

READING THE TELLS

Learning How to Read Body Language

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Non-Verbal Communication Professional Uses

- ▶ Are you good at "reading" people?
- ▶ When you are in a meeting can you tell who may be bored and wants to leave?
- ▶ When you are in a meeting can you tell who may be nervous?
- ▶ Can you tell if someone lies or is deceptive?
- ▶ Can you tell if someone is genuinely interested in what you have to say?
- ▶ Can you read an interview applicant as being really interested in the position?
- ▶ Can you tell if a client is displeased when negotiating a contract?
- ▶ Your business client runs his hands through his hair during a meeting. What's on his mind?
- ▶ Can you tell if a student is nervous about taking a test, or anxious to leave a class?



Non-Verbal Communication Personal Uses

- ▶ Do you know what to look for if a date is going well?
- ▶ Your friend crosses his arms while you are arguing. What is he thinking?
- ▶ You come home after your curfew time and Mom is there to greet you. Can you tell her mood before she speaks?
- ▶ Your mother-in-law is telling a boring story, but you don't want to hurt her feelings. How should you display interest?
- ▶ Would you like to know if a person you are about to hire to come into your home to clean, care for an elderly parent, or care for your children is deceptive?
- ▶ Would you like to know if you are being deceived when the car repair person says they need to replace a part?

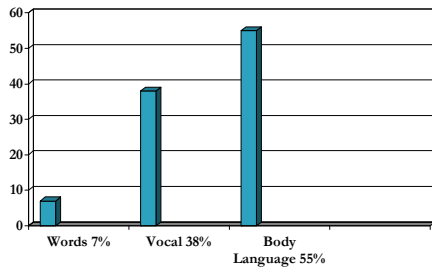


Objectives

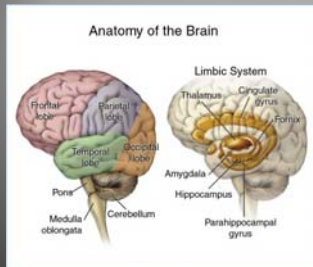
- ▶ Develop skills in reading non-verbal “tells”. (what to look for and what it means)
- ▶ Understand the limbic system and its role in non-verbal communication.
- ▶ Dispel the myth of “fight or flight”.
- ▶ Identifying the most “honest” part of the body.
- ▶ Know how to detect deception.

What Part of the Message...

Mehrabian, Albert (1971) Silent Messages, Wadsworth Publishing Co.



The Limbic System



The Limbic System

- ▶ It is considered to be the “honest brain” in the non-verbal world (Goleman, 1995, 13-29).
- ▶ Consequently it gives off a *true* response to information in the immediate environment.
- ▶ Why? It reacts instantaneously, real time, and without thought.
- ▶ In the non-verbal world, the limbic brain is where the “action” is. Many, but not all, non-verbal responses come from here.
- ▶ The remaining parts of the brain are the thinking and creative parts. These are the non-honest parts of the brain. The brain that can deceive and deceives often (Vrij, 2003, 1-17).

Limbic Responses The Three F's

- ▶ The limbic brain has assured our survival as a species because of how it regulates our behavior during times of threat and danger (Navarro, 2008, 25-34).
- ▶ The “fight or flight” response to threats and danger is a myth.
- ▶ Correct number and sequence is freeze, flight, or fight (Goleman, 1995, 27, 204-207).
- ▶ Movement attracts attention. Freezing means survival, it is our first line of defense when threatened. (Columbine & Virginia Tech. shootings)
- ▶ If the threat is perceived as too close, our second defense is to get out of harms way, or flight. It is distance that gives us comfort.
- ▶ The final response, fight, is a last resort tactic. It is survival through aggression. It is a final response as we realize it may bring harm to our own body.

Freeze & Flight



Flight



Fight



Areas To Look for “Tells”

- ▶ Face
- ▶ Hands and fingers
- ▶ Arms
- ▶ Upper body (chest, shoulders, trunk)
- ▶ Lower body (legs, feet)







Feet & Legs

- ▶ Identifying the most "honest" part of the body
- ▶ Top down versus bottom up (scanning)
- ▶ The feet! (Morris, 1985, 244)
- ▶ Why?
- ▶ When it comes to honesty, it decreases as we move up the body from the feet to the head.
- ▶ Why?

Leg & Feet Non-Verbals

- ▶ Bouncing feet - high confidence, happy, elated
- ▶ Pointing feet - direction of intention
- ▶ Toe point - happy, elated (gravity defying)
- ▶ Starter position - ready to leave, disengaged
- ▶ Leg/foot splay - control, intimidation, threaten, territorial
- ▶ Leg crossing (standing) - high comfort
- ▶ Leg crossing (seated) - leg direction dictates emotions
- ▶ Foot lock w chair - freeze behavior, nervous

Upper Body Non-Verbals (chest, shoulders, hips, trunk)

- ▶ Torso lean (away) - avoidance, dislike, disagreement
- ▶ Torso lean (in) - interest, comfort, agreement
- ▶ Torso bare parts - notice me, make statement, affiliation (tattoos, muscles, etc.)
- ▶ Torso embellishments - affiliations, denotes purpose, attitude (clothing, badges, emblems, gang dress, etc.)
- ▶ Shoulder rise - weakness, insecurity
- ▶ Mirroring - comfort

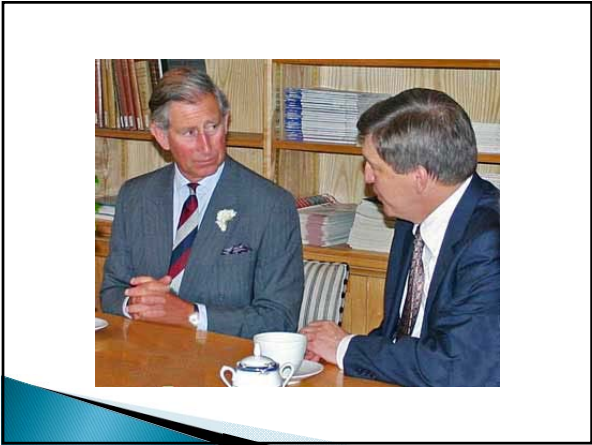


Non-Verbals of the Arm

- ▶ Arms up - happiness, positive, joy, excitement, praise (gravity defying)
- ▶ Withdrawn arms - worried, stressed
- ▶ Open arms from shoulder - welcome, comfort kindness, affection
- ▶ Open arms from elbow - warm but no strong emotion
- ▶ Arms behind back - higher status, not approachable, superiority
- ▶ Hooding - territorial, in charge
- ▶ Arm/finger splay on table - territorial, confidence, authority
- ▶ Folded arms - disapproving, anger, defensive, protecting









Hand & Finger Non-Verbals

- ▶ Steepling – high confidence, superiority
- ▶ Covering mouth – disbelief, extreme excitement, nervousness
- ▶ Resting face in hands – genuine interest or extreme boredom
- ▶ Wringing hands – nervous, anxious, stressed
- ▶ Finger point/snapping fingers – negative, rude, offensive
- ▶ Preening – nervousness, dismissiveness
- ▶ Tapping fingers – nervousness, tension, boredom
- ▶ Hidden hands – suspicious, dishonest
- ▶ Hand shake – strength of character
- ▶ Clenched fist – determination, hostility, anger
- ▶ Thumbs in/out of pocket – low confidence, weakness vs. high confidence, high status
- ▶ Stroking and rubbing hands – concern, anxiety, nervousness
- ▶ Neck/collar/face touching – low confidence, stress reliever, nervousness









Non-Verbals of the Face

- ▶ Jaw tightening - tension
- ▶ Furrowed forehead (frown) - disagreement, resentful, angry
- ▶ Lips tight together - hesitancy, secrecy
- ▶ Smile - content, understanding, acceptance, encouraging (fake vs real)
- ▶ Direct eye contact - positive messages
- ▶ Avoiding direct eye contact - you and your message are no longer important
- ▶ Nail biting - distress, discomfort, nervousness, insecurity
- ▶ Head nod - positive messages (not always agreement)
- ▶ Eye blocking - low confidence, discomfort
- ▶ Eye squinting - dislike, object to loud noise, sounds, anger
- ▶ Raised eyebrows - surprise, disbelief
- ▶ Biting the lip - nervous, fearful, anxious
- ▶ Eye blink increase - troubled, nervousness, suspicious
- ▶ Lip licking - nervous, stressed, anxious, looking to pacify



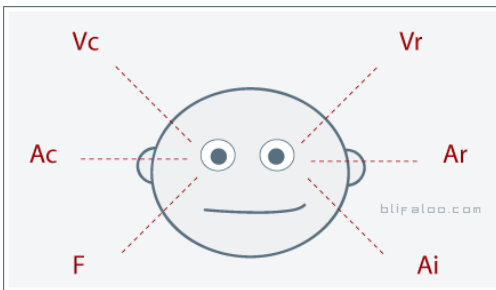




Detecting Deception

- ▶ Deception and/or lying initiates a stress reaction in most people. The stress is fear of being detected or caught. Stress can be further induced via guilt.
- ▶ Nervous fingers
- ▶ Eye contact shifting
- ▶ Rigid and/or defensive posture
- ▶ Sweaty palms and/or face
- ▶ Variations in pitch, amplitude, and rate of speech
- ▶ Abnormal speech hesitation and speech errors (thinking)
- ▶ Increased embellishments of story or parts of the story
- ▶ Inconsistency in story

Deception and Eye Direction







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