

HUMS1006

Lecture 3  
Behaving / Embodying

Self check in:

What are 5 'nonverbal' communication habits that you either positively or negatively associate with yourself?

What are 5 'nonverbal' communication habits that you identify in other people, and that you would like to incorporate in your own presentation style or approach?

Bill Clinton addresses the public about  
Monica Lewinsky



Syrian-American poet Amal Kassir



Zoe Norton Lodge 'Power Speaking  
Science' (2014)



Today - four key ideas for thinking about non-verbal communication practices

*1. Every spoken narrative, presentation or speech is a performed and embodied one*

Aspects of non-verbal communication include:

Body Movements (*Kinesics*), for example, hand gestures or nodding or shaking the head;

Posture, or how you stand or sit, whether your arms are crossed, and so on;

Eye Contact, where the amount of eye contact often determines the level of trust and trustworthiness;

Para-language, or aspects of the voice apart from speech, such as pitch, tone, and speed of speaking;

Closeness or Personal Space (*Proxemics*), which determines the level of intimacy;

Facial Expressions, including smiling, frowning and even blinking; and  
Physiological Changes, for example, sweating or blinking more when nervous.

From <https://www.skillsyouneed.com/ips/nonverbal-communication.html>)



American sociologist Erving Goffman *The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life* (1956)

everyday gestures and actions participate in, use, and remix  
'symbolic behaviours' in order to communicate and *to meet the demands of specific social roles.*

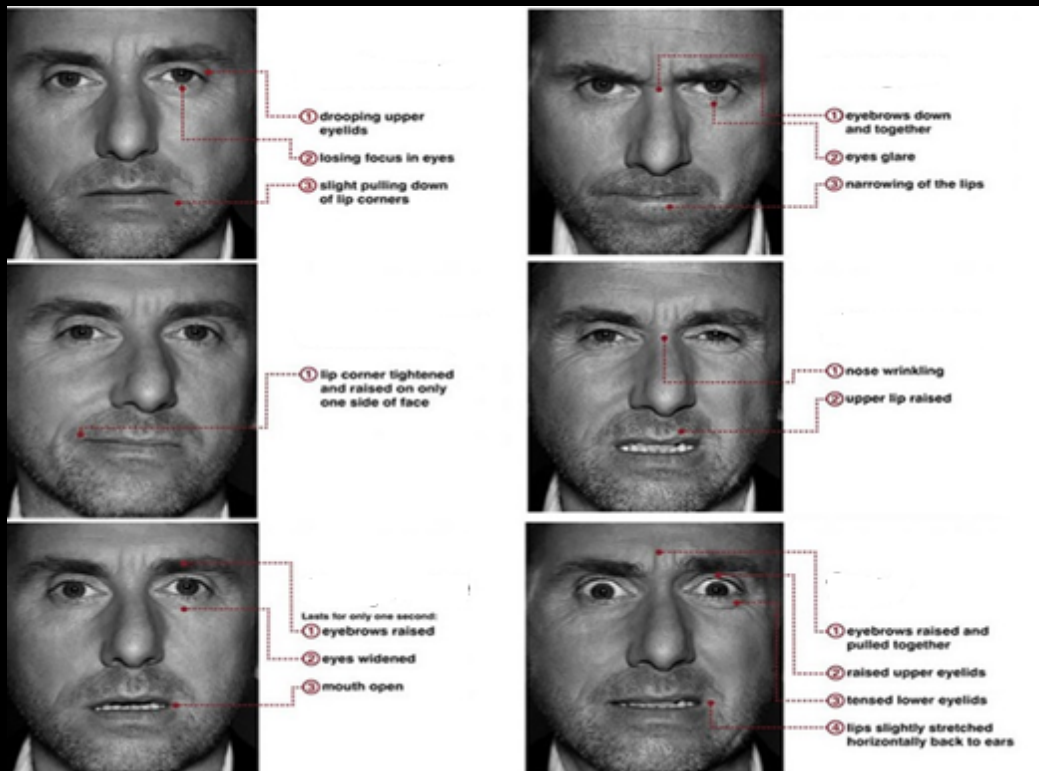
'sign vehicles'

the individual will have to act so that he **intentionally or unintentionally expresses himself, and the others will in turn have to be impressed in some way by him.**' (Goffman, 14)

This involves two forms of expression: **'the expression that he gives, and the expression that he gives off'** (14)

American psychologist **Paul Ekman** published his first theory of nonverbal behaviour in 1957

Emotion recognition test – Pictures of Facial Affect (POFA)





## *2 All behaviours communicate*

‘behaviour has no opposite. In other words, **there is no such thing as non-behaviour or**, to put it even more simply; one cannot not behave. Now, if it is accepted that all behaviour in an interactional situation has message value, i.e. is communication, it follows that no matter **how one may try, one cannot not communicate**. Activity or inactivity, words or silence all have message value; they influence others and these others, in turn, cannot not respond to these communications.’ (as quoted in McCarthy and Hatcher, p4)

### *3 All behaviours communicate within a received and reiterative, socio-historically informed system of embodied practices*

In performing a story, speech or presentation, you are participating in the history of ideas as well as histories of embodied speech acts and practices.

- Dance theorist Carrie Noland *Agency and Embodiment* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard UP, 2009)



The graffiti writer 'swings his arm up over his head following the vertical extension of his body, then sweeps it in a half moon back down to his feet. His gesture ... leaves behind a haloed line of paint, a *D* on the wall.'

the more he repeats this action, the more his body becomes structured and trained by the routine – 'the muscles and ligaments physiologically altered'.

Noland inspires us to think about how:

‘gestures reveal themselves to be simultaneously a repetitive routine and an improvisational dance; a script was obviously at the root of the performance and a script was its ultimate, durable product, but in between ... a body was afforded a change to feel itself moving through space.’ (1)

In their focus on life narratives, autobiography theorists Sidonie Smith and Julia Watson point to the body as a vehicle that *negotiates* the cultural production of meanings:

‘by exploring the body and embodiment as sites of knowledge and knowledge production, life narrators do several things. **They negotiate cultural norms determining the proper use of bodies. They engage, contest, and revise cultural norms determining the relationship of bodies to specific sites, behaviours, and destinies. And they reproduce, mix, or interrogate cultural discourses defining and distinguishing the normative and ab-normative body.**’ (*Reading Autobiography: A Guide for Interpreting Life Narratives*, University of Minnesota Press, 2001: 42)

*4 All behaviours communicate within a reiterative system of embodied practices that is adaptive*

**Find your dragons!**





‘Powerspeaking’ pose. Amy Cuddy. Fake it till you make it.



"High Power" body language (top row)  
vs.  
"Low Power" body language (bottom row)

(Images courtesy of Amy Cuddy, Harvard University)

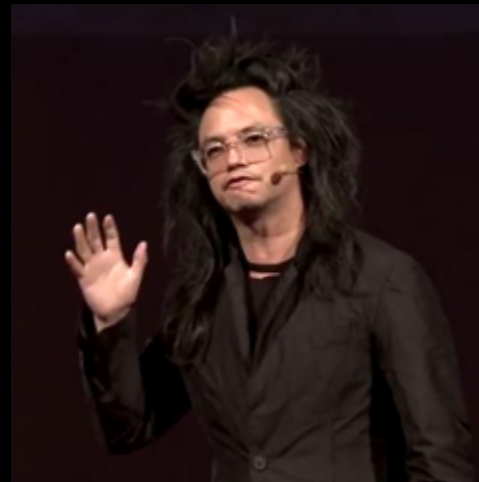


# The body language of 'leaning in' vs 'leaning out'

Sheryl Sandberg says 'lean in'



David Shing says 'lean out'



‘when you’re delivering information that you don’t believe in or are lying about, you manifest the same behaviours as suspects in criminal or espionage cases who are lying to officers or agents’ (*Talk Like Ted*: 89)

‘Believe in what you’re saying... If you don’t believe in what you’re saying, your movements will be awkward and not natural .... if you don’t believe in the message, you cannot force your body to act as though you believe in the message’ (89)

Body Language	Description
Crossed arms	<b>Closed to influence, habit, defensive.</b> Depending on the circumstance, crossed arms may represent a protection barrier. Prominent behaviour when subordinates feel threatened by figures of authority. Can also indicate mild boredom, loss of interest or animosity.
Generally looking Right	<b>Creating, storytelling, lying.</b> Related to imagination and creativity.
Generally looking Left	<b>Recalling, retrieving facts.</b> Related to accessing memory in the brain.
Arms behind the neck	<b>Arrogant, attentive.</b> Open to what's being said; waiting to state their opinion.
Steady, fixed eye contact	<b>Attentive, attraction, interest.</b> Direct eye contact tends to indicate focused interest, attention and openness to message.
Widening Eyes	<b>Interested, engaged.</b> Generally indicated interest in something and someone and often invited a positive response.
Biting lip	<b>Holding back.</b> May be a signal of tension or stress, which can be due to high concentration, but more likely to be anxiousness.
Hand clamped over mouth	<b>Suppression, holding back, shock.</b> Often an unconscious gesture of self-regulation - stopping speech for reasons of shock or embarrassment.
Laughter	<b>Relaxation.</b> Although there are many different contexts regarding laughter, genuine laughter is a sign of relaxation.
pasted smile	<b>Fake smile.</b> Smile which appears quickly, fixed on the face longer than a natural smile, and does not extend to the eyes indicates a forced agreement to restrained annoyance.
Lack of eye contact	<b>Uncomfortable, distracted, lying, guilty.</b> Looking side to side during a conversation can be indicative of someone who is nervous, thinking of something else, uncomfortable or with little confidence.
Nail biting	<b>Frustration, suppression, self-comforting.</b> This action is an inward-directed channel of fear and suppression. Over time, the action becomes a comforting habit, typically prompted by fear or suppression.
Matched non-verbals with yours	<b>Rapport.</b> When the person you are communicating with has matched favourable body language characteristics, this indicates that they feel a rapport with you.

How helpful is this schema for you?

Are there other ways of thinking about some of these physical behaviours (eg the western cultural specificity of making eye contact)?

The *Talk Like Ted* 'power sphere' is described as:

'a circle that runs from the top of your eyes out to the tips of your outstretched hands, down to your belly button, and back up to your eyes again. Try to keep your gestures (and eye gaze) in this zone. Hands that hang below your navel lack energy and "confidence". Using complex gestures above the waist will give the audience a sense of confidence about you as a leader....' (98)

## JENNIFER GRANHOLM'S WORDS WITH CORRESPONDING GESTURES

### WORDS

I was introduced as the former Governor of Michigan, but actually I'm a scientist. All right, a political scientist. It doesn't really count, but my laboratory was the laboratory of democracy that is Michigan, and, like any good scientist, I was experimenting with policy about what would achieve the greatest good for the greatest number.<sup>9</sup>

But there were three problems, three enigmas that I could not solve.

And I want to share with you those problems, but most importantly, I think I figured out a proposal for a solution.

### GESTURES

Leans forward, both hands apart, palms open

Right hand and elbow at a 90-degree angle holding the clicker; left hand raised with three fingers

Leans forward, raises index finger on left hand, makes eye contact with each part of the room

Table 3.3. Jennifer Granholm's words with corresponding gestures during her TED 2013 presentation.

From: *Talk Like TED*, p99 'Eager nonverbal' body language

[https://www.ted.com/talks/jennifer\\_granholm\\_a\\_clean\\_energy\\_proposal\\_race\\_to\\_the\\_top#](https://www.ted.com/talks/jennifer_granholm_a_clean_energy_proposal_race_to_the_top#)



**These presenters command attention through a range of strategies that trouble the conventional notion of a power sphere:**



Kiruna Stammell  
Maid of Honour speech



US Senator Harkin  
(1990) Speech in sign  
language



Stella Young 'I'm Not  
Your Inspiration'



Aimee Mullins

# Non-verbal communication analysis: Maya Angelou 'And Still I Rise'

