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The Economic and Interpersonal Consequences of Deflecting Direct Questions

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Direct, difficult questions (e.g., *Do you have other offers? When do you plan on having children?*) pose a challenge. Respondents may incur economic costs for honestly revealing information, reputational costs for engaging in deception, and interpersonal costs, including harm to perceptions of trust and liking, for directly declining to answer the question (e.g., *I would rather not answer that question.*). Across 8 experiments, we explore the relative economic and interpersonal consequences of a fourth approach: deflection, answering a direct question with another question. We describe how individuals infer the respondent's communication motive from their response (e.g., a motive to seek or hide information), and how these inferences influence perceptions of the respondent's trust and likability. We contrast deflection with other types of responses and show that deflection causes significantly less reputational harm than detected deception and causes significantly less interpersonal harm than directly declining to answer a question. In some cases, deflection even yields better interpersonal and economic outcomes than honest disclosures (e.g., deflecting questions about prior acts of untrustworthy behavior).

Keywords: deception, deflection, disclosure, negotiation, trust

> "If you ask someone a question, they will probably give you an answer."
>
> —Ray Dalio (2011, *Principles*)

Across domains, from job interviews to negotiations to dates, individuals are frequently asked sensitive questions that they would prefer not to answer. For example, during an interview, a job candidate might be asked when she plans to have children or what she was paid in her prior position. Although these types of questions are uncomfortable and sometimes illegal, how an individual responds can influence economic outcomes, have reputational consequences, and shape interpersonal perceptions. Similarly, in situations like negotiations, individuals are routinely asked direct questions (e.g., *How much can you spend?*) about information they either need to or would prefer concealing (van Beest, Steinel, & Murnighan, 2011; Steinel, De Dreu, Ouwehand, & Ramírez-Marín, 2009).

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In this research, we examine a previously unexplored method of responding to difficult and direct questions: Deflection. We define deflection as responding to a direct question with a new question that shifts the conversation to another person. Across eight experiments, we explore deflection as a method of responding to direct and sensitive questions. We make an important and novel contribution to the trust, deception, and negotiation literatures by identifying the economic, reputational, and interpersonal benefits (e.g., perceived trust and liking) of deflection. By using questions, respondents shift the focus of the conversation to another person and convey an interest in seeking information. We demonstrate that by responding to a question with a question, respondents are often able to conceal sensitive information and preserve interpersonal relationships.

Responses to Direct Questions

Many interpersonal interactions are characterized by information asymmetries. This is particularly true of negotiations in which parties have private information (e.g., how badly they want the job or how large their budget is) that, if revealed, could benefit their counterpart and cause them harm. We term these interactions strategic disclosure interactions. In these settings, the information individuals reveal can fundamentally shape both economic outcomes and interpersonal perceptions (Bazerman, Curhan, Moore, & Valley, 2000; Gaspar & Schweitzer, 2013; Koning, Van Dijk, Van Beest, & Steinel, 2010; Levine & Schweitzer, 2014, 2015; Lewicki, 1983; Lewicki & Robinson, 1998; O'Connor & Carnevale, 1997; Olekalns & Smith, 2009; Schweitzer & Croson, 1999; Shell, 1991; Tenbrunsel, 1998). Within strategic disclosure interactions, individuals are motivated to conceal sensitive information, but the likelihood of disclosure may be profoundly influenced by contextual factors such as competition, social pressure, financial

incentives, and even the medium of communication (Acquisti, John, & Loewenstein, 2012, 2013; Hofstetter, Rüppell, & John, 2017; John, 2015; John, Acquisti, & Loewenstein, 2011; John, Loewenstein, & Prelec, 2012; Minson, VanEpps, Yip, & Schweitzer, 2018; Schweitzer & Croson, 1999; Steinel & De Dreu, 2004; Steinel, Utz, & Koning, 2010). One tool that is particularly effective in eliciting information from a counterpart is asking a direct question (Schweitzer & Croson, 1999).

Individuals typically feel compelled to respond honestly and completely to direct questions (Grice, 1989; Mazar, Amir, & Ariely, 2008; Rogers & Norton, 2011; Wiltermuth, Newman, & Raj, 2015). However, answering a question truthfully and completely can come at a personal cost. In a negotiation, for example, someone who fully discloses their private information may be exploited by their counterpart. Similarly, in a job interview, someone who truthfully responds to a sensitive question (e.g., how much they made in their last position or why they left their last position) may be offered a lower salary or fail to receive an offer. In settings involving sensitive information, people often feel compelled to respond when they are asked a direct question, but may suffer economic, interpersonal, and reputational costs when they do.

Prior research has described the costs and benefits of honestly answering, declining to answer, and engaging in deception when asked direct questions about sensitive topics (Brooks & John, 2018; John, Barasz, & Norton, 2016; Rogers & Norton, 2011; Rogers, Zeckhauser, Gino, Norton, & Schweitzer, 2017). In contrast to an honest response, individuals can explicitly decline to answer a question to mitigate the costs of revealing sensitive information. However, people who decline to answer direct questions are viewed as less trustworthy and less likable than individuals who disclose sensitive information (John et al., 2016). In addition, individuals who decline to answer sensitive questions often reveal information—or appear to reveal information—by declining. For example, an individual who responds, "I do not want to answer that question" after having been asked, "Have you ever been convicted of a felony?" suggests that the answer is affirmative.

Alternatively, individuals may respond to a question by engaging in deception. Deception is pervasive (Gaspar & Schweitzer, 2013), but individuals who engage in deception risk harm to their long-term relationships if the deception is discovered (Bok, 1978; DePaulo & Kashy, 1998; DePaulo, Kashy, Kirkendol, Wyer, & Epstein, 1996; John, 2016; Rogers & Norton, 2011; Rogers et al., 2017; Schweitzer, Hershey, & Bradlow, 2006). In practice, deception can take many forms, including lies of omission (misleading others by omitting relevant information), dodging (answering a different question than the one asked), paltering (using truthful statements to create a misleading impression), and lies by commission (explicit false statements). We describe different types of responses in Table 1.

Deceivers prefer to lie by omission than commission, and observers judge lies of omission to be more ethical than lies of commission (Levine et al., 2018; Schweitzer & Croson, 1999; Spranca, Minsk, & Baron, 1991). In practice, however, if an individual is asked a direct question it is very difficult to lie by omission. Deflection represents a response strategy that combines elements of both lies of omission and lies of commission. Deflection is an active response that omits information by shifting the focus of the conversation to another person or topic.

Deflection

We consider how deflection influences interpersonal perception and behavior. We focus our investigation on settings in which

Table 1
Types of Responses to Questions

Method	Definition	Inferred motive	Examples	
			Do you plan to have children soon?	What was your salary in your last position?
Honest disclosure	Fully and honestly respond to the question with no intention of deceiving the counterpart.	Disclose information	My husband and I are currently trying to have kids.	I made $60,000 in my last position.
Declining to respond	Refuse to answer the question.	Hide information	I would rather not answer that question.	I don't feel comfortable discussing my prior salary.
Lie of commission	Make untruthful statements with the intention of deceiving a counterpart.	Disclose information (if undiscovered); Hide Information (if discovered)	I do not plan on having children soon.	I made $80,000 in my last position.
Paltering	Provide truthful statements with the intention of deceiving a counterpart.	Disclose information (if undiscovered); Hide information (if discovered)	I think having kids is a huge responsibility and really is not for everyone.	My last company paid very well.
Dodging	Answering a different question than the one that was asked.	Disclose information (if undiscovered); Hide information (if discovered)	I'm amazed at how expensive daycare can be.	I was very happy at my last company.
Deflection	Responding with a question that shifts the conversation to another person.	Seek information	Do you have kids?	Can you tell me the salary range for this position?

Note. Summary of alternative methods of responding to direct questions during strategic disclosure interactions.

individuals have conflicting relational and economic motivations, such as a negotiation or a work interaction. We investigate the effectiveness of deflection for capturing favorable economic outcomes while preserving trust and liking by shifting inferences of a speaker's motive.

We first contrast the interpersonal consequences of deflection to declining to answer a direct question. We conjecture that by explicitly declining to answer a question, a respondent makes their reluctance to disclose information salient and signals the inferred motive to hide information. Signaling a motive to hide information can harm interpersonal perceptions (Bitterly & Schweitzer, 2019; John et al., 2016; Rogers et al., 2017). In contrast, by asking a question, deflection may redirect the conversation and obfuscate the respondent's failure to disclose relevant information. We predict that deflection, compared with explicitly declining to answer the question, will make observers more likely to infer that the respondent is interested in seeking information and less likely to infer that the respondent is interested in hiding information, which will boost trust and liking.

In strategic disclosure interactions such as negotiations, individuals frequently use deception to capture economic gains (De Dreu, Beersma, Steinel, & Van Kleef, 2007; Koning et al., 2010; Koning, Steinel, Van Beest, & Van Dijk, 2011; Steinel et al., 2010; van Beest, Steinel, & Murnighan, 2011; Schweitzer, DeChurch, & Gibson, 2005). Deception, however, is risky (Boles, Croson, & Murnighan, 2000; Schweitzer, Brodt, & Croson, 2002; Schweitzer et al., 2005; Schweitzer et al., 2006; Spranca et al., 1991). Undetected, deception enables individuals to conceal economically costly information and capture economic surplus, while at the same time curtailing the likelihood that observers will infer their motive of hiding information, and ultimately enables deceivers to maintain positive interpersonal perceptions. Detected deception, however, harms both economic surplus and interpersonal perceptions; individuals judged to have intentionally hid information are viewed as less trustworthy and likable than individuals who are honest (John et al., 2016; Rogers & Norton, 2011; Rogers et al., 2017). We expect that deflection will be less interpersonally costly than deception, because observers will infer that individuals who had deflected are more interested in seeking information and less interested in hiding information than individuals who had deceived their conversational partner.

We postulate that deflection will have beneficial effects on trust and liking by shifting the inferred motives of the respondent. Prior research suggests that behaviors that signal a motive to hide information may harm trust and liking (John et al., 2016; Rogers & Norton, 2011; Rogers et al., 2017). In contrast, asking questions can boost interpersonal perceptions (Gino, Brooks, & Schweitzer, 2012; Huang, Yeomans, Brooks, Minson, & Gino, 2017), suggesting that behaviors that signal a motive of seeking information may promote trust and liking. We hypothesize that by elevating the inferred motive of seeking information and diminishing the inferred motive of hiding information, deflection will have beneficial effects on perceptions of trust and liking, and we depict these relationships in Figure 1.

Hypothesis 1: Observers are more likely to infer that respondents who deflect, compared with respondents who decline to respond or engage in deception, are motivated to seek information and are less motivated to hide information.

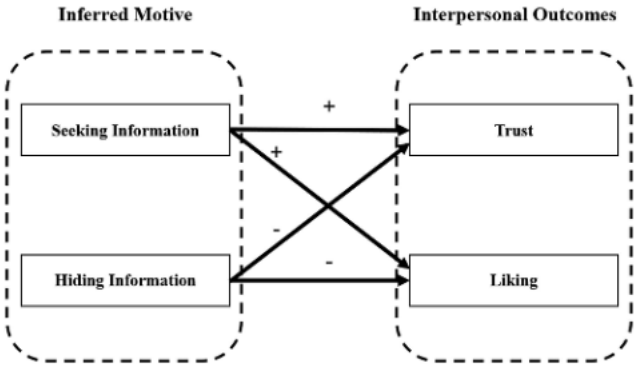

Figure 1. Inferred motives model. Within strategic disclosure interactions, individuals rely on their counterpart's response to infer their counterpart's underlying motive. These motives include the motive to seek information and the motive to hide information. The inferred motive of seeking information can increase trust and liking in the counterpart. The inferred motive of hiding information can diminish trust and liking in the counterpart.

Hypothesis 2a: The more observers infer that the respondent is motivated to seek information, the more they will trust and like the respondent.

Hypothesis 2b: The more observers infer that the respondent is motivated to hide information, the less they will trust and like the respondent.

Hypothesis 3: Inferred motives of seeking and hiding information will mediate the influence of deflection on trust and liking.

Overview of Current Work

We explore deflection as a method for contending with direct questions. Specifically, we consider how responding to a question with a question redirects the focus of the conversation, improves economic outcomes for individuals who deflect, and preserves trust and liking. In our Pilot Study, we examine transcripts from a negotiation simulation to examine the frequency with which deflection occurs during strategic disclosure interactions. In Study 1a, we compare the interpersonal and economic consequences of deflection in a negotiation by contrasting deflection to declining to respond and honest disclosure. In Study 1b, we extend our investigation to a different negotiation context, and we contrast the effects of deflection to declining to respond, honest disclosure, and an additional control condition—no response to the question. In Study 2a and 2b, we compare the costs and benefits of deflection to two forms of deception, a lie of commission and paltering. In these studies, we explore the relative costs and benefits of deception when it goes undetected or detected. In Study 3, we compare deflection to dodging, paltering, lying by commission, declining to respond, and honestly disclosing information. In this study, we measure observers' inferences, and investigate how these inferences influence trust and liking. In Studies 4a through 4c we examine moderators of the effects of deflection on interpersonal perceptions and economic outcomes. In Study 4a, we explore the efficacy of deflection in strategic disclosure interactions involving trust. Although full and honest disclosure may help liking by

making an individual appear forthcoming and trustworthy, deflection may lead to greater trust and liking when honest disclosure requires revealing negative information about prior transgressions and acts of untrustworthy behavior. In Studies 4b and 4c, we explore how the type of question used moderates the effects of deflection. Per Simmons, Nelson, and Simonsohn (2011), we report every condition conducted and every variable collected in all of our studies. All data are available on the Open Science Framework at https://osf.io/7mv5t/.

Pilot Study

We motivate our investigation with a pilot study in which we assess the naturally occurring frequency of deflection in a negotiation exercise.

Method

We analyzed chat data from individuals who participated in an online negotiation as part of a class exercise. In this exercise, three oil-producing teams make interdependent decisions in isolated rooms and communicate via computer mediated texts (https://bit.ly/2SnuZJD). Our dataset includes 583 teams of three to five people each who were organized into 195 groups. Each group included three oil-producing teams who made decisions in a repeated social dilemma game. In this negotiation, teams struggle to cooperate. Collectively the three teams within a group are better off if they produce a low quantity, but each team is tempted to produce a high quantity to maximize their own profit. As a practical matter, participants on each team frequently ask their counterparts via computer mediated text what they plan to produce in the next round and what they produced in the prior round. We analyze answers to these questions to assess the frequency of deflection in a strategic information context.

We had two research assistants review each transcript and code for instances in which one team responded to another team's question with a question. Initial agreement between the two raters was high (98.2%), and in every case of disagreement, we had a third research assistant review that case and make a determination. We focus our analysis on cases in which an individual used a question to avoid answering a counterpart's question to conceal that they either had defected in the previous round or that they were going to defect in the subsequent round.

Results and Discussion

Results from this study reveal that deflection is a common behavior in strategic disclosure interactions. We identified deflection in 32.31% of the 195 groups. For example, in one exchange, one team asked another team, "Hey guys, who did more than 38.3 last time?" to which the other team replied by asking, "What number should we all put in?" In another exchange, one team asked, "Looks like one or two went up by a little?" and the team that had produced more responded with, "How are you trying to find the optimal?"

In this pilot study, we identify deflection as a common occurrence in a strategic disclosure interaction. In our remaining studies, we explore the interpersonal and economic consequences of deflection.

Study 1a

In Study 1a, we examine the effects of deflection in an actual negotiation. We compare deflection with honest disclosure and with explicitly declining to respond to the question. We examine the efficacy of deflection for capturing economic surplus while preserving interpersonal perceptions of trust and liking.

Method

Participants. We recruited 329 adults from a city in the northeastern United States to participate in a behavioral lab study in exchange for $10. We determined in advance a recruitment target of at least 240 participants (80 per cell). To achieve this target sample size, the lab recruited participants on the hour, 10 a.m. to 3 p.m., Monday through Friday, across three weeks in the summer of 2017.

We excluded from our analyses five participants who were not properly screened and completed the negotiation in a second session, 10 participants who failed the comprehension check three times, two participants who did not complete the attitudinal measures of the study, three participants who did not engage in the negotiation because of a malfunction with our chat program, 39 participants who did not complete the entire negotiation and left the chat program without providing any offers (we report the results, including the 39 participants who did not make any offers, in Appendix C),[1] and 48 participants who gave offers before our confederates were able to deliver the manipulation (the results including the 48 participants characterized by the intention to treat are reported in Appendix C). A total of 222 participants completed the study and are included in our analysis reported below (25% men, M_{age} = 22.22 years, SD = 6.21).

Design and procedure. We randomly assigned participants to one of three between-subjects conditions within a negotiation: *Declining to Respond* versus *Honest Disclosure* versus *Deflection*.

Across all conditions, we informed participants that they would be participating in a negotiation. We told participants that they would be randomly assigned to the role of buyer or seller and paired with another participant for the negotiation. In reality, we assigned all participants to the role of seller and paired them with a confederate buyer. (See Appendix B for the seller instructions we gave to participants.)

We then introduced the negotiation, an adapted version of the Hearts case (Schweitzer, 2015). The Hearts case is a two-party distributive negotiation in which a buyer, a private art collector, and a seller, the owner of an art gallery, barter over a painting (Schweitzer, 2015). We asked participants to imagine that they were the owner of an art gallery and were trying to sell a piece of art, "Hearts in the Spring, 1969." We informed participants that they had purchased the piece of art for $7,000, and that this painting was one part of the artist's four-piece Hearts series. We told participants that a buyer who did not have other pieces in the series would be willing to pay closer to $7,000 for the "Hearts in

[1] The rate of dropping out of the chat was not significantly different across conditions. More specifically, 14.1% of participants did not provide any offers in the *Decline to Respond* condition, 9.5% of participants did not provide any offers in the *Deflection* condition, and 14.3% of participants did not provide any offers in the *Honest Disclosure* condition, $\chi^2(2, N = 309) = 1.44$, $p = .486$, Nagelkerke $R^2 = .01$.

the Spring" piece, but that a buyer who had collected other pieces and wanted to complete their set would be willing to pay closer to $14,000.

We informed participants that there were two key pieces of information they needed from the buyer before they made an offer. The first key piece of information was whether the buyer was an art dealer or a personal collector. We included this issue in the negotiation to mask the purpose of the study. The second key piece of information we told sellers to obtain was whether the buyer had other pieces in the Hearts collection. The instructions guided participants to ask the buyer a direct question about their collection. We incentivized participants by informing them that they would receive 1 lottery ticket for each $1,000 above $7,000 they received for the painting, and that each lottery ticket represented a chance to win $50.

After participants read the instructions, we administered a comprehension check (we present this comprehension check in Appendix B). We allowed participants three attempts to pass the comprehension check questions (e.g., "Which Jim Brine Hearts piece are you trying to sell?"). Ten participants did not pass the comprehension check after three attempts, and we dismissed them from the study.

Next, we had participants negotiate with the confederate buyer via chat message. If the participant asked the buyer if they had other pieces in the Hearts series, we manipulated the buyer's response. In the *Decline to Respond* condition, the confederate explicitly declined to answer the question (e.g., "I'm not prepared to discuss my collection right now."). In the *Honest Disclosure* condition, the confederate reported that they did have the other pieces in the Hearts collection (e.g., "I did purchase the other Hearts pieces in the collection."). In the *Deflection* condition, the confederate responded to the question with a question that would redirect and shift the conversation back to the participant (e.g., "How much do you want for this piece?"). To increase credibility in the script that the confederates used, we used an adapted version of a negotiation completed between a student buyer and a student seller. (We summarize the responses used in each of our studies in Appendix A and present the script we had our confederates follow in Study 1a in Appendex B.)

Across conditions, we instructed confederates to wait for the seller to provide the initial offer. After receiving that offer, we instructed confederates to make a counteroffer $1,000 below the initial offer they received. Specifically, we instructed confederates to respond, "I'm afraid that is more than I expected to pay. Could you do [(initial offer) − $1,000]?" We instructed confederates to accept the next counteroffer the seller made.

To calculate the economic surplus gained by the negotiator who employed each of the response strategies, we calculated the buyer's surplus. According to the negotiation instructions, the most the buyer could pay was $14,000. Agreements below $14,000 gave the buyer economic surplus, and we calculated the economic surplus of each buyer by subtracting their final offers in the negotiation from $14,000. This enabled us to compare the buyer's economic and interpersonal outcomes across different response strategies.

After the negotiation, we had participants rate the buyer on the following qualities: *forthcoming*, *trustworthy*, *honest*, *likable*, *good-natured*, and *pleasant* (7-point Likert scale, 1 = *not at all*, 7 = *extremely*). We combined the first three items to create a measure of trust ($\alpha = .90$) and the remaining items to create a measure of liking ($\alpha = .95$).

We also measured how well the buyer concealed information about their collection. Specifically, we asked sellers, the participants, "How likely is it that the buyer owns other pieces in the 'Hearts' collection?" (reverse scored). Next, we asked participants to provide demographic information (age and gender of participants).

After the study, we had a research assistant review the transcripts and record the number of times that a participant asked their counterpart if they had other pieces in the collection.

Results

We find that deflection is highly effective. We summarize the results of Study 1a in Table 2 and depict the main results in Figure 2. For each of our dependent variables, we conducted ordinary least squares regression analysis.

Surplus. Economic surplus was marginally higher in the *Deflection* ($M = 1.81$, $SD = 3.74$) than in the *Honest Disclosure*

Table 2
Summary of Results for Study 1a and Study 1b

Variable	F	η^2	$1 - \beta$	Control M (SD)	Decline to respond M (SD)	Honest disclosure M (SD)	Deflection M (SD)
Study 1A							
Surplus (in $1,000s)	$F(2, 219) = 4.39^{*}$	.04	.82		2.34_{a} (2.65)	$.93_{b}$ (1.92)	1.81_{ab} (3.74)
Concealment	$F(2, 219) = 22.87^{***}$	.17	1.00		2.44_{a} (1.20)	1.70_{b} (1.01)	3.12_{c} (1.60)
Trust	$F(2, 219) = 34.57^{***}$	.24	1.00		3.95_{a} (1.56)	5.72_{b} (1.03)	5.03_{c} (1.24)
Liking	$F(2, 219) = 24.05^{***}$	.18	1.00		4.43_{a} (1.56)	5.82_{b} (.90)	5.11_{c} (1.12)
Asked about collection	$F(2, 219) = 5.72^{**}$	.05	.90		1.26_{a} (0.51)	1.04_{b} (0.20)	1.35_{a} (0.83)
Study 1B							
Surplus (in $1,000s)	$F(3, 900) = 7.23^{***}$	.02	.94	3.70_{a} (2.20)	3.44_{a} (1.94)	$.92_{b}$ (10.65)	3.03_{a} (8.88)
Concealment	$F(3, 900) = 115.57^{***}$	.28	1.00	3.89_{a} (1.18)	3.14_{b} (1.09)	2.04_{c} (1.06)	3.62_{d} (1.24)
Trust	$F(3, 900) = 148.76^{***}$	.33	1.00	4.52_{a} (1.10)	3.06_{b} (1.14)	5.19_{c} (1.02)	3.68_{d} (1.33)
Liking	$F(3, 900) = 116.65^{***}$	.28	1.00	4.88_{a} (1.09)	3.30_{b} (1.22)	5.17_{c} (1.05)	4.13_{d} (1.29)

Note. Means in each row with different subscripts are significantly different at the $p < .05$ level. We present the simulated power ($1 - \beta$) at an α of .05 using 1,000 simulations.
* $p < .05$. ** $p < .01$. *** $p < .001$.

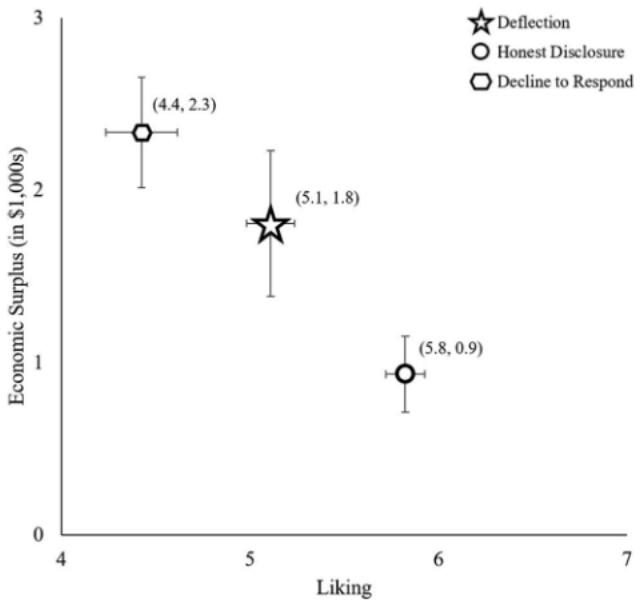

Figure 2. Results for Study 1a. Perceptions of liking and economic surplus in Study 1a. Buyers who deflected the question about their collection received greater economic surplus than buyers who honestly disclosed the information about their collection. Buyers who deflected were also better liked than buyers who declined to disclose information about their collection.

condition ($M = 0.93$, $SD = 1.92$), $t(219) = 1.88$, $p = .061$, $\eta^2 = .02$. Economic surplus was not significantly different between the *Deflection* condition and the *Decline to Respond* condition ($M = 2.34$, $SD = 2.65$), $t(219) = 1.10$, $p = .271$, $\eta^2 = .01$. Economic surplus was significantly lower in the *Honest Disclosure* condition than in the *Decline to Respond* condition, $t(219) = 2.92$, $p < .01$, $\eta^2 = .04$. The variance of economic surplus is larger in the *Deflection* condition than in the *Honest Disclosure* condition, $F(1, 152) = 6.01$, $p = .015$, but is not significantly different between the *Deflection* and *Decline to Respond* conditions, $F(1, 144) = .13$, $p = .718$.

Trust. Trust was significantly different across all conditions. Trust was significantly higher in the *Deflection* condition ($M = 5.03$, $SD = 1.24$) than in the *Decline to Respond* condition ($M = 3.95$, $SD = 1.56$), $t(219) = 5.10$, $p < .001$, $\eta^2 = .11$. Trust was significantly lower in the *Deflection* condition than in the *Honest Disclosure* condition ($M = 5.72$, $SD = 1.03$), $t(219) = 3.32$, $p < .01$, $\eta^2 = .05$. Trust was significantly lower in the *Decline to Respond* condition than in the *Honest Disclosure* condition, $t(219) = 8.27$, $p < .001$, $\eta^2 = .24$.

Liking. Liking was significantly different across all conditions. Liking was significantly higher in the *Deflection* condition ($M = 5.11$, $SD = 1.12$) than in the *Decline to Respond* condition ($M = 4.43$, $SD = 1.56$), $t(219) = 3.41$, $p < .001$, $\eta^2 = .05$. Liking was significantly lower in the *Deflection* condition than in the *Honest Disclosure* condition ($M = 5.82$, $SD = .90$), $t(219) = 3.66$, $p < .001$, $\eta^2 = .06$. Liking was significantly lower in the *Decline to Respond* condition than in the *Honest Disclosure* condition, $t(219) = 6.93$, $p < .001$, $\eta^2 = .18$.

Concealment. The perceived likelihood that the buyer has other pieces was significantly different across all conditions. Concealment was significantly higher in the *Deflection* condition ($M = 3.12$, $SD = 1.60$) than in the *Decline to Respond* condition ($M = 2.44$, $SD = 1.20$), $t(219) = 3.12$, $p < .001$, $\eta^2 = .04$, and the *Honest Disclosure* condition ($M = 1.70$, $SD = 1.01$), $t(219) = 6.76$, $p < .001$, $\eta^2 = .17$. Concealment was significantly lower in the *Honest Disclosure* condition than in the *Decline to Respond* condition, $t(219) = 3.42$, $p < .001$, $\eta^2 = .05$.

Asked about collection. The average number of times that a participant asked whether the buyer had other pieces in the collection was significantly higher in the *Deflection* condition ($M = 1.35$, $SD = 0.83$) than in the *Honest Disclosure* condition ($M = 1.04$, $SD = 0.20$), $t(219) = 3.28$, $p < .01$, $\eta^2 = .05$. The average number of times that a participant asked whether the buyer had other pieces in the collection was not significantly different between the *Deflection* condition and the *Decline to Respond* condition ($M = 1.26$, $SD = 0.51$), $t(219) = 0.85$, $p = .399$, $\eta^2 = .00$. The average number of times that a participant asked whether the buyer had other pieces in the collection was significantly lower in the *Honest Disclosure* condition than in the *Decline to Respond* condition, $t(219) = 2.32$, $p = .021$, $\eta^2 = .02$.

Moderation. We also examined whether the counterpart answered the deflection question or not moderates the effects of deflection. For each of our dependent variables, we contrast the *Deflection* condition to the *Decline to Respond* and *Honest Disclosure* conditions by conducting ordinary least squares regression analysis with *Deflection* (1 = *deflection*, −.5 = *decline to respond*, −.5 = *honest disclosure*) and whether or not the participant answered the deflection question (1 = *answered deflection question*, −1 = *did not answer deflection question*, 0 = *was not asked deflection question*) as our independent variables, controlling for the other conditions (1 = *honest disclosure*, 0 = *deflection*, −1 = *decline to respond*). We depict the results of our moderation analysis in Figure 3.

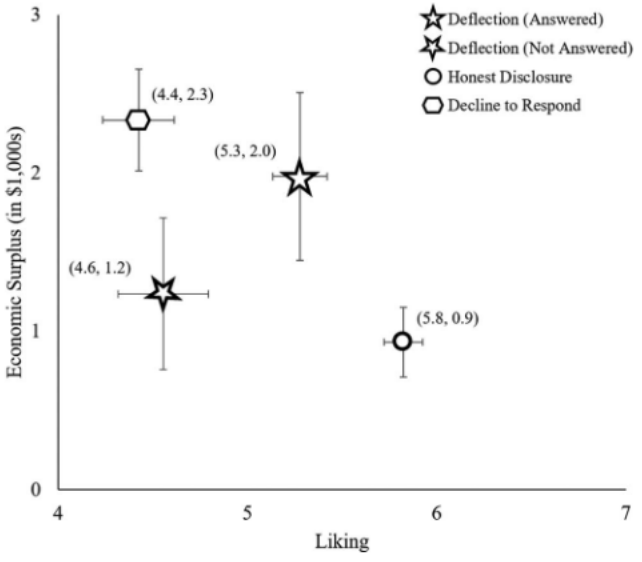

Figure 3. Moderation results for Study 1a. Perceptions of liking and economic surplus in Study 1a. We find that whether or not a counterpart answers the deflection question moderates the effect of deflection on trust and liking. Trust and liking are lower when a counterpart does not answer the deflection question than when they do answer the deflection question.

Surplus. We do not find that whether or not the participant answered the deflection question moderates the effect of deflection on surplus, $\beta = .37$, $p = .340$, $\eta^2 = .00$.

Trust. We find that whether or not the participant answered the deflection question moderates the effect of deflection on trust, $\beta = .37$, $p = .031$, $\eta^2 = .02$. Trust is higher when the individual answered the deflection question than when they did not.

Liking. We find that whether or not the participant answered the deflection question moderates the effect of deflection on liking, $\beta = .36$, $p = .026$, $\eta^2 = .02$. As with trust, liking is higher when the individual answered the deflection question than when they did not.

Concealment. We do not find that whether or not the participant answered the deflection question moderates the effect of deflection on concealment, $\beta = -.03$, $p = .849$, $\eta^2 = .00$.

Asked about collection. We find that whether or not the participant answered the deflection question moderates the effect of deflection on the number of times that the participant asked about the collection, $\beta = -.39$, $p < .001$, $\eta^2 = .11$. That is, participants who answered the deflection question were significantly less likely to follow-up later to ask again about the collection.

Summary. In Study 1a, we find that deflection helps individuals conceal economically costly information, capture economic surplus, and preserve trust and liking. Specifically, negotiation counterparts perceived individuals who deflected to be more trustworthy and more likable than individuals who explicitly declined to answer a direct question. These negotiators also gave individuals who deflected better offers than they did to individuals who disclosed information about their collection.

Deflection was effective at redirecting the conversation. In the *Deflection* condition, the majority of participants answered the deflection question (76.92%), and participants tended to ask whether the buyer had the other pieces in the collection only once ($M = 1.35$, $SD = 0.83$, $Mdn = 1$). Deflection was also very effective at concealing information. Individuals thought that individuals who deflected questions were less likely to have the other pieces in the collection than individuals who explicitly declined to answer the question and individuals who disclosed information about their collection. The concealing of this sensitive information directly increased economic surplus for individuals who deflected.

We also find that deflection was particularly effective when the counterpart answered the deflection question. In these cases, the deflection redirected the conversation and counterparts were unlikely to follow-up with their original question. In addition, when the counterpart did answer the deflection question, they rated the deflector as higher in trust and liking than when they did not.

Study 1b

In Study 1b, we extend our investigation in several ways. As in Study 1a, we investigate deflection within a negotiation context, but we used a different deflection to build confidence in the robustness of our finding. We also used additional conditions to include a broader set of control conditions, and we increased the sample size.

Method

Participants. We recruited adults from Amazon Mechanical Turk to participate in a study in exchange for $0.50. We set a target recruitment of 900 participants to replicate our findings with more power (300 participants per cell). Nine hundred sixty-three individuals began the study. Forty individuals failed the comprehension check three times and were dismissed from the study. Eleven individuals started the study but did not complete it. Eight individuals failed an attention check and were not included in our analysis. A total of 904 people passed a comprehension check, passed an attention check, completed the study, and have been included in our analysis (52% men, $M_{age} = 36.41$ years, $SD = 12.11$).

Design and procedure. We randomly assigned participants to one of four between-subjects conditions: *Control* versus *Decline to Respond* versus *Honest Disclosure* versus *Deflection*.

Across conditions, we had participants review a negotiation scenario, and we assigned all participants to the role of seller. As in Study 1a, we adapted the negotiation from the Hearts case (Schweitzer, 2015). We told participants that they were the owner of an art gallery and were trying to sell a piece of art, "Panda Bears, 1969." We then informed participants that they had purchased the piece of art for $7,000, and that the piece of art was part of the artist's four-piece series on bears. We instructed participants that a buyer who did not have other pieces in the series would be willing to pay closer to $7,000 for the Panda piece, but that a buyer who had other pieces and wanted to complete the series would be willing to pay closer to $14,000. (See Appendix D for the full instructions we presented to participants.)

We then gave participants a comprehension check. We allowed participants three attempts to pass the comprehension check (we present this comprehension check in Appendix D). Forty participants did not pass the comprehension check after three attempts and were dismissed from the study. Next, we presented participants who passed the comprehension check with a transcript of a negotiation between the art dealer and a potential buyer. The transcript was an adapted version of a real negotiation that occurred in a class setting that involved a very similar version of this scenario.

Across conditions, every seller in this negotiation asked the buyer, "Do you own other pieces in the bears series?" In the *Control* condition, we ended the transcript after the buyer asked the question. In the *Decline to Respond* condition, we had the buyer explain that, "I'm not prepared to discuss my collection right now." In the *Honest Disclosure* condition, we had the buyer explain that, "I did purchase a different Bears piece recently." In the *Deflection* condition, we had the buyer respond, "How long have you had the painting?" (See Appendix D for an example of the transcripts we showed to participants.)

Economic surplus was one of our primary dependent variables. After the transcript, we asked participants, "What offer would you make the buyer?" We calculated economic surplus by subtracting offers from the top end of the zone of possible agreement ($14,000).

Next, we had participants rate the buyer on the following qualities: *forthcoming*, *trustworthy*, *honest*, *likable*, *good-natured*, and *pleasant* (7-point Likert scale, 1 = *not at all*, 7 = *extremely*). We combined the first three items to create a measure of trust ($\alpha =$

.89), and the remaining items to create a measure of liking (α = .95). Using the same response scale, we measured how well the buyer concealed information about their collection by having participants rate, "How likely is it that the buyer owns other pieces in the 'Bears' collection?" (reverse scored). After participants completed an attention check, we asked them to provide demographic information (age and gender). Eight individuals failed the attention check and were excluded from our analysis. Finally, we gave participants a completion code so that they could receive payment for the study.

Results

We summarize the results of Study 1b in Table 2 and depict the main results in Figure 4. For each of our dependent variables, we conducted ordinary least squares regression analysis.

Surplus. Economic surplus was significantly higher in the *Deflection* condition (M = 3.03, SD = 8.88) than in the *Honest Disclosure* condition (M = 0.92, SD = 10.65), $t(900) = 3.16$, $p < .01$, $\eta^2 = .01$. Surplus not significantly different between the *Deflection*, *Decline to Respond* (M = 3.44, SD = 1.94), and *Control* conditions (M = 3.70, SD = 2.20), $ps > .315$. Surplus was significantly lower in the *Honest Disclosure* condition than in the *Decline to Respond*, $t(900) = 3.79$, $p < .001$, $\eta^2 = .02$, and *Control* conditions, $t(900) = 4.18$, $p < .001$, $\eta^2 = .02$.

Trust. Trust was significantly different across all conditions, $ps < .001$. Trust was lowest in the *Decline to Respond* condition (M = 3.06, SD = 1.14), higher in the *Deflection* condition (M = 3.68, SD = 1.33), higher in the *Control* condition (M = 4.52, SD = 1.10), and highest in the *Honest Disclosure* condition (M = 5.19, SD = 1.02).

Liking. Liking was significantly different across all conditions, $ps < .011$. Liking was lowest in the *Decline to Respond* condition (M = 3.30, SD = 1.22), higher in the *Deflection* condition (M = 4.13, SD = 1.29), higher in the *Control* condition (M = 4.88, SD = 1.09), and highest in the *Honest Disclosure* condition (M = 5.17, SD = 1.05).

Concealment. Differences in perceived likelihood that the buyer has other pieces were significant across all conditions, $ps < .012$. Concealment was significantly higher in the *Deflection* condition (M = 3.62, SD = 1.24) than in the *Decline to Respond* (M = 3.14, SD = 1.09), $t(900) = 4.43$, $p < .001$, $\eta^2 = .02$, and *Honest Disclosure* conditions (M = 2.04, SD = 1.06), $t(900) = 14.67$, $p < .001$, $\eta^2 = .19$. Concealment was highest in the *Control* condition (M = 3.89, SD = 1.18).

Summary. In Study 1b, we find that individuals who deflect successfully conceal information about their collection, and as a result, receive better offers than individuals who disclose information about their collection. Individuals who fully disclose information about their collection are viewed as trustworthy and likable. However, this disclosure comes at a cost. Individuals who disclose information receive worse offers in the negotiation.

We find that deflection enables individuals to conceal information about their collection and obtain better outcomes than revealing information. We also find that deflection, compared with declining to answer the question, improved trust and liking compared with individuals who declined to answer the question about their collection.

One limitation of this study is that it is a scenario study and participants were not financially incentivized in their offers. Although the participants were not incentivized, we have no reason to believe that the lack of incentive would have motivated participants to misrepresent the offers that they would have made to their counterpart if they were actually negotiating. The consistency of the results across Studies 1a and 1b provides convergent evidence of the effects of engaging in deflection compared with honest disclosure and declining to disclose.

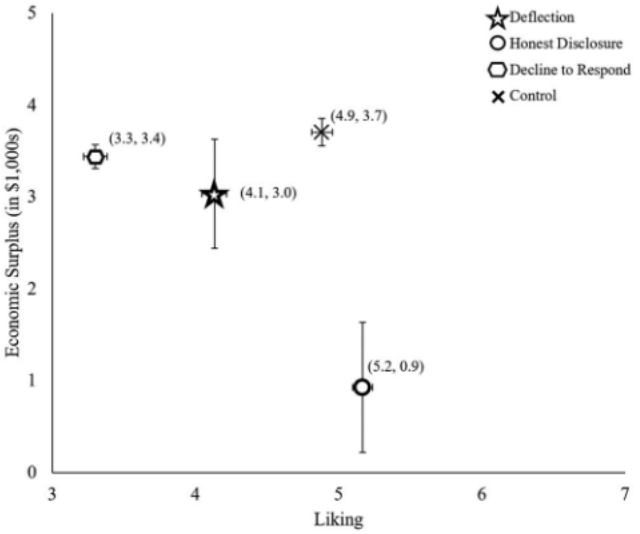

Figure 4. Results for Study 1b. Perceptions of liking and economic surplus in Study 1b. Whereas honest disclosure of sensitive information is beneficial for liking, it harms economic surplus. In contrast, declining to respond preserves economic surplus, but harms liking. Deflection preserves economic surplus but is less harmful to liking than declining to respond.

Discussion

In Studies 1a and 1b, we compared the effects of deflection to honest disclosure and declining to disclose in an actual negotiation and in a negotiation scenario. We find that deflection enables individuals to conceal information and capture greater economic surplus than honest disclosure, while also being viewed as more trustworthy and likable than declining to disclose.

Study 2

In Studies 2a and 2b, we extend our investigation in several ways. First, we use different deflections. Second, we contrast deflection with two forms of deception: lies of commission and paltering. When asked a sensitive question (e.g., "Do you have the other paintings in the collection?"), a deceptive respondent could lie by commission (e.g., "I do not have the other paintings.") or palter by using truthful statements to create a misleading impression (e.g., "I've been looking to buy one"; Rogers et al., 2017). To compare the long-term interpersonal risks of deflection, lies of commission, and paltering we measure interpersonal perceptions both before and after we inform participants that the buyer had other pieces in the series. Finally, we measure the extent to which participants would be willing to negotiate with the buyer again.

Study 2a

In Study 2a, we compare the use of deflection, paltering, and lie of commission during an actual negotiation in the lab.

Method

Participants. We recruited 285 adults from a city in the northeastern United States to participate in a behavioral lab study in exchange for $10. We determined in advance that we would have a target recruitment of at least 240 participants (80 per cell). To achieve the target sample size, the lab recruited participants on the hour, 12 p.m. to 3 p.m., Monday through Thursday, across two weeks in the winter of 2018.

We excluded from our analyses 21 participants who were not properly screened and completed the negotiation on more than one occasion. We also excluded from our analysis 27 participants who did not complete the entire negotiation and left the chat program without providing any offers (we report the results including the 27 participants who did not provide any offers in Appendix F),[2] and 61 participants who gave offers before our confederates were able to deliver the manipulation (the results including the 61 participants characterized by the intention to treat are reported in Appendix F). A total of 176 people completed the study and have been included in our analysis reported below (29% men, M_{age} = 20.66 years, SD = 2.96).

Design and procedure. We randomly assigned participants to one of three between-subjects conditions: *Lie of Commission* versus *Paltering* versus *Deflection*.

The design was very similar to the design Study 1a. The instructions we gave to participants were identical to Study 1a. As in Study 1a, we introduced the negotiation, an adapted version of the Hearts case (Schweitzer, 2015). We then informed participants that they would be randomly assigned to the role of buyer or seller and paired with another participant for the negotiation. In reality, we assigned all participants to the role of seller and paired them with a confederate buyer.

As in Study 1a, we informed participants that there were two key pieces of information they needed from the buyer before they made an offer. The first key piece of information was whether the buyer was an art dealer or a personal collector. We included this issue in the negotiation to mask the purpose of the study. The second key piece of information we told sellers to obtain was whether the buyer had other pieces in the Hearts collection. Next, the instructions guided participants to ask the buyer a direct question about their collection. We incentivized participants by informing them that they would receive 1 lottery ticket for each $1,000 above $7,000 they received for the painting, and that each lottery ticket was for a chance to win $50.

In this study, we manipulated how the confederate buyer responded to the participant seller across our three conditions: *Lie of Commission* versus *Paltering* versus *Deflection*.

After participants read the instructions, we administered a comprehension check. We allowed participants three attempts to pass the comprehension check (see Appendix E for the comprehension check). Fifty-four participants failed the comprehension check once but passed after the second attempt.

Next, we had participants negotiate with the confederate buyer. If the participant asked the buyer if they had other pieces in the Hearts series, we manipulated the buyer's response, as in Study 1a. (See Appendix E for the script we had our confederates follow.)

In the *Lie of Commission* condition, the confederate responded by saying, "I do not have any other pieces in the collection." In the *Paltering* condition, the confederate provided a response that was true but misleading, "I've been looking to buy one." In the *Paltering* condition, if participants asked a second or third time if the buyer had other pieces in the collection, the confederate responded with, "As I said, I've been looking to buy one." and "Again, I've been looking to buy one." In the *Deflection* condition, the confederate responded to the question with a question that would redirect the conversation, "How much are you looking to get for the piece?" In the *Deflection* condition, if participants asked a second time if the buyer had other pieces in the collection, the confederate responded with another deflection, "What's your offer?" In one negotiation, the participant asked a third time if the buyer had other pieces in the collection, and the confederate responded with a lie of commission, "I do not have any other pieces in the collection." Including or excluding this case from our analysis does not significantly change our results.

After the negotiation, we asked participants to provide the final offer they agreed to in the negotiation. According to the negotiation instructions, the most the buyer could pay (the top of the zone of possible agreement) was $14,000. Agreements below $14,000 gave the buyer economic surplus, and we calculated the economic surplus of each buyer by subtracting final offers in the negotiation from $14,000. This allowed us to compare the buyer's financial outcomes across conditions.

Next, we had participants rate the buyer on the following qualities: *forthcoming*, *trustworthy*, *honest*, *likable*, *good-natured*, and *pleasant* (7-point Likert scale, 1 = *not at all*, 7 = *extremely*). We combined the first three items to create a measure of trust (α = .86), and the remaining items to create a measure of liking (α = .95). We also measured how well the buyer concealed information about their collection. Specifically, we asked sellers, the participants, "How likely is it that the buyer owns other pieces in the 'Hearts' collection?" (reverse scored).

Next, we informed participants that the buyer had the other 3 pieces in the Hearts series, and we again had participants rate the buyer in terms of trust and liking. Finally, we asked participants, "How willing would you be to sell to the buyer again?" (7-point Likert scale, 1 = *not at all*, 7 = *extremely*). Finally, we asked participants to provide demographic information (age and gender).

After the study we had a research assistant review the transcripts and record the number of times that a participant asked their counterpart if they had other pieces in the collection.

Results

We find that paltering and lies by commission are risky and have significant interpersonal costs if discovered. After the truth about the buyer's history and interests were revealed, the sellers'

[2] The rate at which participants dropped out of the chat was not significantly different across conditions; 11.2% of participants did not provide any offers in the *Lie of Commission* condition, 8.0% of participants did not provide any offers in the *Palter* condition, and 11.4% of participants did not provide any offers in the *Deflection* condition, $\chi^2(2, N = 264) = 0.70$, p = .705, Nagelkerke R^2 = .01.

ratings of the buyers' trust and liking were significantly lower. In contrast, deflection had lower interpersonal costs after participants discovered that the buyer had other pieces in the collection. We summarize the results of Study 2a in Table 3 and depict the main results in Figure 5. For each of our dependent variables, we conducted ordinary least squares regression analysis.

Surplus. Economic surplus was significantly lower in the *Deflection* condition ($M = 1.64$, $SD = 1.52$) than in the *Lie of Commission* condition ($M = 2.54$, $SD = 2.91$), $t(173) = 2.18$, $p = .030$, $\eta^2 = .03$. Economic surplus was not significantly different in the *Palter* condition ($M = 2.28$, $SD = 1.85$) than in the *Deflection* condition, $t(173) = 1.58$, $p = .115$, $\eta^2 = .01$, and the *Lie of Commission* condition, $t(173) = 0.65$, $p = .514$, $\eta^2 = .00$.

Trust. Initial ratings of trust were not significantly different between the *Deflection* condition ($M = 4.56$, $SD = 1.34$) and the *Palter* condition ($M = 4.20$, $SD = 1.60$), $t(173) = 1.43$, $p = .155$, $\eta^2 = .01$, and the *Lie of Commission* condition ($M = 4.93$, $SD = 1.20$), $t(173) = 1.38$, $p = .171$, $\eta^2 = .01$. Initial ratings of trust were significantly higher in the *Lie of Commission* condition than in the *Palter* condition, $t(173) = 2.87$, $p < .01$, $\eta^2 = .05$.

After participants learned that the buyer had the other pieces in the collection, ratings of trust were significantly higher in the *Deflection* condition ($M = 3.50$, $SD = 1.64$) than the *Palter* condition ($M = 2.62$, $SD = 1.54$), $t(173) = 3.36$, $p < .01$, $\eta^2 = .06$, and the *Lie of Commission* condition ($M = 1.78$, $SD = 0.98$), $t(173) = 6.46$, $p < .001$, $\eta^2 = .19$. Final ratings of trust were significantly higher in the *Palter* condition than in the *Lie of Commission* condition, $t(173) = 3.27$, $p < .01$, $\eta^2 = .06$.

Liking. Initial ratings of liking were not significantly different between the *Deflection* condition ($M = 4.58$, $SD = 1.52$) and the *Palter* condition ($M = 4.35$, $SD = 1.59$), $t(173) = 0.82$, $p = .412$, $\eta^2 = .00$, and the *Lie of Commission* condition ($M = 4.92$, $SD = 1.23$), $t(173) = 1.25$, $p = .212$, $\eta^2 = .01$. Initial ratings of liking were significantly higher in the *Lie of Commission* condition than in the *Palter* condition, $t(173) = 2.13$, $p = .034$, $\eta^2 = .03$.

After participants learned that the buyer had the other pieces in the collection, ratings of liking were significantly higher in the *Deflection* condition ($M = 4.17$, $SD = 1.71$) than the *Palter* condition ($M = 3.49$, $SD = 1.76$), $t(173) = 2.26$, $p = .025$, $\eta^2 = .03$, and the *Lie of Commission* condition ($M = 3.25$, $SD = 1.41$),

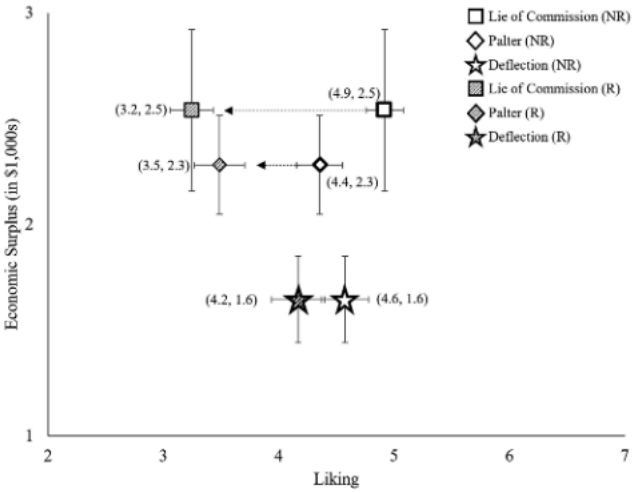

Figure 5. Results for Study 2a. Economic surplus and liking before (NR) and after (R) it was revealed that the buyer had other pieces in the collection. If it is revealed that a counterpart did not honestly disclose information, the harm to liking is less severe after deflection than after a lie of commission or a palter.

Table 3
Summary of Results for Study 2a and Study 2b

Variable	F	η^2	$1 - \beta$	Lie of commission M (SD)	Palter M (SD)	Deflection M (SD)
Study 2A						
Initial ratings						
Surplus (in $1,000s)	$F(2, 173) = 2.52^{+}$	.03	.46	2.54_{a} (2.91)	2.28_{ab} (1.85)	1.64_{b} (1.52)
Concealment	$F(2, 173) = 27.81^{***}$	.24	1.00	5.47_{a} (1.55)	4.54_{b} (1.87)	3.18_{c} (1.43)
Trust	$F(2, 173) = 4.12^{*}$	.05	.74	4.93_{a} (1.20)	4.20_{b} (1.60)	4.56_{ab} (1.34)
Liking	$F(2, 173) = 2.29$	.03	.47	4.92_{a} (1.23)	4.35_{b} (1.59)	4.58_{ab} (1.52)
Final ratings						
Trust	$F(2, 173) = 20.85^{***}$	.19	1.00	1.78_{a} (0.98)	2.62_{b} (1.54)	3.50_{c} (1.64)
Liking	$F(2, 173) = 4.81^{**}$	.05	.79	3.25_{a} (1.41)	3.49_{a} (1.76)	4.17_{b} (1.71)
Would negotiate w/ buyer again	$F(2, 173) = 8.65^{***}$	.09	.96	3.26_{a} (1.73)	3.75_{a} (1.67)	4.58_{b} (1.73)
Asked about collection	$F(2, 173) = 7.11^{**}$	.08	.95	1.02_{a} (0.23)	1.32_{b} (0.53)	1.20_{b} (0.49)
Study 2B						
Initial ratings						
Surplus (in $1,000s)	$F(2, 301) = 18.67^{***}$	.11	1.00	4.76_{a} (1.65)	4.46_{a} (1.74)	3.31_{b} (1.92)
Concealment	$F(2, 301) = 50.92^{***}$	.25	1.00	5.23_{a} (1.42)	5.06_{a} (1.30)	3.51_{b} (1.26)
Trust	$F(2, 301) = 26.19^{***}$	.15	1.00	4.96_{a} (1.13)	4.41_{b} (1.24)	3.75_{c} (1.19)
Liking	$F(2, 301) = 11.02^{***}$	.07	.99	5.03_{a} (1.13)	4.71_{b} (1.12)	4.28_{c} (1.14)
Final ratings						
Trust	$F(2, 301) = 29.17^{***}$	.16	1.00	1.67_{a} (1.08)	2.27_{b} (1.31)	3.01_{c} (1.34)
Liking	$F(2, 301) = 16.97^{***}$	.10	1.00	2.58_{a} (1.39)	3.24_{b} (1.38)	3.71_{c} (1.38)
Would negotiate w/ buyer again	$F(2, 301) = 30.69^{***}$	.17	1.00	2.82_{a} (1.68)	3.66_{b} (1.72)	4.66_{c} (1.62)

Note. Means in each row with different subscripts are significantly different at the $p < .05$ level. We present the simulated power ($1 - \beta$) at an α of .05 using 1,000 simulations.
$^{+}$ $p < .10$. * $p < .05$. ** $p < .01$. *** $p < .001$.

$t(173) = 2.99$, $p < .001$, $\eta^2 = .05$. Final ratings of liking were not significantly different between the *Palter* condition and the *Lie of Commission* condition, $t(173) = 0.80$, $p = .422$, $\eta^2 = .00$.

Concealment. Concealment was significantly lower in the *Deflection* condition ($M = 3.18$, $SD = 1.43$) than in the *Palter* condition ($M = 4.54$, $SD = 1.87$), $t(173) = 4.50$, $p < .001$, $\eta^2 = .10$, and the *Lie of Commission* condition ($M = 5.47$, $SD = 1.55$), $t(173) = 7.42$, $p < .001$, $\eta^2 = .24$. Concealment was significantly lower in the *Palter* condition than in the *Lie of Commission* condition, $t(173) = 3.11$, $p < .001$, $\eta^2 = .05$.

Willingness to negotiate again. Ratings of willingness to negotiate with the buyer again were significantly higher in the *Deflection* condition ($M = 4.58$, $SD = 1.73$) than in the *Palter* condition ($M = 3.75$, $SD = 1.67$), $t(173) = 2.65$, $p < .01$, $\eta^2 = .04$, and the *Lie of Commission* condition ($M = 3.26$, $SD = 1.73$), $t(173) = 4.12$, $p < .001$, $\eta^2 = .09$. Willingness to negotiate with the buyer again was not significantly different between the *Palter* and *Lie of Commission* conditions, $t(173) = 1.57$, $p = .119$, $\eta^2 = .01$.

Asked about collection. The average number of times that a participant asked if the buyer had other pieces in the collection was significantly higher in the *Deflection* condition ($M = 1.20$, $SD = 0.49$) than in the *Lie of Commission* condition ($M = 1.02$, $SD = 0.23$), $t(173) = 2.21$, $p = .028$, $\eta^2 = .03$. The average number of times that a participant asked whether the buyer had other pieces in the collection was not significantly different between the *Deflection* condition and the *Palter* condition ($M = 1.32$, $SD = 0.53$), $t(173) = 1.45$, $p = .149$, $\eta^2 = .01$. The average number of times that a participant asked whether the buyer had other pieces in the collection was significantly lower in the *Lie of Commission* condition than in the *Palter* condition, $t(173) = 3.75$, $p < .001$, $\eta^2 = .08$.

Moderation. We also examined whether or not the counterpart answered the deflection question moderates the effects of deflection. As in Study 1a, for each of our dependent variables we conducted ordinary least squares regression analysis with *Deflection* (1 = *deflection*, −.5 = *palter*, −.5 = *lie of commission*) and if the participant answered the deflection question (1 = *answered deflection question*, −1 = *did not answer deflection question*, 0 = *was not asked deflection question*) as our independent variables, controlling for the other conditions (1 = *lie of commission*, 0 = *deflection*, −1 = *palter*). We depict the results of our moderation analysis in Figure 6.

Surplus. We do not find that whether or not the participant answered the deflection question moderates the effect of deflection on surplus, $\beta = .38$, $p = .366$, $\eta^2 = .00$.

Trust. Though directionally consistent with our findings in Study 1a, we do not find that whether or not the participant answered the deflection question significantly moderates the effect of deflection on initial trust, $\beta = .18$, $p = .494$, $\eta^2 = .00$, or final trust, $\beta = .29$, $p = .284$, $\eta^2 = .01$.

Liking. As with trust, our findings are directionally consistent with our findings in Study 1a, but we do not find that whether or not the participant answered the deflection question significantly moderates the effect of deflection on initial liking, $\beta = .26$, $p = .345$, $\eta^2 = .01$, and final liking, $\beta = .17$, $p = .583$, $\eta^2 = .00$.

Concealment. We do not find that whether or not the participant answered the deflection question moderates the effect of deflection on concealment, $\beta = .18$, $p = .567$, $\eta^2 = .00$.

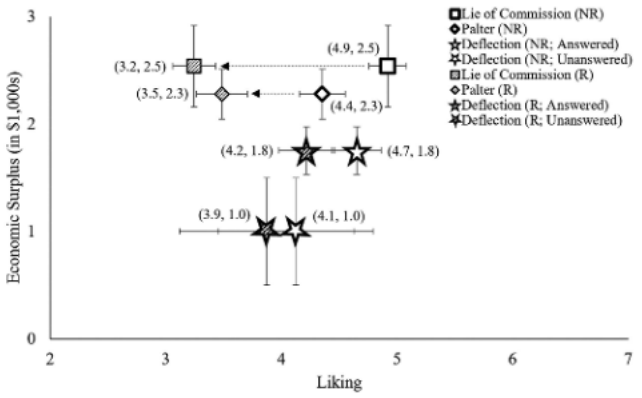

Figure 6. Moderation results for Study 2a. Perceptions of liking and economic surplus in Study 2a. Although the effect of our moderation analysis is not significant, we find that surplus and liking are directionally lower when a counterpart does not answer the deflection question compared with when they do answer the question.

Willingness to negotiate again. We do not find that whether or not the participant answered the deflection question moderates the effect of deflection on willingness to negotiate with the buyer again, $\beta = .05$, $p = .884$, $\eta^2 = .00$.

Asked about collection. We find that whether or not the participant answered the deflection question moderates the effect of deflection on the number of times the participant asked about the collection, $\beta = -.39$, $p < .001$, $\eta^2 = .13$. That is, participants who answered the deflection question were significantly less likely to follow-up and ask again about the collection.

Summary. In Study 2a, we find that before deception is revealed, an individual who lied by commission claimed greater economic surplus and was viewed as more trustworthy and likable than an individual who deflected. However, we find that deflection is less risky than a lie of commission or a palter. Once the deception was discovered, an individual who deflected was viewed as more trustworthy and likable than an individual who lied by commission or paltered. After deception was revealed, counterparts were more willing to negotiate with an individual who deflected than with an individual who lied by commission or paltered.

As in Study 1a, we find that deflection was effective at redirecting the conversation. In the *Deflection* condition, the majority of participants answered the deflection question (85.45%), and participants rarely asked the buyer if they had the other pieces in the collection more than once ($M = 1.20$, $SD = 0.49$, $Mdn = 1$). Interestingly, in contrast to Study 1a, we do not find that whether or not the counterpart answered the deflection question moderated the effects of deflection on trust and liking. The results are directionally consistent with our findings in Study 1a, but in this study only eight participants in the *Deflection* condition did not answer the deflection question.

Study 2b

To test the robustness of the finding in Study 2a, we ran a conceptual replication. The design was similar to Study 2a, with two notable differences. First, participants were shown a scenario

rather than having them engage in a negotiation; we asked participants to imagine that they were negotiating with a buyer who either deflected, paltered, or provided a lie of commission. Second, the scenario was run on Amazon's Mechanical Turk rather than in the behavioral lab.

Method

Participants. We recruited adults from Amazon Mechanical Turk to participate in a study in exchange for $0.50. We had a target recruitment of 300 participants. Four-hundred and 10 participants began the study. Ninety-four participants dropped out of the study. Twelve participants failed the comprehension check three times and were not allowed to continue with the study. A total of 304 people completed the study and have been included in our analysis (56% men, M_{age} = 36.08 years, SD = 11.68).

Design and procedure. We randomly assigned participants to one of three between-subjects conditions: *Lie of Commission* versus *Paltering* versus *Deflection*.

We used similar materials as those used in Study 1b. The instructions we presented to participants were identical to Study 1b. After reading the instructions, we had participants complete a comprehension check that was identical to the comprehension check that was used in Study 1b. Twelve participants failed the comprehension check three times and were dismissed from the study.

Across all conditions, the seller in the negotiation asks the buyer, "Do you own any Bear pieces?" In the *Lie of Commission* condition, the buyer responds, "No. I do not have any other Bear pieces." In the *Palter* condition, the buyer responds, "I've been looking to buy one." Note that in this case, the buyer has the other three pieces in the Bears series, but the palter includes a truthful—but misleading—statement. In the *Deflection* condition, the buyer responds by asking, "Can you tell me more about this piece? What price are you asking for it?"

We had participants complete the same dependent measures as in Study 2a: surplus, trust (α = .89), liking (α = .94), and concealment. Next, we informed participants that the buyer had the other 3 pieces in the Bears series, and we again had participants rate the buyer in terms of trust and liking. Finally, we asked participants, "How willing would you be to sell to the buyer again?" (7-point Likert scale, 1 = *not at all*, 7 = *extremely*).

Results

Before deception is detected, deception effectively captures value in negotiations and maintains favorable impressions of trust and liking. However, consistent with Study 2a, we find that paltering and lies of commission have significant interpersonal costs if discovered. That is, after revealing the truth about the buyer's history and interests, the sellers' ratings of the buyers' trust and liking were significantly lower. In contrast to engaging in paltering or a lie of commission, deflection had lower interpersonal costs after participants discovered that the buyer had other pieces in the collection. We summarize the results of Study 2b in Table 3 and depict the main results in Figure 7. For each of our dependent variables, we conducted ordinary least squares regression analysis.

Surplus. Economic surplus was significantly lower in the *Deflection* condition (M = 3.31, SD = 1.92) than in the *Palter* condition (M = 4.46, SD = 1.74), $t(301) = 4.59$, $p < .001$, $\eta^2 = .07$, and *Lie of Commission* condition (M = 4.76, SD = 1.65), $t(301) = 5.79$, $p < .001$, $\eta^2 = .10$. Surplus was not significantly different in the *Lie of Commission* and *Palter* conditions, $t(301) = 1.21$, $p = .227$, $\eta^2 = .00$.

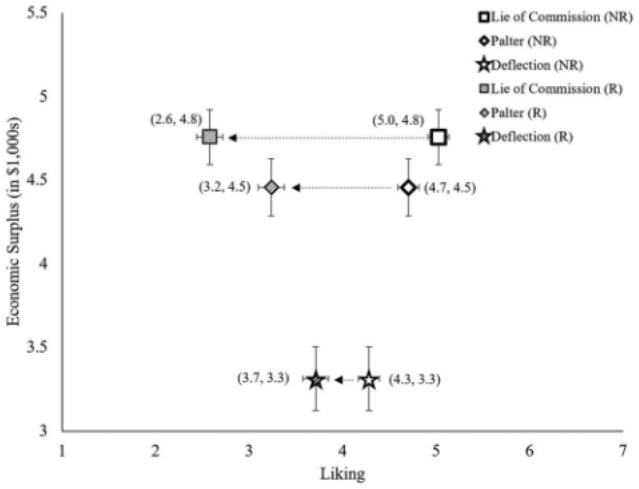

Figure 7. Results for Study 2b. Economic surplus and liking before (NR) and after (R) it was revealed that the buyer had other pieces in the collection. If it is revealed that a counterpart did not honestly disclose information, the harm to liking is less severe after deflection than after a lie of commission or a palter.

Trust. Initial ratings of trust were significantly lower in the *Deflection* condition (M = 3.75, SD = 1.19) than in the *Palter* condition (M = 4.41, SD = 1.24), $t(301) = 3.94$, $p < .001$, $\eta^2 = .05$, and *Lie of Commission* condition (M = 4.96, SD = 1.13), $t(301) = 7.23$, $p < .001$, $\eta^2 = .15$. Initial ratings of trust were significantly lower in the *Palter* condition than in the *Lie of Commission* condition, $t(301) = 3.31$, $p < .01$, $\eta^2 = .04$.

After participants learned that the buyer had the other pieces in the Bears series, ratings of trust were significantly higher in the *Deflection* condition (M = 3.01, SD = 1.34) than in the *Palter* condition (M = 2.27, SD = 1.31), $t(301) = 4.23$, $p < .001$, $\eta^2 = .06$, and *Lie of Commission* condition (M = 1.67, SD = 1.08), $t(301) = 7.62$, $p < .001$, $\eta^2 = .16$. Final ratings of trust were significantly lower in the *Lie of Commission* condition than in the *Palter* condition, $t(301) = 3.41$, $p < .001$, $\eta^2 = .04$.

Liking. The results for liking are similar to the results for trust. Initial ratings of liking were significantly lower in the *Deflection* condition (M = 4.28, SD = 1.14) than in the *Palter* condition (M = 4.71, SD = 1.12), $t(301) = 2.67$, $p < .01$, $\eta^2 = .02$, and *Lie of Commission* condition (M = 5.03, SD = 1.13), $t(301) = 4.68$, $p < .001$, $\eta^2 = .07$. Initial ratings of liking were significantly lower in the *Palter* condition than in the *Lie of Commission* condition, $t(301) = 2.02$, $p = .044$, $\eta^2 = .01$.

After participants learned that the buyer had the other pieces in the Bears series, ratings of liking were significantly higher in the *Deflection* condition (M = 3.71, SD = 1.38) than in the *Palter* condition (M = 3.24, SD = 1.38), $t(301) = 2.44$, $p = .015$, $\eta^2 = .02$, and *Lie of Commission* condition (M = 2.58, SD = 1.39), $t(301) = 5.80$, $p < .001$, $\eta^2 = .10$. Final ratings of liking were significantly lower in the *Lie of Commission* condition than in the *Palter* condition, $t(301) = 3.38$, $p < .001$, $\eta^2 = .04$.

Concealment. Participants believed that the buyer was significantly more likely to own other pieces in the collection in the *Deflection* condition than in the other conditions. Concealment was significantly lower in the *Deflection* condition ($M = 3.51$, $SD = 1.26$) than in the *Palter* condition ($M = 5.06$, $SD = 1.30$), $t(301) = 8.27$, $p < .001$, $\eta^2 = .19$, and *Lie of Commission* condition ($M = 5.23$, $SD = 1.42$), $t(301) = 9.15$, $p < .001$, $\eta^2 = .22$. Concealment was not significantly different in the *Lie of Commission* and *Palter* conditions, $t(301) = 0.90$, $p = .366$, $\eta^2 = .00$.

Willingness to negotiate again. Ratings of willingness to negotiate with the buyer again were significantly different across all conditions. Willingness to negotiate with the buyer again was significantly higher in the *Deflection* condition ($M = 4.66$, $SD = 1.62$) than in the *Palter* condition ($M = 3.66$, $SD = 1.72$), $t(301) = 4.29$, $p < .001$, $\eta^2 = .06$, and *Lie of Commission* condition ($M = 2.82$, $SD = 1.68$), $t(301) = 7.82$, $p < .001$, $\eta^2 = .17$. Willingness to negotiate with the buyer again was significantly higher in the *Palter* condition than in the *Lie of Commission* condition, $t(301) = 3.56$, $p < .001$, $\eta^2 = .04$.

Summary. As in Study 2a, we find that deflection can be less risky to interpersonal perceptions than lying by commission or paltering. Before deception is revealed, lying by commission and paltering led to better economic (greater surplus) and interpersonal (liking and trust) outcomes than deflection. However, after the deception was discovered, the individual who deflected was rated as more trustworthy and likable than the individual who lied by commission or paltered. In addition, participants reported that they would be significantly more willing to negotiate again with an individual who deflected than with an individual who lied by commission or paltered, suggesting that deflection may be less harmful to long term relationships than deception.

One limitation of this study is that it is a scenario study and participants were not financially incentivized in their offers. We have no reason to believe that the lack of incentive would have motivated participants to misrepresent the offers that they would have made to their counterpart if they were actually negotiating.

Discussion

In Studies 2a and 2b, we compare the effects of deflection to two forms of deception—lying by commission and paltering. We find that both forms of deception, especially lies of commission, have substantial economic and interpersonal benefits when the deception is not discovered. However, both lies of commission and paltering are far riskier than deflection. After we revealed that the buyer had either misrepresented or failed to disclose relevant information, participants reported that they were significantly more willing to negotiate again with the buyers who deflected than they were with the buyers who paltered or lied by commission. Participants judged the buyers who deflected as more trustworthy, more likable, and as having concealed less information than the buyers who lied by commission or paltered.

In our next study, we extend our investigation to contrast deflection with a broader set of responses. In addition to contrasting deflection with lies of commission and paltering, we compare deflection with dodging, declining to respond, and an honest disclosure.

Study 3: Inferred Motives

In Study 3, we contrast deflection with a wider set of response strategies than we consider in Studies 2a and 2b, and we assess the inferences individuals make about their counterparts' motives. Specifically, we assess inferences individuals make about their counterparts' motives to hide information and to seek information, and we link these inferences to perceptions of trust and liking.

Method

Participants. We set a preregistered target recruitment of 600 participants from Amazon Mechanical Turk to participate in our study in exchange for $0.60. Six hundred sixty-two participants began the study. Forty-one participants began the study but did not complete the comprehension check, six participants failed the comprehension check three times and were not allowed to continue the study, and 15 passed the comprehension check but did not complete the dependent measures. As a result, a total of 600 people completed the study, and we include data from all 600 participants in our analyses (52% men, $M_{age} = 40.91$ years, $SD = 12.89$).

Design and procedure. We randomly assigned participants to one of six between-subjects conditions: *Honest Disclosure* versus *Decline to Respond* versus *Lie of Commission* versus *Paltering* versus *Dodging* versus *Deflection*.

We used materials very similar to those used in Studies 1b and 2b. As in those studies, we asked participants to imagine that they were an owner of an art gallery that was trying to sell a painting which was part of a collection. After reading the instructions, we had participants complete a comprehension check that was similar to the one we used in Studies 1b and 2b (we include the instructions and comprehension check questions in Appendix G).

After reading the background material and passing the comprehension check, participants read a transcript of a prior negotiation. In this negotiation, across all conditions, the seller asks the buyer, "Are you familiar with Jim Brine, the artist?" We then manipulate how the buyer responds. To craft our responses for each of the conditions, we adapted actual responses from prior individuals who had completed this negotiation as part of a class exercise.

In the *Honest Disclosure* condition, the buyer responds, "I actually bought 'Polar Bears' a couple years ago at an auction." In the *Decline to Respond* condition, the buyer responds, "I'm not prepared to discuss my collection right now." In the *Lie of Commission* condition, the buyer responds, "I've never heard of Brine, I just think this piece could look good next to the fireplace." In the *Palter* condition, the buyer responds, "I'm not a professional collector or anything like that." Note that in this case, the buyer is a private collector, so the palter includes a truthful—but misleading—statement. In the *Dodge* condition, the buyer responds, "I'm in town for a couple of days and I noticed some other paintings at other galleries that I also liked." Note that the dodge answers a question that is different from the one the seller asked. In the *Deflection* condition, the buyer responds with a question by asking, "Didn't he pass away recently?" To boost participant engagement, before participants saw the exchange, we asked them to actively think about how they would respond if they were the seller; specifically, we asked every seller to: "Imagine you are the seller. What is the next message that you would send the buyer?" (See Appendix G for an example of the transcripts we showed to participants.)

Next, to assess inferred motives of the buyer, we asked participants to rate the extent to which the buyer was *Revealing information, Hiding information*, and *Seeking information* (7-point Likert scale, 1 = *not at all*, 7 = *extremely*). We combined the first two items to form a hiding index, with *Revealing information* reverse scored ($\alpha = .69$). We used the last item in our scale to measure inferences of the extent to which the buyer was seeking information.

We then had participants complete the same dependent measures we used in Studies 2a and 2b: surplus, trust ($\alpha = .93$), liking ($\alpha = .96$), and concealment. Finally, we revealed to participants that the buyer had the other 3 pieces in the Bears series, and we then had participants rate the buyer for a second time in terms of trust and liking, before we asked, "How willing would you be to sell to the buyer again?" (7-point Likert scale, 1 = *not at all*, 7 = *extremely*).

Results

Compared with other response strategies, we find that deflection has positive effects on inferences of seeking and hiding information; an individual who deflected was seen as relatively high on seeking information but relatively low on hiding information. These inferred motives, in turn, had beneficial effects on perceptions of trust, liking, and willingness to negotiate with the buyer again. We summarize the results of Study 3 in Table 4 and depict the main results in Figure 8. For each of our dependent variables, we conducted ordinary least squares regression analysis.

Surplus. Surplus in the *Deflection* condition ($M = 2.82$, $SD = 1.52$) was significantly greater than in the *Honest Disclosure* condition ($M = 1.94$, $SD = 1.46$), $t(594) = 3.83$, $p < .001$, $\eta^2 = .02$, was not significantly different than the *Decline to Respond* condition ($M = 2.89$, $SD = 1.65$), $t(594) = -0.33$, $p = .742$, $\eta^2 = .00$, and was significantly lower than in the *Dodge* condition ($M = 3.52$, $SD = 1.69$), $t(594) = -3.03$, $p < .01$, $\eta^2 = .02$, the *Palter* condition ($M = 3.96$, $SD = 1.58$), $t(594) = -4.95$, $p < .001$, $\eta^2 = .04$, and the *Lie of Commission* condition ($M = 4.05$, $SD = 1.81$), $t(594) = -5.39$, $p < .001$, $\eta^2 = .05$.

Trust. Initial ratings of trust were significantly higher in the *Deflection* condition ($M = 4.19$, $SD = 1.08$) than in the *Dodge* condition ($M = 3.56$, $SD = 1.33$), $t(594) = 3.86$, $p < .001$, $\eta^2 = .02$, and the *Decline to Respond* condition ($M = 2.90$, $SD = 1.10$), $t(594) = 8.05$, $p < .001$, $\eta^2 = .10$, were marginally higher than in the *Palter* condition ($M = 3.90$, $SD = 1.21$), $t(594) = 1.80$, $p = .073$, $\eta^2 = .01$, were not significantly different from the *Lie of Commission* condition ($M = 4.43$, $SD = 1.20$), $t(594) = -1.48$, $p = .140$, $\eta^2 = .00$, and were significantly lower than in the *Honest Disclosure* condition ($M = 5.29$, $SD = 0.84$), $t(594) = -6.89$, $p < .001$, $\eta^2 = .07$.

After participants learned that the buyer had the other pieces in the Bears series, ratings of trust were significantly higher in the *Deflection* condition ($M = 3.48$, $SD = 1.43$) than in the *Dodge* condition ($M = 2.94$, $SD = 1.57$), $t(594) = 2.73$, $p < .01$, $\eta^2 = .01$, the *Palter* condition ($M = 2.67$, $SD = 1.27$), $t(594) = 4.08$, $p < .001$, $\eta^2 = .03$, the *Lie of Commission* condition ($M = 2.16$, $SD = 1.57$), $t(594) = 6.70$, $p < .001$, $\eta^2 = .07$, and the *Decline to Respond* condition ($M = 2.67$, $SD = 1.21$), $t(594) = 4.15$, $p < .001$, $\eta^2 = .03$, and were significantly lower than in the *Honest Disclosure* condition ($M = 5.12$, $SD = 1.32$), $t(594) = -8.24$, $p < .001$, $\eta^2 = .10$.

Liking. Initial ratings of liking were significantly higher in the *Deflection* condition ($M = 4.85$, $SD = 0.96$) than in the *Dodge* condition ($M = 4.23$, $SD = 1.27$), $t(594) = 3.98$, $p < .001$, $\eta^2 = .03$, the *Palter* condition ($M = 4.43$, $SD = 1.11$), $t(594) = 2.70$, $p < .01$, $\eta^2 = .01$, and the *Decline to Respond* condition ($M = 2.77$, $SD = 1.06$), $t(594) = 13.60$, $p < .001$, $\eta^2 = .24$, were not significantly different from the *Lie of Commission* condition ($M = 4.74$, $SD = 1.25$), $t(594) = 0.71$, $p = .478$, $\eta^2 = .00$, and were significantly lower than in the *Honest Disclosure* condition ($M = 5.40$, $SD = 0.81$), $t(594) = -3.60$, $p < .001$, $\eta^2 = .02$.

After participants learned that the buyer had the other pieces in the Bears series, ratings of liking were significantly higher in the *Deflection* condition ($M = 4.25$, $SD = 1.32$) than in the *Dodge* condition ($M = 3.52$, $SD = 1.66$), $t(594) = 3.77$, $p < .001$, $\eta^2 = .02$, the *Palter* condition ($M = 3.45$, $SD = 1.30$), $t(594) = 4.16$,

Table 4
Summary of Results for Study 3

Variable	F	η^2	$1 - \beta$	Decline to respond M (SD)	Honest disclosure M (SD)	Lie of commission M (SD)	Palter M (SD)	Dodge M (SD)	Deflection M (SD)
Inf motive									
Seeking Info	$F(5, 594) = 5.21^{***}$	.04	.99	3.83_{ab} (1.82)	4.23_{acd} (1.78)	3.64_{b} (1.83)	4.40_{cd} (1.50)	4.20_{ac} (1.48)	4.68_{d} (1.41)
Hiding Info	$F(5, 594) = 108.36^{***}$	.48	1.00	5.86_{a} (1.07)	2.36_{b} (1.10)	3.33_{c} (1.16)	4.01_{d} (1.21)	4.59_{e} (1.28)	3.66_{f} (1.09)
Initial ratings									
Surplus	$F(5, 594) = 24.75^{***}$	.17	1.00	2.89_{a} (1.65)	1.94_{b} (1.46)	4.05_{c} (1.81)	3.96_{cd} (1.58)	3.52_{d} (1.69)	2.82_{a} (1.52)
Concealment	$F(5, 594) = 89.95^{***}$	.43	1.00	2.84_{a} (1.14)	2.03_{b} (1.23)	5.21_{c} (1.37)	4.63_{d} (1.15)	3.99_{e} (1.34)	3.96_{e} (1.16)
Trust	$F(5, 594) = 51.75^{***}$	.30	1.00	2.90_{a} (1.10)	5.29_{b} (0.84)	4.43_{c} (1.20)	3.90_{d} (1.21)	3.56_{e} (1.33)	4.19_{cd} (1.08)
Liking	$F(5, 594) = 69.50^{***}$	.37	1.00	2.77_{a} (1.06)	5.40_{b} (0.81)	4.74_{c} (1.25)	4.43_{d} (1.11)	4.23_{d} (1.27)	4.85_{c} (.96)
Final ratings									
Trust	$F(5, 594) = 56.24^{***}$	.32	1.00	2.67_{a} (1.21)	5.12_{b} (1.32)	2.16_{c} (1.57)	2.67_{a} (1.27)	2.94_{a} (1.57)	3.48_{d} (1.43)
Liking	$F(5, 594) = 44.90^{***}$	.27	1.00	2.83_{a} (1.18)	5.26_{b} (0.99)	3.02_{a} (1.59)	3.45_{c} (1.30)	3.52_{c} (1.66)	4.25_{d} (1.32)
Negot again	$F(5, 594) = 36.67^{***}$	.24	1.00	4.78_{ae} (1.43)	6.21_{b} (0.86)	3.67_{c} (1.52)	4.31_{d} (1.53)	4.56_{ad} (1.63)	5.13_{e} (1.40)

Note. Means in each row with different subscripts are significantly different at the $p < .05$ level. We present the simulated power ($1 - \beta$) at an α of .05 using 1,000 simulations.
*** $p < .001$.

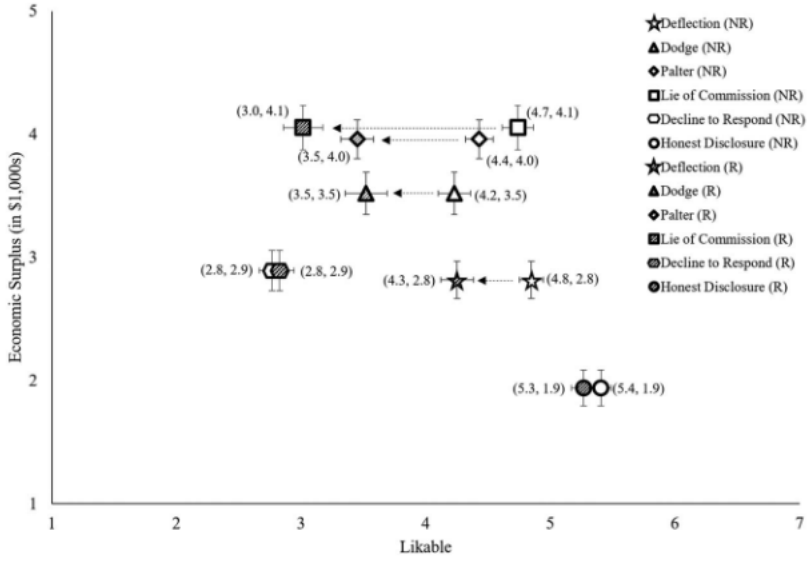

Figure 8. Results for Study 3. Economic surplus and liking before (NR) and after (R) it was revealed that the buyer had other pieces in the collection.

$p < .001$, $\eta^2 = .03$, the *Lie of Commission* condition ($M = 3.02$, $SD = 1.59$), $t(594) = 6.45$, $p < .001$, $\eta^2 = .07$, and the *Decline to Respond* condition ($M = 2.83$, $SD = 1.18$), $t(594) = 7.47$, $p < .001$, $\eta^2 = .09$, and were significantly lower than in the *Honest Disclosure* condition ($M = 5.26$, $SD = 0.99$), $t(594) = -5.28$, $p < .001$, $\eta^2 = .04$.

Concealment. Concealment of the other pieces in the collection in the *Deflection* condition ($M = 3.96$, $SD = 1.16$) was significantly higher than in the *Honest Disclosure* condition ($M = 2.03$, $SD = 1.23$), $t(594) = 11.07$, $p < .001$, $\eta^2 = .17$, and the *Decline to Respond* condition ($M = 2.84$, $SD = 1.14$), $t(594) = 6.42$, $p < .001$, $\eta^2 = .06$, significantly lower than in the *Palter* condition ($M = 4.63$, $SD = 1.15$), $t(594) = -3.80$, $p < .001$, $\eta^2 = .02$, and the *Lie of Commission* condition ($M = 5.21$, $SD = 1.37$), $t(594) = -7.16$, $p < .001$, $\eta^2 = .08$, and was not significantly different than the *Dodge* condition ($M = 3.99$, $SD = 1.34$), $t(594) = -0.17$, $p = .864$, $\eta^2 = .00$.

Willingness to negotiate again. Willingness to negotiate with the buyer again in the *Deflection* condition ($M = 5.13$, $SD = 1.40$) was significantly greater than in the *Dodge* condition ($M = 4.56$, $SD = 1.63$), $t(594) = 2.84$, $p < .01$, $\eta^2 = .01$, the *Palter* condition ($M = 4.31$, $SD = 1.53$), $t(594) = 4.06$, $p < .001$, $\eta^2 = .03$, and the *Lie of Commission* condition ($M = 3.67$, $SD = 1.52$), $t(594) = 7.27$, $p < .001$, $\eta^2 = .08$, was marginally greater than in the *Decline to Respond* condition ($M = 4.78$, $SD = 1.43$), $t(594) = 1.78$, $p = .076$, $\eta^2 = .01$, and was significantly lower than in the *Honest Disclosure* condition ($M = 6.21$, $SD = 0.86$), $t(594) = -5.37$, $p < .001$, $\eta^2 = .05$.

Inferred motives. The inferred motive of seeking information in the *Deflection* condition ($M = 4.68$, $SD = 1.41$) was significantly greater than in the *Dodge* condition ($M = 4.20$, $SD = 1.48$), $t(594) = 2.04$, $p = .041$, $\eta^2 = .01$, the *Lie of Commission* condition ($M = 3.64$, $SD = 1.83$), $t(594) = 4.43$, $p < .001$, $\eta^2 = .03$, and the *Decline to Respond* condition ($M = 3.83$, $SD = 1.82$), $t(594) = 3.63$, $p < .001$, $\eta^2 = .02$, marginally greater than in the *Honest Disclosure* condition ($M = 4.23$, $SD = 1.78$), $t(594) = 1.93$, $p = .054$, $\eta^2 = .01$, and directionally greater than in the *Palter* condition ($M = 4.40$, $SD = 1.50$), $t(594) = 1.16$, $p = .245$, $\eta^2 = .00$.

The inferred motive of hiding information in the *Deflection* condition ($M = 3.66$, $SD = 1.09$) was significantly lower than in the *Dodge* condition ($M = 4.59$, $SD = 1.28$), $t(594) = -5.65$, $p < .001$, $\eta^2 = .05$, the *Palter* condition ($M = 4.01$, $SD = 1.21$), $t(594) = -2.10$, $p = .036$, $\eta^2 = .01$, and the *Decline to Respond* condition ($M = 5.86$, $SD = 1.07$), $t(594) = -13.58$, $p < .001$, $\eta^2 = .24$, and significantly higher than in the *Honest Disclosure* condition ($M = 2.36$, $SD = 1.10$), $t(594) = 7.98$, $p < .001$, $\eta^2 = .10$, and the *Lie of Commission* condition ($M = 3.33$, $SD = 1.16$), $t(594) = 2.05$, $p = .040$, $\eta^2 = .01$.

Mediation. We conducted both Baron and Kenny (1986) and bootstrap analyses (Hayes & Preacher, 2014; Preacher & Hayes, 2004, 2008) to examine the extent to which inferred motives mediate the relationship between deflection and trust. We summarize the correlations among our dependent variables in Table 5.

For each of our analyses, we conducted ordinary least squares regression analysis with trust as our dependent variable, deflection as our independent variable (*Deflection* = 1, *Dodge* = −.20, *Palter* = −.20, *Lie of Commission* = −.20, *Decline to Respond* = −.20, *Honest Disclosure* = −.20), with contrast coding to control for the other conditions. When we examine initial trust and include the inferred motives of seeking information and hiding information in our model, the effect of deflection was reduced (from $\beta = .14$, $p = .170$, $\eta^2 = .00$ to $\beta = -.09$, $p = .290$, $\eta^2 = .00$) and the effects of seeking information ($\beta = .15$, $p < .001$, $\eta^2 = .06$) and hiding information ($\beta = -.52$, $p < .001$, $\eta^2 = .29$) were significant. Using bootstrap analysis, we find significant indirect effects of seeking information (IE = .08, 95% bias adjusted CI [.04, .13]) and hiding information (IE = .16, 95% bias adjusted CI [.06, .27]). When we examine final trust and include the inferred motives of seeking information and hiding information

Table 5
Correlation Table for Study 3

Variable	*M* (*SD*)	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
1. Seeking info	4.16 (1.68)								
2. Hiding info	3.97 (1.59)	−.07^{+}							
3. Surplus	3.19 (1.77)	.03	−.03						
4. Concealment	3.77 (1.63)	−.11**	−.09*	.45***					
5. Initial trust	4.05 (1.35)	.22***	−.70***	.04	.00				
6. Initial liking	4.40 (1.36)	.25***	−.63***	.03	.04	.80***			
7. Final trust	3.17 (1.69)	.20***	−.40***	−.20***	−.37***	.60***	.47***		
8. Final liking	3.72 (1.58)	.25***	−.43***	−.15***	−.26***	.63***	.66***	.85***	
9. Negotiate again	4.78 (1.61)	.15***	−.19***	−.31***	−.41***	.32***	.28***	.61***	.59***

Note. Means reflect raw means.
$^{+}$ $p < .10$. * $p < .05$. ** $p < .01$. *** $p < .001$.

in our model, the effect of deflection was reduced (from $\beta = .31$, $p = .015$, $\eta^2 = .01$ to $\beta = .14$, $p = .260$, $\eta^2 = .00$) and the effects of seeking information ($\beta = .15$, $p < .001$, $\eta^2 = .03$) and hiding information ($\beta = -.32$, $p < .001$, $\eta^2 = .07$) were significant. Using bootstrap analysis, we find significant indirect effects of seeking information (IE = .07, 95% bias adjusted CI [.03, .14]) and hiding information (IE = .10, 95% bias adjusted CI [.04, .18]).

We also conducted both Baron and Kenny (1986) and bootstrap analyses (Hayes & Preacher, 2014; Preacher & Hayes, 2004, 2008) to examine the extent to which inferred motives mediate the relationship between deflection and liking. When we examine initial liking and include the inferred motives of seeking information and hiding information in our model, the effect of deflection was reduced (from $\beta = .45$, $p < .001$, $\eta^2 = .03$ to $\beta = .26$, $p < .01$, $\eta^2 = .01$) and the effects of seeking information ($\beta = .16$, $p < .001$, $\eta^2 = .07$) and hiding information ($\beta = -.35$, $p < .001$, $\eta^2 = .15$) were significant. Using bootstrap analysis, we find significant indirect effects of seeking information (IE = .08, 95% bias adjusted CI [.04, .14]) and hiding information (IE = .11, 95% bias adjusted CI [.04, .18]). When we examine final liking and include the inferred motives of seeking information and hiding information in our model, the effect of deflection was reduced (from $\beta = .53$, $p < .001$, $\eta^2 = .03$ to $\beta = .35$, $p < .01$, $\eta^2 = .01$) and the effects of seeking information ($\beta = .18$, $p < .001$, $\eta^2 = .05$) and hiding information ($\beta = -.29$, $p < .001$, $\eta^2 = .07$) were significant. Using bootstrap analysis, we find significant indirect effects of seeking information (IE = .09, 95% bias adjusted CI [.04, .16]) and hiding information (IE = .09, 95% bias adjusted CI [.03, .17]).

Furthermore, we conducted both Baron and Kenny (1986) and bootstrap analyses (Hayes & Preacher, 2014; Preacher & Hayes, 2004, 2008) to examine the extent to which inferred motives mediate the relationship between deflection and willingness to negotiate with the buyer again. When we examine willingness to negotiate with the buyer again and include the inferred motives of seeking information and hiding information in our model, the effect of deflection was reduced (from $\beta = .35$, $p < .01$, $\eta^2 = .01$ to $\beta = .26$, $p = .045$, $\eta^2 = .01$) and the effects of seeking information ($\beta = .10$, $p < .01$, $\eta^2 = .01$) and hiding information ($\beta = -.13$, $p < .01$, $\eta^2 = .01$) were significant. Using bootstrap analysis, we find significant indirect effects of seeking information (IE = .05, 95% bias adjusted CI [.02, .11]) and hiding information (IE = .04, 95% bias adjusted CI [.01, .09]). We summarize the results of the mediation analysis in Table 6.

Discussion

In Study 3, we replicate the effects of Studies 1a, 1b, 2a, and 2b. Consistent with Studies 1a and 1b, we find that deflection enables the buyer to capture greater surplus than an honest disclosure, and we find that deflection preserves trust and liking better than explicitly declining to answer the question does. Consistent with Studies 2a and 2b, we find that engaging in deception (lie of commission, paltering, dodging) increases economic surplus relative to deflection, but that deceptive responses harm trust and liking, relative to deflection, when the truth was revealed (e.g., in this case, that the buyer had other pieces in the collection). Taken

Table 6
Summary of Mediation Results

	Seeking information		Hiding information		Total I.E.	
DV	Ind. effect	95% CI	Ind. effect	95% CI	Ind. effect	95% CI
Trust (initial)	.08	[.04, .13]	.16	[.06, .27]	.23	[.12, .36]
Liking (initial)	.08	[.04, .14]	.11	[.04, .18]	.19	[.10, .28]
Trust (final)	.07	[.03, .14]	.10	[.04, .18]	.17	[.09, .27]
Liking (final)	.09	[.04, .16]	.09	[.03, .17]	.18	[.10, .28]
Willingness to negotiate again	.05	[.02, .11]	.04	[.01, .09]	.09	[.04, .17]

Note. Comparisons in each row reflect contrasts with the *Deflection* condition. We report the indirect effects using 5,000 simulation bootstrap analysis (Hayes & Preacher, 2014; Preacher & Hayes, 2004, 2008).

together, results from this study demonstrate that deflection can yield greater economic benefits than honest disclosure and greater interpersonal perception benefits (e.g., trust and liking) than lies of commission, paltering, and dodging when the truth is revealed.

In this study, we also examined participants' inferences of their counterpart's conversational motives. We find that deflection boosts inferences of the seeking information motive and diminishes inferences of the hiding information motive. We find that these inferred motives mediate the effects of deflection on perceptions of trust and liking. That is, inferences that a conversational counterpart is motivated to seek, but not hide information, boost trust and liking. In contrast, inferences that a conversational counterpart is motivated to hide information harm trust and liking.

In Studies 2a, 2b, and 3, the interpersonal perceptions of trust and liking of individuals who honestly provided information were very high. In these studies, honest disclosures had economic costs, but did not reveal unflattering information about an individual's trustworthiness. In some cases, honest disclosures of unflattering information may harm interpersonal perceptions, and we consider this possibility in our next study.

One limitation of this study is the correlational nature of the mediation analysis. A limitation of Studies 1a and 1b, Studies 2a and 2b, and Study 3 is that these studies were run in a negotiation setting. Quite possibly, the effects we observe may be specific to negotiation contexts. In Studies 4a through 4c, we extend our investigation to explore deflection in other settings.

Study 4: When Deflection Is Better Than Honesty

In Study 4, we investigate the possibility that, in some contexts, deflection may boost interpersonal perceptions relative to an honest disclosure. That is, deflection may boost *both* economic and interpersonal outcomes relative to an honest disclosure. We consider this possibility in Study 4a, and contrast deflection with an honest disclosure when the critical information relates to a prior untrustworthy act. In some contexts, individuals are asked direct questions that could cause them to reveal prior acts of untrustworthy behavior (e.g., "Why did you leave your prior job after only a month?"). Quite possibly, an honest disclosure could harm both economic and interpersonal outcomes (e.g., "I was fired for repeatedly being late for work."). In these situations, deflection may boost trust, liking, *and* economic outcomes relative to an honest disclosure.

In Studies 4b and 4c, we examine two moderators of deflection. First, if the content of the deflection is about the current topic or if it switches topics. In conversations, questions that are about the current topic have been found to increase liking more than questions that switch the topic of conversation (Huang et al., 2017). We predict that deflection that is on the current topic will boost liking more effectively than deflection that switches the topic of conversation. Second, we examine the moderating effect of the deflection being prosocial or selfish. Prior research has found that selfish lies can harm perceptions of benevolence, but lies that are prosocial boost perceptions of benevolence (Gaspar, Levine, & Schweitzer, 2015; Levine & Schweitzer, 2014, 2015; Lupoli, Levine, & Greenberg, 2018). We predict that individuals will respond similarly to deflection, and deflection that is prosocial will boost perceptions of liking.

Study 4a

Method

Participants. We recruited adults from TurkPrime to participate in a study in exchange for $0.40, with a chance for a $75 bonus. We had a target recruitment of 450 participants. Four hundred eighty-six participants began the study. Thirty-eight participants failed the comprehension check twice and were not allowed to continue with the study. A total of 448 people passed the comprehension check and completed the study (55% men, M_{age} = 37.07 years, SD = 11.74).

Design and procedure. We randomly assigned participants to one of three between-subjects conditions: *Decline to Respond* versus *Honest Disclosure* versus *Deflection*.

Across all conditions, we informed participants that they would play a "Choice Game" with another participant. We told participants that they would play the game for real lottery tickets and the number of lottery tickets each participant received would determine the number of times they were entered into a lottery for a $75 bonus.

Next, we had participants read the instructions for "The Choice Game." The game was a modified version of the trust game (adapted from Berg, Dickhaut, & McCabe, 1995; Glaeser, Laibson, Scheinkman, & Soutter, 2000; Levine, Bitterly, Cohen, & Schweitzer, 2018; Malhotra, 2004; Malhotra & Murnighan, 2002; McCabe, Rigdon, & Smith, 2003; Schweitzer et al., 2006). In the game, Player 1 is given two lottery tickets. Player 1 can either keep the lottery tickets or pass them to Player 2. If Player 1 keeps the lottery tickets, Player 1 receives two lottery tickets and Player 2 receives zero lottery tickets for the game. If Player 1 decides to pass the lottery tickets to Player 2, then the total number of lottery tickets increases from two to six. Player 2 could then decide to either keep all six lottery tickets or pass half of the lottery tickets back to Player 1. If Player 2 decided to keep all the lottery tickets, then Player 2 would receive six lottery tickets and Player 1 would receive zero lottery tickets. If Player 2 decided to pass half of the lottery tickets back to Player 1, then Player 1 and Player 2 would receive three lottery tickets each. We present the instructions we showed to participants in Appendix H.

After reading the instructions, participants completed a comprehension check (see Appendix H for the comprehension check questions). Thirty-eight participants failed the comprehension check twice and were not allowed to continue with the study.

After the comprehension check, we assigned participants to their role and paired them with their partner for the game. We told participants that their role and partner would be randomly determined. In reality, we assigned all participants to the role of Player 1 and paired them with a confederate Player 2.

Before participants made their decision as Player 1, we had them review how their partner responded to a direct question. We informed participants, "Your partner was asked the question, 'If you have previously played this game, what did you do?'" We then manipulated how the partner, Player 2, responded to the question. In the *Honest Disclosure* condition, Player 2 responded to the question with the following answer, "When my partner passed, I chose keep the tickets. (sic)" In the *Decline to Respond* condition, Player 2 responded to the question with, "I don't want to answer that question." In the *Deflection* condition, Player 2 responded

with a question, "Does this mean my partner decided to keep the tickets?"

After reviewing their partner's response, we had participants make their decision in the Choice game. Then, we had participants rate the extent to which their partner possessed the following qualities: *likable*, *good-natured*, and *pleasant* (7-point Likert scale, 1 = *not at all*, 7 = *extremely*). We combined these items to measure the extent to which participants liked their counterpart (α = .98). Finally, we had participants provide demographic information (age, sex) and then provided them with the payment code for the study. After completion of the study, we randomly selected one participant and paid them the $75 bonus.

Results

We summarize the results of Study 4a in Figure 9. For passing in the trust game, we conducted logistic regression analysis. For the liking dependent variable, we conducted ordinary least squares regression analysis.

Passing. We find a significant effect of our manipulation on passing in the trust game, $\chi^2(2, N = 448) = 53.22$, $p < .001$, Nagelkerke $R^2 = .15$, simulated power = 1.00 at an alpha of .05 using 1000 simulations. We find that the rate of passing was significantly higher in the *Deflection* condition (62.2%) than in the *Decline to Respond* condition (42.9%), $Z = 3.33$, $p < .001$, $e^b = 2.18$, and the *Honest Disclosure* condition (20.8%), $Z = 6.88$, $p < .001$, $e^b = 6.24$. We also find that the rate of passing was significantly higher in the *Decline to Respond* condition than in the *Honest Disclosure* condition, $Z = 4.02$, $p < .001$, $e^b = 2.86$.

Liking. We find a significant effect of our manipulation on liking, $F(2, 445) = 25.79$, $p < .001$, $\eta^2 = .10$, simulated power = 1.00 at an alpha of .05 using 1000 simulations. We find that liking was significantly higher in the *Deflection* condition ($M = 4.02$, $SD = 1.29$) than in the *Decline to Respond* ($M = 3.23$, $SD = 1.43$), $t(445) = 5.04$, $p < .001$, $\eta^2 = .05$, and *Honest Disclosure* conditions ($M = 2.90$, $SD = 1.41$), $t(445) = 6.96$, $p < .001$, $\eta^2 = .10$. We also find that liking was significantly higher in the *Decline to Respond* condition than in the *Honest Disclosure* condition, $t(445) = 2.04$, $p = .042$, $\eta^2 = .01$.

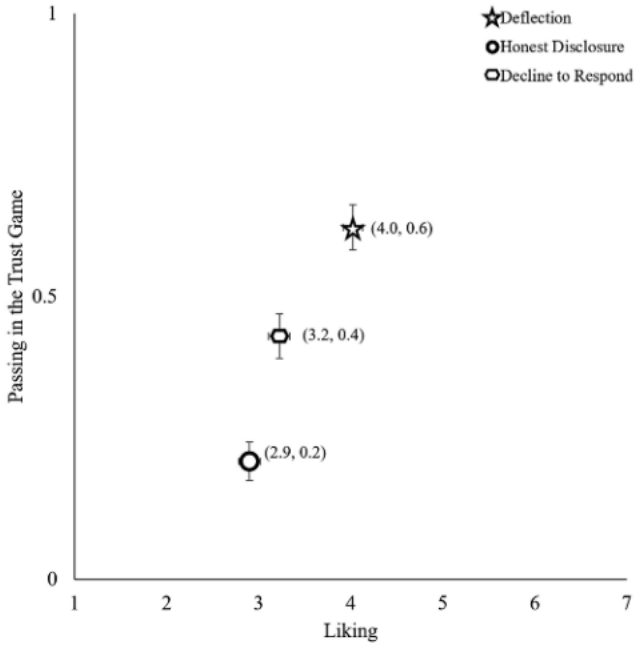

Figure 9. Results for Study 4a. Passing in the trust game and liking of partner in Study 4a. For disclosures about prior acts of untrustworthy behavior, deflection can lead to better interpersonal and economic outcomes than honest disclosure or declining to disclose.

Summary. In Study 4a, we find that when an individual was asked a direct question that would require revealing negative information about an individual's trustworthiness, deflection led to better economic outcomes (greater passing in the trust game) and interpersonal outcomes (greater liking) than declining to disclose or honest disclosure. Combined with the economic outcomes observed in Studies 1, 2a and 2b, and 3, this study provides convergent evidence for the interpersonal and economic benefits of deflection.

Study 4b

In Study 4b, we examine the effect of deflection that is prosocial on perceptions of trust and liking. We also examine the moderating effect of question type and if the deflection is on the same topic (a follow-up question) or a different topic (a full-switch question).

Method

Participants. We recruited 270 adults from Amazon Mechanical Turk to participate in a study in exchange for $0.20. A total of 270 people completed the study (49% men, M_{age} = 38.25 years, SD = 12.50).

Design and procedure. We randomly assigned participants to one of three between-subjects conditions: *Honest Disclosure* versus *Deflection* (*follow-up*) versus *Deflection* (*full-switch*).

Across all conditions we asked participants to imagine a scenario that takes place between John and Sam. Next, we had participants read the following scenario (adapted from Levine, 2016):

> After working for several weeks on an important presentation, John's colleague Sam is about to deliver his presentation to the board.
>
> Though Sam normally does not wear a suit to work, he wore one for the presentation. Apparently, Sam has put on some weight since he was fitted for the suit, and it looks a bit too tight. Sam, however, does not have other clothes to wear and does not have time before his presentation to buy different clothes.
>
> As Sam gets ready to head into his presentation, he asks John, "How does my suit look?"

We manipulated how John responds to Sam's question. In the *Honest Disclosure* condition, participants read, "John says, 'The suit looks tight on you.'" In the *Deflection* (*full-switch*) condition, participants read, "John says, 'Do you have all of your slides ready?'" In the *Deflection* (*follow-up*) condition, participants read, "John says, 'Where can I buy a suit like that?'"

Next, we had participants rate to what extent John possesses the following qualities: *forthcoming*, *trustworthy*, *honest*, *likable*, *good-natured*, and *pleasant*. We combined the first three items into an index of trust (α = .90). We combined the second three items into an index of liking (α = .93).

Then, we had participants rate to what extent they agreed with the following statement, "John thinks the suit looks tight on Sam." (1 = *strongly disagree*, 7 = *strongly agree*). We reverse coded this item to measure to what extent John concealed that he thought the suit looked tight on Sam. Finally, we had participants complete exit questions (gender and age).

Results

We summarize the results of Study 4b in Figure 10 and Table 7. For each of our dependent variables, we conducted ordinary least squares regression analysis.

Trust. We find no significant difference in ratings of trust between the *Deflection* (*full-switch*) condition ($M = 3.44$, $SD = 1.30$) and the *Deflection* (*follow-up*) condition ($M = 3.53$, $SD = 1.39$), $t(267) = 0.47$, $p = .639$, $\eta^2 = .00$. We find that ratings of trust are significantly higher in the *Honest Disclosure* condition ($M = 5.66$, $SD = 1.21$) than in the *Deflection* (*full-switch*) condition, $t(267) = 11.44$, $p < .001$, $\eta^2 = .33$, and the *Deflection* (*follow-up*) condition, $t(267) = 11.00$, $p < .001$, $\eta^2 = .31$.

Liking. We find that ratings of liking were significantly higher in the *Deflection* (*follow-up*) condition ($M = 4.91$, $SD = 1.35$) than in the *Deflection* (*full-switch*) condition ($M = 4.27$, $SD = 1.36$), $t(267) = 3.07$, $p < .001$, $\eta^2 = .03$, and the *Honest Disclosure* condition ($M = 4.17$, $SD = 1.46$), $t(267) = 3.57$, $p < .001$, $\eta^2 = .05$. We find no significant difference in ratings of liking between the *Deflection* (*full-switch*) and *Honest Disclosure* conditions, $t(267) = 0.49$, $p = .626$, $\eta^2 = .00$.

Concealment. We find that ratings of concealment were significantly different across conditions. We find that concealment was significantly lower in the *Deflection* (*full-switch*) condition ($M = 2.69$, $SD = 1.28$) than in the *Deflection* (*follow-up*) condition ($M = 3.13$, $SD = 1.53$), $t(267) = 2.48$, $p = .014$, $\eta^2 = .02$. Concealment was significantly lower in the *Honest Disclosure* condition ($M = 1.42$, $SD = .65$) than in the *Deflection* (*follow-up*) condition, $t(267) = 9.55$, $p < .001$, $\eta^2 = .25$, and the *Deflection* (*full-switch*) condition, $t(267) = 7.04$, $p < .001$, $\eta^2 = .16$.

Summary. In Study 4b, we find that honest disclosure led to the highest ratings of trust, but that deflection that used a follow-up question led to the highest ratings of liking. We also find a moderating effect of the content of the disclosure, with deflection that uses a follow-up question leading to greater liking than deflection that uses a full-switch question and attempts to change the topic of discussion.

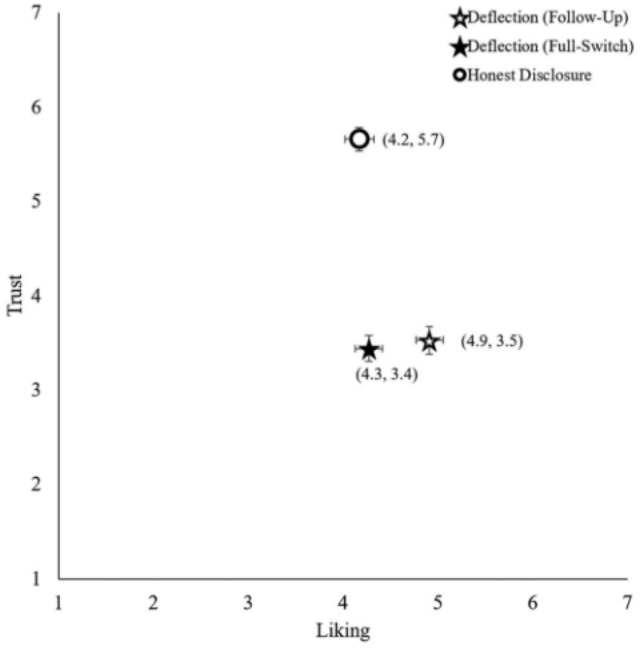

Figure 10. Results for Study 4b. Participants rated an individual who honestly disclosed as the most trustworthy but an individual who deflected using a follow-up question as the most likable.

Study 4c

In Study 4c, we extend Study 4b in two ways. First, we examine the effects of deflection and honest disclosure in a different context. Second, we explore a different honest disclosure and different deflections.

Method

Participants. We recruited 270 adults from Amazon Mechanical Turk to participate in a study in exchange for $0.25. A total of 270 people completed the study (59% men, M_{age} = 35.56 years, $SD = 10.16$).

Design and procedure. We randomly assigned participants to one of three between-subjects conditions: *Honest Disclosure* versus *Deflection* (*follow-up*) versus *Deflection* (*full-switch*).

Across all conditions we asked participants to imagine a scenario that takes place between Tom and Edward. Next, we had participants read the following scenario (adapted from Levine, 2016).

Please imagine the following scenario:

> After working for several weeks on an important presentation, Tom's colleague, Edward, just delivered a presentation to the board. Tom attended the presentation.
>
> Edward's presentation went very poorly. Edward stuttered a lot during the presentation because he has a diagnosed speech impediment. Edward cannot improve his ability to speak without a stutter.
>
> Immediately after the presentation, Edward asks Tom, "What did you think of the presentation?"

We manipulated how Tom responds to Edward's question. In the *Honest Disclosure* condition, participants read, "Tom says, 'I think it went very poorly.'" In the *Deflection* (*full-switch*) condition, participants read, "Tom says, 'Do you have any vacation plans?'" In the *Deflection* (*follow-up*) condition, participants read, "Tom says, 'How do you think it went?'"

Next, we had participants rate to what extent Tom possesses the following qualities: *forthcoming*, *trustworthy*, *honest*, *likable*, *good-natured*, and *pleasant*. We combined the first three items into an index of trust ($\alpha = .87$). We combined the second three items into an index of liking ($\alpha = .95$).

Then, we had participants rate their agreement with the following statement, "I would want to have Tom as a colleague" (1 =

Table 7
Summary of Results for Study 4b and 4c

Variable	F	η^2	$1 - \beta$	Honest disclosure M (SD)	Deflection (follow-up) M (SD)	Deflection (full-switch) M (SD)
Study 4B						
Concealment	$F(2, 267) = 49.14^{***}$	.27	1.00	1.42_a (0.65)	3.13_b (1.53)	2.69_c (1.28)
Trust	$F(2, 267) = 84.27^{***}$	.39	1.00	5.66_a (1.21)	3.53_b (1.39)	3.44_b (1.30)
Liking	$F(2, 267) = 7.47^{***}$	.05	.94	4.17_a (1.46)	4.91_b (1.35)	4.27_a (1.36)
Study 4C						
Concealment	$F(2, 267) = 15.66^{***}$	.10	1.00	1.98_a (1.41)	3.09_b (1.42)	2.56_c (1.17)
Trust	$F(2, 267) = 54.52^{***}$	.29	1.00	5.47_a (1.33)	3.92_b (1.21)	3.43_c (1.56)
Liking	$F(2, 267) = 2.63^{+}$	.02	.55	3.35_a (1.44)	3.85_b (1.51)	3.68_{ab} (1.56)
Want as a colleague	$F(2, 267) = 3.95^{*}$	.03	.71	4.30_a (1.66)	4.04_{ab} (1.54)	3.64_b (1.55)
Changed topic	$F(2, 267) = 137.83^{***}$	.51	1.00	1.67_a (1.19)	3.45_b (1.74)	5.55_c (1.69)

Note. Means in each row with different subscripts are significantly different at the $p < .05$ level. We present the simulated power ($1 - \beta$) at an α of .05 using 1,000 simulations.
$^{+}$ $p < .10$. * $p < .05$. *** $p < .001$.

strongly disagree, 7 = *strongly agree*). Then, we had participants rate their agreement with the statement, "Edward knows that Tom thought Edward's presentation went very poorly" (1 = *strongly disagree*, 7 = *strongly agree*). We reverse coded this item to measure to what extent Tom concealed that he thought Edward's presentation went poorly. We also asked participants to rate their agreement with the statement, "In response to Edward's question, Tom attempted to change the topic of conversation" (1 = *strongly disagree*, 7 = *strongly agree*). Finally, we had participants complete exit questions (gender and age).

Results

We summarize the results of Study 4c in Figure 11 and Table 7. For each of our dependent variables, we conducted ordinary least squares regression analysis.

Trust. We find ratings of trust were significantly higher in the *Deflection* (*follow-up*) condition ($M = 3.92$, $SD = 1.21$) than in the *Deflection* (*full-switch*) condition ($M = 3.43$, $SD = 1.56$), $t(267) = 2.38$, $p = .018$, $\eta^2 = .02$. We find that ratings of trust are significantly higher in the *Honest Disclosure* condition ($M = 5.47$, $SD = 1.33$) than in the *Deflection* (*follow-up*) condition, $t(267) = 7.68$, $p < .001$, $\eta^2 = .18$, and the *Deflection* (*full-switch*) condition, $t(267) = 9.93$, $p < .001$, $\eta^2 = .27$.

Liking. We find that ratings of liking were significantly higher in the *Deflection* (*follow-up*) condition ($M = 3.85$, $SD = 1.51$) than in *Honest Disclosure* condition ($M = 3.35$, $SD = 1.44$), $t(267) = 2.26$, $p = .025$, $\eta^2 = .02$. We find that ratings of liking in the *Deflection* (*full-switch*) condition ($M = 3.68$, $SD = 1.56$) were not significantly different than in the *Deflection* (*follow-up*) condition, $t(267) = 0.77$, $p = .442$, $\eta^2 = .00$, and the *Honest Disclosure* condition, $t(267) = 1.45$, $p = .148$, $\eta^2 = .01$.

Concealment. We find that ratings of concealment were significantly different across conditions. We find that concealment was significantly lower in the *Deflection* (*full-switch*) condition ($M = 2.56$, $SD = 1.17$) than in the *Deflection* (*follow-up*) condition ($M = 3.09$, $SD = 1.42$), $t(267) = 2.62$, $p < .01$, $\eta^2 = .03$. Concealment was significantly lower the *Honest Disclosure* condition ($M = 1.98$, $SD = 1.41$) than in *Deflection* (*full-switch*) condition, $t(267) = 2.88$, $p < .01$, $\eta^2 = .03$, and the *Deflection* (*follow-up*) condition, $t(267) = 5.59$, $p < .001$, $\eta^2 = .10$.

Want as a colleague. We find that ratings of wanting Tom as a colleague in the *Deflection* (*follow-up*) condition ($M = 4.04$, $SD = 1.54$) were not significantly different than in the *Deflection* (*full-switch*) condition ($M = 3.64$, $SD = 1.55$), $t(267) = 1.70$, $p = .091$, $\eta^2 = .01$, and the *Honest Disclosure* condition ($M = 4.30$, $SD = 1.66$), $t(267) = 1.12$, $p = .265$, $\eta^2 = .00$. We find that participants were significantly less likely to report wanting Tom as a colleague in the *Deflection* (*full-switch*) condition than in the *Honest Disclosure* condition, $t(267) = 2.80$, $p < .01$, $\eta^2 = .03$.

Attempted to change topic. We find that ratings of agreement that Tom attempted to change the topic of conversation

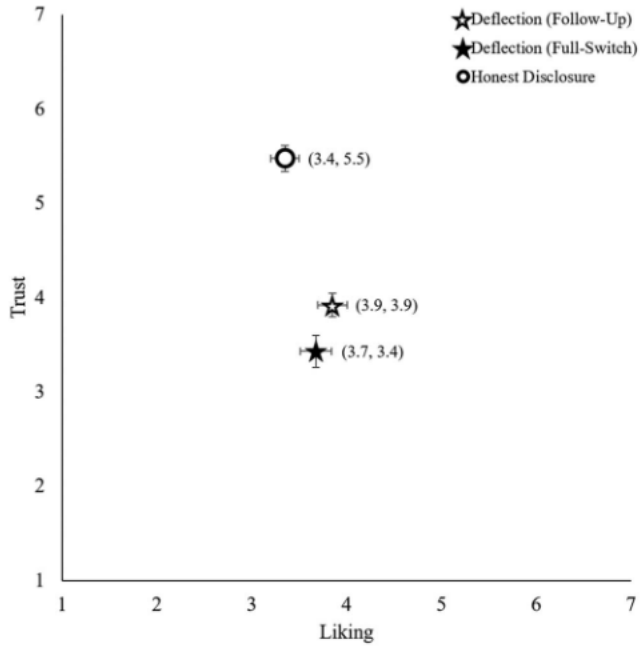

Figure 11. Results for Study 4c. Participants rated an individual who honestly disclosed as the most trustworthy but an individual who deflected using a follow-up question as the most likable.

were significantly different across conditions. Perceptions that Tom attempted to change the topic were significantly higher in the *Deflection* (*full-switch*) condition ($M = 5.55$, $SD = 1.69$) than in the *Deflection* (*follow-up*) condition ($M = 3.45$, $SD = 1.74$), $t(267) = 9.00$, $p < .001$, $\eta^2 = .23$. Perceptions that Tom attempted to change the topic of conversation were significantly lower in the *Honest Disclosure* condition ($M = 1.67$, $SD = 1.19$) than in the *Deflection* (*follow-up*) condition, $t(267) = 7.72$, $p < .001$, $\eta^2 = .18$, and the *Deflection* (*full-switch*) condition, $t(267) = 16.60$, $p < .001$, $\eta^2 = .51$.

Summary. In Study 4c, consistent with Study 4b, we find that honest disclosure led to the highest ratings of trust, but that deflection that used a follow-up question led to the highest ratings of liking. We also find that participants were less likely to want an individual who deflected with a full-switch question as a colleague than an individual who gave an honest disclosure.

Again, we find a moderating effect of the content of the disclosure, with deflection that uses a follow-up question leading to higher ratings of trust and directionally higher ratings of liking than deflection that uses a full-switch question. Individuals who deflected using a follow-up question were also seen as concealing information more effectively and being less apparent in their attempt to change the topic of conversation than individuals who deflected using a full-switch question.

Discussion

In Studies 4a, 4b, and 4c we compare deflection to honest disclosure. In Study 4a, we find that the use of deflection to conceal, rather than reveal, untrustworthy behavior can lead to greater trust and liking than honest disclosure. In Studies 4b and 4c, we find that when a deflection is prosocial and on-topic, it can lead to greater liking than honest disclosure. But we find a moderating effect of the content of the deflection. Deflection that attempted to change the topic of conversation was less effective at increasing liking than deflection that included a follow-up question that was on-topic.

General Discussion

In this work, we explore deflection as a method of responding to direct questions. We find that by responding to a question with a question, individuals can maintain favorable interpersonal impressions, capture economic surplus by avoiding revealing potentially costly economic information, and avoid the risks inherent in using deception. In our Pilot Study, we find that deflection is a common behavior in strategic disclosure interactions. In Studies 1a and 1b, we examine the effects of deflection in a negotiation simulation and a negotiation scenario. We find that individuals who deflected captured more economic surplus than individuals who honestly disclosed information. We find that deflection imposes less interpersonal costs than declining to respond, and less economic costs than honest disclosure. In Study 1b, we also contrasted the response conditions with a control condition in which we ended the scenario after the direct question was asked. Although this control condition is not a viable option in most actual interactions (we rarely end an interaction immediately after someone asks a direct question), it confirms that deflection enables individuals to preserve economic surplus while mitigating the interpersonal harm caused by explicitly declining to respond.

In Studies 2a, 2b, and 3, we contrast the interpersonal and economic outcomes of deflection with deception. In Studies 2a and 2b, we contrast deflection with a lie of commission and paltering. We find that deflection carries greater interpersonal and economic costs than deception initially, but that once the truth is revealed, individuals view the person who deflected as more trustworthy and more likable and are more willing to negotiate with the deflector again than they are with the counterpart who lied by commission or paltered. In Study 3, we contrast deflection with paltering, dodging, lying by commission, declining to respond, and honest disclosure. We find that once deception is discovered, individuals viewed the person who deflected as more trustworthy and likable than the person who paltered, dodged, or lied by commission.

In Study 3, we also examined inferred motives. We find that the inferred motive of seeking information is higher after deflection than after other responses strategies, which has beneficial effects on trust, liking, and the willingness to negotiate with the buyer again. We also find that, with the exception of honest disclosure and undiscovered lying by commission, the inferred motive of hiding information is lower after deflection than after other responses strategies, which elevates trust, liking, and the willingness to negotiate with the buyer again.

In Study 4, we examine situations in which deflection can lead to greater liking than honest disclosure. In Study 4a, we examine disclosures that get at the heart of trustworthiness by using an adaptation of the trust game and providing participants with partners' responses to a question about their previous behavior in the trust game. We find that deflection can lead to greater liking and greater economic outcomes in situations where honest disclosure would involve revealing unflattering information about one's prior acts of untrustworthy behavior. In Studies 4b and 4c, we explore how the type of question used moderates the effects of deflection. We find that deflections that use follow-up questions are more effective at increasing liking than deflections that switch topics.

Theoretical Implications

Our investigation makes several important theoretical contributions. First, our work advances our understanding of strategic disclosure interactions, such as negotiations and interviews. We enumerate and describe the alternatives individuals face when they are asked to reveal sensitive information. Our work develops a theoretical framework to contrast these alternatives and identifies the economic and interpersonal consequences of different responses. We also consider the risks associated with misleading a counterpart who later learns the truth. In developing this framework, we consider how conversational partners and observers infer a speaker's motives. We focus on the inferred motives of seeking and hiding information and show that the inferred motive of seeking information boosts trust and liking, whereas the inferred motive of hiding information harms trust and liking. Interestingly, even though deflection violates conversational norms and fails to answer the initial question, it offers substantial relational benefits because it boosts the in-

ferred motive of seeking information and, compared with other evasive response strategies, does not elevate the inferred motive of hiding information.

Second, our work advances our understanding of questions and conversational norms. A substantial literature has explored the role of questions in both soliciting and conveying information. We add to this literature by identifying a very different function of questions—avoiding a direct question. That is, our work broadens our conceptualization of the functional use of questions.

Third, our findings also contribute to our understanding of trust. Though prior work has focused on individual traits, such as trustworthiness (Colquitt, Scott, & LePine, 2007; Levine et al., 2018) and perceptions of a counterpart's ability, benevolence, and integrity (Dunn, Ruedy, & Schweitzer, 2012; Mayer, Davis, & Schoorman, 1995; Levine & Schweitzer, 2014, 2015; Schoorman, Mayer, & Davis, 2007), our findings extend our understanding of the antecedents of trust to inferred conversational motives. We postulate that different response strategies influence inferred motives that ultimately shape perceptions of benevolence and integrity. These findings highlight a number of promising directions for future research.

Prescriptive Advice

Our findings identify deflection as an effective strategy for responding to direct, difficult questions. In our studies, we find that deflection effectively concealed costly information and preserved interpersonal perceptions of trust and liking. In Studies 1a and 1b, participants consistently perceived the negotiator who deflected to be less likely to have the other paintings in the collection than those who declined to answer the question. Across multiple settings, we find that individuals who deflect are viewed as more likable and trustworthy than individuals who explicitly decline to answer a question.

Although deflection may be effective in contending with direct questions, negotiators and prospective interviewees may need to practice their use of deflection. Conversational norms guide individuals to answer direct questions. It may require effort and practice to both violate and invoke this conversational norm by deflecting a difficult question.

Our findings also inform a number of prescriptions for those asking direct questions. Interviewers, negotiators, and debate moderators should anticipate and guard against deflection. If individuals need answers to critical questions, they should recognize when a question response fails to answer a direct question and persist in their pursuit of information. In addition, question askers should recognize that deflections can convey information; specifically, someone who deflects may reveal that they would prefer to avoid discussing the topic and would prefer to shift the conversation away from that topic by shifting the onus of conversation to their conversation partner or another individual.

Future Directions

Our findings suggest a number of promising directions for additional work. We call for future work to explore how expertise and the repeated use of deflection influences its success. For example, the effectiveness of deflection in interpersonal interactions is likely to be moderated by how practiced an individual is in using deflection, whether or not a conversational partner anticipates deflection, and whether or not a conversational partner or observer is made explicitly aware of the use of deflection.

Future work should also explore whether deflection is more successful at redirecting the conversation if the deflection question triggers a counterpart's egocentrism. Deflection may trigger egocentrism by asking a counterpart to discuss something high in self-relevance (Brooks, Gino, & Schweitzer, 2015; Huang et al., 2017). For example, if a women is asked during an interview, "When do you plan on having kids?" a deflection that triggers the question asker's egocentrism (e.g., "Do you have any children?") may be particularly effective in absorbing the counterpart's attention.

The success of deflection (and other response strategies) is also likely to be influenced by contextual factors, such as how and where responses are delivered. For example, by coupling deflection with humor (Bitterly, Brooks, & Schweitzer, 2017; Bitterly & Schweitzer, 2019), an individual may be particularly effective in shifting the topic of the conversation and boosting perceptions of their warmth and competence. Deflection may also be more successful in novel settings with strangers, such as interviews and dates, and in contexts in which conversational partners may be cognitively loaded or easily distracted. For example, anxious individuals (Brooks, 2014; Brooks et al., 2016; Brooks & Schweitzer, 2011; Gino et al., 2012) or individuals consuming alcohol (Rick & Schweitzer, 2013; Schweitzer & Gomberg, 2001; Schweitzer & Kerr, 2000) may be especially susceptible to deflection. Similarly, cultural differences that influence expectations regarding the exchange of information and adherence to conversational norms may significantly influence perceptions of deflection (Gelfand, Nishii, & Raver, 2006; Uskul & Over, 2018).

Finally, we call for future work to explore how conversational partners might glean information from deflection. When individuals avoid answering a question by deflection, they might reveal that they both anticipated the question and are keen to avoid discussing the topic. In a related vein, future work could examine the extent to which deflection and other response strategies raise suspicion. In our studies, we assess the costs and benefits of each response strategy both before and after the target learned the truth. By independently manipulating whether or not deception was detected, we exerted high experimental control. In practice, however, the likelihood that deception is detected may depend upon the response strategy itself. That is, different response strategies may trigger greater suspicion than others.

Conclusion

In our social and professional lives, information exchange is crucial and direct questions represent one of the best avenues for gathering information. In many settings, however, individuals are reticent to reveal private information. When asked direct questions, individuals can honestly disclose information, decline to answer the question, lie, dodge, or palter. In this work, we consider another response option: deflection, answering a direct question with another question. We find that deflection can be a highly

effective strategy for redirecting a conversation. Sometimes, the best way to respond to a question may be to pose a new one.

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Appendix A

Responses Used in Studies

In each of our studies, we manipulated how an individual responded to a direct question during a strategic disclosure interaction.

Study 1a

Question. "Do you own other pieces in the series?"

Decline to respond. "I'm not prepared to discuss my collection right now."

Honest disclosure. "I did purchase the other Hearts pieces in the collection."

Deflection. "How much do you want for this piece?"

Study 1b

Question. "Do you own other pieces in the bears series?"

Decline to respond. "I'm not prepared to discuss my collection right now."

Honest disclosure. "I did purchase a different Bears piece recently."

Deflection. "How long have you had the painting?"

Study 2a

Question. "Do you own other pieces in the series?"

Lie of commission. "I do not have any other pieces in the collection."

Palter. "I've been looking to buy one."

Deflection. "How much are you looking to get for the piece?"

Study 2b

Question. "Do you own any Bear pieces?"

Lie of commission. "No. I do not have any other Bear pieces"

Palter. "I've been looking to buy one"

Deflection. "Can you tell me more about this piece? What price are you asking for it?"

Study 3

Question. "Are you familiar with Jim Brine, the artist?"

Decline to respond. "I'm not prepared to discuss my collection right now."

Honest disclosure. "I actually bought 'Polar Bears' a couple years ago at an auction."

Lie of commission. "I've never heard of Brine, I just think this piece could look good next to the fireplace."

Palter. "I'm not a professional collector or anything like that."

Dodge. "I'm in town for a couple of days and I noticed some other paintings at other galleries that I also liked."

Deflection. "Didn't he pass away recently?"

Study 4a

Question. "If you have previously played this game, what did you do?"

Honest disclosure. "When my partner passed, I chose keep the tickets. (sic)"

Decline to respond. "I don't want to answer that question."

Deflection. "Does this mean my partner decided to keep the tickets?"

(*Appendices continue*)

Study 4b

Question. "How does my suit look?"
Honest disclosure. "The suit looks tight on you."
Deflection (full-switch). "Do you have all of your slides ready?"
Deflection (follow-up). "Where can I buy a suit like that?"

Study 4c

Question. "What did you think of the presentation?"
Honest disclosure. "I think it went very poorly."
Deflection (full-switch). "Do you have any vacation plans?"
Deflection (follow-up). "How do you think it went?"

Appendix B

Study 1a Materials

Seller Instructions in Study 1a and 2a

Seller Instructions

You have been assigned to the role of Seller for this negotiation. You have been paired with another participant, who will be in the role of Buyer.

When you press next, you will review the instructions for the Seller role. Please read the instructions carefully. After you read the instructions, you will be asked to take a comprehension check before proceeding to the negotiation.

(*Appendices continue*)

Seller Instructions

Please imagine the following scenario:

You own a small art gallery in New York. Yesterday, you met a potential customer. This one spent a fair amount of time staring at Jim Brine's "Hearts in the Spring," 1969. You would really like to sell that painting. Jim Brine was a pop artist (born in 1945) who produced a lot of work in the 1960's and 1970's. Jim Brine passed away 9 months ago.

You purchased the painting 9 months ago for $7,000. This particular painting was produced by Jim Brine as part of a set along with: "Hearts in the Winter," "Hearts in the Fall," and "Hearts in the Summer." When you bought the "Hearts in the Spring," 1969 piece you were really hoping to find someone nostalgic for the 1960's who would want this painting.

In terms of comparables for Jim Brine's "Hearts in Spring," 1969, there are a few out there. Another Jim Brine painting (of Hearts he painted in 1972) sold two years ago for $12,000, but around the same time, one of the Hearts paintings ("Hearts in Summer" 1969) sold for $7,000 at an auction house. Typically, art prices increase after the artist has died, especially for buyers who want to own all pieces in a series.

Your guess is that the value of this painting could fall anywhere between $7,000 and $14,000. Of course, the more you can sell it for, the better. There are two main pieces of information that will influence the offer that you make to a buyer:

1. Whether or not the buyer is an art dealer or a personal collector? If the buyer is an art dealer, they will likely have more information and know about the artist and prior sales prices.

2. Whether or not the buyer has other pieces in the Hearts collection. If a buyer does not have other pieces in Jim Brine's Hearts collection, you expect them to be willing to pay closer to $7,000. If a buyer does have other pieces in Jim Brine's Hearts collection, you expect them to be willing to pay closer to $14,000.

Just now, the buyer from yesterday returned to your store. You sure hope to sell the Jim Brine painting!

(*Appendices continue*)

Instructions

There are two key pieces you need to learn in this negotiation before you make an offer to the buyer:

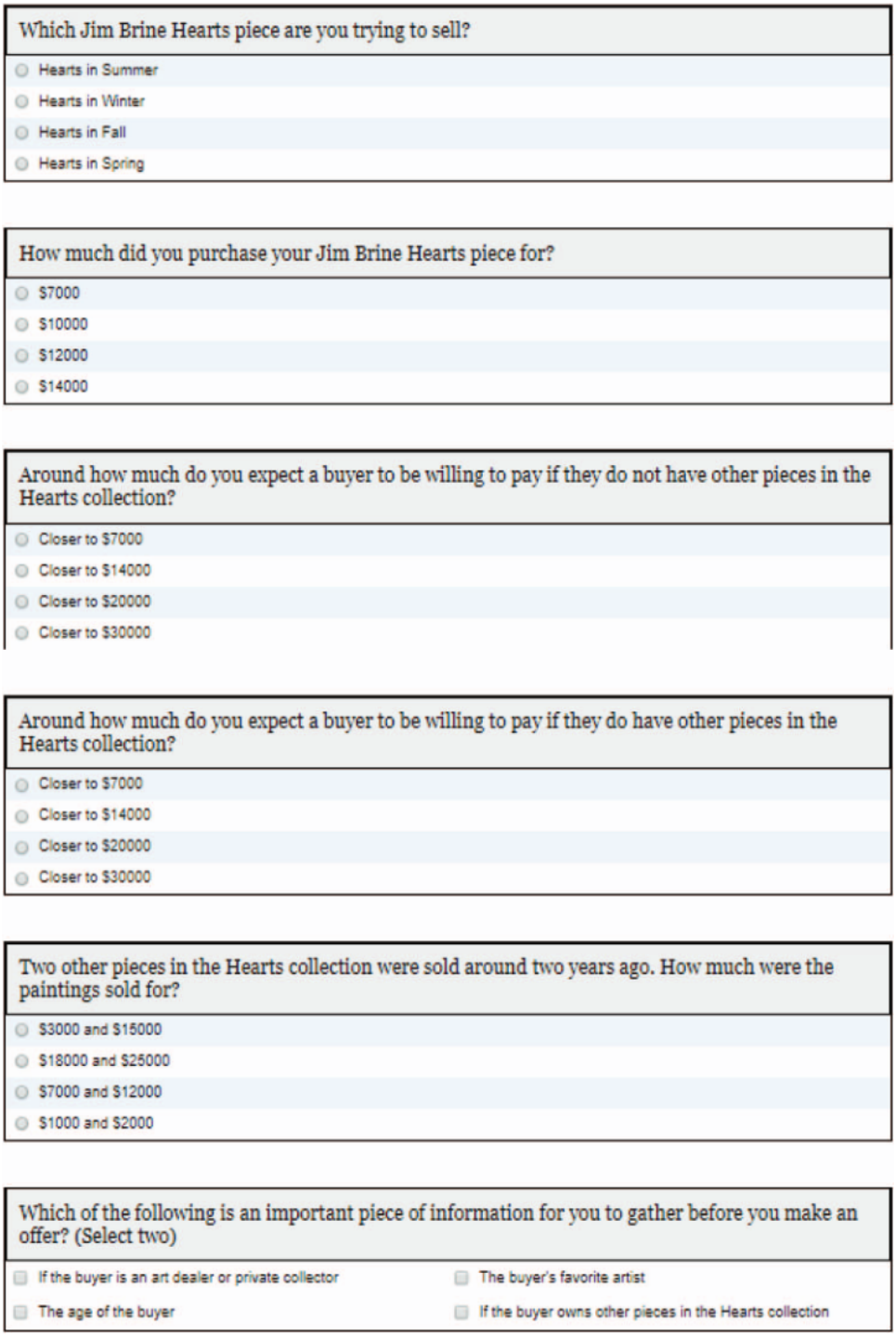
1. Is the buyer an art dealer or a personal collector? If they are a dealer, they will likely have more information and know about the artist and prior sales prices.

2. Does the buyer own other pieces in the Hearts collection? If they do own other pieces, the sales price should be close to $14,000.

If you reach an agreement with your partner, you will receive 1 lottery ticket for each $1,000 above $7,000 you receive for the painting. Each ticket is for a chance to win $50. For example, if you and your partner agree to a sales price of $10,000, you will receive 3 lottery tickets ($10,000-$7,000 = $3,000). If you and your partner do not reach an agreement, you will not receive any lottery tickets.

(*Appendices continue*)

Comprehension Check in Study 1a



(*Appendices continue*)

Confederate Script in Study 1a

Introduction

< Hello! Are you a robot? >

If they ask why you asked if they are a robot.

< Just wanted to check. I'm interested in buying the Hearts painting. Can you tell me more about it? >

If they do not ask why you asked, but do not ask you a question.

< I'm interested in buying the Hearts painting. Can you tell me more about it? >

After they ask if you are an art dealer or private collector.

< I'm a private collector. Have you had the piece for a while? >

After they ask if you have other pieces in Jim Brine's Hearts collection.

Deflection: < How much do you want for this piece? >

Disclosure: < I did purchase the other Hearts pieces in the collection. >

Decline to Respond: < I'm not prepared to discuss my collection right now. >

If the P asks again if you have another piece in Jim Brine's Hearts collection.

Deflection: < What's your starting offer? >

Disclosure: < As I said, I purchased the other pieces in the collection. >

Decline to Respond: < As I said, I do not want to discuss my collection. >

If the P asks again if you have another piece in Jim Brine's Hearts collection.

Deflection: < I did purchase the other pieces in the collection. >

Disclosure: < Again, I purchased the other pieces in the collection. >

Decline to Respond: < Again, I do not want to discuss my collection. >

After they make their offer.

< I'm afraid that is more than I expected to pay. Could you do (Initial offer) - $1,000? >

Accept their next offer.

< I would really like to make a deal, so I'll accept (their last offer). >

If they accept your offer.

< We have a deal. >

If they give an offer outside of the range.

< I'm afraid that is more than I expected to pay. Could you do $13,000? >

Appendix C

Study 1a Supplemental Analyses

Study 1a Results Including Participants Who Did Not Make Any Offers

A total of 309 participants have been included in our analysis reported below (33% men, M_{age} = 22.35 years, SD = 6.55). For each of our dependent variables, we conducted ordinary least squares regression analysis. We summarize these results in Table C1 and depict the main results in Figure C1.

Surplus. If we treat the economic surplus of individuals who did not make any offers as 0, economic surplus was lower in *Honest Disclosure* condition (M = 1.06, SD = 1.89) than in the *Deflection* (M = 1.81, SD = 3.39), $t(306) = 2.03$, $p = .043$, $\eta^2 = .01$, and the *Decline to Respond* conditions (M = 1.97, SD = 2.46), $t(306) = 2.42$, $p = .016$, $\eta^2 = .02$. Participants made lower offers in the *Deflection* and *Decline to Respond* conditions than in the *Honest Disclosure* condition. Offers were not significantly different between the *Deflection* and the *Decline to Respond* conditions, $t(306) = 0.42$, $p = .675$, $\eta^2 = .00$.

If we treat the economic surplus of individuals who did not make any offers as blank, economic surplus was lower in *Honest Disclosure* condition (M = 1.24, SD = 1.99) than in the *Deflection* (M = 2.00, SD = 3.51), $t(267) = 1.86$, $p = .064$, $\eta^2 = .01$, and the *Decline to Respond* conditions (M = 2.29, SD = 2.51), $t(267) = 2.50$, $p = .013$, $\eta^2 = .02$. Offers were not significantly different between the *Deflection* and the *Decline to Respond* conditions, $t(267) = 0.70$, $p = .483$, $\eta^2 = .00$.

(*Appendices continue*)

Table C1
Summary of Results for Study 1a Including Participants Who Did Not Make Any Offers

Variable	F	η^2	Decline to respond M (SD)	Honest disclosure M (SD)	Deflection M (SD)
Surplus (in $1,000s), surplus for no offers coded as 0	$F(2, 306) = 3.39^{*}$	.02	1.97_{a} (2.46)	1.06_{b} (1.89)	1.81_{a} (3.39)
Surplus (in $1,000s), surplus for no offers coded as blank	$F(2, 267) = 3.38^{*}$	.02	2.29_{a} (2.51)	1.24_{b} (1.99)	2.00_{ab} (3.51)
Concealment	$F(2, 306) = 11.73^{***}$	.07	3.01_{a} (1.59)	2.22_{b} (1.52)	3.21_{a} (1.59)
Trust	$F(2, 306) = 30.06^{***}$	.16	4.07_{a} (1.62)	5.54_{b} (1.10)	4.85_{c} (1.32)
Liking	$F(2, 306) = 20.38^{***}$	.12	4.49_{a} (1.55)	5.64_{b} (1.03)	4.98_{c} (1.26)
Asked about collection	$F(2, 306) = 2.80^{+}$	.02	$.96_{ab}$ (0.68)	$.83_{a}$ (0.47)	1.07_{b} (0.95)

Note. Means in each row with different subscripts are significantly different at the $p < .05$ level.
$^{+}$ $p < .10$. * $p < .05$. *** $p < .001$.

Trust. Trust was significantly different across all conditions. Trust was significantly lower in the *Decline to Respond* condition ($M = 4.07$, $SD = 1.62$) than in the *Deflection* condition ($M = 4.85$, $SD = 1.32$), $t(306) = 4.13$, $p < .001$, $\eta^2 = .05$, and the *Honest Disclosure* condition ($M = 5.54$, $SD = 1.10$), $t(306) = 7.75$, $p < .001$, $\eta^2 = .16$. Trust was significantly different in the *Deflection* and the *Honest Disclosure* conditions, $t(306) = 3.67$, $p < .001$, $\eta^2 = .04$.

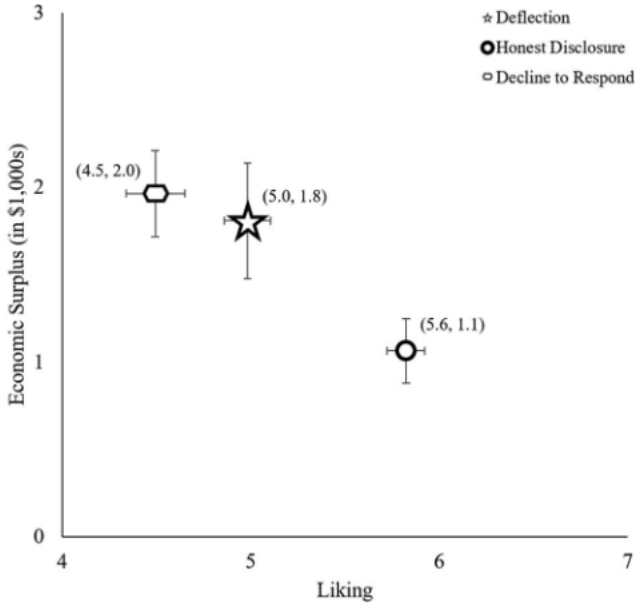


Figure C1. Results for Study 1a including participants who did not make any offers. Results presented for analyses treating surplus for no offers as 0. Buyers who deflected the question about their collection received greater economic surplus than buyers who honestly disclosed the information about their collection. Buyers who deflected were also better liked than buyers who declined to disclose information about their collection.

Liking. Liking was significantly different across all conditions. Liking was significantly lower in the *Decline to Respond* condition ($M = 4.49$, $SD = 1.55$) than in the *Deflection* condition ($M = 4.98$, $SD = 1.26$), $t(306) = 2.70$, $p < .01$, $\eta^2 = .02$, and the *Honest Disclosure* condition ($M = 5.64$, $SD = 1.03$), $t(306) = 6.35$, $p < .001$, $\eta^2 = .12$. Liking was significantly different in the *Deflection* and the *Honest Disclosure* conditions, $t(306) = 3.70$, $p < .001$, $\eta^2 = .04$.

Concealment. Differences in perceived likelihood that the buyer has other pieces were significantly different across all conditions. Concealment was significantly higher in the *Deflection* condition ($M = 3.21$, $SD = 1.59$) than in the *Honest Disclosure* condition ($M = 2.22$, $SD = 1.52$), $t(306) = 4.59$, $p < .001$, $\eta^2 = .06$, and directionally higher than in the *Decline to Respond* ($M = 3.01$, $SD = 1.59$), $t(306) = 0.91$, $p = .363$, $\eta^2 = .00$. Concealment was significantly different in the *Honest Disclosure* and the *Decline to Respond* conditions, $t(306) = 3.61$, $p < .001$, $\eta^2 = .04$.

Asked about collection. The average number of times that a participant asked whether the buyer had other pieces in the collection was significantly lower in the *Honest Disclosure* condition ($M = 0.83$, $SD = 0.47$) than in the *Deflection* condition ($M = 1.07$, $SD = 0.95$), $t(306) = 2.36$, $p = .019$, $\eta^2 = .02$. The average number of times that a participant asked whether the buyer had other pieces in the collection was not significantly different between the *Decline to Respond* condition ($M = 0.96$, $SD = 0.68$) and the *Deflection* condition, $t(306) = 1.05$, $p = .296$, $\eta^2 = .00$, and the *Honest Disclosure* condition, $t(306) = 1.28$, $p = .201$, $\eta^2 = .01$.

(*Appendices continue*)

Moderation. We also examined whether the counterpart answered the deflection question or not moderates the effects of deflection. For each of our dependent variables, we contrast the *Deflection* condition to the *Decline to Respond* and *Honest Disclosure* conditions by conducting ordinary least squares regression analysis with *Deflection* (1 = *Deflection*, −.5 = *Decline to Respond*, −.5 = *Honest Disclosure*) and whether or not the participant answered the deflection question (1 = *answered deflection question*, −1 = *did not answer deflection question*, 0 = *was not asked deflection question*) as our independent variables, controlling for the other conditions (1 = *Honest Disclosure*, 0 = *Deflection*, −1 = *Decline to Respond*).

Surplus. If we treat the economic surplus of individuals who did not make any offers as 0, we do not find that whether or not the participant answered the deflection question moderates the effect of deflection on surplus, $\beta = .42$, $p = .203$, $\eta^2 = .01$. If we treat the economic surplus of individuals who did not make any offers as blank, we do not find that whether or not the participant answered the deflection question moderates the effect of deflection on surplus, $\beta = .26$, $p = .469$, $\eta^2 = .00$.

Trust. We find that whether or not the participant answered the deflection question moderates the effect of deflection on trust, $\beta = .50$, $p < .01$, $\eta^2 = .03$. Trust is higher when the individual answered the deflection question than when they did not.

Liking. We find that whether or not the participant answered the deflection question moderates the effect of deflection on liking, $\beta = .51$, $p < .01$, $\eta^2 = .03$. As with trust, liking is higher when the individual answered the deflection question than when they did not.

Concealment. We do not find that whether or not the participant answered the deflection question moderates the effect of deflection on concealment, $\beta = -.13$, $p = .497$, $\eta^2 = .00$.

Asked about collection. We find that whether or not the participant answered the deflection question moderates the effect of deflection on the number of times that the participant asked about the collection, $\beta = -.21$, $p = .019$, $\eta^2 = .02$. That is, participants who answered the deflection question were significantly less likely to follow-up later to ask again about the collection.

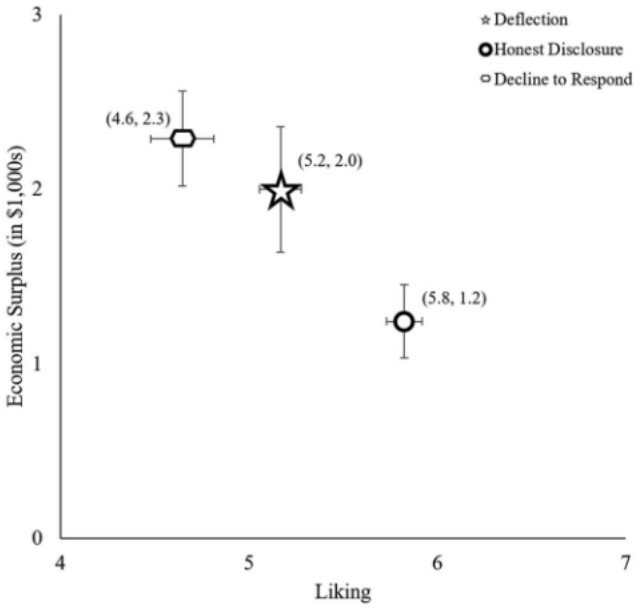


Figure C2. Intention to treat results for Study 1a. Buyers who deflected the question about their collection received greater economic surplus than buyers who honestly disclosed the information about their collection. Buyers who deflected were also better liked than buyers who declined to disclose information about their collection.

Study 1a Intention to Treat Results

A total of 270 participants completed the study and have been included in our analysis reported below (30% men, $M_{age} = 22.47$ years, $SD = 6.91$). For each of our dependent variables, we conducted ordinary least squares regression analysis. We summarized these results in Table C2 and depict the main results in Figure C2.

Table C2
Summary of Intention to Treat Results for Study 1a

Variable	*F*	η^2	Decline to respond *M* (*SD*)	Honest disclosure *M* (*SD*)	Deflection *M* (*SD*)
Surplus (in $1,000s)	$F(2, 267) = 3.38^{*}$	.02	2.29_{a} (2.51)	1.24_{b} (1.99)	2.00_{ab} (3.51)
Concealment	$F(2, 267) = 14.64^{***}$	.10	2.75_{a} (1.50)	1.99_{b} (1.33)	3.15_{a} (1.58)
Trust	$F(2, 267) = 28.86^{***}$	.18	4.20_{a} (1.61)	5.69_{b} (1.03)	5.01_{c} (1.20)
Liking	$F(2, 267) = 20.78^{***}$	.13	4.65_{a} (1.54)	5.81_{b} (0.90)	5.17_{c} (1.08)
Asked about collection	$F(2, 267) = 1.98$	.01	1.02_{ab} (0.67)	0.91_{a} (0.41)	1.12_{b} (0.91)

Note. Means in each row with different subscripts are significantly different at the $p < .05$ level.
* $p < .05$. *** $p < .001$.

(*Appendices continue*)

Surplus. Economic surplus was lower in *Honest Disclosure* condition ($M = 1.24$, $SD = 1.99$) than in the *Deflection* ($M = 2.00$, $SD = 3.51$), $t(267) = 1.86$, $p = .064$, $\eta^2 = .01$, and the *Decline to Respond* conditions ($M = 2.29$, $SD = 2.51$), $t(267) = 2.50$, $p = .013$, $\eta^2 = .02$. Participants made lower offers in the *Deflection* and *Decline to Respond* conditions than in the *Honest Disclosure* condition. Offers were not significantly different between the *Deflection* and the *Decline to Respond* conditions, $t(267) = 0.70$, $p = .483$, $\eta^2 = .00$.

Trust. Trust was significantly different across all conditions. Trust was significantly lower in the *Decline to Respond* condition ($M = 4.20$, $SD = 1.61$) than in the *Deflection* condition ($M = 5.01$, $SD = 1.20$), $t(267) = 4.21$, $p < .001$, $\eta^2 = .06$, and the *Honest Disclosure* condition ($M = 5.69$, $SD = 1.03$), $t(267) = 7.59$, $p < .001$, $\eta^2 = .18$. Trust was significantly different in the *Deflection* and the *Honest Disclosure* conditions, $t(267) = 3.54$, $p < .001$, $\eta^2 = .04$.

Liking. Liking was significantly different across all conditions. Liking was significantly lower in the *Decline to Respond* condition ($M = 4.65$, $SD = 1.54$) than in the *Deflection* condition ($M = 5.17$, $SD = 1.08$), $t(267) = 2.92$, $p < .001$, $\eta^2 = .03$, and the *Honest Disclosure* condition ($M = 5.81$, $SD = .90$), $t(267) = 6.43$, $p < .001$, $\eta^2 = .13$. Liking was significantly different in the *Deflection* and the *Honest Disclosure* conditions, $t(267) = 3.65$, $p < .001$, $\eta^2 = .05$.

Concealment. Differences in perceived likelihood that the buyer has other pieces were significantly different across all conditions. Concealment was significantly higher in the *Deflection* condition ($M = 3.15$, $SD = 1.58$) than in the *Honest Disclosure* condition ($M = 1.99$, $SD = 1.33$), $t(267) = 5.34$, $p < .001$, $\eta^2 = .10$, and marginally higher than in the *Decline to Respond* ($M = 2.75$, $SD = 1.50$), $t(267) = 1.79$, $p = .074$, $\eta^2 = .01$. Concealment was significantly different in the *Honest Disclosure* and the *Decline to Respond* conditions, $t(267) = 3.43$, $p < .001$, $\eta^2 = .04$.

Asked about collection. The average number of times that a participant asked whether the buyer had other pieces in the collection was significantly lower in the *Honest Disclosure* condition ($M = 0.91$, $SD = 0.41$) than in the *Deflection* condition ($M = 1.12$, $SD = 0.91$), $t(267) = 1.99$, $p = .048$, $\eta^2 = .01$. The average number of times that a participant asked whether the buyer had other pieces in the collection was not significantly different between the *Decline to Respond* condition ($M = 1.02$, $SD = 0.67$) and the *Deflection* condition, $t(267) = 0.88$, $p = .378$, $\eta^2 = .00$, and the *Honest Disclosure* condition, $t(267) = 1.06$, $p = .290$, $\eta^2 = .00$.

Moderation. We also examined whether the counterpart answered the deflection question or not moderates the effects of deflection. For each of our dependent variables, we contrast the *Deflection* condition to the *Decline to Respond* and *Honest Disclosure* conditions by conducting ordinary least squares regression analysis with *Deflection* (1 = *Deflection*, −.5 = *Decline to Respond*, −.5 = *Honest Disclosure*) and whether or not the participant answered the deflection question (1 = *answered deflection question*, −1 = *did not answer deflection question*, 0 = *was not asked deflection question*) as our independent variables, controlling for the other conditions (1 = *Honest Disclosure*, 0 = *Deflection*, −1 = *Decline to Respond*).

Surplus. We do not find that whether or not the participant answered the deflection question moderates the effect of deflection on surplus, $\beta = .26$, $p = .469$, $\eta^2 = .00$.

Trust. We find that whether or not the participant answered the deflection question moderates the effect of deflection on trust, $\beta = .35$, $p = .035$, $\eta^2 = .02$. Trust is higher when the individual answered the deflection question than when they did not.

Liking. We find that whether or not the participant answered the deflection question moderates the effect of deflection on liking, $\beta = .31$, $p = .046$, $\eta^2 = .01$. As with trust, liking is higher when the individual answered the deflection question than when they did not.

Concealment. We do not find that whether or not the participant answered the deflection question moderates the effect of deflection on concealment, $\beta = -.04$, $p = .838$, $\eta^2 = .00$.

Asked about collection. We find that whether or not the participant answered the deflection question moderates the effect of deflection on the number of times that the participant asked about the collection, $\beta = -.20$, $p = .026$, $\eta^2 = .02$. That is, participants who answered the deflection question were significantly less likely to follow-up later to ask again about the collection.

(*Appendices continue*)

Appendix D

Study 1b Materials

Seller Instructions in Study 1b

Seller Instructions

You own a small art gallery in New York. Yesterday, you met a potential customer. This one spent a fair amount of time staring at Jim Brine's "Panda Bears," 1969. You would really like to sell that painting. Jim Brine was a pop artist (born in 1945) who produced a lot of work in the 1960's and 1970's. Jim Brine passed away 9 months ago.

You purchased the painting 9 months ago for $7,000. This particular painting was produced by Jim Brine as part of a set along with: "Polar Bears," "Brown Bears," and "Black Bears."

In terms of comparables for Jim Brine's "Panda Bears," 1969, there are a few out there. Another Jim Brine Bears painting sold two years ago for $12,000, but around the same time, one of the Bears paintings ("Polar Bears" 1969) sold for $7,000 at an auction house. Typically, art prices increase after the artist has died, especially for buyers who want to own all pieces in a series.

Your guess is that the value of this painting could fall anywhere between $7,000 and $14,000. The more you can sell it for, the better, but setting the price too high could cause a buyer to walk away. There is one main piece of information that will influence the offer that you make to a buyer:

Whether or not the buyer has other pieces in the Bears collection.

- If a buyer *does* ***not*** have other pieces in Jim Brine's Bears collection:
  - You expect them to be willing to pay a lower amount (like $7,000).
  - Asking a very high price (like $14,000) could cause the buyer to walk away without making a deal.
- If a buyer ***does*** have other pieces in Jim Brine's Bears collection:
  - You expect them to be willing to pay a higher amount (like $14,000).
  - Asking a very low price (like $7,000) could hurt your profit.

Just now, the buyer from yesterday returned to your store. You sure hope to sell the Jim Brine painting!

(*Appendices continue*)

Comprehension Check for Study 1b

Which Jim Brine Bears piece are you trying to sell?

- Brown Bears
- Polar Bears
- Panda Bears
- Black Bears

How much did you purchase your Jim Brine Bears piece for?

- $7000
- $10000
- $12000
- $14000

Around how much do you expect a buyer to be willing to pay if they do not have other pieces in the Bears collection?

- Closer to $7000
- Closer to $14000
- Closer to $20000
- Closer to $30000

Around how much do you expect a buyer to be willing to pay if they do have other pieces in the Bears collection?

- Closer to $7000
- Closer to $14000
- Closer to $20000
- Closer to $30000

Two other pieces in the Bears collection were sold around two years ago. How much were the paintings sold for?

- $3000 and $15000
- $18000 and $25000
- $7000 and $12000
- $1000 and $2000

Which of the following is the most important piece of information for you to gather to make an offer?

- If the buyer is an art dealer or private collector
- The age of the buyer
- The buyer's favorite artist
- If the buyer owns other pieces in the Bears collection

(*Appendices continue*)

Example Transcript From Study 1b

· **buyer**
"Hello - interested in the Bears piece that i saw in the shop today. Today's my last day in NYC on holiday, and I'm considering making a purchase to bring home with me."

· **seller**
"Great to see you, this is definitely one of the best art pieces in my gallery"

· **buyer**
"Hmm... I found the piece hidden in the corner - were you planning to put it in a more prominent position later on?"

· **seller**
"Well, I just wanted to put it close to my office in the corner"

· **seller**
"So that I can see it easily"

· **buyer**
"Ah, understood"

· **seller**
"You know what? Unfortunately the Artist passed away a couple months ago. It's kind of sad. He's a great asset in the pop art industry"

· **seller**
"Do you own other pieces in the bears series?"

(*Appendices continue*)

Appendix E

Study 2a Materials

Comprehension Check Questions in Study 2a

Instructions

Please answer the following questions before proceeding with the study.

Which Jim Brine Hearts piece are you trying to sell?

- Hearts in Fall
- Hearts in Spring
- Hearts in Winter
- Hearts in Summer

How much did you purchase your Jim Brine Hearts piece for?

- $7000
- $10000
- $12000
- $14000

(*Appendices continue*)

Confederate Script in Study 2a

Introduction

< Where are you? >

If they ask why you asked.

< Just checking if you are real. Can you tell me more about the Hearts painting? >

If they do not ask why you asked, but do not ask you a question.

< Can you tell me more about the Hearts painting? >

If they ask why you are looking at the Hearts painting.

< I like it >

After they ask if you are an art dealer or private collector.

< Private. How long have you had the painting? >

After they ask if you have other pieces in Jim Brine's Hearts collection.

Deflection: < How much are you looking to get for the piece? >

Lie of Commission: < I do not have any other pieces in the collection. >

Palter: < I've been looking to buy one. >

If the P asks again if you have another piece in Jim Brine's Hearts collection.

Deflection: < What's your offer? >

Lie of Commission: < As I said, I do not have any other pieces in the collection. >

Palter: < As I said, I've been looking to buy one. >

If the P asks again if you have another piece in Jim Brine's Hearts collection.

Deflection: < I do not have any other pieces in the collection. >

Lie of Commission: < Again, I do not have any other pieces in the collection. >

Palter: < Again, I've been looking to buy one. >

After they make their offer.

< How about (Initial offer) - $1,000? >

After their counter or if they accept your offer.

< That works >

If they give an offer outside of the range.

< How about $13,000? >

If they make other comments or statements, respond with <Ok > or <Cool>

Appendix F

Study 2a Supplemental Analyses

Study 2a Results Including Participants Who Did Not Make Any Offers

A total of 264 people has been included in our analysis reported below (34% men, M_{age} = 20.63 years, SD = 3.37). For each of our dependent variables, we conducted ordinary least squares regression analysis. We summarized these results in Table F1 and depicted the main results in Figure F1.

Surplus. If we treat the economic surplus of individuals who did not make any offers as 0, economic surplus was not significantly different comparing the *Palter* condition (M = 1.90, SD = 2.11) to the *Lie of Commission* condition (M = 2.25, SD = 2.61), $t(261) = 1.10$, $p = .272$, $\eta^2 = .00$, and the *Deflection* condition (M = 1.60, SD = 1.53), $t(261) = 0.93$, $p = .352$, $\eta^2 = .00$. Economic surplus was significantly higher in the *Lie of Commission* condition than in the *Deflection* condition, $t(261) = 2.04$, $p = .042$, $\eta^2 = .02$.

If we treat the economic surplus of individuals who did not make any offers as blank, economic surplus was significantly higher in the *Lie of Commission* (M = 2.53, SD = 2.63) than in the *Deflection* condition (M = 1.80, SD = 1.51), $t(234) = 2.15$, $p = .033$, $\eta^2 = .02$. Economic surplus was not significantly different in the *Palter* condition (M = 2.06, SD = 2.12) than in the *Deflection* condition, $t(234) = 0.77$, $p = .443$, $\eta^2 = .00$, and the *Lie of Commission* condition, $t(234) = 1.39$, $p = .166$, $\eta^2 = .01$.

Trust. Initial ratings of trust were not significantly different between the *Deflection* condition (M = 4.35, SD = 1.46) and the *Palter* condition (M = 4.13, SD = 1.57), $t(261) = 1.05$, $p = .296$, $\eta^2 = .00$. Initial ratings of trust were significantly higher in the *Lie of Commission* condition (M = 4.88, SD = 1.24) than in the *Palter* condition, $t(261) = 3.49$, $p < .001$, $\eta^2 = .04$, and the *Deflection* condition, $t(261) = 2.44$, $p = .015$, $\eta^2 = .02$.

(*Appendices continue*)

Table F1
Summary of Results for Study 2a Including Participants Who Did Not Make Any Offers

Variable	F	η^2	Lie of commission M (SD)	Palter M (SD)	Deflection M (SD)
Initial ratings					
Surplus (in $1,000s), surplus for no offers coded as 0	$F(2, 261) = 2.09$	.02	2.25_{a} (2.61)	1.90_{ab} (2.11)	1.60_{b} (1.53)
Surplus (in $1,000s), surplus for no offers coded as blank	$F(2, 234) = 2.37^{+}$	.02	2.53_{a} (2.63)	2.06_{ab} (2.12)	1.80_{b} (1.51)
Concealment	$F(2, 261) = 14.32^{***}$	.10	5.07_{a} (1.78)	4.28_{b} (1.88)	3.64_{c} (1.69)
Trust	$F(2, 261) = 6.42^{**}$	.05	4.88_{a} (1.24)	4.13_{b} (1.57)	4.35_{b} (1.46)
Liking	$F(2, 261) = 5.57^{**}$	.04	4.97_{a} (1.23)	4.28_{b} (1.62)	4.36_{b} (1.58)
Final ratings					
Trust	$F(2, 261) = 16.59^{***}$	.11	2.24_{a} (1.36)	2.71_{b} (1.53)	3.55_{c} (1.67)
Liking	$F(2, 261) = 3.73^{*}$	.03	3.52_{a} (1.56)	3.51_{a} (1.72)	4.11_{b} (1.71)
Would negotiate w/ buyer again	$F(2, 261) = 6.91^{**}$	.05	3.49_{a} (1.82)	3.84_{a} (1.66)	4.45_{b} (1.73)
Asked about collection	$F(2, 261) = 7.00^{**}$	.05	0.75_{a} (0.48)	1.10_{b} (0.76)	0.81_{a} (0.72)

Note. Means in each row with different subscripts are significantly different at the $p < .05$ level.
$^{+}$ $p < .10$. * $p < .05$. ** $p < .01$. *** $p < .001$.

After participants learned that the buyer had the other pieces in the collection, ratings of trust were significantly higher in the *Deflection* condition ($M = 3.55$, $SD = 1.67$) than in the *Palter* condition ($M = 2.71$, $SD = 1.53$), $t(261) = 3.62$, $p < .001$, $\eta^2 = .05$, and the *Lie of Commission* condition ($M = 2.24$, $SD = 1.36$), $t(261) = 5.69$, $p < .001$, $\eta^2 = .11$. Final ratings of trust were significantly higher in the *Palter* condition and the *Lie of Commission* condition, $t(261) = 2.04$, $p = .043$, $\eta^2 = .02$.

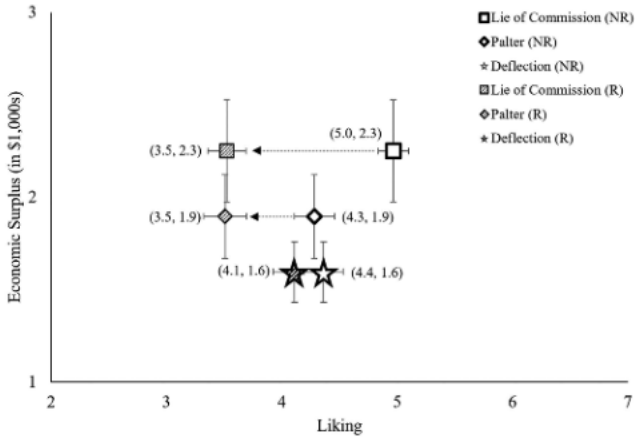


Figure F1. Results for Study 2a including participants who did not make any offers. Economic surplus and liking before (NR) and after (R) it was revealed that the buyer had other pieces in the collection. Results presented for analyses treating surplus for no offers as 0. If it is revealed that a counterpart did not honestly disclose information, the harm to liking is less severe after deflection than after a lie of commission or a palter.

Liking. Initial ratings of liking were not significantly different between the *Deflection* condition ($M = 4.36$, $SD = 1.58$) and the *Palter* condition ($M = 4.28$, $SD = 1.62$), $t(261) = 0.36$, $p = .722$, $\eta^2 = .00$. Initial ratings of liking were significantly higher in the *Lie of Commission* condition ($M = 4.97$, $SD = 1.23$) than in the *Palter* condition, $t(261) = 3.04$, $p < .01$, $\eta^2 = .03$, and the *Deflection* condition, $t(261) = 2.69$, $p < .01$, $\eta^2 = .03$.

After participants learned that the buyer had the other pieces in the collection, ratings of liking were significantly higher in the *Deflection* condition ($M = 4.11$, $SD = 1.71$) than in the *Palter* condition ($M = 3.51$, $SD = 1.72$), $t(261) = 2.39$, $p = .018$, $\eta^2 = .02$, and the *Lie of Commission* condition ($M = 3.52$, $SD = 1.56$), $t(261) = 2.34$, $p = .020$, $\eta^2 = .02$. Final ratings of liking were not significantly different between the *Palter* condition and the *Lie of Commission* condition, $t(261) = 0.06$, $p = .953$, $\eta^2 = .00$.

Concealment. Concealment was significantly lower in the *Deflection* condition ($M = 3.64$, $SD = 1.69$) than in the *Palter* condition ($M = 4.28$, $SD = 1.88$), $t(261) = 2.37$, $p = .018$, $\eta^2 = .02$, and the *Lie of Commission* condition ($M = 5.07$, $SD = 1.78$), $t(261) = 5.34$, $p < .001$, $\eta^2 = .10$. Concealment was significantly lower in the *Palter* condition than in the *Lie of Commission* condition, $t(261) = 2.95$, $p < .01$, $\eta^2 = .03$.

Willingness to negotiate again. Ratings of willingness to negotiate with the buyer again were significantly higher in the *Deflection* condition ($M = 4.45$, $SD = 1.73$) than in the *Palter* condition ($M = 3.84$, $SD = 1.66$), $t(261) = 2.34$, $p = .020$, $\eta^2 = .02$, and the *Lie of Commission* condition ($M = 3.49$, $SD = 1.82$), $t(261) = 3.67$, $p < .001$, $\eta^2 = .05$. Willingness to negotiate with the buyer again was not significantly different between the *Palter* and *Lie of Commission* conditions, $t(261) = 1.31$, $p = .190$, $\eta^2 = .01$.

(*Appendices continue*)

Asked about collection. The average number of times that a participant asked if the buyer had other pieces in the collection was significantly higher in the *Palter* condition ($M = 1.10$, $SD = 0.76$) than in the *Deflection* condition ($M = 0.81$, $SD = 0.72$), $t(261) = 2.94$, $p < .001$, $\eta^2 = .03$, and the *Lie of Commission* condition ($M = 0.75$, $SD = 0.48$), $t(261) = 3.48$, $p < .001$, $\eta^2 = .04$. The average number of times that a participant asked whether the buyer had other pieces in the collection was not significantly different between the *Deflection* condition and the *Lie of Commission* condition, $t(261) = 0.54$, $p = .591$, $\eta^2 = .00$.

Moderation. We also examined whether or not the counterpart answered the deflection question moderates the effects of deflection. As in Study 1a, for each of our dependent variables we conducted ordinary least squares regression analysis with *Deflection* (1 = *Deflection*, −.5 = *Palter*, −.5 = *Lie of Commission*) and if the participant answered the deflection question (1 = *answered deflection question*, −1 = *did not answer deflection question*, 0 = *was not asked deflection question*) as our independent variables, controlling for the other conditions (1 = *Lie of Commission*, 0 = *Deflection*, −1 = *Palter*).

Surplus. If we treat the economic surplus of individuals who did not make any offers as 0, we do not find that whether or not the participant answered the deflection question moderates the effect of deflection on surplus, $\beta = .37$, $p = .263$, $\eta^2 = .00$. If we treat the economic surplus of individuals who did not make any offers as blank, we do not find that whether or not the participant answered the deflection question moderates the effect of deflection on surplus, $\beta = .12$, $p = .741$, $\eta^2 = .00$.

Trust. Though directionally consistent with our findings in Study 1a, we do not find that whether or not the participant answered the deflection question significantly moderates the effect of deflection on initial trust, $\beta = .36$, $p = .103$, $\eta^2 = .01$, or final trust, $\beta = .05$, $p = .838$, $\eta^2 = .00$.

Liking. As with trust, our findings are directionally consistent with our findings in Study 1a, but we do not find that whether or not the participant answered the deflection question significantly moderates the effect of deflection on initial liking, $\beta = .42$, $p = .072$, $\eta^2 = .01$, and final liking, $\beta = .10$, $p = .691$, $\eta^2 = .00$.

Concealment. We do not find that whether or not the participant answered the deflection question moderates the effect of deflection on concealment, $\beta = -.30$, $p = .275$, $\eta^2 = .00$.

Willingness to negotiate again. We do not find that whether or not the participant answered the deflection question moderates the effect of deflection on willingness to negotiate with the buyer again, $\beta = .17$, $p = .522$, $\eta^2 = .00$.

Asked about collection. We do not find that whether or not the participant answered the deflection question moderates the effect of deflection on the number of times the participant asked about the collection, $\beta = .05$, $p = .618$, $\eta^2 = .00$.

Study 2a Intention to Treat Results

A total of 237 people completed the study and have been included in our analysis reported below (34% men, $M_{age} = 20.70$ years, $SD = 3.52$). For each of our dependent variables, we conducted ordinary least squares regression analysis. We summarize these results in Table F2 and depict the main results in Figure F2.

Table F2
Summary of Intention to Treat Results for Study 2a

Variable	F	η^2	Lie of commission M (SD)	Palter M (SD)	Deflection M (SD)
Initial ratings					
Surplus (in $1,000s)	$F(2, 234) = 2.37^{+}$	.02	2.53_{a} (2.63)	2.06_{ab} (2.12)	1.80_{b} (1.51)
Concealment	$F(2, 234) = 18.64^{***}$	.14	5.13_{a} (1.70)	4.29_{b} (1.90)	3.44_{c} (1.58)
Trust	$F(2, 234) = 5.40^{**}$	.04	4.97_{a} (1.16)	4.27_{b} (1.52)	4.58_{ab} (1.30)
Liking	$F(2, 234) = 3.41^{*}$	.03	5.03_{a} (1.18)	4.47_{b} (1.54)	4.60_{ab} (1.45)
Final ratings					
Trust	$F(2, 234) = 14.87^{***}$	.11	2.27_{a} (1.38)	2.81_{b} (1.54)	3.59_{c} (1.63)
Liking	$F(2, 234) = 3.28^{*}$	.03	3.62_{a} (1.53)	3.67_{a} (1.69)	4.22_{b} (1.65)
Would negotiate w/ buyer again	$F(2, 234) = 8.79^{***}$	.07	3.59_{a} (1.77)	4.00_{a} (1.62)	4.71_{b} (1.64)
Asked about collection	$F(2, 234) = 4.80^{**}$	.04	0.76_{a} (0.49)	1.06_{b} (0.70)	0.86_{a} (0.68)

Note. Means in each row with different subscripts are significantly different at the $p < .05$ level.
$^{+}$ $p < .10$. * $p < .05$. ** $p < .01$. *** $p < .001$.

(*Appendices continue*)

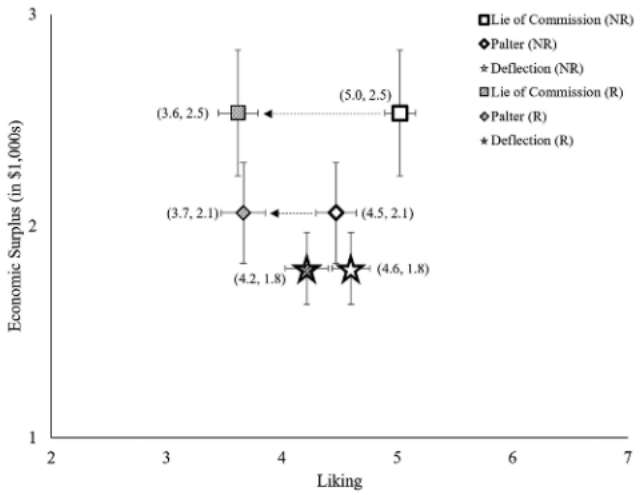


Figure F2. Intention to treat results for Study 2a. Economic surplus and liking before (NR) and after (R) it was revealed that the buyer had other pieces in the collection. If it is revealed that a counterpart did not honestly disclose information, the harm to liking is less severe after deflection than after a lie of commission or a palter.

Surplus. Economic surplus was significantly higher in the *Lie of Commission* condition ($M = 2.53$, $SD = 2.63$) than in the *Deflection* condition ($M = 1.80$, $SD = 1.51$), $t(234) = 2.15$, $p = .033$, $\eta^2 = .02$. Economic surplus was not significantly different in the *Palter* condition ($M = 2.06$, $SD = 2.12$) than in the *Deflection* condition, $t(234) = 0.77$, $p = .443$, $\eta^2 = .00$, and the *Lie of Commission* condition, $t(234) = 1.39$, $p = .166$, $\eta^2 = .01$.

Trust. Initial ratings of trust were not significantly different between the *Deflection* condition ($M = 4.58$, $SD = 1.30$) and the *Palter* condition ($M = 4.27$, $SD = 1.52$), $t(234) = 1.46$, $p = .146$, $\eta^2 = .01$, and the *Lie of Commission* condition ($M = 4.97$, $SD = 1.16$), $t(234) = 1.81$, $p = .072$, $\eta^2 = .01$. Initial ratings of trust were significantly higher in the *Lie of Commission* condition than in the *Palter* condition, $t(234) = 3.28$, $p < .01$, $\eta^2 = .04$.

After participants learned that the buyer had the other pieces in the collection, ratings of trust were significantly higher in the *Deflection* condition ($M = 3.59$, $SD = 1.63$) than the *Palter* condition ($M = 2.81$, $SD = 1.54$), $t(234) = 3.21$, $p < .01$, $\eta^2 = .04$, and the *Lie of Commission* condition ($M = 2.27$, $SD = 1.38$), $t(234) = 5.43$, $p < .001$, $\eta^2 = .11$. Final ratings of trust were significantly higher in the *Palter* condition and the *Lie of Commission* condition, $t(234) = 2.25$, $p = .026$, $\eta^2 = .02$.

Liking. Initial ratings of liking were not significantly different between the *Deflection* condition ($M = 4.60$, $SD = 1.45$) and the *Palter* condition ($M = 4.47$, $SD = 1.54$), $t(234) = 0.57$, $p = .568$, $\eta^2 = .00$, and the *Lie of Commission* condition ($M = 5.03$, $SD = 1.18$), $t(234) = 1.91$, $p = .057$, $\eta^2 = .02$. Initial ratings of liking were significantly higher in the *Lie of Commission* condition than in the *Palter* condition, $t(234) = 2.50$, $p = .013$, $\eta^2 = .03$.

After participants learned that the buyer had the other pieces in the collection, ratings of liking were significantly higher in the *Deflection* condition ($M = 4.22$, $SD = 1.65$) than in the *Palter* condition ($M = 3.67$, $SD = 1.69$), $t(234) = 2.13$, $p = .034$, $\eta^2 = .02$, and the *Lie of Commission* condition ($M = 3.62$, $SD = 1.53$), $t(234) = 2.30$, $p = .022$, $\eta^2 = .02$. Final ratings of liking were not significantly different between the *Palter* condition and the *Lie of Commission* condition, $t(234) = 0.18$, $p = .857$, $\eta^2 = .00$.

Concealment. Concealment was significantly lower in the *Deflection* condition ($M = 3.44$, $SD = 1.58$) than in the *Palter* condition ($M = 4.29$, $SD = 1.90$), $t(234) = 3.08$, $p < .01$, $\eta^2 = .04$, and the *Lie of Commission* condition ($M = 5.13$, $SD = 1.70$), $t(234) = 6.11$, $p < .001$, $\eta^2 = .14$. Concealment was significantly lower in the *Palter* condition than in the *Lie of Commission* condition, $t(234) = 3.05$, $p < .01$, $\eta^2 = .04$.

Willingness to negotiate again. Ratings of willingness to negotiate with the buyer again were significantly higher in the *Deflection* condition ($M = 4.71$, $SD = 1.64$) than in the *Palter* condition ($M = 4.00$, $SD = 1.62$), $t(234) = 2.64$, $p < .01$, $\eta^2 = .03$, and the *Lie of Commission* condition ($M = 3.59$, $SD = 1.77$), $t(234) = 4.14$, $p < .001$, $\eta^2 = .07$. Willingness to negotiate with the buyer again was not significantly different between the *Palter* and *Lie of Commission* conditions, $t(234) = 1.52$, $p = .129$, $\eta^2 = .01$.

Asked about collection. The average number of times that a participant asked if the buyer had other pieces in the collection was significantly higher in the *Palter* condition ($M = 1.06$, $SD = 0.70$) than in the *Deflection* condition ($M = 0.86$, $SD = 0.68$), $t(234) = 2.03$, $p = .043$, $\eta^2 = .02$, and the *Lie of Commission* condition ($M = 0.76$, $SD = 0.49$), $t(234) = 3.04$, $p < .01$, $\eta^2 = .04$. The average number of times that a participant asked whether the buyer had other pieces in the collection was not significantly different between the *Deflection* condition and the *Lie of Commission* condition, $t(234) = 0.99$, $p = .323$, $\eta^2 = .00$.

Moderation. We also examined whether or not the counterpart answered the deflection question moderates the effects of deflection. As in Study 1a, for each of our dependent variables we conducted ordinary least squares regression analysis with *Deflection* (1 = *Deflection*, −.5 = *Palter*, −.5 = *Lie of Commission*) and if the participant answered the deflection question (1 = *answered deflection question*, −1 = *did not answer deflection question*, 0 = *was not asked deflection question*) as our independent variables, controlling for the other conditions (1 = *Lie of Commission*, 0 = *Deflection*, −1 = *Palter*).

Surplus. We do not find that whether or not the participant answered the deflection question moderates the effect of deflection on surplus, $\beta = .12$, $p = .741$, $\eta^2 = .00$.

(*Appendices continue*)

Trust. Though directionally consistent with our findings in Study 1a, we do not find that whether or not the participant answered the deflection question significantly moderates the effect of deflection on initial trust, $\beta = .12$, $p = .587$, $\eta^2 = .00$, or final trust, $\beta = .13$, $p = .621$, $\eta^2 = .00$.

Liking. As with trust, our findings are directionally consistent with our findings in Study 1a, but we do not find that whether or not the participant answered the deflection question significantly moderates the effect of deflection on initial liking, $\beta = .18$, $p = .449$, $\eta^2 = .00$, and final liking, $\beta = .08$, $p = .771$, $\eta^2 = .00$.

Concealment. We do not find that whether or not the participant answered the deflection question moderates the effect of deflection on concealment, $\beta = -.14$, $p = .630$, $\eta^2 = .00$.

Willingness to negotiate again. We do not find that whether or not the participant answered the deflection question moderates the effect of deflection on willingness to negotiate with the buyer again, $\beta = -.10$, $p = .727$, $\eta^2 = .00$.

Asked about collection. We do not find that whether or not the participant answered the deflection question moderates the effect of deflection on the number of times the participant asked about the collection, $\beta = .07$, $p = .506$, $\eta^2 = .00$.

Appendix G

Study 3 Materials

Instructions From Study 3

Seller Instructions

You own a small art gallery. Yesterday, you met a potential customer. This one spent a fair amount of time staring at Jim Brine's "Panda Bears," 1969. You would really like to sell that painting.

Jim Brine was a pop artist (born in 1945) who produced a lot of work in the 1960's and 1970's. His work has been very influential because of his novel use of vibrant colors and entrancing lines. Jim Brine passed away 9 months ago.

You purchased the painting 9 months ago for $7,000. This particular painting was produced by Jim Brine as part of a set along with: "Polar Bears," "Brown Bears," and "Black Bears."

In terms of comparables for Jim Brine's "Panda Bears," 1969, there are a few out there. Another Jim Brine painting sold two years ago for $12,000, but around the same time, one of the Bears paintings ("Polar Bears" 1969) sold for $7,000 at an auction house. Typically, art prices increase after the artist has died, especially for buyers who want to own all pieces in a series.

Your guess is that the value of this painting could fall anywhere between $7,000 and $14,000. The more you can sell it for, the better, but setting the price too high could cause a buyer to walk away. There is one main piece of information that will influence the offer that you make to a buyer:

Whether or not the buyer has other pieces in the Bears collection.

- If a buyer *does* ***not*** have other pieces in Jim Brine's Bears collection:
  - You expect them to be willing to pay a lower amount (like $7,000).
  - Asking a very high price (like $14,000) could cause the buyer to walk away without making a deal.
- If a buyer ***does*** have other pieces in Jim Brine's Bears collection:
  - You expect them to be willing to pay a higher amount (like $14,000).
  - Asking a very low price (like $7,000) could hurt your profit.

Just now, the buyer from yesterday returned to your store. You sure hope to sell the Jim Brine painting!

(*Appendices continue*)

Comprehension Check Questions From Study 3

Instructions

Please answer the following questions before proceeding with the study.

Which Jim Brine Bears piece are you trying to sell?

- Panda Bears
- Black Bears
- Polar Bears
- Brown Bears

What made Jim Brine's work so influential?

- His novel use of stencils and spray paint.
- His novel use of wax and clay.
- His novel use of vibrant colors and entrancing lines.
- His novel use of screen printing.

Which of the following is the most important piece of information for you to gather to make an offer?

- If the buyer is an art dealer or private collector
- The age of the buyer
- The buyer's favorite artist
- If the buyer owns other pieces in the Bears collection

(*Appendices continue*)

Example Transcript From Study 3

Transcript

· **seller**
"Welcome back to the store."

· **buyer**
"Thanks - I'm interested in "Panda Bears"."

· **seller**
"Are you familiar with Jim Brine, the artist?"

· **buyer**
"I'm not a professional collector or anything like that."

(*Appendices continue*)

Appendix H

Study 4a Materials

The Choice Game Instructions

Player 1 starts with 2 lottery tickets.

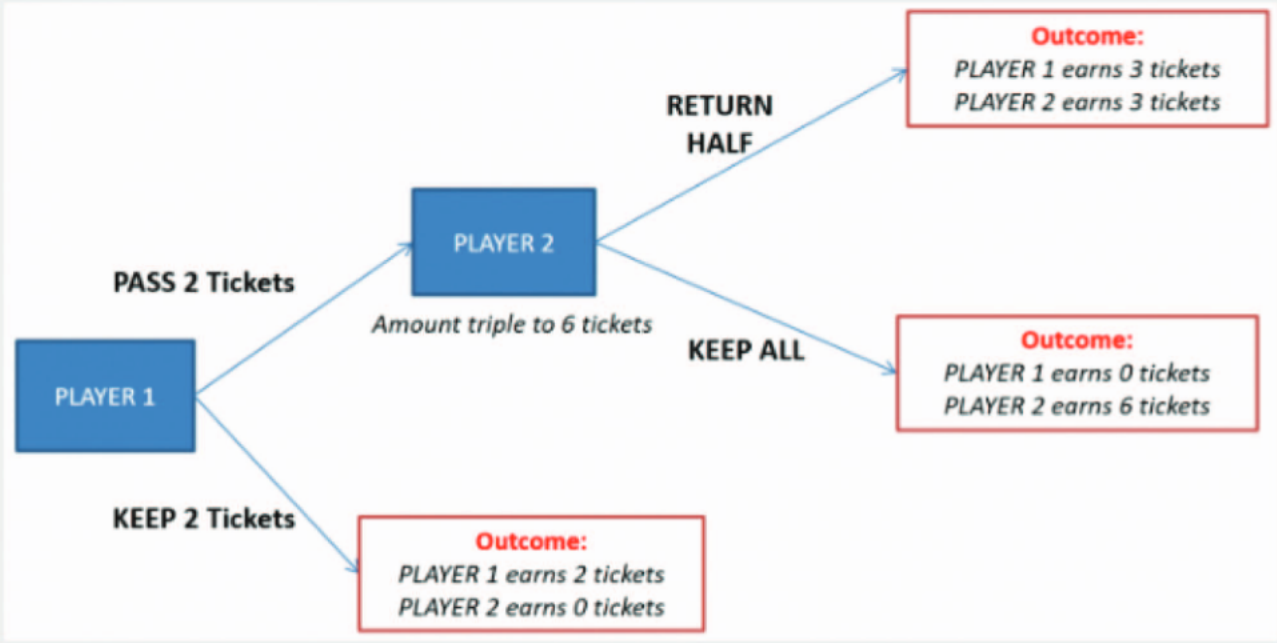
Player 1 can choose "KEEP 2 Tickets" or "PASS 2 Tickets."

If Player 1 chooses "KEEP 2 Tickets," Player 1 earns 2 lottery tickets for this exercise and Player 2 earns 0 lottery tickets for this exercise. That means that Player 1 has 2 chances to win $75 and Player 2 has 0 chances to win $75.

If Player 1 chooses "PASS 2 Tickets" the amount of lottery tickets triples (to 6 tickets), and Player 2 makes a decision.

If Player 1 chooses "PASS 2 Tickets," Player 2 can either "RETURN HALF (3 Tickets)" or "KEEP ALL (6 Tickets)."

- If Player 2 chooses "RETURN HALF (3 Tickets)", Player 1 earns 3 lottery tickets, and Player 2 earns 3 lottery tickets.That is, if Player 2 chooses "RETURN HALF (3 Tickets)", Player 1 has 3 chances to win $75 and Player 2 has 3 chances to win $75.
- If Player 2 chooses "KEEP ALL (6 Tickets)", Player 1 earns 0 tickets and Player 2 earns 6 tickets. That is, if Player 2 chooses "KEEP ALL (6 Tickets)", Player 1 has 0 chances to win $75 and Player 2 has 6 chances to win $75.



(*Appendices continue*)

Comprehension Check for The Choice Game

Suppose that Player 1 chooses "KEEP 2 Tickets". Will Player 2 make a decision in this exercise?

- Yes
- No

Suppose that Player 1 chooses "KEEP 2 Tickets". How many lottery tickets will Player 1 earn?

- 0
- 2
- 3
- 6

Suppose that Player 1 chooses "PASS 2 Tickets" and Player 2 chooses "KEEP ALL (6 Tickets)". How much will Player 1 earn?

- 0
- 2
- 3
- 6

Suppose that Player 1 chooses "PASS 2 Tickets" and Player 2 chooses "KEEP ALL (6 Tickets)". How much will Player 2 earn?

- 0
- 2
- 3
- 6

Suppose that Player 1 chooses "PASS 2 Tickets" and Player 2 chooses "RETURN HALF (3 Tickets)". How much will Player 1 earn?

- 0
- 2
- 3
- 6

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