

How to see what's in the mind

6th lesson
Principle 4
Facial Expressions

Here is another pillar of observing body language that is essential for you to understand. This part gives a little bit more sophisticating messages than the rest of the body, and it also takes more practise to master it.

You have to put quite a lot of effort into training reading facial expressions, but once you understand it, you cannot imagine how powerful is it. Facial expressions are in fact expressions of several basic emotions which are **happiness, sadness, anger, disgust, surprise, fear** and sometimes the **contempt** is included, I included it.

Can you imagine how powerful it can be to know how to notice these emotions on the face of other people? It is like a real superpower, to know when someone sad or disgusted, happy or just faking happiness, surprised or fearful. I can tell you, it takes some effort, but it is worth it!

Facial Expressions can be divided into two main categories which are macro-expressions and micro-expressions. You cannot get better at reading micro-expressions unless you practise and learn the macro expressions properly.

Macro expressions are the expressions of emotions that are very obvious on the face which you don't need almost any skill to decode them because we all have kind of built-in recognition program, that helps us to decode facial expressions, but only to a certain amount, then you have learned a new skill.

You have to be consciously aware of all the facial muscle movements to be able to read micro-expressions, so let's start listing the typical look of all the basic emotions.

Happiness

It is the most beautiful emotion of all and the one we recognise the easiest because we just somehow feel from others, even the very slight movements of mouth corners is visible for us. The critical thing in happiness is that it is not created only by the mouth movement but also the eye movements.

Eyes

The muscle around eyes called Orbicularis Oculi is responsible for creating the happy expression on the face. You can observe it right next to the eye, and it is called a Crow's Feet. Inspect the picture of this emotion. When this eye movement is absent, it is a fake smile.

Mouth

The lip corners are raised and drawn back in very typical shape which you more than just a familiar so won't describe more so I don't confuse you. The movement is done by m.Zygomaticus Major.



Sadness

The emotion that is literally painful. Its priority message is to call for help, this emotion is the actual nonverbal call for help, and it is shown in front of close people mostly. When there are only strangers in your surrounding, you don't express sadness very much.

Eye-Brows

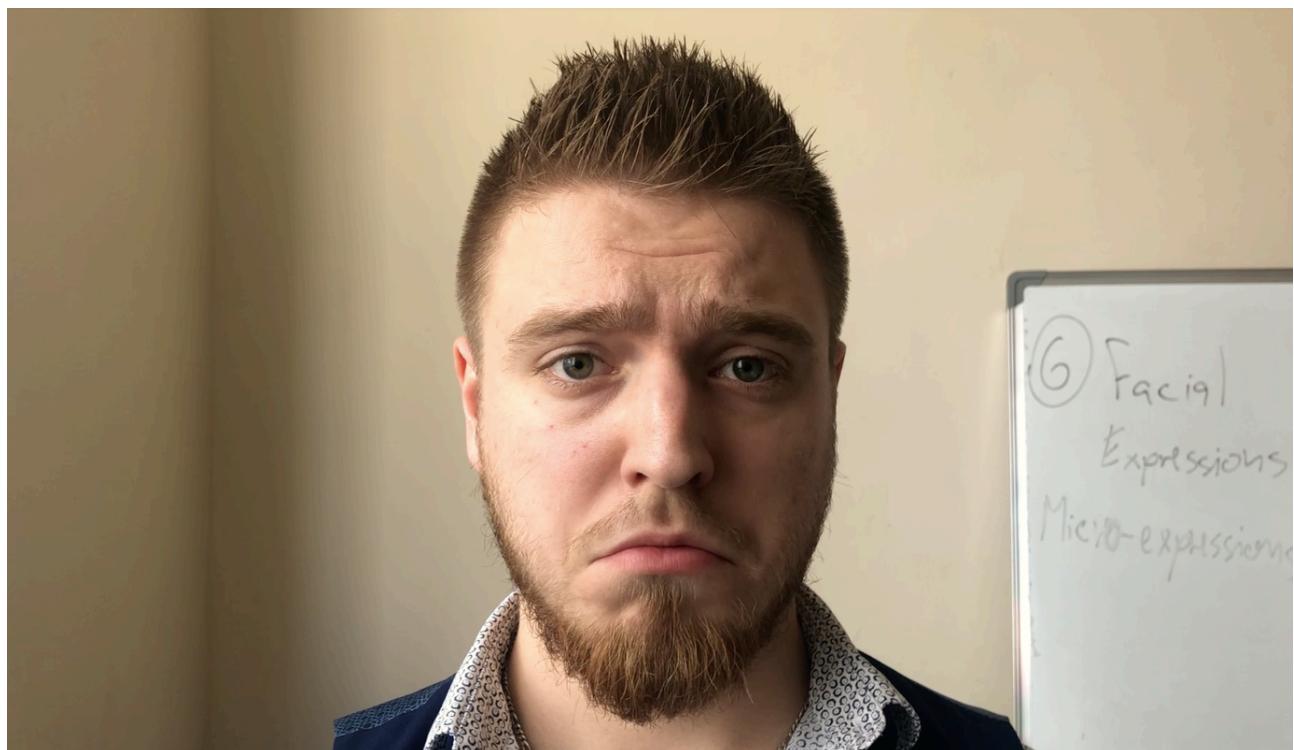
In sadness, the brows are shaped in the typical roof-like shape where the medial part of eyebrows are raised and drawn together. It creates a characteristic furrow in the glabella and the centre of the forehead.

Eye(-lids)

The lower lids are a little raised in sadness to create stronger expressions. Usually, sad people look down rather than straight (not in the micro-expressions; there is no time to look down).

Mouth

The mouth can be shaped in the inverted U as it is drawn in emojis or kids drawings. The chin boss muscle is contracted, and sometimes the lips can be a little loose when there are trembling, and the person is about to cry. Inspect the picture to see it.



Anger

This emotion is powerful and gives you the power to do stuff but be careful; sometimes, it gives you a way too much power, and you can say and do things you'll regret later. I think everybody has their experiences with it. In anger, most of the blood goes to the arms, so you are ready to fight.

Eye-Brows

In anger, brows are typically drawn down and together. It's simple as that.

Eyes(-lids)

The eyelids in the anger are tensed, and the eye appears to stare out in a hard fashion. There are two types of anger eyes. One is narrower where the eyes are more tensed is also created by lowering the brows, and the second one is wider. The lower lid tensed.

Mouth

There are again two types of anger mouth, closed mouth and open mouth. In the closed mouth, the lips are pressed one against another, and it is more done when the person is engaging in some form of physical violence. The open mouth is like squarish shape which you can find in the speech when someone is shouting, for example. Inspect the picture.



Disgust

When we hate something or deny something, the disgust is ready on our face. It's great to protect us from things we don't know and which can be dangerous. The typical trait is to close the nose.

Facial Movements

A single muscle makes the main movement in the disgust (m. Levator Labi Superioris, Aleque Nasi) and it draws the brows down, wrinkles a nose, deepens nasolabial furrow and in extreme amount open a mouth and expose teeth. The eyes are tensed as well, but it's usually produced by contraction of the muscle mentioned above.

The lower lid is also raised and tensed, you can observe it on the wrinkled chin.

Inspect the picture.



Contempt

It is an interpersonal relationship killer. The unique thing about contempt is that it can only be felt towards the human being, or the being with intellectual power and a free will. And let's have a look at how does it look like.

Facial Movements

One lip corner is raised. That is it. When you notice that someone is smiling only on one side, the person is not smiling, but he is feeling contempt. Be careful about interpreting it because it is really similar to the smile. Have a look!



Surprise

This expression is the only neutral emotion which can be felt a short time, and then it is followed by some other triggered emotion. Human's brain only can be surprised until it finds out what surprised him. When it is a surprise party, he will be surprised maybe a second, but when he realises you made him a surprise party, the surprise will be gone, and happiness will arise, for example.

Eye-Brows

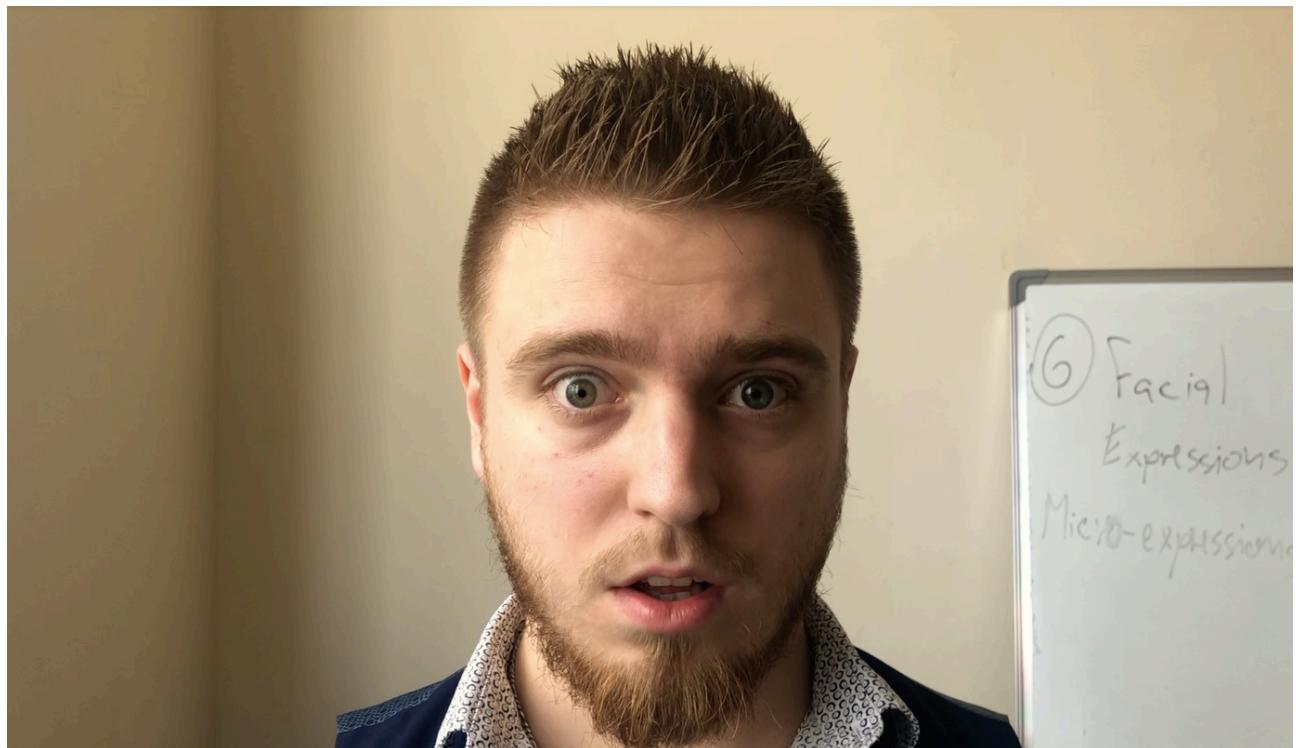
In a surprise, brows are raised and curved, and it creates the horizontal wrinkles across the forehead.

Eyes

Are widely open but without any tension. Upper eye-lid is raised, and lower eye-lid is relaxed.

Mouth

The jaw is dropped, and mouth roundly opens without any tension. Look at the picture so you can understand better.



Fear

Is very often misread with surprise because they are very similar and also the researches say that these two are maybe the most interchangeable emotion, so be careful. In fear, most of the spare blood goes into legs, so you are ready to run away and save yourself.

Eye-Brows

In fear, brows are raised and drawn together, which it looks like it's straightened. The eye-brows are tensed unlikely the surprise brows.

Eyes

Eyes are widely open, and the lower lid is tensed. The eye is more stretched than in the surprise so you can see more of the sclera (the white part of the eye).

Mouth

The mouth is open in fear, or the lip corners are drawn back, and they are tensed in both instances. Let's have a look.



Blends of emotions

The beautiful and also frightening thing about this is that all the emotions can blend as they want to. The beautiful thing about it is that we can feel all these beautiful emotions we know, but the frightening part about this is when we need to observe it, it gets much more difficult.

You have to train your eyes to see the clear emotions in the first place, and then you can start preparing yourself to see the blends of it.

Micro-expressions are expressions of emotions that are very quick and very subtle. Before we dive into the studying micro-expressions, I have to give one piece of advice. Because with observing micro-expression, you are usually peeking into the privacy of the person, you have to understand that you don't understand the situation of the person correctly. Hence, it's very tricky and challenging to correctly interpret what you have observed. The problem I have mentioned in the previous chapter about not knowing what the person reacts to is on its place even here.

Let me explain this on an example. You will talk to your friend, and you will notice a fearful micro-expressions. That was the first hard part to notice it, and the second one is to interpret it. But you suddenly don't know what was it about. Whether he was afraid of what you have said or how you said it, or he just remembered something, or you reminded him something he didn't want to you know about. It's tough to assign the explanation to the micro-expression correctly and even when you verbally confront the person he might deny any existence of the expression, and you make him angry on insisting you have seen it.

You have to be wise in asking questions and finding out what is going on. When it is something short term, you better not talk about it before the person starts or when some right occasion arises, take it and gently ask. You are now getting a powerful weapon in your hand, so you have been careful using it, it could cause a lot of pain. The power is now on your side, use it wisely.

About the **micro-expressions** go once more thru the videos of them and try any part of the expression can be micro-expressions. I cannot properly show it here neither in the video. Because the speed and genuineness wouldn't be there, but I will show you how the micro-expressions look like in the real-life if you go to the Facebook group you are a member of and search the videos there and you will see some real-life examples. Enjoy!

Summary of the section is now made with a paper with a pictographic display of each primary facial expression, so you easily remember it, and it's more efficient to use it.