it over to my new office, but *before* Julie had vandalised it. She had banked on my not having seen it beforehand. But God had specifically drawn my eye to the table. He wanted me to notice that it was perfect on the first occasion, but was scratched on the second. He often does that when He wants me to see things.

Julie had scratched the table at a place where it would be right alongside the path I would take to walk to my desk. She had wanted to make sure that I saw it. That neat little pile of dust was one of the small forensic details that later caused her story to unravel. You have got to take careful note of the little details and tiny inconsistencies which most of us brush aside and assume to be insignificant. They can turn out to be crucial and can often expose a deceiver. Julie had damaged the table to make it appear that Terry had been careless with it. She had hoped that might provoke me to get angry with him and create a fall-out which might lead to his departure.

That may sound incredible to you if you are a sincere, naïve person. But I assure you such devious tactics are entirely normal. They come very naturally to the mind of a wicked person, no matter how unthinkable they may be to others. Many of the unexplained mishaps, where important papers ‘go missing’, things are damaged, or events are not arranged properly, are not random accidents. They have been sabotaged deliberately, but covertly, by a malicious colleague, without you ever discovering it was them. This happens far more often than most of us realise.

The wicked don’t just do one wicked thing. Therefore, once you discover something wrong, or suspicious, start to dig and to ask a lot of questions, because you will find more.

After I had made that initial discovery about the damage to the boardroom table I began to ask lots more questions to staff about several other issues, to investigate Julie more fully. When I did, a series of other deceptions emerged. Here are just a few of them. The first was that she had been running a small business of her own while working for me. She regularly stayed late at the office, supposedly doing work for me on overtime rates. In fact, she was making greeting cards for her own little sideline business. I had not authorised her to do any of that, and she knew that I never would.

However, she had been clever enough to get me to agree to her *storing* her card-making materials at the office on the basis that there wasn't enough room for them at home. That was all that had ever been agreed with me - that she could *store* the materials, not that she could make cards at the office, especially while being paid to work for me. Because I had agreed to let her store the materials at the office, I myself never saw anything suspicious about the materials *being there*. Obviously I would have, if she had not *asked me*. She knew that, which is why she told me about some, but not *all*, of her plans.

So, the fact that she had *asked permission* to store the material was actually a devious act, not an honest one. It was the exact opposite of what it appeared to be. She also needed to find a way to have the whole office to herself, so that she could make the cards without being seen. Therefore she also told other staff to go home as soon as it was 5.30pm, even though some of them actually wanted to stay late to catch up with their work. She herded them out, telling them that they needed to get a “healthy work and leisure balance.”

Yet she didn't mean any of that. She only said it to get them out of the way, so that she could make cards, not for their sake. She had the opportunity to clear the office in this way whenever I was not present. That was quite often, because I would be away doing other things, or travelling or working from home. So, she sent the staff home and spoke as if she was their mother and as if she was concerned for them not to work too hard.

To add further deceit, at the same time, she was also presenting herself as a martyr for staying late, falsely telling them that she was doing things for me. Accordingly, in addition to stealing her own overtime pay while not actually doing any work for me, she was also stopping others from working. That reduced the efficiency and output of the firm, and its profit, simply so that she could ensure the coast was clear to make cards.

The wicked are remarkably clever, and quick-thinking, when it comes to lying their way out of a tight corner.

One evening ‘Neville’, an outdoor clerk, whose job required him to spend most of his time driving round the country, came in to the office unexpectedly. He arrived at about 6.30pm, after we were closed, while Julie was on her own, supposedly working overtime for me. He saw her busily making cards and spoke to her about it, simply out of curiosity. However, she feared that he would then report that to me because it was suspicious, or that he might innocently mention it to me in conversation. She could not afford for that to happen, whether he suspected her or not.

Julie then took a cleverly calculated risk. She knew that Neville was out on the road 90% of the time and that he would probably not see me for a week or more. She therefore came to see me the *next morning*, and asked if it would be alright for her to work at the office “*tonight, in my own time, to make cards*”. She correctly estimated that Neville wouldn’t see me for several more days. Therefore, even if he did mention, at that point, that he’d seen her making cards in the office, it would seem to me that he was referring to *that* evening, not the evening before.

It would then appear to have been authorised in advance, as I would naturally assume he must be referring to the one off card-making exercise in the office that I had previously agreed to. In fact, she sought the supposedly ‘prior’ approval the morning *after* Neville saw her, not the morning *before*. Her little scheme worked perfectly. When Neville did mention it, a week or more later, it looked exactly as she had intended it to look. I therefore brushed it aside, thinking he was only telling me something I already knew about.

That trick could have gone disastrously wrong. Neville could have texted me that very night, or come to see me the next morning. But she took a calculated gamble that he would probably be delayed in speaking to me, and she was right, as the wicked so often are. However, it was even cleverer than it seemed. She was actually sounding me out that morning, even before she made her ‘request’. She waited a little while when we spoke, to see whether I would raise the subject of Neville having seen her *last night* making cards in the office.

She knew it was possible that he could have already told me the night before, or even early that morning. The outdoor clerks were often out on the road very early, as well as late. She also knew that Neville and I were close, having known each other through church for many years, long before he worked for me. Therefore she needed to know whether or not he had spoken to me before she made her ‘request’. So she subtly fished for information, and eventually concluded that he almost certainly hadn’t contacted me, because I would have mentioned it by now if he had.

She was working to a kind of flow chart. If I had told her that Neville *had* rung me the night before, she would have admitted it, made an excuse and given an apology. She would have presented it as a one-off incident and claimed no overtime pay for the night before. It would have been made to look entirely innocent. However if, as she expected, Neville had *not* told me, then she would have proceeded with Plan A and asked me if it was OK for her to make cards ‘*tonight*’.

So, I still didn't realise what she was doing, even after she had been caught *red-handed*, making cards in the office, and even after that was reported to me. It illustrates how ingenious the wicked are at covering their tracks and talking their way out of trouble. Julie showed remarkable guile and initiative. She could think on her feet and concoct schemes and plots of which even MI5 or the CIA would have been proud. Yet, in her standards of general education, she was nothing special, had passed very few exams, and had left school at 15. Indeed, in academic terms, she was rather a dunce.

Nevertheless, she had this tremendous craftiness. It came partly from her own wicked mind, and partly from the demons who were guiding her. Just as with Tracey, I realised, though only at the end, that Julie had also kept out, or got rid of, a number of job applicants whom she had seen as a threat to herself. She was more senior, and more confident and resourceful, than Tracey. Therefore she was able to devise many more ways to achieve that. She would do it either by causing them to be rejected at interview, or later at trial stage, or at some point during their probationary period.

I had a long and careful selection process and had also arranged a sensible system of making all newcomers work a probationary period. I did all that to protect the firm from bad staff. However, the system was being used by Julie to protect *herself from good staff*, who might one day become a threat to her. She had developed a remarkably accurate nose for detecting anyone who had natural talent, honesty or discernment. She knew that such people might, one day, become either a rival or a threat to herself. Either way, she took steps to prevent it by sabotaging their applications.

Those who practice witchcraft have the ability to plant thoughts into your mind.

Julie also had an uncanny ability to *plant thoughts into my mind*. She did it very subtly, so as to make me think they were my own ideas. She was therefore able to get me to do things that she wanted me to do, yet without me ever realising that I was being manipulated. You really do need to note this trait, as it is one of the main hallmarks of witchcraft. I mean the ability to *control other people's minds* by planting thoughts into their heads, which they then wrongly assume to be their own thoughts.

Something very similar is done by hypnotists, because hypnosis is itself an aspect of witchcraft. For that reason, and many others, no person, least of all a Christian, should ever let themselves be hypnotised. It is very dangerous in itself and it puts you under the control of another person, which is always wrong. Even worse, it opens you up to demonic influence. I say all that as an aside. My main point, for the moment, is that you need to be aware that mind control is real, and that it is widely practiced by ordinary people, not just stage hypnotists.

Julie also deceived me, and others, by claiming the credit for their work.

Julie also gave the false impression that she was doing a huge amount of work. She got a series of different members of staff to do things for her and then presented their work to me as if it was her own. I had no idea that any of this was going on, because nobody ever said a word about it. The main reason for their silence was that the staff themselves had no idea that I didn't know they were doing the work for her. They all assumed that it was I who had asked Julie to get them to do these things, and that I knew it was their work.

It never occurred to them to suspect that she was deceiving us all, by deleting their initials on screen, inserting her own, printing off their typing or research, and presenting it to me as if it was her work. However, she was very clever, and careful, in how she went about this and also when, and with whom. She wouldn't over-do it with any one individual, in case it may be noticed. By 'stealing' only 5-10%

of each person's work she was much less likely to be found out. Yet, when combined, it added up to a lot of work that she had apparently done.

This went on for about two or three years, on an ever larger scale, without me, or the staff, realising what she was doing. All the time she worked for me I thought Julie was super-efficient and hugely productive, and I never doubted her. Yet it was all an illusion. I am embarrassed now to admit to having been so thoroughly duped. However, I include the story because it may help you to grasp how devious and daring the wicked can be, and how easily they can deceive just about anybody. My being candid may also make it easier for you to admit it to yourself, and others, when you are deceived.

By the way, if you are going to try to argue that you never get tricked, then you are already badly deceived. The only exception is if you are a deceiver yourself, in which case this book isn't meant for you. The reality is that no sincere, decent person can entirely avoid being deceived, especially if they aren't even looking out for such behaviour. Only the wicked are immune to it, because they are doing the deceiving themselves. Therefore, when others try to do it to them, they can spot it a mile off.

Keira's story - a deceitful, manipulative supervisor

Another wicked person I employed was 'Keira', a solicitor (lawyer). I appointed her as a supervisor in my law firm. She had left her previous firm with her files in a mess. However, because I needed more staff urgently, and because she was so convincing at interview, I didn't take up any references before employing her. So I didn't discover that until later. That was a major error. If I had taken references I could have avoided a lot of grief. I let my guard down because I was in a hurry, and was short-staffed.

Moreover, she did seem impressive, had a lot of charm, and was extrovert and engaging. I have learned that careful checking of references and other background checks are essential, especially if the candidate has charm and the 'gift of the gab', as Keira did. The better they 'seem' to be, the more you need to check them out. To make matters worse, not long after she had joined us, I promoted her to the role of salaried partner. I did this prematurely, before I had had time to check her out and see what warning signs emerged. Instead, I gave her a larger team and more responsibilities.

She then began a long series of manipulative schemes. I will just give brief details of some of them. She started her campaign of deception immediately after she joined us, by persuading me to recruit three new members of staff who were friends of hers. She misled me by portraying them as excellent staff and hard workers. So I appointed all three, but it turned out later that they were incompetent and had terrible attitudes. Keira had tricked me into taking them on in order to bring her friends in to the firm.

That said, her motive was not to help them, but to *control them*. They would be her 'eyes and ears' in the office, as they would each owe their jobs to her. She banked on the assumption that, like most bosses, I would never get rid of them, even after finding out how useless they were. She thought I would not have the nerve to sack them, and would let them stay on, no matter how bad they were. That was one point where she was very wrong about me. I was entirely willing to sack staff when necessary and I never shrank from doing so.

However she would be right to assume that about most other bosses in the UK. The majority have an aversion to sacking anybody, and a great fear of doing so. I was so naïve at the time I never realised I was being lied to by Keira. I thought she had merely made an error of judgement and given me poor advice about the appointments. Even so, I quickly got rid of all three of them. That was a shock to her, but she quickly learned from it and changed her method from then on.

If they get caught, or their way is blocked, the wicked will alter their approach and find other ways to deceive you.

Keira never again *openly* tried to get me to appoint anybody else that she knew. She realised that, after those three recruitment disasters, I would be wary of any recommendation from her. Therefore she completely changed her technique and started getting people to apply to me for jobs *as if they didn't know her*. She told them to make no mention of her and to pretend not to know her. In that way, she managed to get me to appoint 'Mavis', another friend of hers. Because I was so naïve and undiscerning at the time, I even made her a salaried partner.

Mavis later got the sack for being useless, but then sued me and told lies about me to national newspapers. It was all very disturbing and unsettling but I never gave in to Mavis. In the end, she abandoned her case and got paid nothing. I never had any idea that she and Keira already knew each other. I only discovered that much later. God must have intervened to open my eyes, because I happened to meet another person who knew them both. I found out from him that they had *already known each other*, long before working for me. They had both carefully hidden that from me.

However, before that fact came out, there was another strange incident, when a young man came for a job interview with me. He applied to us to be a solicitor (lawyer) and turned up in reception for an interview. For some reason, Keira forgot to tell this applicant that he needed to pretend not to know her. She had intended to meet him in reception, by herself, before I saw him. Then she would have told him of her little trick and briefed him on what *not* to say. But she came unstuck because I went to reception by myself, and unexpectedly early.

Therefore I met him on my own, just before she got there. As I was greeting the young man, Keira rushed in and joined us in reception, looking very flustered. The job applicant looked at her with obvious recognition in his face, but she looked at him with panic in her eyes, as if she was trying to convey a message. Then she said, in a strange tone of voice, "*Good morning Mr..... . I understand you work in Birmingham, although we've never met*". As she said this odd remark, with an expression of panic on her face, the applicant couldn't help looking deeply confused.

He didn't seem to know what to say to her in reply because, of course, *he knew her very well*. I could see that it was all very peculiar, but even so, the penny didn't drop immediately. I only realised the position later, when I interviewed him again, without Keira present. I then asked him directly whether he knew her. He was obviously very uncomfortable, and unsure what to say, but his panic-stricken pauses spoke volumes. That was when I realised what Keira was up to. She had been getting people whom she already knew to apply to me, whilst she pretended not to know them.

Her motive in trying to bring in her friends was the same as it was before - the desire for control. She wanted to build a power base for herself within the firm by bringing in staff whom she knew and who would also owe their positions to her. Then she could more easily use them from then on, to gain greater influence over the firm as a whole. To her, having control over other people was all important, as it is for most wicked people.

Another way Keira tried to achieve that was to get junior staff to believe that I was a monster and that she could 'protect' them from me. She would then offer to cover up their mistakes and wrongdoings and keep it from me, as if she was doing them a favour. That harmed the firm, and our clients, as it prevented me from seeing what staff were doing wrongly and from dealing with those problems. It also meant I could not provide training and advice at the earliest possible time.

It was actually also harmful to those staff, because it caused them to be needlessly wary of me as their boss, even when they hadn't done anything wrong. Therefore they lost out on the chance to receive my advice and input, which reduced the quality of their training. That didn't bother Keira because she didn't care a jot about them. All she wanted was to have control over them, for her *own* benefit, not

theirs. This kind of deceit and manipulation goes on in businesses and churches all the time, but simple/naïve people are usually oblivious to it.

Years ago, such tricks and schemes were beyond my ability to detect or understand. Now I can see them much faster. I also realise that there is nothing unusual about them and that *most people* do these devious things, to one extent or another. I am therefore on the lookout for it, whereas previously I wasn't on the lookout for anything, so I didn't see anything. You tend only to see things if you expect to see them and are actively looking for them. What you don't expect, you won't see, even when it happens right in front of you.

A deceiver will cause even good people to behave badly when they believe the lies they are told and act upon them.

The damage caused by a liar can spread far and wide and the impact can be felt not only by the person who is lied to, but by the whole business, organisation or church. It goes far beyond the original lie itself, because of what deceived people do once they have believed a lie. They will often begin to act in disruptive, divisive, damaging ways, almost as if they were wicked themselves, as the overall effect looks very similar. One of the objectives of a liar is to get the deceived person to act in ways which will harm their own interests and destroy relationships, and even for them to commit 'career suicide'.

The person who has been lied to believes something which, *if it was true*, would make their own actions seem reasonable and rational. But the problem is the information which they, *and only they*, have been told is *not* true. More importantly, nobody else, except the deceiver, is even aware of the lie. To everyone else, the deceived person's actions, and his suspicious, hostile manner, will seem unreasonable, and even inexplicable.

But, to the deceived person himself, his responses make perfect sense, as he is acting in self-defence. Furthermore, the deceived person very rarely ever *checks* any of the things that they believe to be facts. In their own minds, there is no need to check, because those things are already fully accepted as absolute 'facts'. On top of that, a skilled deceiver will usually cause their victim to think that they cannot, or should not, check the 'facts' with anybody else.

They present the information in a "*confidential*" way, or "*as a favour*". They will also suggest that they have "*taken a risk*" in disclosing it and that they, or the victim, could "*get into trouble*" if it becomes known that they have discussed this matter, or revealed this information. So, the victim then feels obliged to keep quiet and makes no checks or enquiries. Therefore nobody around him ever gets the chance to challenge or correct any of these lies that he has been told.

A person who has been deceived will act to their own detriment, and even commit 'career suicide', as a result of believing the lies they are told.

The person who believes the lie is acting rationally, in what they believe to be self-defence. They are reacting to the perceived threat which, to them, is utterly real. The point is it is real *only* to them. It is false, and probably not known about at all, so far as *everybody else* is concerned. The deceived person usually also compounds the problem by acting in the flesh and thus over-reacting and acting badly, and even dishonestly. He can begin to do and say things which are wrong, and even wicked, purely because he is trying to protect himself from the imaginary, non-existent threat which the liar has convinced him is real.

Deceived people react in these ways because, in their own 'parallel universe', the lie is a fact and also because they feel angry, or even violated. Therefore, to them, their own misbehaviour is justified in the circumstances, especially as they were not the one who '*started it*'. The problem is that so far as everybody else is concerned, except for the liar, there have *not been* any prior events or circumstances.

The victim's actions, and carnal reactions, are the only things they know about. So he seems to be the one who is starting things and causing all the problems.

To the people around them, the victim looks and sounds unreasonable and difficult to handle, and he seems to be the cause of the conflict. This may sound far-fetched if you have never come across this technique within a business, church or group of friends. But I assure you it is very real and extremely common. The only reason it doesn't sound common is because most deception is *never discovered*, even afterwards. Therefore it goes completely unnoticed. We assume it is just somebody being irrational, hostile, or ill-tempered.

It does not occur to us that they are acting in response to some lie, known only to them, that they have believed. Thus, relationships are broken, jobs are lost, marriages are destroyed, and churches are undermined or split, without anybody ever realising what the lies were, or even that there were any lies. All of the parties, except for the liar, fully assume that they are dealing with settled facts and that they understand all of those facts correctly. Accordingly, we need to be continually on our guard for hidden lies and to at least recognise the possibility that some may have been told to us.

We also need to be alert to the possibility that lies may have been told to someone else, whom we are investigating, or tackling, or upon whom we are relying as a witness. Therefore we need to be very careful to weigh up, *and check*, anything that we are told about other people, whether directly or indirectly, especially if it amounts to an accusation or criticism. We also need to be alert to this kind of problem, and remain open-minded, when dealing with any irrational, unexplained or unexpected hostility or misbehaviour.

Be willing to question, check, and reconsider everything. There is a distinct possibility that such strange conduct could be due to that person having believed a lie told to them by somebody else. That could explain their peculiar behaviour or unnecessary defensiveness. The same applies where we ourselves have become angry or hostile towards another person, or where we are called upon to tackle their misconduct. Always be open to consider the possibility that you may have been lied to and that the person you are dealing with could actually be the innocent victim of a deceiver.

If so, he will also be totally unaware of what has been alleged against him. Therefore, your very anger and suspicion towards him will be seen by him as evidence of your hostility, or at least of your unreasonableness. Remember, he has no idea what has been said about him, or why you are acting as you are, or asking questions. Indeed, he may well assume that *you* are wicked. Having said all that, one must also avoid making the equal and opposite mistake of assuming that all allegations, accusations and rumours are always automatically *untrue*. They might well be true.

In short, don't assume anything at all, *in either direction*, either to believe everything you are told, or to believe nothing you are told. Be willing to believe that things *may* be true, but also be willing to accept that they might not be. We should not rule things either out or in, at least not at the outset. Then we should check, double check, and even triple check, everything we are told before believing it, but also before *disbelieving* it.

One reason why lies do so much harm is that they are so appealing. People like lies and enjoy hearing them. They are also eager to believe them and to pass them on.

The sad fact is that lies are more attractive to most people than the truth is. Therefore a lie tends to be believed instantly, and without question, whereas the truth has to work very hard to be heard at all, let alone believed. Moreover, even if the truth is eventually accepted, people feel far less inclined to pass it on to others than when repeating a lie. The truth just doesn't have the same delicious aroma and taste that lies have:

The words of a whisperer are like delicious morsels;

they go down into the inner parts of the body.
Proverbs 18:8 (RSV)

Thus it is an uphill battle to get the truth to be heard and believed, whereas lies are actively self-propagating. They send out their seeds on the wind and reproduce themselves all over the place, faster than anybody can remove them, because lies are inherently more interesting than the dull, dependable truth. Lies appeal to our flesh and go with the grain of our sin nature, rather than against it. Jeremiah certainly thought so:

the prophets prophesy falsely,
and the priests rule at their direction;
my people love to have it so,
but what will you do when the end comes?
Jeremiah 5:31 (RSV)

An evildoer listens to wicked lips;
and a liar gives heed to a mischievous tongue.
Proverbs 17:4 (RSV)

Another reason is that, whenever a lie is told or heard, the demons are doing all they can to ensure it is believed and acted upon. Conversely, when the truth is told, the demons do all they can to close our ears and minds so that it is not heard or accepted. Therefore the demons accentuate the problem, in both directions.