

Perceptive side of communication



Lecture 12

by Natalya Vladimirovna
Polyvyannaya



Perceptive side of communication

MAIN ISSUES

- Components of the perceptual side of communication
- Elements of the perceptual side of communication
- 4 main strategies in perceiving another person:
- Types of perception
- Errors of perception
- Mechanisms of social perception

ADDITIONAL ISSUES

- Developing Perceptual Skills
- Functions of social perception
- Practices (optional)

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Perceptive side of communication



**Do you think
we can judge a
person by their
appearance?
Why?**





Perceptive side of communication

The perceptual (or perceptive) side of communication is associated with the **perception** and **interpretation** of information that a person receives from the interlocutor.

Why is this important? Non-verbal signals make up to 70% of information in communication. Understanding nonverbal and behavioral cues helps avoid misunderstandings.





Components of the perceptual side of communication

The perceptual side includes a set of processes:

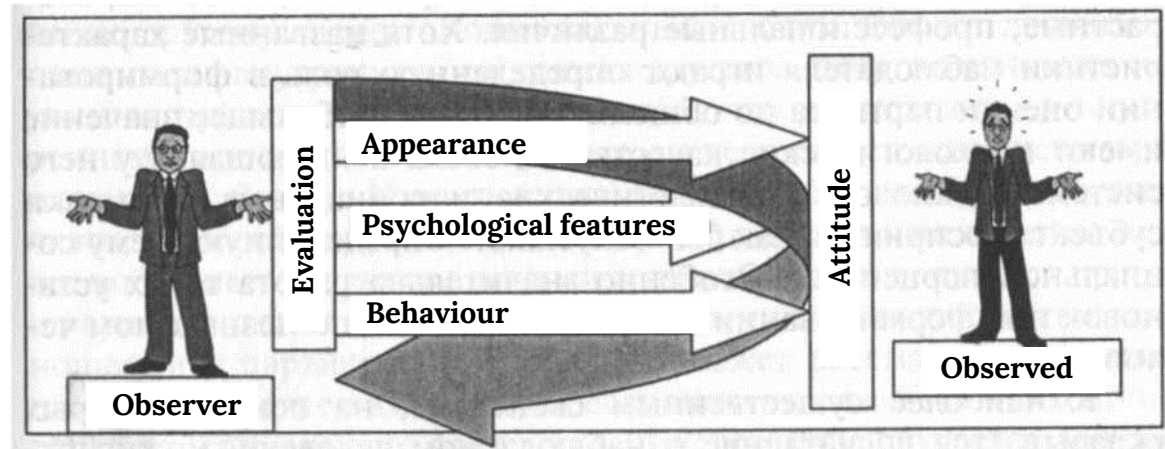
1. Evaluation of non-verbal signals transmitted by the interlocutor;
2. Observation of behavior;
3. Formation of ideas about the inner world of the interlocutor based on the information received;
4. Formation of the subject's perception on an emotional level;
5. Creation of effective communication.





Perceptive side

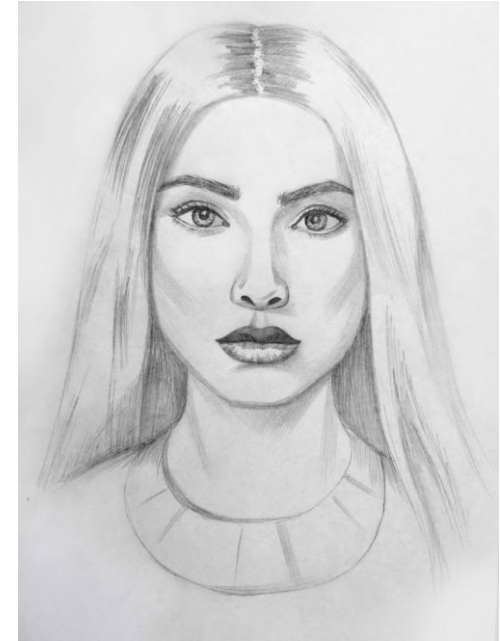
WHAT do we
pay attention
to when we
meet another?





Perceptive side

- In simple terms, within the perceptual side of communication, **people "read" each other**, which allows them to obtain much more information and go beyond simple verbal exchange.
- In psychology, perception is considered as a **person's ability to display at a cognitive level the objects of the surrounding world that he encounters throughout his life**. Among the manifestations of perception, understanding and acceptance can be distinguished. This feature allows people to find a common language and build strong communication.





Practice (Optional)

- For 1 minute look into the eyes of your partner
- Hands can be open and directed upwards
- Try to perceive the person as it is.
- Try to guess at what emotional state is the person
- Do not start conversation, just perceive, look into the eyes, put the sight to forehead and somewhere else.
- After minute finished reflect with 1 sentence how was this experience for you. Did you get any new info about the person?



Practice example

- The meeting participant avoids eye contact and sits with a closed posture. You may perceive this as a lack of interest, but it may just be fatigue or shyness.
- **What non-verbal cues do you usually notice when communicating?**





Elements of the perceptual side of communication

Initially, when perceiving a stranger, the main attention is paid to his appearance (**facial expression, eyes, hairstyle, expressive body movements**).

As the process of perceiving a person unfolds, ideas are formed about his **character traits, abilities, interests, emotional states**, which are very often grouped around the professional characteristics of the individual.





Elements of the perceptual side of communication

Non-verbal communication Facial expressions:

- **A smile, frowning eyebrows, raised corners of the lips** – all this indicates the emotions of the interlocutor. Example: a smile can express joy, but also be formal politeness.
- **Gestures and postures:** Open gestures indicate readiness for dialogue, closed ones – about barriers. Example: crossed arms can mean protection, disagreement or just habit.
- **Tone of voice:** Timbre, volume, pauses. Example: loud speech can be perceived as confidence or aggression.
- **Eye contact:** Too long a look – a challenge or interest. No look – discomfort.





Strategies

4 main strategies in perceiving another person:

1. **Analytical**, in which each element of appearance is interpreted as a form of manifestation of a personality trait (wearing glasses – a scientist);
2. **Emotional**, in which directly imperceptible personality traits are interpreted depending on general attractiveness or unattractiveness;
3. **Perceptual-associative**, in which the traits of another person who is outwardly similar are attributed;
4. **Social-associative**, in which the traits of the social group to which a person can be assigned are attributed.

Optional reading

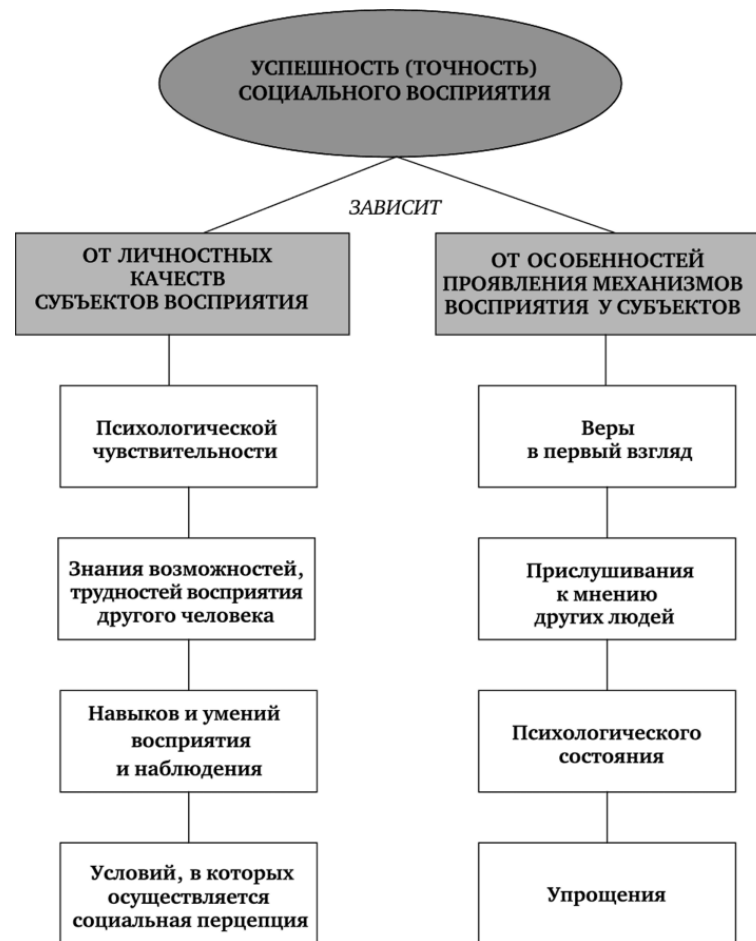
<https://medium.com/seek-blog/the-art-of-misunderstanding-and-the-4-sides-model-of-communication-7188408457ba>



Types of perception

By the degree of correspondence to reality perception can be:

- Adequate
- Distorted





Elements of the perceptual side of communication

The first stage of perception: Formation of impression

The first 7 seconds of communication are the most important for forming a first impression. People evaluate:

- Confidence (posture, tone of voice).
- Openness (gestures, eye contact).
- Emotional mood (facial expressions).



Elements of the perceptual side of communication

Tools for interpreting behavior

Context: Always consider the circumstances. Example: a person speaks quietly – this may be fatigue, not lack of interest.

Cultural differences: For example, avoiding eye contact in some cultures is a sign of respect, not lack of confidence.

Combination of signals: One gesture or facial expression may be accidental, but their combination helps to understand the true state of the interlocutor.



Errors of perception

The social-perceptual side of communication also has mechanisms by which a loss of mutual understanding can occur. Let's list the main ones.

1. Projection: When we attribute our feelings and intentions to the interlocutor.

Example: you are upset and think that the interlocutor is also unhappy, although he is just tired or even just fine.

2. Stereotypes: Assessing a person based on the group he belongs to. The effect of stereotyping is based on such a judgment about the object, which is formed on the basis of limited information and often arises regarding the group affiliation of the subject.

Example: a young colleague is perceived as inexperienced, even if he is a professional.

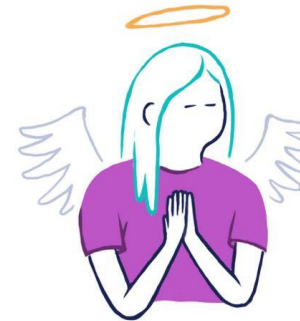
3. Selective perception: We notice only what confirms our expectations. Example: if you think that a person is not interested, then you will notice only his gestures of not being present.



Errors of perception

- **The primacy effect** is manifested in the fact that a person tends to evaluate a new acquaintance mainly by his first impression and first information.
- **Halo effect** – preliminary information is transferred to the real perception of a person. One positive quality overshadows all others (e.g. a person with a confident smile seems competent). This effect can be most clearly observed in a situation when very little is known about the other person in the conversation or when it comes to his moral qualities.
- **Horn effect:** one negative quality distorts the overall assessment (e.g. a hunched posture is perceived as lack of confidence).
- The **attractiveness** effect is manifested in the tendency to exaggerate the qualities of an interlocutor who has a beautiful, attractive appearance.
- The **superiority** effect is the tendency of the perceiver to constantly exaggerate certain psychological qualities of those around him whom he considers better than himself on certain parameters.

How to avoid mistakes: Ask clarifying questions. Observe the combination of signals. Check your perception with feedback.



✓ intelligent
✓ kind
✓ rich



✗ intelligent
✗ kind
✗ rich



Practice

Examples of practical situations

1. The interlocutor avoids eye contact. What could this mean?
2. A person often looks at his watch during a conversation. How should this be interpreted?
3. A colleague gestures actively, but does not say anything important. How can we understand his intentions?
4. A client at a meeting nods, but does not ask questions. Does he agree or is he just polite?
5. Your friend tells you that he is fine, but his facial expressions look tired. What should you do?



Practice

Answers

1. *Possible options: uncertainty, discomfort, absent-mindedness.*
2. *Possible options: in a hurry, losing interest, worried about another matter.*
3. *Possible options: nervousness, attempt to dominate, lack of a clear plan.*
4. *Possible options: you need to clarify his opinion.*
5. *Ask a clarifying question to be sure of his condition.*



Developing Perceptual Skills

- **Active Observation:**
Pay attention to non-verbal cues such as gestures, facial expressions, posture, tone of voice.
- **Situational Analysis:**
Always consider the context, not just the person's behavior.
- **Probing Questions:**
For example: "It seems to me, you look upset today. Is everything okay?"
- **Mindfulness Practice:**
Ask yourself questions: "What am I seeing? What could this mean?"





How it develops itself

- The formation of perceptual communication skills begins in childhood, when the child learns to recognize and understand facial expressions, intonations and emotions of their parents.
The complexity of the mechanisms of perception directly affects the number of factors that an individual can perceive in the process of communicating with others - the more complex the mechanisms, the more there will be.
- The emergence of interest in another person leads to the manifestation of activity aimed at finding out the maximum possible amount of information about the new acquaintance with the help of questions. In this way, you can achieve a better understanding of his internal qualities, judgments and attitudes.





Mechanisms of social perception

The psychological mechanisms of perception and understanding in interpersonal communication are

- Identification
- Reflection
- Empathy
- Stereotyping
- Attraction





Identification

The simplest way to understand another person is through identification, i.e. likening oneself to them. An unconscious projection of oneself by a person onto something other than oneself: another person, a cause or a location. In other words, this is an unconscious identification of oneself by a subject with another subject, a group, a process or an ideal.

When identifying, a person puts himself in the place of another and determines how he would act in similar situations. To understand a communication partner, one must put oneself in their place. This mechanism allows one to understand the values, habits and norms of behavior of the other partner.

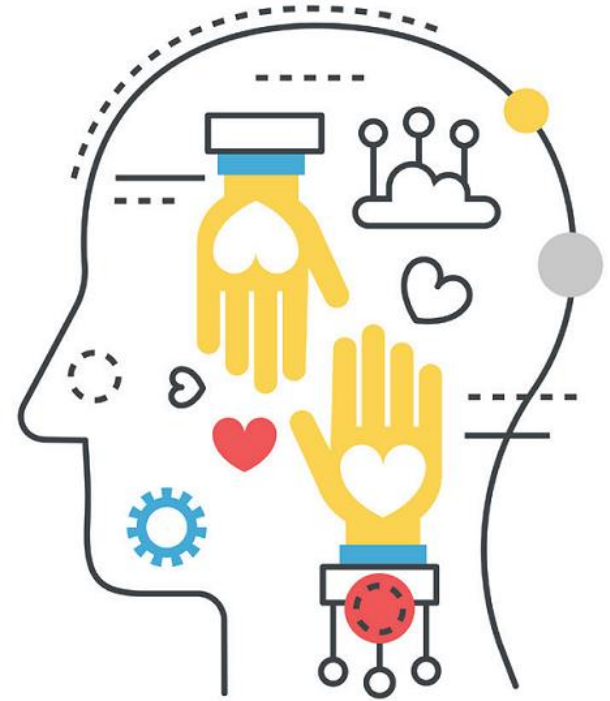




Reflection

The process of understanding each other is mediated by the process of reflection. In social psychology, reflection is understood as the awareness of the acting individual of how he is perceived by the communication partner. This is no longer just knowledge of the other, but **knowledge of how the other understands me**, i.e. a kind of double process of mirror reflection of each other. During interaction, certain characteristics of each other are mutually assessed and changed.

Reflection helps to answer the questions: What am I really like? How do I see myself? How does my communication partner see me?





Reflection

- Personal. It allows you to study your own actions, analyze images and the inner "I". It is used in cases where there is a self-disintegration of the personality, correction of self-awareness and the construction of a new "I" is required.
- Intellectual. The object is knowledge related to a certain subject and ways of interacting with it. This type of reflection is used in engineering and educational psychology.
- Existential. The object is the deep meanings of the personality.
- Sanogenic. The main function is considered to be the regulation of emotional states and the reduction of suffering and experiences.
- Reflection in the psychology of communication. It implies a complex system of relationships that arise in the process of interaction between individuals.





Empathy

- Understanding at the level of feelings, the desire to respond emotionally to the problems of another person. The situation of another person is not so much thought out as felt. This is the ability to sympathize, i.e. a person's ability to empathize with other people, the ability to understand their internal state.
- The mechanism of empathy is to some extent similar to the mechanism of identification. This similarity consists in the ability to put yourself in the place of another, to look at things from his point of view. However, this does not necessarily mean identification with this other person.
- With empathy, the partner's line of behavior is taken into account, the subject treats him with sympathy, but interpersonal relationships with him are built based on the strategy of his line of behavior.





Empathy

- The ability to enter into the personal world of meanings of another person and see whether my understanding is correct. The criterion for the success of "empathy" is the physical sensation of immersion in the body of the communication partner, the feeling of the organic nature of his reactions, the anticipation of his reactions and words, the bodily feeling of the impossibility for the communication partner to say or do anything else.
- The direct consequence of this is the disappearance of irritation, barriers and misunderstanding of the motives of the behavior or actions of the communication partner.





Empathy

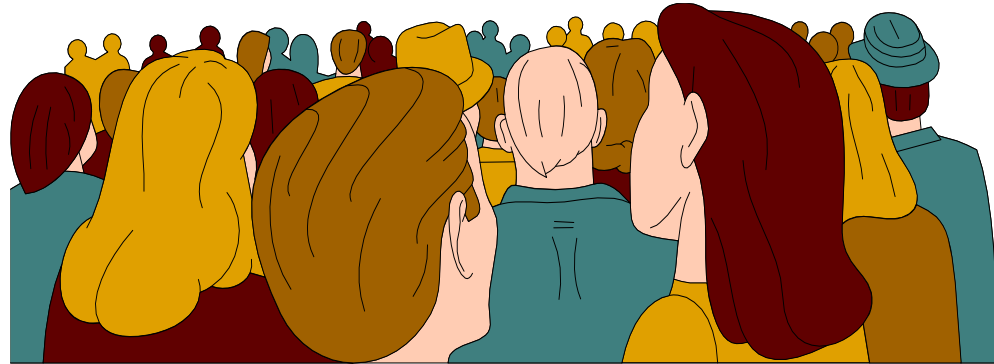
- An elevated level is characterized by pronounced empathy. A person is unable to separate their problems and feelings from the problems of loved ones, and sometimes even complete strangers. Psychologists in this case talk about the affective level of empathy. Signs of empathists of the affective type: too much emotional vulnerability, impressionability, unreasonable feelings of guilt.
- A normal level is inherent in most of the population. They try to keep emotions under control and do not show them to strangers.
- A low level is characterized by an inability to empathize and accept other points of view. An anti-empath considers people's actions based on emotions to be meaningless. As a result, serious difficulties arise in contacts with others.





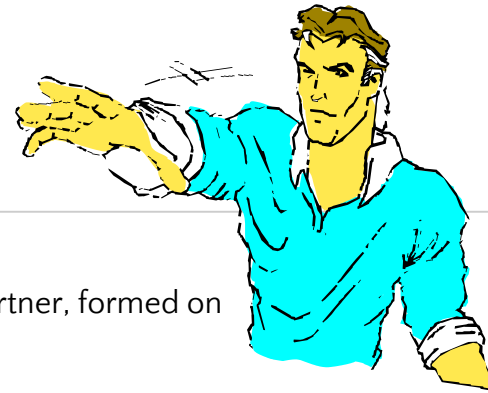
Stereotyping

- Perception and evaluation of social objects based on certain ideas (stereotypes). Stereotyping is manifested in the attribution of similar characteristics to all members of a social group without sufficient awareness of possible differences between them.





Attraction



- A specific mechanism for understanding a communication partner, formed on an emotional basis, is interpersonal attraction.
- Attraction (from *attract* – to attract, to attract) – literally “attraction”. Attraction is both the process of forming the attractiveness of a person and the product of this process (i.e. a certain quality of the relationship).

Levels of attraction:

- sympathy,
 - friendship,
 - love.
-
- There are a number of techniques that help to create attraction, which include addressing a communication partner by name, smiling, the art of giving compliments, the willingness to patiently listen to a partner, etc.
 - Attraction in business communication is formed on the similarity of life positions, the high level of professionalism of business partners, their trust in each other.



Functions of social perception

- **Development of mutual understanding.** This function acts as a prerequisite for building productive communication between individuals. The presence of common interests, sharing the same values and beliefs is the foundation for benefiting from communication. It also provides an opportunity to find compromises in controversial situations;
- **Development of emotional interaction.** Feelings and emotions are an integral part of relationships. Positive feelings and emotions form sympathy, negative feelings and emotions lead to hostility.
- **Formation of ideas about oneself.** A participant in communication can receive information about himself using conclusions obtained during a dialogue with other people. As part of interaction with an interlocutor, a person can retransmit his attitudes and views on himself. As a result, a person can independently reveal what was hidden in his consciousness.





Functions of social perception

- **Formation of ideas about the interlocutor.** This is manifested in understanding the views and worldview of people from the immediate social environment. In such conditions, a person can form a full-fledged idea of the interlocutor. There are no alternative ways. Communication acts as a fundamental basis for any kind of relationship;
- **Organizing joint activities.** If people entering into communication understand and accept each other, this helps them to conduct joint activities with a focus on a quality result. Knowledge about the interlocutor makes it possible to build a strategy for communicating with him in any situation. Perception takes on a new meaning when it comes to communication on the scale of an entire social group. Productive joint activities can only be carried out if there is complete understanding and acceptance between the members of the group.





Conclusion

- The level of perceptual skills of an individual has a direct impact on their ability to form productive communication with other members of society, social groups and associations. **Understanding the characteristics of communication subjects allows for high-quality interaction.**
- Among the features of this process, one can highlight the dependence on age, professional, gender, emotional and psychological factors. The perceptual side of communication has a great impact on communication between people. **The better one person understands another, the stronger their relationship will be.**



Conclusion

Why is the perceptual side important?

- The perceptual side of communication helps you better understand the interlocutor, avoid misunderstandings, and build more productive relationships.
- By focusing on nonverbal cues, context, and feedback, you can achieve more effective interactions.

Key Takeaways:

- *Observe nonverbal cues.*
- *Check your perceptions.*
- *Develop flexibility in interpreting behavior.*



References

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- <https://happy-job.ru/blog/kollegi/17-fraz-motiviruyuschey-pokhvaly-dlya-kolleg/>
- <https://dnevnik-znaniy.ru/psixologiya/perceptivnaya-storona-obshheniya.html>
- <https://medium.com/seek-blog/the-art-of-misunderstanding-and-the-4-sides-model-of-communication-7188408457ba>

A photograph of two white doves in flight against a clear, bright blue sky. The dove in the foreground is shown from a low angle, with its wings fully extended, revealing the intricate structure of its feathers. Its head is turned slightly to the right. The second dove is positioned further back and higher up in the frame, also in flight. The overall scene conveys a sense of peace and freedom.

HOMEWORK?





Tasks for the seminar-12.

Case study

Solve the case-studies. If you do this task alone or/and as the homework give answer to at least 2 case studies on next pages.

These case studies are designed to deepen students' understanding of how nonverbal communication affects the perception of others and to develop strategies for interpreting and addressing it effectively.

General Approach of Working on Cases:

- **Analysis Phase:**
 - Group or student analyze the situation, identifying nonverbal cues and hypothesizing their meanings.
 - Writing down possible reasons behind the observed behavior.
- **Solution Development:**
 - Generate a list of questions to verify hypotheses.
 - Propose strategies to improve communication or adjust their behavior accordingly.
- **Role-Playing (Optional):**
 - Students role-play the scenarios.
 - Observers evaluate the effectiveness of interpreting signals and improving communication.
- **Feedback and Reflection:**
 - Discussing what worked, what didn't, and what could be improved.

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Case 1: "Mixed Signals in the Meeting"

- **Scenario:**
During a team meeting, you present a new product concept. One participant listens attentively but avoids eye contact and sits with crossed arms. Another nods enthusiastically, smiles, and occasionally takes notes. A third keeps looking at their phone, occasionally glancing at you.

Tasks:

- Analyze the nonverbal cues of each participant. What might they signify?
- What questions could you ask to confirm your interpretation of their positions?
- How would you adjust your presentation to engage all participants effectively?



Case 2: "Conflict at the Roundtable"

- **Scenario:**
During a discussion about task allocation, two team members begin arguing. One speaks loudly, gestures aggressively, and interrupts others. The second responds calmly but sits with a tense posture and avoids eye contact. Other team members avert their eyes and seem uncertain about how to proceed.

Tasks:

- Identify the emotions and intentions conveyed by the nonverbal cues of the arguing team members.
- How would you de-escalate the conflict and re-engage the rest of the team?
- What nonverbal signs would indicate that the situation is improving?

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Case 3: "Unengaged Client"

- **Scenario:**

You meet with a new client to discuss a potential project. Throughout the meeting, they respond briefly, avoid eye contact, and keep their arms crossed. At the end, they say, "This sounds interesting. Let's discuss it further later."

Tasks:

- Interpret the client's behavior. What do their nonverbal signals suggest about their level of interest or understanding?
- What questions could you ask to clarify their true stance?
- What nonverbal cues could you use to make the client feel more comfortable and engaged?



Case 4: "Isolation in the Team"

- **Scenario:**

A team member has begun avoiding discussions, sitting apart during meetings, and rarely making eye contact with others. They give short answers to questions and do not contribute ideas during brainstorming sessions. Meanwhile, they complain privately to colleagues about unfair task distribution.

Tasks:

- What might be the reasons behind this behavior based on their nonverbal cues?
- How would you approach this team member to understand their perspective?
- What nonverbal signals might indicate they are starting to re-engage with the team?



Case 5: "Nervous Candidate"

- **Scenario:**
You're interviewing a candidate for a position. They answer questions but frequently pause before responding, avoid eye contact, and shake their leg under the table. They seem increasingly nervous when asked follow-up questions.

Tasks:

- What might be the reasons for their nervousness?
- How could you adjust your own nonverbal cues to help them feel more at ease?
- How would you determine whether their nervousness stems from incompetence or personal anxiety?



Tasks for the seminar-12.

If cases were too hard/easy.

Make a small report from the reliable sources on one of the following topics (1-3 pages A4, or 4-6 slides of presentation)

- **The role of nonverbal communication in interpersonal relationships**
- **The impact of first impressions on the communication process**
- **Projection in interpersonal communication: its influence on perception**
- **Stereotypes and their impact on perception in communication**
- **The influence of emotional intelligence on perception in communication**
- **Perceptual barriers in business communication**
- **The role of context in interpreting nonverbal cues**
- **Eye contact as a key element of perception in communication**
- **Emotions and their nonverbal expression: how to interpret them correctly**
- **Methods for developing perceptual skills in communication**

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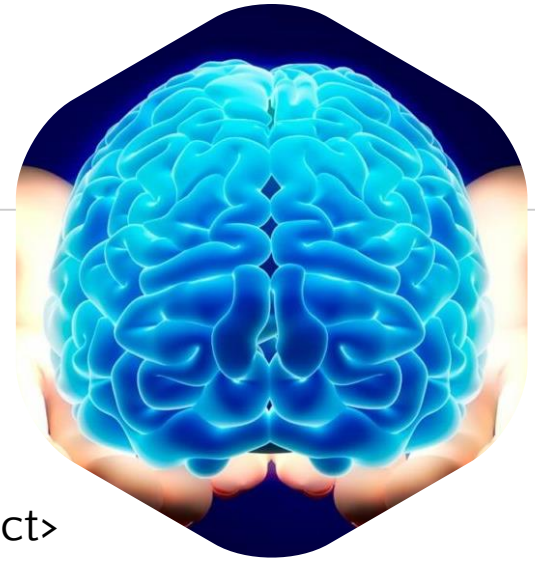
Task for the seminar

In the **SUBJECT** of the letter,
it is **MANDATORY** to indicate:

<Group> – <First Name Last Name> – <Work Subject>

Example:

IT2-2021 – Maria Kukushkina – WEEK-12 (Communication).



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Thanks!

*Any **questions** ?*

You can find me at

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