

WINNING BODY LANGUAGE FOR SUCCESS IN CAREER AND LIFE

WINNING BODY LANGUAGE

CONTROL THE CONVERSATION,
COMMAND ATTENTION, AND
CONVEY THE RIGHT MESSAGE—
WITHOUT SAYING A WORD



— MARK BOWDEN —

WINNING BODY LANGUAGE FOR SALES PROFESSIONALS

CONTROL THE CONVERSATION
AND CONNECT WITH YOUR CUSTOMER
—WITHOUT SAYING A WORD



MARK BOWDEN
AUTHOR OF WINNING BODY LANGUAGE
WITH ANDREW FORD

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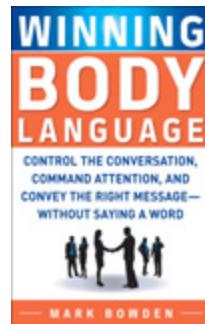
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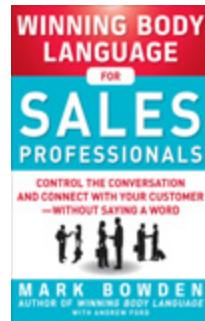
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Mark Bowden



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To Pig

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Preface

I get referred from client to client because of the results I get. Thanks to my reputation as a master of both verbal and nonverbal communication, when I walk into the room and begin to talk, there is already a preestablished high level of trust. We can begin working immediately, and my clients typically reach their goals at speed. And so I will spare you from any attempt to prove the credibility of my techniques with anything more than my personal views on their validity, based on my depth of research, knowledge, and, most important, long experience in the varied fields of arts, science, and entertainment, all of which converge for me in the relatively new field of *embodied cognition* (how the human mind is determined by the human form). My mission is to demonstrate, and train audiences around the world in the everyday practical application of this new angle on communication and its powerfully persuasive and influential effects on business.

According to one FTSE 100 company director, four out of five business communications fail. What this means is that most leaders, managers, entrepreneurs, and salespeople are having very little profitable impact when they talk to the people who matter most to their business. If you agree that communication excellence is a critical key to success in any business, and you can accept that an enormous proportion of human communication is nonverbal (it's often not what you say but *how* you say it that gets results), wouldn't it be useful to know how to instantly stand out, win trust, and profit when talking with your colleagues, clients, and superiors by using highly persuasive and influential *body language*?

If you want such communications as presentations, public speaking, team meetings, interviews and reviews, one-on-ones, water-cooler chats, and even media appearances to build trust and be profitable for everyone, including and especially you, then you can start *right now* to learn a new and powerful system for separating yourself from the crowd and communicating confidently by following the winning physical techniques in this book.

If you want to understand exactly *how* and *why* these powerful new techniques work, then read each chapter in depth, do the exercises, and get involved in the “Theory to Practice” case studies. These sections are evocative of common business experiences. They are here to serve as a further resource for developing your craft and your individual artistry in presenting winning body language. But if you simply need to know right now exactly *what to do* physically to win trust, then you can skip the introduction and go straight to the practical “Chapter Quick-Study” and “Just Do This Now” sections.

The work that I am about to take you through is innovative, and is extraordinarily powerful—even to the most experienced of communicators. It has also fast-tracked “lost causes” into confident communicators and turned the “pretty good” into the “pretty great.” So, if at any moment you begin to feel like questioning a technique or its rationale, step backward, take a breath, *trust*, and just do it. You will then see for yourself how effective my methods are.

Now read on and send your body out to work for you!

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Introduction

It is so easy to forget the massive impact that your body language can have on just how positively or negatively you are perceived in business. Even so, for some people, the level of mistrust that they build and the amount of respect that they lose with their nonverbal communication makes no difference to them. So look, no one needs to waste precious time here.

Stop Reading Now ...

Stop reading now if you are part of a commercial company that has no competition, holds a monopoly over a vital product or service for a very large population, and is totally at ease with the level and style of communication that it has with its captive audience. Frankly, the techniques in this book are quite superfluous. You don't need to communicate more effectively—if at all. This book is simply not the book for you.

If you are in a position within your organization where you wield total executive power, with no threat of demotion, review, or overthrow (maybe you have taken control of the business using extreme force and in doing so have neutralized all opposition), it's a good guess that you have no real need to engage with your colleagues in a way that wins their trust and compels them to help your goals. The physical communication models for persuading and influencing others that this book has to offer you are totally pointless for you. This book is not the book you are looking for.

Finally, should you be planning on leaving the world of business to become a reclusive cave-dwelling hermit for the rest of your life, living off worms and moss, totally independent of any human interaction and society to help you further your personal goals, the unique nonverbal communication techniques contained in these chapters and never before delivered to the general public, designed to help you stand out and win trust and profit, will not enhance your new life. This book should be firmly placed at the top of your “must not read” list.

So, to sum up, for any purchaser of this book who finds himself totally unthreatened by the usual market forces, poor public perception, or difficult human interactions, and so is unable to see any benefit in exponentially increasing his ability to communicate using this unique system of winning body language to control the conversation, command attention, and convey the right message without saying a word—let's hope you kept your receipt.

For everyone else around the globe who is still reading, congratulations; you have come to the right place. You know why you are here: because you recognize the fact that the feelings people have about you and your work are fundamentally based upon what is communicated by what they see you do, and not from what you think and say—and that is the real issue.

Communication Is a Billion-Dollar Problem

It is easy to understand why poor communication can cost a company dearly; for one thing, it simply takes longer for that sort of communication to be processed and understood by others, and even then it is most likely misunderstood. With poor communication, unnecessary questions are asked, discussions become needlessly lengthy, presumptions are adopted, and goals are wildly compromised to accommodate the misunderstandings created by this whole arduous process. In the end, the benefit that was originally intended from the communication almost always gets squeezed out of existence, and a dry husk of a message is instead pushed onto an audience. Poor communication is the culprit that caused one top pharmaceutical firm to lose \$253 million after presenting evidence at trial. Why? The jurors were simply confused, and they subsequently lost trust in the company's story. Since then, the same \$22 billion organization has agreed to a second \$4.8 billion settlement rather than risk alienating the court a further time. This is just one example of a company whose poor communication lost trust, business, and money for shareholders around the globe.

So What Is Your Contribution?

Are you keeping your communication tools sharp enough, performing at your very best. Whether in pure business dealings or in social shoulder

rubbing, the lifeblood of healthy communication must flow through all parts and extremities of the system; otherwise, the system will get sick. And how will you get help? Without effective communication at our disposal, it is totally impossible to organize people. If the use of all forms of visual or audible communication were taken from you, then how would you even plan for getting together for the planning meeting? Sure, you would be left with touch, taste, and smell with which to synchronize your agendas, but as you can imagine, unless both parties already knew a tactile sign language, it would end up being a very messy conversation.

So individually, you and those around you may have great brains that come up with superbly intelligent ideas, but without communication, you are totally isolated. Your individual intellects can very quickly become quite valueless to any organization, because without your being able to integrate with the organizational system as a whole, the greater good for everyone cannot be served—and if you are not an asset, then you may be a liability.

Presenting like a Dodo

Charles Darwin wrote in his second book, *The Descent of Man* (1871), that “Ignorance more frequently begets confidence than does knowledge.” And in a report from the year 2000 entitled *Unskilled and Unaware of It: How Difficulties in Recognizing One’s Own Incompetence Lead to Inflated Self-Assessments*, two Ig Nobel Prize–winning psychologists from Cornell University asserted that people who feel that they are achieving in the top third in ability actually tend to score in the lowest quarter, grossly overestimating their performance.

For this reason, it is important that even seasoned communicators look to themselves whenever they become overconfident of their abilities. Everyone should take the time to develop and evolve their work, not only to fulfill their own potential, but also to keep their competitive advantage in a free-market economy, where “survival of the fittest” remains the model for evolutionary development.

Changes in commerce and society at large are inextricably linked to changes in the ways in which valuable information can be exchanged. So leading the pack and staying one step ahead of the rest of the big game in

the communication jungle is not just linked to business survival—it *is* survival!

The Power of Communication

From watching other primates, one can expect that human beings first signaled to each other using simple gestures and sounds in order to group together, plan, hunt, and feed. As we physically and mentally advanced, our communication moved forward to include a fuller vocabulary of symbols and words. Small human groups or tribes could now look further afield, not only geographically in space but imaginatively in time, by laying down plans for the future, accounting for the past, negotiating the coalition of territories, or winning over the terrain through ever more elaborate strategies of aggression.

As the abundance of language increased, so too did the abundance of what humans were able to achieve with it, and as the ways in which language was able to be broadcast around the globe increased, so too did the power that language could have over vast swaths of land, and the people who lived in those lands.

It is the simple signs, sounds, signals, pictures, hieroglyphs, words, publications, and broadcasts disseminated across all channels and media, throughout time and space, that have revolutionized and advanced our world and our understandings within it. With our various sophisticated forms of communication, humankind has evolved into the major intelligent biological force on this planet.

It is worth noting that, on the flip side, poor communication has meant certain death for some groups that have been unable to sustain, or have lost control of, their communication methods, channels, or technologies, and so have disappeared or been subsumed by others—by losing the power of communication, they have often lost their political, social, artistic, economic, and ecological niches. For example, the decline of the Roman Empire could be argued as resulting from the collapse of their expansive, expensive, and consequently unsustainable communication network.

Human beings have evolved to such a degree that we no longer adapt to changes in our environment, but rather adapt our environment to the

changes in *us*. What's more, we have developed the capacity to pass down to others the skill and knowledge on exactly how to do this.

The Art and Science of Communication

It is perhaps this ability to pass our skill and ability down through the generations that explains why the techniques, models, and processes that you are about to learn come from ancient traditions of art going back to before the first civilizations, starting with the first professional storytellers, presenters, or public speakers—the mediators between the physical world and the realm of the imagination—the shaman, witch doctor, or magician.

Now, if the idea of using techniques that are thousands of years old and were passed down orally from this lineage of tribal sorcerers seems a little freaky or out there or just plain hocus-pocus, then maybe you should pay a visit to your hedge fund manager and ask him, “What do you think for the market this quarter?” Now watch carefully as the dance begins. First the charts will be summoned up, full of lines and symbols that map the past knowledge of the ancestors and point to a place in time that does not as yet exist. Maybe disincarnate entities will be allied with to bring deeper knowledge to the fore. Sure, you can’t hear them—they are, you are assured, on the other end of the phone, and they have insight into the declining equity markets way above and beyond the floor that you are currently on. They exist on a higher plane and bonus scale. Then finally, with the use of a tool that combines roots with floating points, a figure is arrived at and the bones are cast. “Go short!” is the answer. “Are you sure?” you reply. The manager nods sagely at his advice that you sell a risk that you don’t yet own.

Can this modern-day soothsayer be sure? Well, the day of reckoning on this piece of advice exists as an event in the future, so it is therefore only a prediction of the future based on specialized knowledge of the past and the present. If artful storytelling has convinced you of the insight, then you might trust to fortune and buy in. No one knows anything for sure here. You are banking on the act and the actor—there is nothing “real” that you can hold in your hand and with which you can have security. As one anonymous Wall Street executive was quoted by CBS News as saying when the financial crisis hit in 2008, “Everybody is pretending to have some

knowledge, some vision, because in fact money doesn't exist, it's a notional concept. Lose faith in the concept and you get chaos."

This is why the fundamental nonverbal art (image, movement, sound, and context) of the earth's first-ever professional story-tellers and every important performance innovation that has followed since are exactly what you will be studying in this book to help you win trust with body language in a very uncertain world.

Applause!

By evolving your communication ability through learning some winning techniques, you will become advanced in being able to share clear descriptions of your business, your vision and the barriers holding you back.

This book will teach you the power behind the world's greatest communicators, who know the importance of sending out clear and highly effective messages to all those around them, and who know the importance of *using body language strategically*. These powerful communicators know that the content of their message pales in comparison to *how they are seen and heard*. The unique system of nonverbal communication that I have devised, TruthPlane, is practiced by the very same top business and political leaders around the globe. By learning its gestural system and other practices, you will master a full vocabulary of gesture delivery including the universal secrets of persuasive and influential body language: a comprehensive and practical understanding of the signals that bind us all together, regardless of culture or sex, and that cause our messages to stand out, win trust, and gain profit with the people who really matter in our lives —the people who can bring us solutions.

The use of effective nonverbal communication can deliver unparalleled benefits to both you and your business, because effective communication reaps positive results: increased market valuation, greater employee commitment, involvement, retention, and morale; and stronger customer loyalty. All of this creates value.

Nothing happens without communication. It takes interaction between people to create an idea, a product, or a service, and it takes collaboration to

implement and execute it well. No one works in a vacuum; everyone communicates in some way. But lack of communication means lack of opportunity and loss of profit. That's why improving your communication will improve the health of your organization, your company, your wealth, and your well-being. That's why you are holding this book: *you* get it!

Of course, bad business is also about useless selling processes that miss the mark by a mile, and about rambling, cryptic, incoherent e-mails that are misunderstood, ignored, or taken too seriously, resulting in hurt feelings, ill will, and crisis meetings, where the company's lawyers and a human resource manager deliver alienating advice on how to communicate better in future. But you are not here to get clever at vision and mission statements, news releases, financial results, product announcements or legal argument. This is not about internal newsletters, client appreciation notes or annual reports. These are all important and have their place, but they form just a fraction of the communication that takes place every day. This book cuts to where the heart of communication is—*body language*.

We will focus on nonverbal mastery for whenever you have to deliver your message live. Not only is making a live presentation the number one fear in business communication, but according to a *New York Times* study of social anxiety and the 2005 edition of *The Book of Lists*, it is *the* number one fear—period. In second place came meeting new people, and death limped home third. Even the greatest orator of the Roman Empire (and the man perceived as its most versatile mind), Cicero, said of public speaking, “I turn pale at the outset of a speech and quake in every limb and in all my soul.”

Let's Begin

So now you perhaps have an even fuller awareness of the importance of communication to you in your business; you may also recognize that you've seen some people out there who are skilled at it. And some people who are successful seem to have something special about them: they captivate a room; everyone pays attention to them, and they benefit every time they show up. That's what *you* want to be able to do. This book is written to help you practically and substantially improve your ability to communicate and persuade. It ensures that you achieve real consistency and congruency

between the messages you send verbally and those you send nonverbally. This book is about exactly how you can use your body language strategically to your advantage when you go about your business, and especially when you speak, present, network, or negotiate, to profit from all your communications, *starting today*.

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Ago ergo cogito (I act, therefore I think).

—Motto of the University of Wisconsin's
Laboratory of Embodied Cognition

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1

Communication Is More than Words

They Just Don't See What You're Saying

The single biggest problem in communication is the illusion that it has taken place.

—George Bernard Shaw

In this chapter you'll learn:

- The fundamental mechanism for all communication
- How we all know what we all know
- Why content is not king
- Congruence and the key to losing trust and business
- The most important person in the history of communication, ever!

Before we get deep into body language, it is important to break down communication as a whole into its basic parts and understand the fundamentals behind it. This knowledge, the understanding of how communication actually works, is the starting line from which your real competitive advantage can really take off.

Human communication, reduced to its simplest form, consists of *a source transmitting a message to a receiver in order to achieve an intended result.*

So, to make sure that your communication is really taking place, first you need to make sure that there is a source (you), that you have a way of transmitting a message (using your body or your voice, writing, or some other method), and finally that you have a receiver (someone else). Oh, and

there's something else that is too often forgotten: you need a reason to send the message, an intended outcome, or it will be impossible to form the communication at all, or at best it will be nonsense, because if you do not know the intended end goal of any action, you cannot hope to select the best actions to perform in order to achieve that goal.

Thus, the basic linear model for human communication looks like this: the source encodes a message and sends it via a channel, to be received and decoded by the receiver. Of course, there is also the inevitable feedback to the source. For example, as you make your way to a business meeting, you notice that a car is about to pull in front of your vehicle; as a courtesy, you hit your horn to alert the driver of that car of the danger to him; he hears it and, to your surprise, flips you the finger in return!

Clearly one thing to look out for is whether your message has had the *desired effect* that you intended, or anything close to the desired effect, on your audience. As the highly influential American communication theorist Harold Lasswell described: *Who (says) What (to) Whom (in) What Channel (with) What Effect.*

Talking Trash

If the specific communication has not had the intended effect, when you look for where your message has been let down, it is best to keep in mind the modern computational communication model described by the acronym GIGO (Garbage In—Garbage Out). This principle was perhaps first hit upon by the genius engineer Charles Babbage commenting in his autobiography, *Passages from the Life of a Philosopher* (1864), that when he was asked (by an eminent British member of Parliament, no less) whether the outcome of a calculation would be correct even when incorrect data were placed into that calculation, he could only reply, “I am not able to comprehend the kind of confusion of ideas that could provoke such a question!”

The observation is that if the feedback appears to be nonsense, it could well be because you fed in a stream of similar nonsense in the first place! In all communication, pay attention to the fact that it is a two-way system with a feedback loop. In other words, “the phone goes both ways,” and any

message can easily escalate out of control and spiral into craziness, and when it does, everyone is to blame.

Understanding the Message

On top of all this, according to Shannon and Weaver's very popular model of communication, while the message is in transit, it is subject to all manner of distortion, and understandings and misunderstandings are influenced by factors well beyond the control of either the sender or the receiver.

To illustrate, a simple but relatively comprehensive diagram of human communication looks something like [Figure 1.1](#).

You can see the possibilities for corruption of the message and its meaning at every point in this model, either in the mind of the receiver through *generalization*, *deletion*, or *distortion*; or during the transit of the message as a result of “noise” either interrupting, distorting, or creating an amplified resonance in the message.

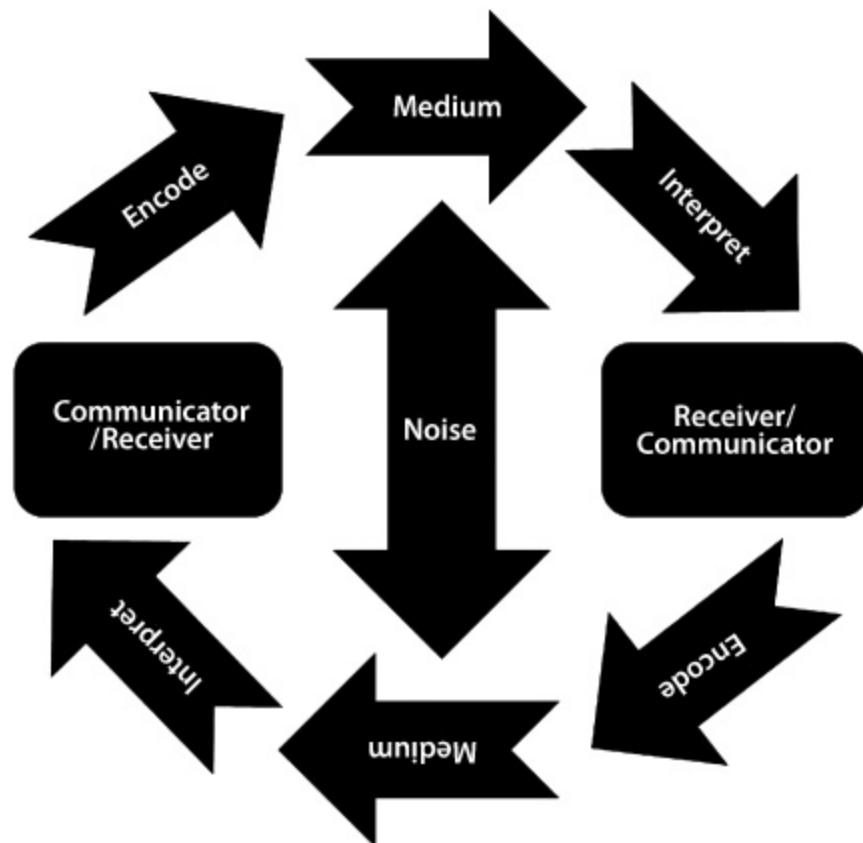


Figure 1.1 Communication Model

So how do we ever get to understand a communication?

How We Know What We Know

Let's look at it from the viewpoint of an area of philosophy called epistemology, which deals in theories around the question, "How do we know what we know?"

At this point, you may be thinking, "Why should an area of *philosophical* study be so important to the business body language practitioner, who surely should be focused on the influential effects of physical action, the *doing* rather than the *thinking*?" Well, the answer is that if you know the exact mechanism by which people understand any communication, you will have a better ability to influence the mechanics of that conversation. By doing so, you will optimize your persuasive influence over the recipient's mind and the final outcome of the communication: bringing the receiver's understanding in line with your goals.

Simply stated, when you can comprehend the cogs and wheels of how we gain understanding, you can deliver understanding more effectively, just as a mechanic who understands the workings of an engine can supercharge it, or a programmer who understands code can hack it, or a bartender who understands the simple science of a martini can mix the best Manhattan in town.

So what, according to philosophers, are the major ingredients that make up the cocktail that we call "knowledge"?

Facts

Thought in this area is as diverse as you might expect from a discipline in which thinking is an end in itself. However, the debate tends to summarily lead toward two main ingredients: "belief" and "truth." Indeed, the great Harvard epistemologist and metaphysician Roderick Chisholm defined knowledge as *justified true belief*. But what justifies the truth of a belief? Many would say that *facts* do the job—and as the eminent philosopher Edmund Burke once said of facts, "They are to the mind as food is to the

body.” So where does the mind get these nutritional facts, and why might some be more tasty to our feeling of *knowing* than others?

The word *fact* originally comes from the Latin *factum*, meaning “a thing done or performed.” This definition provokes the question: how do we know, as certainly as we ever can, that anything has really been done or performed? The answer may be that we *ourselves* must sense it with one or more of our traditional five senses or potentially more than a dozen other exteroceptive and interoceptive senses. Certainly, this is the viewpoint of Aristotle and a line of thinkers who place *our senses* as the foundation of all fact and belief, and so of truth and knowledge. You might say, “We sense it, therefore it is.” From this idea, we can understand that our senses, which form our impressions of reality, are our route to knowing that what is *out there* is indeed out there. Our senses are the exact tools that we use to form human understanding of what is happening in the world, and therefore what can be believed and held to be true and trustworthy.

Look Smart

However, in the business world, where the intellect is so often given the highest status, we would expect that we all know what we know because of how clever we are, not from what we sense outside of ourselves. In the top floors of an organization, those who occupy the “C-suite” are almost never referred to as the “sharpest eyes” or the “biggest ears,” but as “the smartest guys in the room”—it is about brains and not body parts, isn’t it?

If that is the case, though, then how do you account for Mehrabian’s 7 percent–38 percent–55 percent rule? I’m sure you don’t need reminding of it but for those who would like a quick review, here it is.

The Body Rules First, there are three commonly understood elements in any face-to-face human communication: *words*, *tone of voice*, and *body language*. The first category, the words, is known as *verbal* communication, and the last two categories, tone of voice and body language, are known as *nonverbal* communication (the focus of this book). The nonverbal elements have been found to be particularly important for communicating the information that forms a receiver’s understanding of the *feelings*, *attitude*, or *intent* behind a communication. Indeed, this is true to such an extent that

body language accounts for 55 percent of that understanding, tone of voice accounts for 38 percent, and the verbal content, the words, supplies only 7 percent of the perceived overall feeling, attitude, or intent that a communicator communicates. This implies, first, that the feeling, attitude, or intent that we might communicate is *almost entirely dependent* on the non-verbal message (93 percent), not on what we say.

What You Say

So, to put all of these psychological statistics on “silent messages” and the first insights derived from them into the context of business communication: when you are delivering any kind of business presentation, while your *intellectual content* may be delivered entirely verbally, the nonverbal cues are more than 10 times as important in your audience perceiving your *belief* or *conviction* concerning that material.

It’s of very limited use for the chief financial officer to only say, “We’ve had a great year.” To get close to convincing an audience of this, she needs it to *sound* (38 percent) and, most important, *look* (55 percent) to the audience like it is true. Indeed, it would seem from these statistics, first presented to the public by Albert Mehrabian (professor emeritus of psychology, UCLA), that in this case, when planning a speech, our CFO might be wisest to pay more attention to how she shows up looking like a good year has been had, than on the “It’s Been a Great Year” speech she is going to make.

As American modernist poet William Carlos Williams wrote, “It is not what you say that matters but the manner in which you say it; there lies the secret of the ages.” It appears that content is not king after all. But wait, there’s more.

All Together Now ...

More important, Mehrabian’s findings also conclude that to produce effective and meaningful messages the words, sound, and body need to support one another. In the case of any incongruence, the receiver of the message trusts the predominant nonverbal cues (remember our voice 38 percent + vision 55 percent) rather than the potential literal meaning of the words (verbal 7 percent).

Given this second insight from Dr. Mehrabian's research, it is fair to say, in the context of the earlier hypothetical CFO speech, that if the words of the presentation say, "It's been a great year," but the CFO's body stance and the cadence (rise and fall in tone) of her voice indicate, "It has been a *lousy* year," the audience is once again at least 10 times as likely to trust the perceived meaning of the messages coming through the nonverbal communication; listeners will come away with the feeling that it has been a *lousy* year. They will not trust the words over the voice, or even the words and voice over the body.

From these findings, we can quickly deduce that in the case of live human interaction, we know what we know because *we see it*. In short:

We believe it when we see it!

Yet the C-suite, board, directors, executives, shareholders, stakeholders, clients, customers, interviewers, and the public at large are not prone to making decisions purely based on faith in what they say—are they? Well, get this.

Blowing Smoke

We now know from the scientific findings so far that if we see one set of clear physical signals from the body, we are far more likely to accept their meaning as fact than any verbal message to the contrary. However, if we already have a trustworthy base of knowledge in an area, and so the meaning of the words is considered factual, still without perfect congruence with the nonverbal message we experience a state of "cognitive dissonance," which is the mental anguish we experience when knowledge and belief collide and conflict. This is a point at which we often put our faith in *how we feel* above the intellectual data we have received.

As an example, let's say that we own shares in a particular investment, and figures show that the market is way down, our investment's share price is at rock bottom, and by all accounts the future is bleak. However, when we show up at the annual shareholders' meeting, we are served champagne in an atmosphere of jubilation. While we know that the picture is grim, and we have experienced information elsewhere to suggest that we should get

out now, the feel-good factor we experience from drinking champagne in a party atmosphere, creates cognitive dissonance, potentially clouding our judgment given the feelings produced by the new physical experience. We may now feel that “it’s going to get better,” “there is some good news on the horizon,” or “there is truly cause for celebration.” And so we trust those shares further, perhaps unwisely and perhaps against our “better judgment,” because of the feeling produced by the champagne reception. But of course, you don’t fall for that type of manipulation ... do you?

Here’s another illustration of cognitive dissonance from the world of health and wellness that some of you may have noticed or even experienced yourselves: cigarette smokers tend to experience cognitive dissonance around the issue of how bad smoking is for their health. Medicine tells us how and why cigarettes cause lung cancer and can shorten any smokers’ life expectancy, yet many smokers may not have experienced the physical effects or seen any physical evidence of disease or a shortened lifespan. Furthermore, as they inhale the cigarette smoke containing nicotine and additives, these complex organic chemicals enter the bloodstream and most often produce a physical experience of pleasure for them, both in the body and in the mind—quite the contrary of feeling sick and in pain, they experience a pleasurable stimulation.

The intellectual understanding of *pain of death* from smoking is dissonant with the feelings of pleasure experienced during the act of smoking. The tension produced by these contradictory ideas and experiences causes the smoker to find ways of rationalizing the conflict between the intellectual concept of pain and the physical experience of pleasure: smokers conclude things like “everyone dies in the end” or “smoking keeps me from gaining weight, which is also unhealthy” or “I’ll just have one last one and then I’ll give it up!” in order for the physical experience to rationally take precedence.

Because a physical experience is often stronger than an intellectual one for the human brain, dissonance becomes a threat to our self-concept (the knowledge we possess regarding ourselves, which creates our own, most stable idea of exactly who we are), and so the intellectual facts are rationalized into an alignment with the physical experience; the smoker has faith that he is not dying from smoking right now.

Illogic Can Be Rationalized

Excuses are always easier than behavioral change. Everybody from the bottom floor of an organization to the very top is prone to rationalizing conflicts in an effort to align what she is hearing with the perceived fact, truth, and reality of what she may see communicated. All of us are constantly rearranging, reinterpreting, or simply creating things that have been said in order to fit them into the world that we see in front of us.

Body Language Creates Illusions

I have always been fascinated by the natural world and the way it communicates, but my personal interest in (some would say obsession with) body language, nonverbal communication and persuasion and influence came from my fascination with illusionary mime as a young boy. I was highly entertained by those performers who could create the impression of walking in the wind, being lifted by a helium balloon and of course the much mocked “trapped in a glass box.” I was totally engaged by their physical control and how it not only afforded them to tell a story without opening their mouths, but also changed their audience’s perception of “reality.” It was wonderful magic that looked and felt both fun and powerful, and so I put aside my initial desire for the life of a marine biologist, exchanged my hero Jacques Cousteau for Marcel Marceau, and spent hours practicing how to create these illusions myself for others.

Thus, it is so easy, once we have become assured that what we see is the truth, to continue seeing it as so even when there is strong evidence to the contrary through other channels—and so we come back to faith. And while beliefs are hard to undo, faith can often be blind and is therefore dangerous to the survival of any business. As the modern evolutionary biologist Richard Dawkins states, “Blind faith secures its own perpetuation by the simple unconscious expedient of discouraging rational inquiry.”

This is why congruence between the verbal and the nonverbal is essential to the business communicator. Without a clear, consistent message conveyed on the two fronts of what we hear and what we see, a chasm of irrational thoughts opens up, potentially leading to some leaps of faith in the receiver that could produce some doomed outcomes.

Auditory Distortion

Again, with our hypothetical CFO's speech: if the verbal says, "It's been a great year!" and yet we see a physicality that suggests just the opposite—that there is no cause for celebration, and therefore perhaps no real financial gain—then we might create an auditory hallucination that causes the verbal content to fit the nonverbal attitude we are perceiving, and hear that "It's *not* been a great year."

But let's even just imagine that we have some prior knowledge from the company's financial auditors that it has indeed been a *great* year, and what is more, the dividend check we received in the mail that morning from our shares in the company was a fat one. If the nonverbal suggests that it has been a lousy year and cognitive dissonance occurs between what we know and what we see and believe, then we are quite likely to rationalize the incongruity. "Oh no—perhaps the next check will turn out to be no good!" Your stockbroker may advise you against selling, but that advice may fall on deaf ears because the broker did not *see* the speech you just heard. Your broker has only read the report and does not have the feeling you have about this company's fortunes. Your broker still has faith in the stock; you just lost yours.

The Eye of the Beholder

You're getting the picture, right? Unless an audience sees the right *image*, it doesn't hear the right *message*. The audience members may even make up their own message to fit the picture that they see, because the reality of this whole human communication system is that the receiver is ultimately in charge of the message received; it all gets translated in the receiver's head. Sure, you may think you are sending out the message "x," but then you hear back that your audience heard the message "y." In order to minimize the

possibility of this kind of total misinterpretation, you need to understand this:

The message happens in the audience's head.

The receiver is without doubt the most important person in any communication. Only by understanding this can you realize that you need to concentrate on not just the message that you send out, but also how it can potentially be interpreted. If you can concentrate on sending out nonverbal messages that are easy for the receiver to interpret correctly—clearly coded, with congruent images and sound—then the audience's brains stand a far greater chance of relaxing and getting your meaning in the way you intended.

To understand how your message could be interpreted and indeed misinterpreted, you will need to understand the mindset of your audience. You can then work toward shifting that mindset to one that *can* interpret your clear, congruent message in the way you intend. In order to understand your audience, you need to fix the following mantra in your mind every time you communicate:

It's not about me—it's about the audience.

Individual Interpretation

So much of the time in life in general, and particularly in business, it is easy to think that everything is about us. Well, of course! We are well practiced at creating the world around us in our own heads. The way the world exists to each of us personally is a creation resulting from the individual way in which our unique brains are specifically wired and patterned to receive the universe's messages. Our personal understanding of the world could be boiled down to the diversity of our individual genetic makeup, a result of experiences that have shaped our concepts about the world, or even a result of the noise that is getting between us and the message created in the environment in which we choose to be—in short, *nature, nurture, and choice*.

Because of this complex process of personal reception and creation, we constantly forget that every other person out there is also using his own individual process. Therefore, the world that we describe is not necessarily the exact world that others receive because of the way they are patterned to interpret our world in their minds. So we think we are communicating one thing, and yet we find out that it is perceived quite differently.

Of course, the usual business solution to this universal communication problem has been to create more and better content. You will recognize this as document obesity, PowerPoint overkill, lengthy speeches, and detailed discussions being held for hours “in the weeds” of the problem. This comes from a schoolroom mentality of getting high marks for demonstrating a high quantity of correct information. You have no doubt sat through laborious presentations and communications that take this attitude, and yet you know you were not engaged. The substance of the content is not what grabs audiences the most—it is the meaning that it has for us. However, you might instantly recognize this attitude as the one that you adopt when you are put on the spot: “We need *you* to make the presentation!” “Oh #@*%! —*What am I going to say!*”

They Need to Trust You

Remember, the members of your audience are just not that interested in you. This is not because they are selfish, but because they are human, sentient, and survivalist. They are watching you, and they need to experience a feeling of *trust* in what they see and hear from you first—for their own comfort. It is not what you say that builds that trust; it is what you do for them that allows them to feel it. As the American novelist Carl Buechner said, “They may forget what you said, but they will never forget how you made them feel.”

Trust is the key to business. Indeed, Canadian Peter Munk, chairman and founder of Barrick Gold, the world’s largest gold Mining Corporation, and one of the biggest entrepreneurs in mineral mining, has said, “The most important component to any business is trust.”

Trust is a feeling, not a tangible thing. In the end, business deals do not come down to content; they come down to how much we trust the content—people buy *feelings*, not things! Help people to feel trust in you through

your nonverbal communication, and whatever the substance of your content, it's going to get deep into their hearts and minds, and they are quite likely going to *do* whatever you ask!

In the end, it is what people *do* alongside you that will build the lasting connections between you. Shared experience of action is the glue for any group, tribe, or society. The greatest trust is built when people go beyond their individual survival, rise above the selfish gene, and advance to the evolutionary level of joining in “a movement” together. Group feeling through action is what affirms existence. **We act, therefore we are.**

So, by now you will want to know exactly what to do congruently with your body to win the trust of your audience. Of course you do, but first you must consider exactly what you have been doing incongruently in order to take on, install, and master these new physical techniques for good, and that is just what you'll do in the next chapter.

Chapter 1 Quick Study

We believe, trust, and act on what we see more than on anything else in the world. If we see something that does not fit exactly with what is being said, we feel that it is incongruent. We then trust what we saw as being the truth over what was said. This is not rational—but it is human. Great communicators are congruent and so cause less confusion or cognitive dissonance. Congruence in communication wins trust.

Just Do This Now

1. Which people in business do you trust and which do you not trust? Why do you not trust them? Have you witnessed them doing something that was not congruent in what they do and what they say and in line with what they had said or promised? Think how this makes you feel, and what would it take to get you to trust them again?
2. Ask yourself what you can *do* for people in business who may be losing trust in you.

3. Now see what happens if you take some immediate action to win back trust. How quickly do you see positive results for yourself and your business?

Chapter 1 Case Study

Theory to Practice: “Seeing” on a Screen?

“It really was strange to watch,” explained the middle manager, describing the recent Webcast of the CEO’s quarterly update. Trimmed budgets dictated that the “town hall meeting” of previous quarters was replaced by a “live Webcast” from the CEO’s office, complete with real-time Q&A.

“From his speeches at all the other town halls, I would have described him as a great speaker and a very charismatic leader,” she recounted. “That wasn’t the case with the Webcast. I am not completely sure what the problem was. I can say that it had a negative effect on my view of his leadership and probably affected my involvement in achieving the vision.”

With increased scrutiny of dollars spent, what are companies to do when the HR and corporate communications budgets do not allow these conference-type employee gatherings?

Insight

It is certainly worth asking questions like, “Do we really need to get everyone in the same place for these events?” The answer may continue to be yes because of the benefits derived from getting staff members “all fired up” over achieving the organization’s goals.

The message could be identical, but look at the differences between the “broadcast” and “conference” events:

	Broadcast	Conference
<i>Speaker frame</i>	Sitting at a desk	Standing/moving on a stage
<i>Audience surroundings</i>	Sitting at my desk	In a large group in a hall
<i>Interactivity</i>	One-way visual and sound	Two-way visual and sound

In executing the broadcast option, presenters must address the incongruence of media presentation to effectively creating relatedness between leadership and staff and across the whole organization. Feelings of alienation and unrelatedness cause an avoidance response in the human mind and automatically turn us off to the content. Attention to body language should be a large part of the preparation for Web-enabled interactions such as the one just described. Being able to see more movement and body language that is more akin to a conference event can create more of a “group event” feeling by creating a more solid, human connection through the camera. To complete the experience, audience members can also form small or larger groups in their remote locations to watch the speech together.

Provocation

Why is it presumed that the physical language of business Webcasts should be like that of a studio news broadcast and not, say, that of a current affairs programme an outside broadcast, or even a prime-time game show—using the more entertaining and connected nonverbal style that goes with those genres?

If some of those potential styles don’t feel businesslike to you, ask the questions, “What is entertainment,” “What is business?” and “What would a body do to win at both of these?”

2

What We Have Here Is a Failure to Communicate

Shedding the Common Body Language of Bad Business

If we are strong, our strength will speak for itself. If we are weak, words will be of no help.

—John F. Kennedy

In this chapter you'll learn:

- Why being an optimist is overrated
- How you're naturally hardwired for paranoia
- The chemistry of fear—and its mismanagement
- The biggest body language *don't* when presenting
- Top nonverbal ways to put an audience to sleep and lose business!

When we communicate, we are often unknowingly creating a potent feeling of distrust in others. Sadly, even established public speaking and presentation coaches worldwide consistently teach a common mistake that, more than any other factor, can overwhelmingly cause a speaker or business presenter to be viewed negatively by any audience. But before you learn how to never ever make that mistake yourself, and in so doing improve your mastery of nonverbal influence immediately, you must first understand this.

Why Have We Made It This Far?

There is a really good reason that you are looking at this page right now and reading these words, and it is not just that you want to improve your ability in human communication. You are right here, right now, alive and reading this because your brain has a very special way of thinking that naturally increases your chances of survival, and you inherited this routine process the very moment you were conceived. It is also responsible for the vast majority of the negative body language in business today.

So, let me give you the simple unconscious thought process that is naturally hardwired into your brain that helps to deliver you from potential threats:

First and foremost, take a negative view.

Optimists Are Frequently Surprised

Here is the way in which this preexisting programming works to your advantage. Imagine that you are an early human around about 200,000 years ago. It is the dead of night, and you are comfortable in your warm cave, asleep with your small family unit. Suddenly, your prehistoric partner wakes you up with a start and indicates that she has heard an ominous noise outside the cave entrance.

You are mentally predisposed to take the negative view, to instantly react *pessimistically*—“Uh-oh! It’s a wildcat!”—and without blinking you quickly rouse the group, pick up the big stick that is lying next to you and move cautiously to the exit of your cave to potentially flee or defend yourself and your family from attack and possible death.

Now, it could indeed be a vicious animal, or it could just be the wind. If it is the first, you and your family stand a better chance of survival because *you are ready* and able to run or defend yourself and your genetic line as best you can; you were wise to be immediately and unconsciously wary, or pessimistic about the unknown sound. If it turns out to be only the wind in the trees, then you have lost nothing but a little sleep, but you have gained a statistically better chance of survival than, say, the prehistoric optimist, who in this selfsame situation thinks, “I bet it’s nothing,” and rolls over and goes back to sleep.

The optimistic mindset lets the person sleep soundly, but quite significantly lowers the chances of his genetic line surviving! The optimistic outlook leaves the sleeper unprepared to defend himself and his family should the chances that it's a predator go against him. So you can quite see how in a dog-eat-dog—or rather a large cat-eat-human—world, the optimists and their families were all soon dinner and the pessimists reproduced and survived.

The optimistic mindset has mostly been ironed out of our unconscious mind over time by the evolutionary process of natural selection. Darwinism at a neurological level has made the optimistic unconscious, for the most part, very nearly extinct. Only the programming for pessimism has predominantly survived within the unconscious mind. As we already know, it is that unconscious mind that rules our life on a daily basis, often for the sake of our personal survival and that of our species.

A Leopard Can't Change Its Spots

Now, think of all those colleagues, bosses, and gurus over the years who, when it comes to business communication, have advised you, “Hey, don’t be so negative—be optimistic! Be positive! Once you get in front of the group, you’ll be fine!” Upon closer examination, it turns out that they were expecting a leopard to change its spots, because in reality, our default mindset is *acutely paranoid*. Remember this, because you are going to discover later in this chapter just how the vast majority of communication and presentation training available to date ironically works fruitlessly against several million years of this natural survival programming. Being optimistic without being prepared dramatically increases the sense of unease in communicators and audiences alike by failing to recognize and respect how the mind and body fundamentally work when under pressure.

What’s the proof? There is a plethora of communication/presentation training out there, and everyone in business seems to have attended course after course—yet we are all constantly bored, confused, disengaged, stupefied, and too often condescended to or even offended by the majority of what we see and hear. The bar on business communication is set so low that there are almost no entry-level requirements other than being a living human being (and even then some seem to have slipped through the net!). Statistics from Andy Lopata and Peter Roper’s 2006 book on business

communications, *And Death Came Third*, state that “81% of organizations were poor at presentation.” According to many sources, giving a presentation is the number one fear in business, yet most organizations have naively instilled an optimistic cultural mindset concerning presenting.

Public Speaking Pessimism

All across the planet right now, leaders, entrepreneurs, and professionals of all kinds are stating their case in boardrooms, on stages, on TV, in meeting halls, in corridors, at networking meetings, and at lunches. And you can be sure that for the billions of people who are communicating under pressure right now, this simple, primeval routine programming of their unconscious minds to act on the *negative forecast* of any event is playing loudly in the background.

They come to present, and because there is very little hard information on how the communication will pan out for sure, positively or negatively, their ancient brain takes over and the primal pessimism kicks in to ensure their best chance of survival—or so it thinks.

You see, the primitive mind also sees everything in terms of black or white, good or bad—there is no gray area of thinking, no “maybe.” If something looks potentially bad, then the primitive brain categorizes it as just *bad*, and the body’s resulting reactions are those deemed appropriate by pre-organized response routines. Even anything that is unpredictable or uncertain will be categorized as a threat, in turn causing a retreat response—just to be safe and never sorry.

This means that presenters worldwide are in front of their audiences, thinking at a deep unconscious level, “There are other people here, and I don’t know for sure what is going to happen, so I’ll treat this as a threat—chances are that this will make me more likely to survive it.” Of course, all they consciously experience is the feeling of “Oh, *#@#!!” Just like the prehistoric people of all our brains’ pasts, the sympathetic nervous system, a control mechanism for our body’s fundamental functions, initiates a response that is as familiar to us as it was to the first vertebrates on this planet—a response that can be traced back through our mammalian ancestors and reptiles, and right back to fish: *fight or flight*.

Danger When sensory data hit the brain stem, or, as some call it, the R complex or the reptilian brain, in a pattern that is registered and perceived as “danger,” the rate of our adrenal activity is quickly increased. This, in turn, facilitates reliance on set behaviors that are often related to alertness, defense, and combat, along with the physical readiness to execute these tactics effectively—our fight-or-flight response is activated.

Also our simple reptilian mindset categorizes anything that we can’t predict easily or is uncertain as a risk, and so stimulates our most fundamental nervous system to take in lots more data while closing down the number of categories to label and understand it by in order to allow quick computation and analysis. At the same time, our bodies fill up with adrenalin so that we can be physically ready for effective aggression toward the threat if running in the opposite direction has proved ineffective.

Presentation Anxiety

No surprise that business communicators at all levels often end up talking to their audiences in a frozen state, or one of submission or aggression. Their unconscious minds assume that they are not able to predict with any great certainty the exact outcome of this most critical and complex of human interactions. The more humans there are in the mix and the more imperative a positive outcome is, the more unpredictable and uncertain the situation appears to be to the unconscious mind. Complexity and importance bring about the unconscious imagination of a whole heap of possible threats and potential disappointments.

A presenter just has to get up in front of a group of people (any more than four is categorized as “many” by the unconscious mind), and in kicks the impulse to freeze, flee, fight, or finally *faint*—the “play dead” response. All of these begin by sending adrenalin coursing through the bloodstream, rapidly preparing the body for reaction and appropriate action in an immediate emergency situation. (In fact, even just one person can push the presenter’s *unpredictability* button—“Will this person like my pitch or not?”)

Acute anxiety—the result of all this stress—can eventually stimulate the release of a chemical called norepinephrine into the brain. This is the body’s own antidepressant. (You’ll recognize this as the high you feel when you

finally get off the white-knuckle ride to make up for the terror you felt when you were on it, or the elated over-confidence of a poor presenter after a car crash of a corporate communication.) Further symptoms that you may recognize in others include a panic attack, a drained complexion, extreme fluctuations in temperature, sweating, dryness of the mouth and choking sensations, dizziness, feelings of “unreality” and confusion, introspection, and loss of concentration and memory.

These reactions are all a perfectly reasonable response to being attacked by a hungry lion; perhaps, however, rationally they could be considered a little over the top for reading from a PowerPoint slide in front of a small committee.

Animal Instinct

So presenters are freezing, fleeing, or fighting their audiences in fright (and maybe even fainting too, or at least taking a sick day) because they cannot safely predict the outcome of an important communication exchange. And how can we tell that the majority of them are doing this as they speak? Next time you are watching a series of business presentations, watch the presenters closely. Do you see their hands down by their sides, their stomachs crunched in, and their shoulders down (hunched over), chin tucked in, forehead down and eyes narrowed? Do you see some repetitive movement from side to side? This is the human body getting ready either to avoid attack, to be attacked, or to attack. And this is unfortunately how the vast, vast majority of business communicators meet their audiences to a lesser or greater degree.

What exactly is happening here? This posture drops the person’s center of gravity to facilitate balance and power when ducking and running, to absorb the energy of an attack, or to spring into offensive action. The hands are below the waist to facilitate movement, as the arms are needed as pendulumlike weights (to walk or run, we need the swinging motion of our arms to help move us forward) to propel the body away from or toward a threat. The stomach is crunched in to shield the soft vital organs in that area, protected only by a muscle wall because of the body’s design, which allows a diverse range of movement at the body’s center (instead of protecting the core with skeletal tissue and suppressing mobility). Along with the repetitive shifting of weight to remain a moving target and the tucked-in

chin to protect both the trachea and carotid artery, supplying oxygen to the body and blood to the brain and head down with narrowed eyes to protect sight, this is the posture of someone who is tremendously frightened or potentially highly aggressive.

Can you recall the last time *you* had something of a similar posture when you made a presentation?

View to a Kill

So it is the vulnerable “vital” or “kill” points of the body that we unconsciously protect when we feel anxious. The human race’s business culture has introduced the format of “giving presentations” as a positive commercial tool, yet our old brains can’t recognize the personal benefit. When we get up there to present, we still feel that age-old fear of danger. So we protect ourselves with posture. Furthermore, we will angle ourselves side on to the audience to decrease the vulnerable surface area to attack, or maybe hide a little behind an object such as a podium, chair, or table, touching this object for security and positioning ourselves in relation to it as we would to a shield or a weapon. We can also unconsciously gravitate toward windows and doors to be sure that we are close to an exit. Watch this behavior the next time you attend a presentation. More important, watch this behavior in yourself—it is natural, and you are predisposed to it. First recognize it, then, as you will find, you will be able to change it with the specific physical techniques coming up in the next chapter of this book.

Most important, how do you feel about the speaker when she presents to you in this way? Do you have confidence in her? Do you trust her? Do you feel that she is calm and assertive and able to deal with pressure as a leader? Is she credible to you as a potential provider? Or is she creating a feeling of distrust in you because what you see is someone who is showing all the fundamental signs of attack or retreat?

Think about the hypothetical scenario of our CFO telling us, “It’s been a great year!”: it may be this fight-or-flight posturing that is responsible for the incongruent nonverbal signals—the mixed messages that cause us not to trust the statement because of the physical impression that the CFO is prepping to flee or attack, is “stuck in the headlights,” or is just rolling over and dying in front of us!

Pack Mentality

What's more, the pack copies the leader. The audience copies the presenter. Part of our brain is free of any logical thought process and is more emotionally based. It is sympathetic at an unconscious level with strong signals that it receives when watching and listening to other human beings. Not only do we have more faith in what we see, but we also have more faith in what we feel emotionally. Therefore, when we "connect" with another person on an emotional level, we trust the feelings that are communicated because they feel like they are *ours* too. We "mirror" or copy others' actions and feelings and have faith in them through our own physical and emotional experience of them.

It is theorized that the chemical that is most responsible for emotional bonding in humans, oxytocin, is involved in the human mirroring system, producing increased empathy and rapport and influencing generosity within partnerships and social groups. This chemical instills trust, increases loyalty, and promotes the "tend and befriend" response by diminishing fear—a response that is great for business in so many ways. When human beings get together, they can often display a complex and rapid exchange of largely nonverbal information regarding their emotional states. In other words, we can detect what others are feeling and rapidly adjust our own thinking, feeling, physiology, and actions to precisely match the situation. Part of your mind works alongside the sympathetic nervous system to release oxytocin for a deep, personal connection below the level of consciousness. It draws the emotions of a group into congruence. Human beings at all ages are active in this sense.

It is this reaction that causes any audience to mirror or mimic the messages that a presenter sends nonverbally. And in the case of the presenter displaying the symptom of fight or flight—well, the audience members just join right in. Only there are normally more of them than the speaker, so this can quickly spiral into a feedback loop of fear, aggression, and submission. "*Tough crowd. ... I got eaten alive!*"

Mimic

Training in physical and visual theater opened up a huge vocabulary of movement for me, and I found that I was adept. I ate, drank, and slept the world of performance, and my eyes were opened to the extreme power in the body to understand and change psychological and emotional states. (More so than thought, intention and feeling can ever do by themselves.) Take, for example, the exercise of “pastiche,” in which I would mimic another’s personal movement rhythms and idiosyncratic gestures. This was most exciting when, in performing the other person, I could gain insights into her innate mindset through being receptive to the thoughts and feelings that copying her movement induced in me. One piece of vocabulary I would use when studying an individual was to discern whether he was “above the table” or “below the table”; this referred to the “TablePlane,” (see Appendix) an imaginary surface that cuts through the body horizontally at the navel. If you take your center of gravity below that plane, you become sluggish, heavy, and often a little depressed in feeling—quite “passive.” If you take your center of gravity above it, you became lighter, more airy, and a little more nimble mentally—quite “active.” I would also see whether people were in front of the “door frame” or behind it. By imagining a surface that cuts through the body laterally and stepping your center of gravity either forward of this or behind it, you become psychologically more extroverted or introverted respectively. It is possible to go so far behind the door frame that you become so self-conscious that it is impossible for you to speak; you can also see this in others and shift them physically to give them instant confidence. By using combinations of these positions, one can literally step into another mental state while still being “authentic” because it is you doing it and so it is your genuine emotional state in that moment. For example, above the table and in front of the door frame can become hyper and aggressive—totally “in your face!” Try it out next time you want to clear a room quickly.

The Big Don't: Dropping Your Hands

Not only are you predisposed to drop your hands down by your sides when you present, *but the majority of traditional and present business presentation training tells you to do this!* These presentation manuals and trainers not only tell you to keep your hands loose by your sides, but also tell you to stand still. Let me make this quite clear: *you cannot do anything worse!*

Dropping your hands and standing still in front of an audience causes your unconscious mind to wonder why you have made yourself a static target. At this stage, your body will most likely respond by “playing dead.” This is the mechanism that says that *if we are in danger and we are not going to move, we had better pretend to be very weak or even dead so that we don’t get eaten.* That’s when you get the weak body, dull voice, and, worst of all, a lifeless look in the eyes. The audience will see you as roadkill—highly unappetizing! This fright response can also lead to an almost narcoleptic sleep response or cataplexy (a muscular weakness brought on by strong emotion)—a faint response in the most acute cases of a stress response to public speaking.

The GrotesquePlane

I call the region of the body below the waistline the *GrotesquePlane*. (*Grotesque* comes from the same Latin root as *grotto*, meaning a small cave or hollow.) In modern English, grotesque has come to be used as a general adjective for something ugly, incongruous, or unpleasant, and thus it is often used to describe distorted forms. Not only this, but a cave is associated with dark, covert, and untrustworthy areas, where much is hidden from sight. The cave is where our prehistoric ancestors, and thus our animalistic instincts, live. Actioning gestures in the GrotesquePlane can open up the darker recesses of our instinctual mind. It is for these reasons that gestures in this area are so apt to be described as “in the grotesque.”

Embodied Cognition

Let’s now go through exactly what dropping your arms does to your body and your mind. In nature, there are really only two reasons for you to drop

your arms: to rest or to move. We have talked about how with your arms dropped and your adrenalin pumping, you will start to shift your weight in front of an audience, literally looking shifty—not easy for those who are watching you to trust. This shifting can easily escalate to pacing up and down. The brain says that if we have our arms by our sides, we should be moving—especially with all those people looking at and judging us.

But when you stand still with your arms hanging down, the body takes this as a signal to rest, or even sleep. Yes, that's the biggest reason why the audience gets sleepy in a presentation: you are standing still with your arms hanging down. The audience members quickly copy the leader and let their arms relax in their chairs, sit back, and trance out. They become the living dead, just like the presenter. With the arms hanging down and the body still, a person's heart rate, breathing rate, blood pressure and levels of oxygen to the body and brain can decline quite rapidly taking the brain's electrical activity to a state that is getting dangerously near to the theta wave rhythmic cycle of sleep.

When the arms hang down and the body is still, the voice follows and drops significantly in tone (another nonverbal indicator of the meaning behind a message). This deeper voice then tends to drop even further at the end of each thought. Sighs and “ers” have a downward intonation, and there are really only three reasons for a downward intonation: sleep, depression, and command—the dormant presenter, the despondent speaker, and the despotic leader.

The Dormant Presenter If you wish to send a child to sleep with a story, just send the tone of your voice down at the end of each line of text, and start the next line at the deep tone you ended the last one on. So your voice drops down and down like a flight of stairs. The tone of voice informs the old brain that it is time to relax the body and decrease the breathing rate, heart rate, blood pressure and brain's activity. Certain chemicals are sent around the body to tell the brain to start shutting down some of the nonvital functions, most importantly the conscious mind. The child's skin begins to go paler and waxy in tone as his eyes begin to glaze over and his limbs begin to go limp. You see, it is not the story that sends us to sleep, but the tonality of the reading that gives us the instruction at a deep, deep level.

And you have certainly witnessed speakers and presenters who have put both themselves and their audience to sleep in seconds with their downward-inflected tonality. Putting the hands down by the sides and being still is the culprit that is largely responsible for this tranquilizing tonality.

The Despondent Presenter Next is the depressed downward tonality—the chief financial officer who tells us, “It’s been a great year!” but in a tonality that says, “I am close to hanging myself. ... Dump my stock right now.” As Dr. Mehrabian’s studies concluded, given a choice between believing the content and believing the nonverbal messages, the unconscious mind will go with the nonverbal as being more trustworthy. Once again, hands down by the sides is a sure-fire route to creating a downturn in credibility.

The Despotic Presenter Finally, there is the loud-voiced downward tonality, which is more prone to happen when the hands are down at the sides and the body is pacing. Pacing up and down in the space creates the over-confidence of being a moving target and puts more air into the lungs; the brain functions better with more oxygen intake and processes some of the fight-or-flight chemicals so as not to depress and poison the system. However the extra air volume in the lungs gives a loud, forceful downward inflection that can sound overtly commanding, especially when mixed with an adrenalin fueled attitude—a product of the aggressive “fight” response. This may be acceptable to an audience that feels that it is clearly under threat from somewhere else and can sense that dangerous uncertainty personally; such people will be attracted to a strong command structure in the tone of the voice. It will feel more certain and so safer to them. More often than not, however, in the modern business world the commanding voice seems too aggressive and often just crazy. Trust disappears because the audience members cannot see for themselves the imminent threat to which the leader seems to be having a strong response.

Armed forces use the command tonality to great effect in training to stop the soldiers from questioning what the threat is when they cannot see it. It can take months of repetitive drill and other “incentives” to *emotionally desensitize* combatants so that they will respond to orders without question in all circumstances, obeying commands during periods of stress or when they are under no perceived stress.

To illustrate, consider a military combat situation. When a soldier encounters an initial sign of threat, the socially appropriate response, i.e., the response demanded by his military training and reinforced by other members of his unit, is usually the “stop, watch, and listen” heightened-alertness response. This behavior is consistent with the biological predisposition toward the freeze response. But as the reality of a firefight grows imminent, the biological and situational demands are no longer so aligned. The evolved hardwired instinctual response to flee is in conflict with military training, and this conflict can further increase the intensity of this already stressful experience. This is why the military has some unique and highly effective training methods to manage and desensitize soldiers to operation stress and counteract their natural instincts to flight rather than fight. However, these training techniques are frankly a little extreme for the business communicator’s needs. We will leave them well alone.

For most of us who are neither giving nor receiving military orders, in our daily business dealings, barking commands can often kill rapport and get you a name for being an insensitive idiot, potentially quashing lucrative deals in your wake. “I love the smell of napalm in the boardroom!”

Lead with Your Body

Given this new insight, if you have any publications or training manuals that tell you to keep your hands by your sides when you speak, do yourself a favor now, and tear those pages out and burn them! Indeed, burn the whole book or training manual, because if that is some of its best advice, what is its worst like?

What these trainers do not know is the fundamental effect of certain movements on the brains of both the person who is moving and anyone viewing that movement. They have no knowledge of the powerful effect that even small movements of the body have on the emotional impulses of the mind. Of course, masters of the performing arts have known these secrets for thousands of years, and more recently behavioral psychologists and neurologists have recognized the significance of the motor system in influencing cognitive and affective processes. As George Lakoff, a champion of theories on embodied cognition, states in his 2002 work *Moral Politics*, “Our brains take their input from the rest of our bodies. What our

bodies are like and how they function in the world thus structures the very concepts we can use to think. We cannot think just anything—only what our embodied brains permit.”

Specific movements may become so strongly associated with a cognitive or affective state that their initiation consistently elicits that corresponding state. As the simplest example, take the way arm flexion is habitually used for pulling something toward oneself, and arm extension for pushing something away. As a result, these movements have become associated with positive and negative outcomes, respectively, and psychological researchers have proven that performing them tends to invoke corresponding reactions. For instance, conscious use of such approach and repel arm movements can influence an individuals’ feelings of liking or dislike respectively.

His Master’s Voice

Movement experts such as the world-renowned Moshé Feldenkrais (physicist, World War II spy, judo expert and teacher at the Esalen Institute), in his book *Awareness through Movement* (1972), recognize that since the nervous system is mainly occupied with movement, “Correction of movement is the best means of self improvement.” As in the European schools of acting stemming from Michael Chekhov and the modern American methods from Sanford Meisner, the idea of “impulse” is key to creating “authentic” performance. Spontaneous instinct drives human behavior, and so emotional impulses and not sense memory or emotional memory inform the most dynamic of acting techniques. Authentic feelings arise from activities and reactions to “the moment” or “the now,” This is fundamentally why actors are called actors—they *do* action. If thinking where of primary importance in the moment of performance they would be called philosophers. Not only this, but as Europe’s foremost mask theater acting expert John Wright puts it, “That same impulse can be sustained and have influence on the voice.”

The world’s greatest vocal performance teachers, such as Frankie Armstrong, Cicily Berry, and Patsy Rodenberg, concur that the body and the voice are inextricably linked. For the average business professional, this means that body language works not only when the audience can see you, but even when it can’t! Because even a subtle physical impulse affects the

vocal muscles to such a strong degree, when you use body language over the telephone, your audience can hear your intention more clearly when you concentrate on physically projecting that intention rather than merely intending it psychologically. As one great acting trainer was often heard to say to students “you are boring me—an audience cannot hear or see you thinking however hard you are doing it, you must show them.”

Of course, if you are not aware of any negative body language when you talk over the telephone, you will be equally unaware of the negative tonality that your audience is hearing from you.

What Did I Tell You

This book is a unique combination of ancient secrets and new science, so remember that I said, “If at any moment you begin to feel like questioning a technique or its rationale—step backward, take a breath, *trust*, and just do it!” Understand that literally *stepping backward* (a traditional method for taking stock and thinking about a situation) has been shown in psychological tests to significantly enhance cognitive performance in moments of stress (this avoidance pattern of movement decreases anxiety). Indeed backward motion appears to be a very powerful trigger to mobilize cognitive resources. In fact, it was found conclusively in tests at Radboud University, Netherlands, in 2008 that whenever you encounter a difficult mental situation, stepping backward may boost your capability to deal with it effectively.

We will look at exactly what taking a breath can do for you and your business audience in a further chapter—but first, if you would like to know and master the secret of *exactly where* to place your hands in order to take countermeasures to calm your fight-or-flight response system, and instantly win a feeling of trust from your audience, then read on.

Chapter 2 Quick Study

The GrotesqueGesturePlane: When you drop your hands down by your sides in a stressful situation, your body is designed to execute its extreme stress response. Your audience is prone to mirror or copy this response and feel uneasy, confused, or sleepy. Since for the majority of businesspeople, communication is their biggest problem and often has the most impact on

relationships and on business, it is best, when communicating, to avoid doing anything that can exacerbate the fear of speaking. And some business content being just plain boring (sorry, but it is)—it's best not to encourage sleep.

Just Do This Now

1. Keep your hands above your waistline (see next chapter for specifics) and so out of the GrotesquePlane when you communicate to avoid negative engagement with your audience.
2. Should you wish to lower the energy of your audience (maybe they are too excited), let your hands drop down by your sides and stand still.
3. Allow your voice to follow the impulse of your body to reduce strain on it. Let your voice do what it naturally wants to do in alignment with your chosen physicality.

Chapter 2 Case Study

Theory to Practice: Literally Breathtaking

In a seventh-grade classroom, Mr. Williams interrupts John's public speaking delivery as John becomes faint. On the verge of collapse from lack of oxygen, John takes an empty front-row seat. His friend David soon escorts him to the bathroom.

In a project update, Shawn's speech begins to slow and a slight gasp/swallow motion begins to pepper his presentation with alarming frequency. He reduces the "Key Take-Away" portion of his talk to simply reading the bullet points on the presentation slide. He regains his composure after stumbling through an answer to the first audience question looking for clarification on much of the content.

In both cases, audience members are aware that something is amiss, and are completely distracted from the presentation. Nobody says anything, and

there is limited positive discussion following the episode.

Insight

Certain body positions send clear messages that start some quite extreme physiological and psychological responses. What was just described is a natural—and relatively frequent—occurrence when people address groups (e.g., more than four other people). It is very likely that both these presenters stood still, kept their hands in the GrotesquePlane and literally starved their brains of oxygen.

Provocation

In seventh grade, the teacher can come to your aid. What kind of impression are you making in the workplace when this happens?

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3

Winning Trust with a Wave of Your Hand

Truth Fears No Question

Life happens at the level of events. Trust only movement.

—Alfred Adler

In this chapter you'll learn:

- The TruthPlane and how to be there
- The world's top technique for using the body to win trust
- The biggest key to nonverbal excellence
- How to calm stage fright—with your hands
- Ancient techniques for talking to the reptilian brain

If you were not feeling confident about your standing in a social group, you would not wish to show this vulnerability on purpose, would you? If you felt weak and exposed around a group, you would not go out of your way to display that weakness and expose yourself more, right? In the body language you use in a business context, the last thing you might think it wise to do is to expose and display your own Achilles' heel. It seems as though you are better off putting on a mask of boldly assertive body language that shows that *you are strong*—the alpha person in the room, with an air of invincibility, yes?

No!

You are about to learn the key piece of nonverbal communication that is understood in every culture around the world and shows that you are non-confrontational, open, available, and accepting of others. Some of you will

be thinking, “Well, that’s a weak strategy,” but you’d be quite wrong. The people in any business audience—at a presentation or a meeting, or standing around the water cooler for a chat—are not looking for someone who is going to harm them—they are looking for someone who is going to *help* them. They need to feel sure that the leader in the room is going to give them sustenance, not deplete their resources. Most of all, they must be assured that you *accept* them. If you look as if you will “feed them,” they will approach you. If you look as if you are going to “take away,” then they will retreat or attack.

The Gesture That Time Forgot

The following simple piece of body language, hundreds of thousands of years old and still applicable today, is totally overlooked in understanding by nonverbal communication “experts” and business presentation trainers around the globe. It has, however, been handed down within the community of visual communicators for centuries. Until this point, it has never been put into writing for any business audience, with any full explanation of its powerful properties.

So here is that signal that instantly lets the members of an audience know that you are genuine in intention and can be trusted:

Gestures on a horizontal plane extending from the navel.

OK, so what you may be thinking now is, *it can’t be that simple!* Yet, as you are about to experience and learn for yourself, it really is. All you have to do to let the audience know that you are here to give rather than to take away is to make hand gestures along the horizontal plane from your navel, because what those gestures are is not as important as *where* they are when it comes to showing your honest intentions toward others. So let’s do some practical work to help you understand and experience the incredibly influential and persuasive powers of working within this gesture position, which I have named the *TruthPlane*.

Hands-On

First if you stand tall and upright now but allow your hands to hang down by your sides (below the waistline) in the *GrotesquePlane* of gesture you should start to pay attention to your breathing rate. Note the pace and the quality of the breaths in and out that you are taking. For example, is your breathing slow-paced, fast-paced, or what you might describe as mid-paced? Do you feel as if you are taking in deep breaths, shallow breaths, or something you might describe as somewhere in between the two? Do you feel that you are *taking in* more breath than you are *breathing out*, or vice versa, that you are breathing out more air than you are breathing in?

As you stand, notice some details of your physical stance as a whole when your arms are hanging down on each side of your torso. How stable are your legs? How erect is your spine? How does your head feel right now on the top of your neck? How does your face feel? What are the muscles in your face doing, and what do you think is the nature of the expression of your mouth, your eyes, your forehead, and across your face as a whole?

In addition to this, how do you *feel* right now? Describe that feeling to yourself, or even name it if you can. Many people get a considerable feeling of “heaviness” in the physical, mental, and emotional sense. Consider whether that is what you are feeling as well. Finally, note anything you experience beyond that which has been outlined, and remember it all for comparison later.

TruthPlane

Again, tall and upright, but now bring your hands up to your belly button, and just gently interlace the fingers of your left and right hands so that they are held comfortably and lightly over your navel, with your palms softly touching your stomach.

Can you immediately feel a difference in the way you are breathing? Is your breathing faster or slower than before? Has your breathing become deeper or shallower, or even perhaps more balanced? Do you feel that you are breathing out more than you are breathing in, or is there a sense of equilibrium to your breathing? How does your breathing generally compare to the breathing that you experienced with your arms hanging at your sides? Note the difference for yourself right now.

Bring your attention to your body as a whole. How are you standing right now? For example, how secure do you now feel in your feet and legs? How does this compare to your stance in the GrotesquePlane of gesture? What do you feel and think about the position of your spine and how your head now sits on your neck? Can you feel a difference, and if so, what makes up that important difference for you?

Again, pay attention to your face. How do the muscles around your mouth, eyes, and forehead feel to you? What is the expression that you now feel that you have, and what is the feeling that goes with that expression on your face? Can you describe the feeling that having your hands gently in the plane extending from your navel gives you, and can you give that feeling a name? Also take note of anything else that you have experienced or thought since taking up this second position of the hands, especially in relation to your earlier experience of the GrotesquePlane.

Quickly drop your hands down by your sides into the GrotesquePlane or keep the fingers interlaced so that your hands fall in front of your groin. How fast do you revert to the original breathing pattern, stance, positioning, and feelings that go with this position? Now bring your hands up to your navel area and allow them to gesture anywhere in horizontal plane that extends 180° from a centre that is your navel. Be open with your gesture, giving clear access to the stomach. How quickly does the feeling that goes with the new physical position change?

The Result? A Feeling of Calm

Many people describe the feeling that they get from having their hands in the navel or belly-button area as being “centered,” “controlled,” “collected,” “composed,” or “calm” (generally a lot of things beginning with the letter *c*); but also, just as you will have experienced, they get a sensation of levelheadedness, balance, and abundant energy.

Why do we get a feeling of security and calm when we place our hands in this navel area, bringing attention and access to it as opposed to the feeling of lethargy, apathy, and sometimes aggression that comes when our hands are hanging in the GrotesquePlane—either to the sides, across our front or clasped together around the back? To answer this, let’s first look at what centuries-old Eastern thought tells us about this area of the body.

Red Mercury In traditional Chinese medicine and martial arts, the area just a couple of fingers width below the belly button is known as the lower *dantien*, which translates loosely as “red field” and is a storage center and powerhouse for pure energy. Also, and for the purposes of understanding the physical importance of this area and its initial relevance to nonverbal communication, the lower *dantien* is taken as roughly the point where the sagittal, coronal and transverse planes of the human body intersect, or “the one point.” In Chinese and Japanese tradition (along with much Western sports practice), this is considered the physical center of gravity for the human body. (See Appendix)

Scientific theories and practices about centers of gravity, formed first by the famous Greek physicist Archimedes in the second century BC, state that in any system of particles, there is a specific location at which the whole system’s mass behaves as if it were concentrated, and so the center of mass is the point at which the whole of a body can be acted upon by gravity. Therefore, if you act upon a body’s center of mass, you are very likely to act upon that whole body. The most productive input of energy to affect any mass is at its center.

Control the Center to Control the Whole

Recognize as well that the center of mass within a body does not always coincide with its geometric center. With our human center of mass, by manipulating the shape of our body, we can shift the center of gravity to different parts of the body or even outside of it. And this property can be exploited. When an Olympic high jumper performs a “Fosbury flop,” he bends his body in such a way that it is possible for the center of mass to shift along the body so as to allow parts of the jumper’s body to be relieved of the center of gravity in order to clear the bar with more ease.

So it is in the area of our navel, or belly button, that we have the most balanced center of gravity when we are standing still on firm ground. This is the primary reason for the feeling of physical stability that is produced when you stand with your hands anywhere on a plane extending from that belly-button region of the body: you are aligning more of your mass with the center of that horizontal plane.

Plane Truth

I first came across the horizontal planes of gesture and their effect on the psychology of an audience when I was training in the art of mask performance, demonstrating the effects of these GesturePlanes to audiences. Under the instruction of my teacher and mentor, John Wright, I would take some very simple pieces of text and demonstrate to an audience the profound effects that delivering these words with the hands at different horizontal levels had in changing both the way the words “felt” to me as I said them and the resulting effect on the audience that was hearing and seeing them. The results could be anything from breathtakingly profound to hilariously funny, depending on the congruence between the standard linguistic meaning of words and intention found within the corresponding GesturePlane used. No matter what the result from the audience, it was based on a *fundamental and innate understanding of the sincerity of the gesture over the words*. Where this system originally came from is difficult to pin down (acting training being an experience and not a manual). I would predict that it may have been handed down orally through Jacques Copeau or his nephew Michel Saint-Denis to George Devine in the U.K., who collaborated with the likes of John Gielgud, Laurence Olivier, and Alec Guinness. (Devine worked with Saint-Denis on what eventually became the Old Vic Theatre School, a British icon housing legends of theater training through physicality such as Rudi Shelly, teaching well into his nineties, and creating actors such as Sir Patrick Stewart, Daniel Day-Lewis, and even Gene Wilder.) The work of Copeau and Saint-Denis had a profound effect on performing arts across the world, influencing Michael Chekhov and eventually Stanislavski who evolved his own ideas on “substitution of emotional memory” toward Chekhov’s more powerful more imaginative techniques of “The Method of Physical Action” and “Psychological Gesture,” that have

informed thousands of Hollywood actors today from Marilyn Monroe to Johnny Depp.

Breathing from the Stomach

The stomach is an important area of focus in business communication skills for reasons beyond gesturing. Breathing from the stomach is another great way to feel at ease during a presentation. Before any act or action, we need oxygen as fuel. It is no surprise that the belly button or navel area plays an important, even essential role in breathing techniques practiced all over the world, from the Qigong's "embryonic breathing" and storage of vital Chi energy to an Opera singer's powerful volume and range.

For example, in stage acting, "breathing from the belly"—controlling the muscles of the diaphragm—is an invaluable professional technique, the purpose of which is to draw air into the bottom portion of the lungs before the chest muscles expand and draw further air into the upper portion. This centuries-old trick of the trade dramatically increases lung capacity, and therefore the amount of oxygen available from each breath, allowing the stage actor the maximum vocal strength. Control of the diaphragm is also used to regulate the pressure and volume of air passed over the vocal cords, producing more consistent tone in the human voice.

And there is more convincing evidence for this technique's power in business communication: the *dantien* is linked directly with the adrenal glands—that area that is responsible for the extreme stress response of fight or flight described in [Chapter 2](#) and as seen in the diagram of the major organs of the endocrine system in [Figure 3.1](#). All these endocrine organs are instrumental in regulating metabolism, growth, development, and tissue function, and also play a most important role in determining mood and dealing with reactions to stress, such as the fight-or-flight response mechanism.

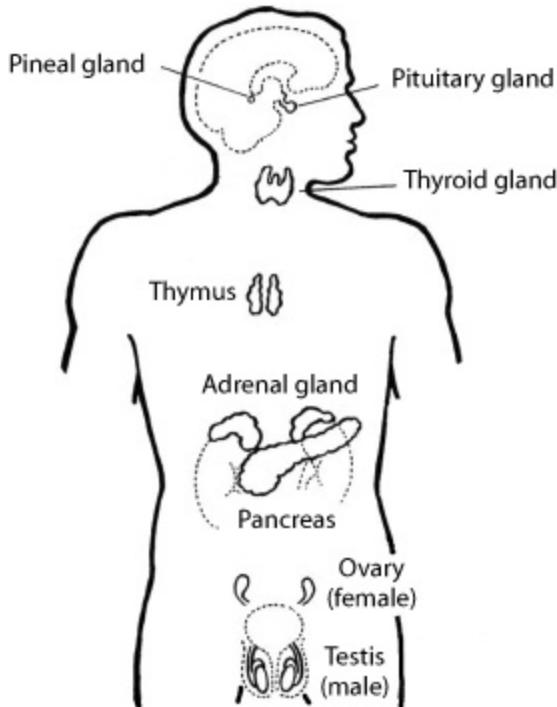


Figure 3.1 The Endocrine System

Navel Intelligence

The adrenal glands are situated (as their name indicates: *ad*, meaning “at,” plus *renes*, meaning “kidneys”) on top of the kidneys and in front of the twelfth thoracic vertebra. The adrenal glands are chiefly responsible for regulating stress responses from your hormones. These hormones all play a part in the fight-or-flight response activated by the sympathetic nervous system. In simple terms, the adrenal glands link the thoughts of the brain to physical action in the human body. They are pieces of primitive brain that, instead of thinking, just get down to chemically reacting when they are stimulated in the right way.

So, whether you, as a businessperson, want to also join in with the ancient beliefs of the East or not, it is pretty clear from a couple of hundred years of modern Western endocrinology that the navel is indeed the control center of your physical balance and the center of your biological mechanism for coping with stress (and you do get stressed!).

However you wish to look at it, the insight to take away from the unique discovery of the TruthPlane ([Figure 3.2](#)) and how the body affects the mind

(embodied cognition) is this:

When the hands gesture within the TruthPlane, an energized calm, confident, and balanced effect is felt by both the communicator and the receiver.

Not only does having your hands in this position affect your body language, but it also affects your whole nonverbal presence. Because of the interconnected nature of the physical system, your vocal tone is affected congruently with the GesturePlane. Therefore, your whole vocal tone becomes more calming and trustworthy. This is another reason why this technique is so effective—it changes one's voice quite profoundly and without the laborious vocal exercises that many other performance and presentation coaches recommend (and that you then forget to perform in the moment of crisis).



Figure 3.2 The TruthPlane

Exercise: Ordering Anxiety

Now it is time for you to try to experience the calm, confident, active effect of placing your hands within the TruthPlane while you are under conditions of stress. You are going to order a pizza! OK, you are thinking—what is so stressful about that? Well, here is the catch: you are going to walk into two stores, neither of which makes or sells pizza, or, indeed, any type of food or drink. A clothing store would be a good choice, or perhaps a bookstore.

Because you know that entering a clothing store and asking the assistant for a pizza is potentially (if not definitely) embarrassing for you, this should cause your central nervous system to push your sympathetic nervous system into activating the stress-regulating system situated toward the back of your belly. Indeed, you should get a shot of adrenaline as you approach the store and certainly a shot as you approach the counter or the fashionable assistant with your food request.

For some of you, just imagining putting yourself in this situation will already be causing you to feel the adrenaline rush—that odd churning feeling in your stomach, dryness in your mouth, and the color draining from your face. So, for those of you who are unable to complete this exercise for whatever reason, you may try it in your imagination, because it may already be doing a great job of firing up your fight-or-flight response just as a thought exercise.

The GrotesquePlane

In the first store or shop, make sure that you have your hands down by your sides in the GrotesquePlane. Try to monitor the level of stress and anxiety that you feel, and take careful note of the type of response you get from the assistant. Note that some of you may not even make it into the store because of the high levels of fear this exercise provokes!

The TruthPlane

Now for the second store: place your hands anywhere within the horizontal plane that extends at the height of your belly button. Allow about three ordinary breaths in and out with your hands in this area to balance out the oxygen levels in your bloodstream and restore equilibrium, particularly in light of your experience in the first store (or your experience outside of the store, for those of you who are acting out the physical instructions solely in your imagination).

Walk right into the store and keep your hands gesturing anywhere in the TruthPlane as you approach the service counter or assistant. When you ask for help with a pizza, be sure to only gesture with your hands gesturing out from this horizontal plane. Keep your hands totally level on the horizontal plane that potentially spreads out a full 180° from the center point of your

belly button and goes out and beyond your personal space. Pay close attention to how you now cope with this stressful situation (or your imagined stressful situation), and pay close attention to the effect you feel you are having on the assistant this time around.

Debrief

Now that you've done this exercise, how did it go? How did you feel the second time around when your hands were stabilized in the belly area, as opposed to hanging by your sides in the GrotesquePlane when you approached the first shop? Did you feel more in control of your breathing the second time around (either for real or in your imagined encounter)? Did you feel more control over your feelings of stress the second time around? Did you notice any calmer reactions from the person with whom you spoke? (I'm sure you may have an understanding by now that presenting the shop assistant with this moment of dissonance is extremely stressful for her, too.) Did you find that this very simple piece of body language made an enormous difference to the situation, not only in providing you with stable feelings of balance, breathing, and bravery, but also in the type of reaction you got? Did others pay more calm attention to you?

Tone

What did you notice about the nonverbal element of communication in the *tone of your voice* when you were gesturing in the TruthPlane? Did you notice, as others often do, the calm and gently upward-inflecting tone, as opposed to the downward intonation of the GrotesquePlane?

By now you will be starting to understand how making simple and clear decisions in the way you use your body language promotes clear decisions in the sound of your voice, along with clear decisions from others around you. You will also by now be getting the picture of how this simple idea of keeping your gestures within the TruthPlane affects how confident you feel and the confidence you display, not only in your body but in your voice. So let's look now at the most important factor in all of this: the effect that gesturing in the TruthPlane has on your audience.

Under the Influence

When you are under stress, you cannot stop your adrenal glands from doing their job because you cannot stop your brain stem from asking them to do their job—the process is involuntary. Your reptilian brain is not under your conscious control, especially in times of stress, when its purpose of saving your life really comes into its own. However, by physically keeping your gestures in the TruthPlane, you can effectively introduce a countermeasure to push back against the reaction in the R-complex part of your brain and in your adrenal glands. (Those of you who have tested this in the crazy pizza experiment should have real proof of this by now.)

And because you can now present this countermeasure to your natural reactions to stress, you enable the members of your audience to unconsciously mirror that countermeasure and reduce their stress along with you. Remember that the audience members are programmed at a deep level to copy. They are designed to copy the confidence that you portray nonverbally, and to frame any *verbal* message that you are delivering with your confident body and the tonality that naturally goes with it.

Placing your hands in the TruthPlane is *the* single most effective way for the business communicator to fight back effortlessly against the natural stress reaction and send out a clear signal to the audience that there is no problem, that everyone, including you, can be very confident. After all, why would you be displaying and drawing unconscious attention to this very vulnerable stomach area (both in terms of physical balance and unprotected vital organs) if you were under stress and, from your brain's point of view, "under attack"?

This is why not only do you feel more confident presenting yourself in this physical position, but others around you become more confident, too: they feel that you are confident, calm, stable and balanced, attentive, intelligent, and, most important, honest, authentic, and *trustworthy*. This is why this belly area is called the TruthPlane.

Taste Test

Here's a quick experiment: take a look at the two silhouettes in [Figure 3.3](#) and ask yourself which person you trust more than the other.

Which of the two would you trust more when you heard the words, “It’s been a great year for our company”?

It’s interesting how, even with simple silhouettes, when the hands appear to be in the GrotesquePlane (the hands appear below the waistline) we the audience feel less assured and less trusting, compared with how we feel toward the silhouette with the hands at navel height.

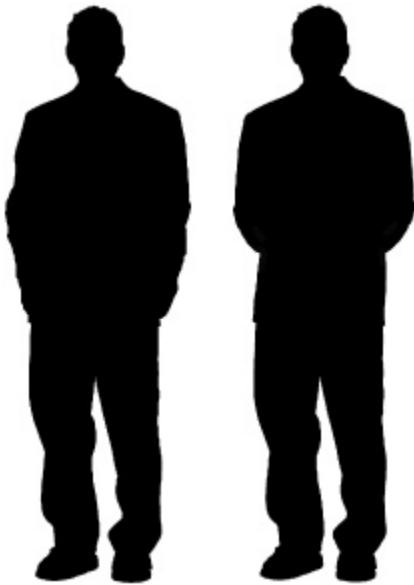


Figure 3.3 The GrotesquePlane versus the TruthPlane

This is all due to your reptilian brain, which is designed to look at the simple body positioning and movement of another human being in order to make a very quick decision as to whether or not that person is a potential threat or a potential friend. Considering the pictures, it may seem illogical for you to rate the two pictures differently because, after all, they both seem to be lacking such a lot of clear information upon which to base a logical decision. But again notice how remarkably easy it is for your fast unconscious process to make a satisfactory decision as to which one you trust more, even though the figures are unclear and in black and white.

Trust Me, I’m A Spin Doctor

Of course, skilled persuaders throughout history have always known of the properties and effects of working with an audience from the TruthPlane.

[Figure 3.4](#) gives a classic physical pose from history that shows this.



Figure 3.4 Meditative Buddha

How could you not trust him? He's so very centered and calm sitting there. And it is not about the serenity in the face; if you cover the head with your hand, you will notice that you continue to perceive a feeling of confident stillness. Facial features are not initially as important as the bulk of the body mass, especially the positioning of the center of gravity and the hands, in how we all determine the intention and emotional state of another human being. Indeed, in a recent study by Dr. Anthony Atkins, it was found that a major part of emotional recognition as a prescreening device for social interaction comes from the body alone and excludes the face. Atkins states, "The way people move their bodies tells us a lot about their feelings or intentions and we use this information on a daily basis to communicate with each other."

[Figure 3.5](#) shows another image where, again, although the figure is bent forward, the hands are within the TruthPlane.

It is difficult to imagine anything other than a genuine and well-intentioned action in this picture. Again, we certainly feel that we can trust this person. Of course, that sheds some light on why the artists who created these images have chosen this physical positioning of the hands at the

height of the belly and open; across all cultures and across all times, it is the strongest symbol for “you can trust me.”



Figure 3.5 Jesus Blesses the Children

News Flash

And for more contemporary examples of the power of the TruthPlane, watch any TV reporter, presenter, or anchor who is delivering a piece of factual news; yes, that person’s hands are in the TruthPlane. As professional communicators to a mass audience, many of these people unconsciously understand (or have been trained in the TruthPlane system) that if they place their hands at navel height, they will feel and sound more confident, and the viewers will feel confident with that anchor delivering the important “factual” information of the day. When people stand with their hands in the TruthPlane and deliver the story, we all start to feel that, for sure and certain, everything they are saying is factual. Yet we don’t know why we’re sure—we simply *trust* it based on the clear signal in body language and tone of voice as old as humankind that *this* human being (the reporter) is to be trusted, and therefore what he says is the truth.

Try It Right Now

You should begin to use this most important body language gesture to win trust immediately. Try it right now with your friends and colleagues. Notice

your confidence; notice the clear, calm quality in your voice; and notice the positive attention that you get instantly. Notice others who do not use this plane of gesture when it would serve them well. Can you imagine how much better you would respond if they were presenting to you or having a business conversation with you from the TruthPlane? Decide right now how you are going to use this powerful secret of winning body language to your immediate business advantage today, and read on for much, much more.

Chapter 3 Quick Study

TruthPlane: The primal stress response experienced by both you and the receivers of your message when you communicate under pressure *can be counteracted* by placing your hands anywhere on the horizontal plane that extends out 180° from a center of the navel—or, as I call it, the Truth-Plane. Open gestures in the plane are the most effective way to engender trust with other humans in micro-seconds

Just Do This Now

1. When you communicate, place your hands as much as possible in the TruthPlane—the horizontal plane that extends out from the navel area (or in anatomical terms, at the “Transverse Plane” or “Axial Plane” that divides the body into cranial and caudal—head and tail—portions).
2. Use the TruthPlane to cause your body and mind to be calm during communications.
3. Lead your audience members to become confident in you and in themselves by placing your hands and gestures open in the TruthPlane when you communicate with them, framing their access to your vulnerable belly area and bringing unconscious attention to it (even over the telephone, because the impulse affects your voice in a profound way, too).

Chapter 3 Case Study

Theory to Practice: Cutting Corners

Flo is the alliance manager on a strategic partnership. In accordance with the contracts, she meets with her counterpart early in April to determine volume and pricing specifics for the fiscal year, which begins in July.

She is somewhat frustrated by the tension that seems to result from the conversations, which are always held on the client’s “turf” in the same boardroom. Both sides know that they need to work together, and they always reach agreements that are within the anticipated range. Why does it have to feel so much like a negotiation?

Insight

The physical setup of a room can create an aggressive response that comes from your visual cues. Think of a typical boardroom scenario like this:

- The parties sit on opposite sides of the table.
- They lean forward slightly, thereby hiding their stomachs.
- Their hands may be hidden below the table at first.

This combination of body language elicits a defensive response from the limbic system. Flo could expect a vastly different—and more receptive—dynamic if she were to try to sit in a position (perhaps at a corner of the table) that puts less of a visual barrier between herself and her counterpart. This will foster more elements of communication from the TruthPlane with the middle section of her the body clearly visible.

Provocation

Why do we so often let the traditional organization of a room dictate our actions instead of controlling our environment and body to align with our objective?

4

Inspirational Influence out of Thin Air

Breathe In the Possibilities

Breathe ... and remind yourself that this very moment is the only one you know you have for sure.

—Oprah Winfrey

In this chapter, you'll learn:

- How to expand your senses when you are communicating
- When to conspire with your audience to influence and persuade
- The first step to being inspirational every time you speak
- A mistake that can kill you and your audience
- How to be imaginative—the easy way

Everyone wants to be an inspiration to others, but not all of us are famous or gregarious, life-of-the-party types; many of us are perhaps more behind-the-scenes folks. Regardless of how we individually operate in business or in society, however, the vast majority of us want to impress others with the help that we have to offer, and in such a way that others are compelled and inspired to act upon that help and perhaps even inspire others with it also. Some people call this a *legacy*.

We all leave behind something in every interaction that we have. Some people define this as an aspect of your personal *brand experience*—the impression that you have or leave on others. Every time you interact and communicate, you create and leave behind ripples in the ponds of a great many individual perceptions, emanating out across time and space from the

point of the interaction. Well after you physically leave any one interaction, the experience of your legacy lives on in the way others react to you, what they think and feel about you, what they are going to do with the message they have received from you, and to what extent they feel energized and inspired to work along with you.

There is simply no downside to effecting inspiration—so how great would it be to stand the best chance of inspiring the people around you every time you interact, and to be able to do this not with your words, but with your body? You know by now from reading the first few chapters that much of the time people trust the body and vocal quality (the nonverbal communication) over the words—a whole lot more than you may have previously imagined.

Breath Control

We decide what type of person we are dealing with by what we see him or her do. This is the way we get a “feeling” for people. Some people appear to be wholly present and *alive* in front of us, and others ... not so much. Knowing that all our judgments about the outside world are influenced by the feelings we have inside us (even the feeling that we are being rational), if we could change the way others feel, then we could change the way they judge us and everything we say and do in our business life.

That is why in this chapter you are going to learn and practice the biggest key to changing others’ opinions of you, and their propensity to accept your messages—just by breathing! This chapter looks at the science of how *breath* changes brain function; the predominant breathing patterns in poor business body language; how to breathe in such a way that it makes you sharper and more positive, creative, and alive; how others mirror your breathing; and the influence you can have on others to make them feel better about you and what you say.

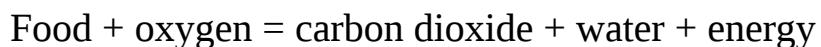
So if you are interested in inspiring others with some winning body language, then read on.

But before we get right into how breathing affects an audience and how to use your breathing patterns to create a positive atmosphere among people at work, it is important first that you understand the details of why we

breathe, how we breathe, and what breathing does to our body and our mind.

The Basics of Breathing

Breathing takes oxygen into and carbon dioxide out of the body. Aerobic organisms (that's us) require oxygen to create energy via a process called *respiration*. To put it simply, what happens is that biochemical energy that is locked within the nutrients we eat is converted via oxidization and reduction into the body's "universal energy currency," adenosine triphosphate (ATP), which drives all biological processes. Oxygen molecules are required for the oxidation process involved in ATP production, and the carbon dioxide is taken away from this process as a by-product. All of this can be described by the following simple biochemical equation:



So we breathe in air containing oxygen to convert food into a more universal and usable form of energy to run our body and our mind. We expel carbon dioxide as a by-product of this process.

Active Breathing

Breathing in, or inhaling, is usually an active movement involving the contraction of the diaphragm (the sheet of muscle extending across the bottom of the rib cage), pulling it downward into the belly and increasing the thoracic volume (the space available in the chest cavity). This is known as *negative-pressure breathing*. This process works in conjunction with the intercostal muscles connected to the rib cage. Contraction of these muscles lifts the rib cage, thus aiding the increase in the total thoracic volume. This decreases the pressure inside the lungs and creates a partial vacuum. Air then flows in to fill the vacuum produced in the lungs.

Conversely, exhaling involves the relaxation of the diaphragm, which compresses the lungs, effectively decreasing their thoracic volume while increasing the pressure inside them. The intercostal muscles simultaneously relax, further decreasing the volume of the lungs. This increased pressure forces air out of the lungs. These processes are shown in [Figure 4.1](#).

OK, this may sound crazy-complicated to you, and so you may be thinking, “It’s just breathing, and we do it every day without even thinking—it’s none of my business,” and you may have a point: unconscious breathing is controlled by specialized centers in the brain stem (the reptilian brain) that automatically regulate the rate and depth of breathing depending on the body’s needs at any given time.

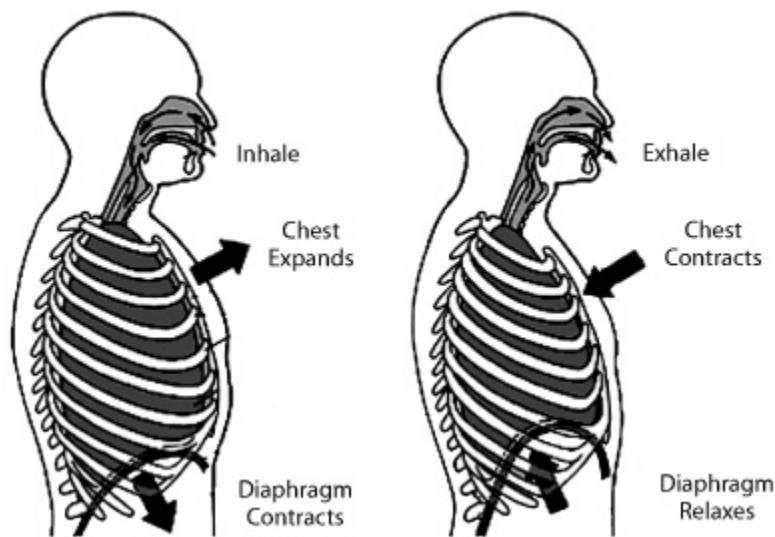


Figure 4.1 Inhaling and Exhaling

Our breathing is controlled by a set of chemical rules and regulations that keep us alive, or, in other words, that stop us from dying (depending on whether your glass of life is half full or half empty). However, there is a certain amount of conscious control that you can have over your breathing. Conscious control of breathing is common in many forms of meditation: for example, in yoga, *pranayama* is all about breath awareness. In sports and physical fitness, breath control is used to regulate such things as oxygen debt in the respiration cycle that can cause a buildup of lactic acid, which in turn causes muscle cramps. In speech and vocal training, breath control is essential for strength and versatility in the voice. No matter what the practice, one learns to discipline one’s breathing, consciously at first, but later subconsciously through repetitious enforcement until a habit is formed. So why not use this in business communication?

This conscious control of breath is above and beyond what is needed for “not dying”—it is what is needed to excel at any mental or physical activity. We need it if we are to be energized, engaged, and really fully “alive” in body and mind, and not just “desk jockeying” at the office. The levels of oxygen required for peak performance are way higher than those for a “resting state.”

Weird as Folk

I spent a great part of my time at university studying the world of shamanism and its use of movement to open up the psyche. I researched, trained and practiced in the use of masks as utilized by the ancient shamans, and how they and the other members of the tribe would dance to represent the movements of that animal in order to contact and commune with the animal’s spirit. In fact, I had been exposed to this from a very early age by performing British folk dance, which is laden with animism and sympathetic magic (the idea that everything has a spirit or essence that can be manipulated via imitative and corresponding symbolic gestures to, in response, control the material world). It became clear to me that the point of this ancient practice was that if you learned through ritual art to move like an animal, you could, through limbic resonance, gain an understanding of the prey’s fundamental thought processes and thus gain an advantage when you were hunting or defending yourself against that animal. This pagan art of magic was not hocus-pocus but a competitive advantage. I wondered in how many other fields outside of the arts this ancient knowledge could be played out, and I quickly hit upon business and politics as a huge possibility.

Hyperventilation

If a healthy person were to voluntarily stop breathing (i.e., hold his breath) for a long enough amount of time, he would lose consciousness, and the

body would resume breathing on its own, using its unconscious survival mechanism. The results of breathing, consciously or unconsciously, in such a way that only small amounts of oxygen are taken into the bloodstream is known as *hypoventilation*. The opposite of this is *hyperventilation*, which is achieved by shallow, fast breathing. This causes a drop in carbon dioxide to below normal levels, lowering blood acidity (respiratory alkalosis) and confusing the brain into thinking that it has more oxygen than is actually present. This causes the constriction of blood vessels to the brain as a response to the presumed oxygen overabundance, when in fact there is a deficiency. Hyperventilating can cause blood oxygen to go to dangerously low levels. Stress and anxiety and sometimes a full-scale panic attack are common side effects of hyperventilation, with symptoms including weakness; dizziness; tight, tingling, and numb mouth, hands, and feet; blurred vision; racing heartbeat; and faintness, to name just a few.

Some of those symptoms may be all too familiar to any business communicator under stress. When you are under stress, you are likely to hypo or hyperventilate, and both of these conditions adversely affect the levels of carbon dioxide in your bloodstream, causing energy to be suppressed, diverted, or overdriven in areas of the body or the brain—not a good ecosystem for the growth of inspirational communication between people.

However, in between hypo- and hyperventilation is the right breathing rate and volume that gives the right levels of oxygen and carbon dioxide for the job your body and your mind want to do, a breathing pattern that is ready to adapt to the needs of the body and the mind, allowing you to be “present” to the current environment and alert to future possibilities.

Exercise: Apples and Oranges

So we know that breathing consists of an out breath and an in breath, and right now we are going to discover the effects of each on both the body and the mind of the members of any audience to which you are making a presentation, whether it is a board meeting, a casual chat, or an all-out media circus. Follow these instructions to understand and experience one of the most amazing psychophysical properties of breathing, and to understand how you can use it to persuade and influence nonverbally.

In just one moment, you are going to close your eyes and picture a fruit in your mind. Before you are told which fruit you are to imagine, be aware that the first time you try this, you are going to breathe only *out* as you picture that fruit. No breathing in—just quickly *breathe out*, expel all air, and try to get an image of that fruit in your head. When the breath is over, remember the look and qualities of the fruit that you had in your head. So, breathe out now and imagine an *orange*.

OK, now you are going to do this again with a different fruit and a different way of breathing. This time, you will *breathe in* and imagine the fruit. After imagining this fruit during one single relaxed breath in, you will again remember the qualities of the second imagined fruit. So you are going to breathe in—ready? Breathe in now and imagine an *apple*.

Right—now think about the difference between the apple and the orange (other than the obvious difference that one is an apple and one is an orange). What were the differences in how you imagined, experienced, and appreciated the different fruits? Were there different levels of detail, intensity, and dimensions between the two? Were there different ways in which you sensed each one in your mind’s eye and a different feeling from one as opposed to the other? Was it “apples and oranges” in more ways than one?

For your reference, here is what others tend to experience during this experiment.

Out with the Old

The orange that was imagined when breathing out tends to be small in the mind’s eye, diminishing or moving away from the viewer; often it is in black and white or a simple monochrome. Many people see the fruit as being shriveled or wrinkled, and some will even see it as rotting. There are also many cases in which viewers see maggots or worms coming out of the fruit—so not to worry if it went that far for you, because you are not at all alone in what imagining on an out breath does for you.

In with the New

In the case of imagining the apple while breathing in, the kind of experience that others have is that the apple is large in the mind’s eye and getting

bigger. It is often pictured in bright, full color. Some people perceive it as being fresh and can even taste or smell it; in some cases the viewer automatically opens up the apple in her imagination and can see inside it; and for some, without prompt or instruction, the apple can be seen on a tree and as part of a larger orchard.

So we used two fruits—but the qualities of the experience were very different depending on whether you were breathing in or breathing out.

Past the Sell-By Date

The out breath tends to produce an experience that is less vibrant, narrower, and pessimistic. Why? Because the brain is not getting the influx of oxygen that it needs to operate to the fullest capacity. On the out breath, there is no oxygen to spare, and so the brain does not have the energy needed for opening up some higher levels of thinking. Depressed breathing creates a rather depressed attitude greeting everything the brain encounters. Scope is decreased and diminished, because to open out scope will take more brainpower, more oxygen to fuel it, and potentially more energy in the body to deal with the more expansive world that is perceived. If the brain finds that you are breathing out at the point when you want to be imaginative, it just can't let you do this because it fears that the oxygen that is available will be needed for “not dying”—it has a glass-is-half-empty mentality with regard to oxygen levels in the body and the brain. It does not have the excess capacity at this point to really live more expansively!

No surprise, then, that breathing out is often called *expiring*. When you breathe out, you *expire*, and expiry means that it is all over!

Fresh In Today

In stark contrast, when you breathe in, you *inspire*. The ideas that you can get in your mind are fuller, brighter, and more positively biased. Not only this, but when you are breathing in, you have the capacity to investigate inside an idea and also place it in a wider context. Scope is broadened, and more categories are opened. With more oxygen comes more energy and a potential surplus that can be put toward thought and action beyond mere survival.

Now think—what if you could be breathing in an inspirational way all the time when you are speaking? Of course, we all know that you have to breathe out at some point, but if you could breathe in such a way that you expired less, then, strange as it may seem, you would think better, find more opportunities, and have a more positive outlook and internal process. Not only that, but remember that as long as you are giving out clear physical signals, any audience to which you are speaking is predisposed and programmed at a base level to mirror you, or copy your action. If you could send out a clear and continuous physical signal that you are breathing in an inspired way, then every member of your audience would be influenced to copy you, unconsciously. Your listeners would be persuaded to be open, positive, and inspired. They would accept your content and open it out in their own minds to bigger and better prospects.

If the sender of any message is also providing or modeling a physical frame of inspiration (an oxygen and so an energy surplus), then the receivers, who we know will copy that physical frame (and create an oxygen and energy surplus within themselves) are very likely to fall into a mental state of inspiration. This will force the receivers to view and translate the content as fitting into that category, because, as we have already seen, we agree with what we see and believe what we feel. And ultimately, that is the influencing factor as to why people say, “I felt inspired by that speech!” “Our meeting was inspirational,” or “Your leadership inspired me to act.”

On the flip side, when the speaker gets a bored response from her audience, it is probably not because her content is intrinsically boring. It is more likely that her breathing is expired, causing the audience to “die” of boredom. By breathing in such a way that you are depleting your own body and mind of the energy-producing oxygen, you will also cause the same thing to happen to your audience as well. When you close down your own body and mind, the audience will copy your leadership and do the same.

Now, the good news. There is a physical state that causes both you and your audience to go into a state of inspiration, and it is called being *on the in breath*. Performers have used this technique for thousands of years to be sure that they have enough oxygen to maintain their energy and therefore their *presence*. As Brian Bates, the former chair of psychology at Sussex University and Royal Academy of Dramatic Art acting trainer, states in his

chapter on charisma from *Way of the Actor*, “Oxygen becomes a psychological force and soon is converted by the mind of the actor into a physical force. ... We want that power in the stage presence of the actor.” Theatrical master and anthropologist Eugenio Barba states in *The Secret Art of the Performer* that the term *bayu*, meaning breath, is used in ancient Balinese theater to denote the increase in power that “elevates” the body and generates a feeling of “life” in any act. A performer’s breathing alone can fill an audience with a sense of expectation and energy for the actions he is selling for the story he is telling. These states are not achieved via such common respiratory techniques as “breathing from the belly,” so often presented by business presentation trainers as a cure-all. If you want the real secret of how to breathe in a way that inspires the audience to listen, then here’s how you do it.

A Valuable Tool

It did not take long for me to formulate a theory that all effective communication is designed to either move us toward our goals or move us away from threats to accomplishing those goals. Anything else is “spam” (abuse of the communication system), which is bad, or “play” (communication for the sheer pleasure of it), which is fine. However, the majority of business communication that I came across at every level too often seemed to me to be designed (by accident or plain ignorance) to cause a standstill—a freeze response in which just nothing happens. So I thought, “If I can help people become aware of communication that is capable of moving themselves and others toward both personal and organizational goals, then that would improve their performance during critical times and give them a massive competitive advantage.” Others in the communication training world seemed to be concentrating on “more and better formed content” or psychological coaching around intention as the universal remedy, and I could already see that before the content could ever be assimilated by an audience, and intentions met, a human, emotional connection needed to be made so that the

audience would trust and accept the message. My major understanding was of the tool for connecting humans known as nonverbal communication, which it turns out is the major tool that all of us use all the time, but unconsciously. If this was my hammer, then I would make every problem look like a nail and find the nonverbal and structural solution to the business communication problems presented to me.

On the In Breath

Stand up right now (or stay sitting if standing up is impractical at the moment). Begin expanding yourself upward—gently cause your body to straighten up. Pretend that you are being pulled up by a string that comes from the very crown of your head. Do not let your heels leave the ground. As you allow yourself to be pulled up from the crown of your head, lengthening along your spine, make sure that you remain well connected to the ground. Some people describe a feeling of lightness in the body while they are performing this exercise, but you are not trying to act like a floating apparition here. Remain pulled up and fully connected with the floor. Now check how your breathing is.

Can you feel yourself still breathing in and out, inspiring and expiring? Do you notice, however, that when you breathe in this position, you are predominantly on the in breath? Still breathing in and out, yet “suspended” within a physical feeling of more in breath than out breath. Your breathing is not rushed, and it is not shallow; you are taking in plenty of air (and so oxygen), but without hyperventilating. You will already be starting to feel very positive on this new in-breath pattern. You may have noticed that you have a gentle, open smile that comes with this physical state. This is, of course, great news, because such a smile is inviting to the members of your audience, and they will mirror it back to you. What’s more, this is a simple by-product of being on the in breath.

You may also notice, after breathing this way for a while, that your perceptions are opening up: you may be experiencing a widening of your peripheral vision or more color, brightness, and detail in what you see. Have you noticed more acuity in your hearing? With more oxygen, the brain can afford to deal with (process) more information—it is happy for you to see

and hear more. This is great for you as an influencer: the more information you have, the more power you have to persuade.

Notice that it takes energy to sustain this elongated spine and light feeling in the body and still be grounded; but happily you have more energy because of the type of breathing that you are experiencing. I sometimes refer to this suspended, light, energetic, soft yet springy feeling as being in an “available” state.

On the Out Breath

Now let’s try the opposite. Allow your spine to sink, and let your stomach cave in. Cast off the feeling of lightness and the feeling of a pull toward the sky. Exchange this for a pull toward the ground. Have you already noticed your breathing pattern changing and the more depressing thoughts that go with it?

Notice the difference in your face. Where is the open, gentle smile now that your eyes are gazing down at the floor instead of at the horizon? You will notice with this that many of the colors and sounds in the world have disappeared. The world seems less available to you and you no doubt feel less available in turn to the world.

Now quickly put your body back into the position for being on the in breath. How quickly do you feel more inspired? That’s how quickly an audience can follow you from one state to another. That is how quickly you can either depress or inspire the person or crowd that you are communicating with. [Figure 4.2](#) shows the difference in physical position for the two kinds of breaths.

A Rousing Speech

Note that this is all done with your *body*—not the body of your *text*. The words of a presentation, speech, or conversation are the icing on the cake or the sauce on the pasta. Get the base right, and what you add to give it intellectual weight can be minimal but have maximum effect. If you build a strong foundation with the techniques discussed so far in this book, you will find that your content has more effect on the audience by going deeper into their minds in a more positive way. No longer will you have to feel that you must “pad out” your content like a schoolroom essay (just trying to get

marks for length of content) because the structure, which in this case is your body, will give your audience a feeling of trust and inspiration, and your content will ride the wave of this positive perception. It is not the speech but the speaker that wins trust and inspires action. Audiences focus first on the messages that they get from watching the bulk of the speaker's body mass. People tend to judge someone's general intention from the way that person carries herself, and they can register her emotion from the expression on her face. The body language reader quickly begins to mirror that body physically, including monitoring the movement of the chest to mirror breathing patterns and become synchronized with the levels of oxygen in others' bloodstreams to gain a resonance with the attitude.

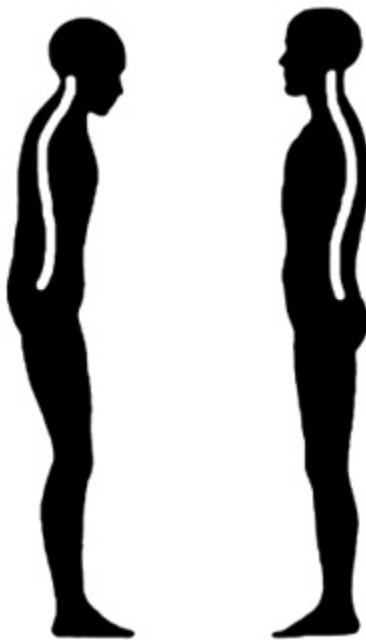


Figure 4.2 The Physicality of the Out Breath versus the In Breath

Breathe and the World Breathes with You

Here's something more, just in case you need convincing further.

You will now start to notice how, over the centuries, what the really great artists—the people who make us laugh and cry and wonder; the people who fill our world with color and dark stories that can fill us with fear and provoke us to action; the people who fill the world with music that moves

us—have actually been doing is creating *strong, clear rhythms* that our breathing can join in on. They are geniuses at provoking us to breathe in patterns that strongly influence our feelings, and so our perception of the world, going back to the very first shamanic performers.

For example, watch a great film, but *turn off the sound*. Can you instantly see how you start to breathe along with the actors? That is the film's route to your feelings, by having good actors who communicate in a way that allows the audience to *join in on the feeling*. The actors are no longer actually having the feelings they created for you and captured on film—but you are! They are not creating the emotion right now—you are doing it for them! Their work is inspirational: they breathe, you copy, and the legacy is that which you feel.

Notice that as the film cuts from shot to shot, you are also breathing along with *that rhythm*—and this is creating tension and feeling in your body. That is the artistry of the film editor. He influences and persuades you with the rhythm of the cut, provoking you to think and feel with the film and the stars acting in it in a certain manner and with definite feelings often preplanned by the film's director. As the radical psychiatrist, expert on the mass psychology of fascism and early architect of Gestalt therapy—which concentrates on the therapeutic experience of the present, Wilhelm Reich recognized and stated “Emotional and physical states can be altered by changing the breathing pattern.”

To experience this further, now turn up the sound and see how the music, the *score* of the film, with its own rhythm, *conspires* (as the word suggests, *con*, meaning “with,” and *spire*, meaning “breath”) with all the other artistry in the film. The music binds together the rhythm of the actors and the rhythm of the picture with sound so that there is no doubt as to the feelings that are being promoted to the audience. You conspire along with it all as well, as you respond by having similar feelings within you. The film is not the feeling—it is simply the instruction manual for how you get to it. It is the map to the feeling. It is not the message; the message happens in you. Great filmmaking is nonverbal influence and persuasion at some of its very best.

Inspire and Motivate

So, now you are beginning to see how you yourself can influence those around you with a simple breathing technique that paves the way for your audience to think and feel positively toward you and receptive to your verbal ideas and instructions. Being on the in breath causes your audience to be more available to you. You now simply need to start breathing predominantly on the in breath every time you want to inspire others. They will copy your body language and will be truly inspired in themselves. It only remains for you to move that inspiration through to real action: to get those around you motivated and actually putting your ideas into physical form.

Now, how can you use body language to influence others and persuade them to act—to literally motivate (move) them into a state of acting out your message? Of course there is a way.

Chapter 4 Quick Study

In Breath: There are two ways of breathing: in and out. When you are predominantly on more of an in breath than an out breath, you supply more oxygen to your body and your brain. You have more oxygen resources for physical and mental opportunities. Your listeners mirror this style of breathing and, in turn, become more open and available to the opportunities that you as a communicator can offer them. They can conspire with you to be inspired.

Just Do This Now

1. Be on the in breath when you communicate.
2. Use the in breath to engage your audience with expectation.
3. Use the out breath to deflate or disappoint your audience and maybe create an atmosphere of negativity or depression around certain aspects of a communication when this may be to your and their advantage.

Chapter 4 Case Study

Theory to Practice: Lightening the Load

Fresh off a strategic selling workshop, Kevin clarifies to himself his desire to introduce new service options to the portfolio of one of his “high-opportunity” clients. He has winning rapport with his key decision maker, Alice, and understands her hot buttons. In the discussion, he is able to expose the gap in the current agreement and create a good degree of fear and uncertainty. To his surprise, Alice fails to get excited when he presents his “solution.” She seems defeated by his line of questioning. The meeting ends with both of them depressed: she because she sees the problems; he because there is no deal yet.

Insight

Change is risky, and people are risk-averse. Fear of consequences can counter the inertia and encourage action rather than complacency. This logic is sound, although an interesting paradox is that fear brings negative (out-breath) emotions, but new thought requires positive (in-breath) thinking.

To use this technique, Kevin would pause and take an exaggerated in breath right before moving into his description of a potential solution. Interestingly, this may be difficult to overdo because taking a deep breath is a reasonable human action and not too big for the business world. This simple action, if timed correctly, can move the client into a more positive and receptive state.

Provocation

Have you found some of concepts or practices in this book difficult to take in and assimilate? New ideas are often difficult to accept. Why not take the advice I gave in the preface of this book and “take a breath” before reading on. That in breath is designed to help you be available to these ideas and move forward positively. Try it.

5

Injecting Excitement into Your Gestures

Are You Feeling It?

Without passion you don't have energy; without energy you have nothing.

—Donald Trump

In this chapter you'll learn:

- How to get some passion back into your business life
- Movement that motivates yourself and others
- Speaking from the heart rather than from the hip
- Nonverbal melodramatics for alpha males
- How to raise the heart rate in the board-room

Why is there no passion in the workplace? So many business theorists extol the virtues of going about the workday with a sense of high energy, vitality, and a fire in your heart for the work that you do. And great business minds, for example, investor Warren Buffett, ranked by *Forbes* in 2008 as the richest person in the world, says of the ideal colleague or employee: “I look for a person with passion for the job, good communicators.”

It's easy for a lot of people to get passionate about their sports team; it's easier for even more people to get passionate about music; and it's tough for a marriage to survive if one is not passionate about one's partner. Some folks are even passionate about the food and drink that they consume every day. Yet most of us ultimately spend most of our time in life at work, and for much of that time you may be *passionless*.

If you want to be persuasive and influential, then passion is going to be one of the great keys to getting everyone on board, motivated, and actively seeing to the work that you need them to do to help build your inspirational vision. You will need to be able to enroll others in your winning vision by displaying inspired, trustworthy, and passionate business body language.

From the techniques we have already detailed, you have the *TruthPlane* for trust, and you have the *in breath* for inspiration. Right now, we need to deal with *passion* by introducing you to the *PassionPlane*, a horizontal plane of gesture that raises you to a motivational level every time you speak to an audience by bringing out the fire in other people's hearts. You see, you may be trustworthy and so trusted, and you may be inspired and inspirational, but as yet that does not mean that anyone will actually do anything for you. You need to be passionate about what you're communicating if you want to be able to motivate others into action.

This idea explains why, in a workplace, on a project, or during a sales call, you can be “on message” yet get no result: because the message itself is not enough to create action—to get us moving. We must be motivated toward a desire. Build desire and you can create a compelling feeling of enthusiasm for action. And for those of you who have ever desired anything in your life (not wanted or needed, but *desired*), you will understand that this is a feeling and not an intellectual state. And this desire is created in the audience by the passion expressed by you, the speaker.

So first of all, let's look at this feeling of passion and find out exactly what it is, understand how and why it exists, and uncover what it looks like so that we can reproduce it ourselves. We need to examine passion so that we can understand the advantages and disadvantages of summoning it up and learn how to control it in ourselves, using it most effectively to invite others to share in our excitement and to motivate and move them into action in the most professional manner.

A Brief History of High Emotions

The word *passion* is most probably derived from the Latin *pati*, meaning “to suffer” (as seen, for example, in the Christian church, where the recounting of Jesus’ crucifixion is known as “the Passion”). The common modern understanding of the word is that it denotes intense feeling and can

be applied to any kind of feeling. You can be passionate in all kinds of ways: passionately angry or passionately in love—indeed, you can be passionate and intense about any feeling known to humankind, and there are many, many feelings. Let's look at some to understand passion more fully.

Take the example of love, which we could say embraces the more complex, subtle, and extreme emotions of affection and maybe even lust. And within affection, you may have experienced and seen in others the more complicated and subtle states such as adoration, fondness, attraction, tenderness, or compassion. So one feeling often has many more facets or subfeelings to it.

There is an abundance of feelings, and many psychological and social theorists over the years have come up with their own lists of these feelings and what they look like. However, there is one list that should stand out for any student of universal body language: the list proposed by Dr. Paul Ekman, a psychologist who has been a pioneer in the study of emotions and their relation to facial expressions since 1954. He is considered one of the 100 most eminent psychologists of the twentieth century.

Universal Feelings

From his research across the globe, Ekman found that many emotional facial expressions are not culturally determined, but are universal and thus biological in origin. The facial expressions that he originally found to be the same universally includes those displaying anger, disgust, fear, joy, sadness, and surprise. There's more to come about Dr. Ekman and his importance to the world of body language, but for now it is enough to note that all of these feelings expressed through facial manipulations can be intense and passionate, and, as Ekman has found, they can be communicated universally. The important thing for our purposes in business is to understand how to share our feelings appropriately with an audience, giving our listeners enough intensity of feeling that they feel compelled to join in and go with our passion—in other words, we must make our passion their passion, and cause them to be motivated enough by it to act.

Let's look at this problem from a biological point of view and see how the body can be used as a solution.

Bio-Solutions

Place your hands in the TruthPlane and monitor your approximate breathing rate and the extent to which you are filling your lungs with air. You will probably notice that when you have your hands in the TruthPlane, you are breathing steadily and fairly deeply—right down into your diaphragm.

Now shift your hands up to your chest height and notice the difference. What has happened to your breathing rate now? Into which part of your lungs are you now predominantly bringing oxygen? You will have noticed that when you set your hands in the chest area, and specifically the horizontal plane of gesture that comes out from just a couple of inches above the sternum (the center and bottom of the rib cage, at exactly the level at which you can best feel your heartbeat), your breathing rate quickly increases and you breathe more into your chest than into your belly. Some of you may have already noticed an increase in your heart or pulse rate that automatically goes along with this.

It seems that gesturing with your hands at chest level automatically increases your breathing rate and heart rate and produces a slightly shallower style of breathing. And you will also notice that it quickly creates way more energy and more than an edge of excitement in you.

Now drop your hands down by your sides and notice what happens as you drop into the GrotesquePlane and naturally onto the *out breath* and into an *expired* physical posture. What happened to the energy you had—your feeling, your sense of motivation, and your thought process in general? You will be feeling the effects of a more depressed breathing right now. As you are in this position, imagine giving a speech or a presentation, or even having a conversation, and start to speak the words that you would be using. Can you quickly hear the predominantly downward intonation in your voice, denoting depression, negativity, or ending, when you are in the GrotesquePlane? Now let's compare this to passion.

Speaking from the Heart

Look even further into how this horizontal level of gesture changes the voice: once again shift your hands up to your chest level and carry on with giving the speech or presentation or having a conversation. What do you notice immediately? Listen to how the pitch of your voice has risen considerably. Also notice the increased upward inflection of the voice, which implies nonverbally that there is still more to come: it creates tension and suspense, causing an audience to be hooked into the sound in order to hear it be completed with a downward (“it’s over”) tonality. By using this intonation, you are instigating the members of your audience to demand completion of the musical cadence, and they will be hooked until they are satisfied. Do you also notice that your body feels more suspended? There may be a feeling of “something is about to happen” when you have your hands up gesturing in the chest area. The mirroring or copying that you by now know to expect from your listeners causes their breathing to also be suspended. They are now looking for a deep out breath and will remain hooked by you until you let them off the hook by giving a strong out breath into an instruction for action. And with all the energy this state has built up in them, there is a surplus of energy they need to expend with action (or risk a build-up of toxins). Your call for action is all the excuse the body needs to redress their energetic balance by getting up a going for it.

The excitement from the energy you are creating, both in your body and in the tone of your voice, is bestowed upon the verbal content of your speech. When your hands come up to your chest and you gesture and speak, there is an energetic buzz, particularly in comparison to the loss of energy and potential depression in the GrotesquePlane and the level-headed stability of the TruthPlane. Gesturing from the chest area literally raises your oxygen level and so your energy level, gets your blood pumping from your heart, and compels those around you to do and feel the same. This is why I call this area the PassionPlane (see [Figure 5.1](#)).



Figure 5.1 Mirroring in the PassionPlane

The Biomechanics of Passion

Why does this technique work so well to raise the energy and ignite the passion within you and within those who make up your audience, embedding in even the most supposedly boring subject matter qualities of excitement and extreme interest? First, you are gesturing in a very safe area of your body. After all, while the chest, like the belly, contains vital organs, it is covered by the hard bones of the rib cage. This arrangement gives us a relatively high level of safety in this area, maybe even a feeling of invulnerability. You can afford to be more expansive and step up your energy from this area because you are less afraid of being damaged there.

Certainly we see that in aggressive posturing between human beings, the chest is displayed and the arms are opened out in this area, perhaps drawing any aggressor's attention away from our very vulnerable middle area and toward this very safe area, where less damage can be easily inflicted. Notice how in fighting sports such as boxing, an attack is traditionally made not at the chest area, but rather at the belly, head, neck, lower back, and limbs. You may see aggressive pushing at the chest area, or warning people back at this height, but again, this is relatively safe compared to attracting an attack on the soft and delicate stomach area.

Fighting For Breath

When I studied the movement and behavior of animals many years ago, I gained a great deal of knowledge about aggressive and passive body language. It soon became clear that the martial arts provided a fount of very old and powerful psychophysical knowledge around this area. I studied one-on-one with a master of martial arts (in return for some acting training) in order to understand more about the balance of the body and how it coped with stress or could be destabilized by placing specific twists along the spine that not only unbalanced physically but also mentally and psychologically. (This lasted until I was accidentally knocked out—ouch!) The learning that had the most impact (apart from now being sure to duck when a foot comes toward your head at 40 mph and 1,000 pounds of pressure) was the exact way in which breath affected both visualization and action. We would spend time breaking dense wooden boards, during which I would deliberately reverse the usual breathing for this (visualize the board breaking on an out breath and strike it on an in breath), often, as you might imagine, crying out with the pain that the board inflicted on me. But when I applied the correct breathing—visualizing the board parting in two on the in breath and just made a relaxed, soft strike on a clear out breath, my hand sliced through the thick wood like a hot knife through butter. There was nothing mysterious—just simple psychophysiology. Basic physics, biology, and artistry wrapped into one. My other great learnings were centered on the fact that one of the fundamental ways of dealing with aggression is simply not to be near it in the first place.

The Passion of the Chest

The chest has an element of bravado about it. Think about any of the great film action heroes and how large their chest is as they square up to the

enemy. Think about the chest-beating ape that shows dominance over other males and his territory by displaying his upper body strength. Therefore, gestures in the PassionPlane can also easily be perceived as aggressive. The energy created by working within this GesturePlane can become very high, and if it is not controlled skillfully, it can make the communicator come across as too forward. Indeed, if a communicator raises her energy level too much, appears to be all over the place, and gestures frenetically and in an overly aggressive manner in the PassionPlane, she can be seen as pointlessly melodramatic in a way that is just not possible in say the TruthPlane. Indeed, if one's gestures in the chest area are wild, the energy can become so high and unrestrained that the mouth begins to work faster than the brain, and words become garbled and nonsensical. At that point, the communicator looks not just completely out of control, but in some cases utterly crazy.

High adrenaline combined with high passion can be a difficult combination for the business communicator to handle. In the heat of the moment, with adrenalin on overload, the presenter quickly starts to breathe very high in the chest, with short, sharp breaths. These breaths can easily produce a perfect physical environment for hyperventilation and the faint and tingly feelings that come with it, or even a sense of panic. If you lose control of your energy in the PassionPlane, you also stand a good chance of moving into a state of heightened aggression (especially if you have no way out of the situation), which is mirrored, in turn, by your receivers (audience, coworkers, and so on), and the next thing you know, the whole room is unconsciously having a secondhand panic attack. This is perhaps the worst possible outcome for a shareholders' meeting.

This is why you must tread quite carefully with the motivating and energizing factors in this particular plane of gesture, using the TruthPlane alongside it to bring balance to the passion. Be very particular about when you use the PassionPlane and when you use the TruthPlane. In general, you should use the PassionPlane to frame content that you wish to come across as exciting, energetic, or even aggressive, and use the TruthPlane for content that you wish to come across as factual, honest, and sincerely felt. For example, in the CFO's "It's been a great year" speech, when it is delivered using the PassionPlane, it could be highly motivating and inspire the audience to buy more stock—but do we feel from the delivery that we

can really *trust* the information? It could easily look like a dramatic exaggeration, and that is a potential problem with the PassionPlane. Maybe the results should be delivered in the TruthPlane and the future expectations be delivered in the PassionPlane; then the audience can both be assured that the stock is healthy now *and* be engaged in the company's future prosperity through the speaker's passion. On this point, also remember that any feeling you talk about from the PassionPlane will be pushed into a more intense delivery of that emotion. Just for fun, try the exercise below.

The “I Love You” Exercise

All you are going to be saying in this exercise is the phrase, “I love you.” Now put your hands down by your sides in the GrotesquePlane and try saying the words. How does it feel? Would you believe it if you heard somebody else tell you that in the same intonation that you just used? Now put your hands at navel height, the TruthPlane, and say the words. How did that feel to you? Now put your hands at chest height, the PassionPlane, and say the words one last time.

Did you notice the subtle yet profound differences among the three? The words remained the same each time, but there is a clear difference in the intention and meaning of the message when you change the position of your hands. Which version you did you believe most? Which was most sincere, which seemed the most excited, and which was the most disengaged? The answer should be immediately obvious.

Artistic Temperament

This PassionPlane enjoys a long tradition of hosting feelings at extreme levels. Master artists across the globe have known for centuries that depicting figures that are gesturing from the chest will give an audience an instant feeling of high energy, high emotion, and active motivation.

Take for example the quite common Christian icon of Christ on a wooden cross portrayed with his arms in the PassionPlane, representing an image of passionate love for humankind. A good example of which is the one looking over the city of Rio de Janeiro, Brazil ([Figure 5.2](#)), where the cross is not shown, but the figure remains in the PassionPlane—an

inspirational and motivating image of passion for many in that city and across the world.

Now, it so happens that much of the military and judicial history suggests that a Roman crucifixion was more likely performed with hands far above the head, putting the figure into more of a Y shape or even elongated into an I shape rather than the traditional cross quite common in Christian images.



Figure 5.2 Passion O Cristo Redentor

But artists know that when they place the figure in the general posture of a more historically accurate Roman crucifixion, with the hands way above the head, the image is more tragic or depressing: one of surrender.

Whether you are in the business of evangelism or out there evangelizing about your business, people need to see, hear, and feel the passion behind your message in order to be motivated and join in. Remember, though, that if you are overly passionate, you may be viewed as out of control and overemotional. Generally, emotion is considered relatively dangerous, as it is very unpredictable. We don't like to be around someone when his emotions seem to be out of control. However, we are fascinated and engaged by emotions when they are under control. That is why we are more

able to watch extreme violence from the safe distance of a film screen but would without doubt run a mile were it for real. It is the same for business: the controlled passion of a CEO for her team—say, a great speech that talks about their brilliant work with great fervor, but from the distance of a stage presentation—may be more palatable than the CEO’s leaping into the audience and hugging and kissing everyone. Both can be equally passionate, yet one might feel more appropriate because it is whole lot safer. Test out this GesturePlane for yourself, and learn how to create a controlled sense and feeling of passion around anything you say and so afford your audience the extra energy this provides to be motivated to join you. In later chapters, I will explain how to mix this PassionPlane with other Gesture-Planes to create balance and narrative flow in your nonverbal influence.

Passion is important to business and in the business messages that you send out. A passionate, energized body has the potential psychological effect of influencing an audience’s perception in quite positive ways: not least that your listeners will feel and mirror your excitement. Next, you will learn how to support what you’ve learned so far by creating positive impressions with your facial expressions also, helping your audience to understand that you are open and here to help.

Chapter 5 Quick Study

Passion is fundamental to motivating the members of your audience to action by helping them to understand your energy and giving them energetic movements to mirror and a surplus of energy that needs expending—predisposing them to execute the actions you ask for.

Just Do This Now

1. Gesture with your hands in the PassionPlane—at chest level—to bring passion to your communication and raise the heart rate and activity of both you and your audience.

2. Bring product samples or reports up into the chest area to give them an air of excitement. Take them to the TruthPlane to give them trusted status or drop them into the GrotesquePlane to demote them.
3. The PassionPlane can create a more aggressive and argumentative atmosphere. Push yourself and others into gesturing in the chest area to create a more passionate environment for discord—if this is what you are looking for!

Chapter 5 Case Study

Theory to Practice—Letting Off Steam

“Why did I have to book this one in the FishBowl meeting room?” Stacey asks herself, as the client does not even sit down before launching into an uninformed rant about the preliminary results of the latest online ad campaign. The FishBowl is pretty much soundproof, but it is the only meeting room in the agency without opaque glass. Now the whole office is getting a crystal-clear picture of her angry and upset client yet can’t hear the unreasonable nonsense that is going with it and would mitigate the negative way the image alone reflects on Stacey and her work. She could mistakenly lose office status fast if she does not do the right thing.

As the account team leader, Stacey chooses to sit down and visibly sustains an open gesture in the TruthPlane while the client’s outburst quickly calms. By the end of the meeting, the conversation has become quite productive.

Insight

Given this scenario, Stacey probably did the right thing. Staying physically lower than the other person, especially if you expose your middle (e.g., by pushing your chair away from the table a bit), will reduce the intensity of such an “attack.” It will also shorten the length of time the attack continues, thereby making it less conspicuous, which is obviously a concern for Stacey.

Provocation

Do you like to win? Can you imagine yourself ever losing first in order to win later on?

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6

Faces Tell the Whole Story

Using Your Head for a Change

Other men are lenses through which we read our own minds.

—Ralph Waldo Emerson

In this chapter you'll learn:

- The secrets of physical mind control
- How we mistake tired leaders for liars
- More motivating gestures
- Facial coding for compelling communication
- Why Botox can kill your message

Business deals would be much easier to negotiate if we were able to read other people's minds and understand what they really want or need. With that kind of knowledge, we would undoubtedly be able to influence the other party to see our point of view every time (or at least understand what she really thought of us!). Unfortunately, most of us cannot read other people's minds. Or can we?

Well, technically we can't read minds. What we can do, however, is read other people's faces, and in many cases that can turn out to be the same thing. We often hear that the eyes are the windows to the soul, and some scientists have found that they can tell character types from a microscopic study of the iris. Dr. Mats Larsson has led research at the Center for Developmental Research, Örebro University, that confirms that a gene called Pax6 is involved in both the development of the eye and the development of an area of the brain involved in conflict detection and emotional awareness. Larsson found that the presence of "crypts" (pits

found in the iris) were significantly associated with the personality characteristics of warmth and trust, whereas “contraction furrows” were associated with impulsiveness.

On a larger scale, certainly every muscle movement that a person makes with his face potentially affects what others think about him. Facial cues are hugely important when you are up close and personal in business, as in life in general. However, it is very difficult to read another person’s body language 100 percent correctly. For example, is the person with her arms crossed being willfully nonreceptive, fending off the cold, or simply trying to stay awake and engaged? It’s impossible to know this for sure from just that one signal.

So, the business communicator who is skilled in using body language needs to also deliver gestures from in and around the face to most fully ensure the reactions and actions desired from his audience in any given situation. In this chapter, you will learn how to get gestures across with your face and the space around your head so that you can have an even stronger positive influence over the opinions of others and help change their minds, often for the better.

Five Thousand Reasons Why Not

Visual artists for centuries have expressed the beauty and mystery of the human face by capturing the emotions displayed within it in still pictures; scientists, however, are continually discovering that much of the power of the face is encapsulated in the split-second expressions that unconsciously slip across it thousands of times each day—in the “microexpressions” or “microgestures” made popular by the work of Dr. Paul Ekman (and the TV character based on him, Dr. Cal Lightman in the network series *Lie to Me*). These fleeting facial gestures are created with as many as, if not more than, 52 facial muscles (depending on how you categorize them) and the nerves and blood vessels serving them, all built upon the foundation of bone and cartilage and covered by the skin; these facial components can take on as many as 5,000 expressions, from the most obvious grimace to the most subtle eyebrow lift. These play a large part in guiding our lives in terms of how we relate to one another as individuals and the way we connect together as a society every time we meet face to face.

Indeed, the ability to make faces, and to read them, is vital to both our personal interactions with any group or society and the survival of our species as a whole. This is so much the case that the father of the natural selection hypothesis of evolution, Darwin, wrote extensive theories on universal facial expressions, published in his book *The Expressions of the Emotions in Man and Animals* in 1898, and academics such as Ekman have further built upon these ideas that the primary emotions conveyed by the face are universal.

Psychologists too have been studying the human face and scrutinizing its potential hidden code for decades. The face is the most extraordinary communicator, capable of signaling emotion accurately in the blink of an eye, but capable of concealing emotion equally well. As Ekman states in his 1997 book *What the Face Reveals*, “The face is equipped to lie the most and leak the most, and thus can be a very confusing source of information.”

Mixed Messages

It would seem that although humans are an intensely social species, and as such are reliant on communication, we are also designed to give mixed messages: combinations of gestures that conceal (or secretly reveal) our intention, our motivation, and the inner workings of our minds. This duplicity is in our very nature.

Before we look at the human face in detail to discover what nonverbal messages we send with any sense of accuracy and assurance about their meaning, let’s look at the head area in general and find out what can be done with this physical space in order to communicate our messages nonverbally.

Head Space

You will remember that as human beings, we get a great deal of our information about the world through what we see. We are able to detect patterns through our sight and instantly make judgments based on past experience, or to use instinctual behavior to determine the appropriate action or reaction for us. However, when we listen, the information travels to and is processed by our brain at a much slower rate.

Because of the relative complexity of sound compared to vision, we rely on supplementing the understanding that we receive from sound with the pictures that go with it. Indeed, it has been speculated that because speech-associated gestures could possibly reduce lexical or sentential ambiguity, comprehension should improve in the presence of such gestures. And work by the department of psychology at the University of Chicago has shown that when spoken language is accompanied by meaningful speech-associated gestures, comprehension is improved. Furthermore, when spoken language is accompanied by no gestures at all or gestures that are irrelevant to the verbal material, it takes longer to comprehend speech. In short, it is neurologically simpler for us to understand speech when we see it. But it is not just arm gestures that we are talking about here.

When we listen to someone speak, we are reading that person's lips more than we would ever expect, and looking out for facial and physical gestures that help us to deduce the potential meaning of what is being said exactly. Take this encounter, for example: a colleague approaches you and says, "Have you read the report?" Now, how do you know if this is a question or not? Your colleague does not approach you with a question mark signal (?) on her forehead—or maybe she does. You might see some expression in her face that suggests to you that this is a question—a furrowed brow, for example. However, this furrowed brow could also be interpreted as stress in the communicator: is she asking you whether you have read the report, or is she telling you that you should have read it, and she is angry because she thinks you have not? Maybe you can listen for an upward inflection in the voice, which would suggest that she is asking a question.

You can see that even before you begin to wonder if you heard the words right (because maybe she actually said, "You ready to report?" and waved the meeting agenda at you!), you are looking for some visual signs of meaning and fitting the content to that frame. Next you will look at how the person's lips are moving in order to help you understand the exact words that are being used and correlate this with the supposed meaning, getting a message that is congruent. If the message is incongruent, then you will tend to go with what you see and make what you heard sound like that—and if you can't manage that, then on the whole you will be confused. And so here is the first lesson about head space for the business communicator:

We need to see your face to know more of what you are saying!

Read My Lips

To test just how much your audience relies on seeing your lips move to understand verbal language, try this out on a colleague: go and have a chat and find ways to keep your hands over your mouth throughout. Notice how many misunderstandings occur and how frustrated your colleague gets because he cannot get the message—because he cannot *see* the message. Now bring your hands down to the TruthPlane and see the relief in your colleague’s face and body. He can now read your lips and see your intention in your face (as well as being assured by your gestures from the part of your body that engenders the most trust). You may think that even the most naive business communicator would not cover his face when he was speaking; however, you will notice, especially in long meetings at tables, that when the head gets tired (it weighs about 8 to 12 pounds, and the neck can get tired of carrying it), even a seasoned communicator’s hands can easily creep up to the chin and the mouth to cup the head with elbows supported on the table to take stress off the neck—something that is comfortable for the person who is holding her head up, but very uncomfortable for the people who are trying to understand and communicate with her because they cannot see her words!

Pants on Fire

The mouth and jaw area of the head I call the horizontal gesture plane of *disclosure*. If the audience members cannot see this area, then they feel as if they are being closed off, and therefore lack information. They can easily turn this feeling into the idea that the communicator is purposely withholding data, or, to put it bluntly, *lying!* Of course, it is not necessarily true that the sender of a message with his hands in this area is lying (to work that out would take far more evidence), but that is often the *feeling* we get when someone speaks to us with his hands in this horizontal plane.

The lesson here is: keep your hands away from your mouth so that everyone can hear your meaning correctly. Conversely, you can use your hands up around your jaw and at mouth level to *funnel* the audience’s vision toward your mouth and direct it to your speech—this would be a gesture of

disclosure, seen as, “I am telling you everything.” Try out this gesture for yourself: bring your hands up to your mouth level and use them to funnel an imagined audience into seeing the mouth area. Can you recognize how it quickly begins to feel as though you are imploring the audience to understand or believe you? You can also probably feel how quickly your energy (physical and mental) rises and becomes quite excited and frantic. Can you feel how your words might run away with you?

On the whole, gesturing around the lower face is to be avoided unless you wish to create a potential feeling of mistrust of the message. For example, try saying this with your hands in the DisclosurePlane: “I have given the board all the information we have on this matter.” Remember that we believe what we see, and so if you are covering the message, we are not as able to believe it. So now try the same sentence with your hands in the TruthPlane. You will instantly understand both the merits and the disadvantages of the DisclosurePlane from this exercise, and get a feeling for how using it, especially unknowingly, can create intense distrust in your audience.

Word to the Action

I have studied and performed in many different styles and forms of theater and performance from around the globe. In all of the styles and traditions that I have experienced firsthand, gesture always comes very slightly before the text, not only in performance, but in life. Indeed, there are methods used by directors in rehearsal whereby the movement or choreography of the work is fully organized and worked out *before* adding the text, in order to get the fundamental psychology of the action set to the desires and intentions of the dramatic characters. One exception to gesture coming before text is in comedy—it is easy to get a laugh from an audience by simply putting the text before the action. The incongruity can be anything from subtly humorous to “fall-off-your-chair funny.” It is interesting, researching further into this area, to learn that movement is the precursor to language and the thought behind language

(brain research now tells us that the nonverbal reactions to our feelings happen well before we can verbalize them). Therefore, it is no surprise that complex rehearsed movement from public speakers can often appear insincere and sometimes plain stupid—not because it is not possible for rehearsed movement and speech to be emotionally authentic (good actors can “fake” that level of sincerity take after take, show after show if they need to), but because for these business presenters, it is quite tricky to connect overly complex and often meaningless movements with text that is complex and all too often lacking intention. The speaker in this context is often content-obsessed; she reads or remembers the words and performs or remembers the movement a second later—too late! That is why I stay well away from choreographing detailed movements with clients. Instead, we work on keeping a simple consistency to their physical movement that will produce big pictures to which their audiences’ minds can respond. The speaker, once she is comfortable working within a simple physical framework, is now liberated to allow her own sincere, detailed movement to come out as natural or “authentic” responses to the impulses of the event. She is living in the “here and now” instead of the “back then and rehearsed” mentally uncluttered from having to sustain complex psychological intentions, and gestures, pre-arranged thoughts and rehearsed words. Preparation of the physical vocabulary and availability to the moment is the road to success, not mental or physical rehearsal.

The ThoughtPlane

As the hands move further up the head, they become level with the eyes and the temples. Let’s understand the effect that this has on you and anyone with whom you are communicating.

Bring your hands up to your temples, put your fingers on the temple area, and try delivering this sentence again: “I have given the board all the information we have on this matter.” Can you feel the mental strain that this gesture gives to the linguistic content? Now move your hands farther apart, but keep them at temple level and keep delivering the statement as you move your hands farther away from each other and gesticulate within the boundaries of this plane of gesture (eye and temple level). Can you feel how agitated, distracted, and frankly crazy you get as you gesture with your hands at this horizontal height and further and further apart? Of course, any audience would be joining you in this mental craziness because, as you learned earlier, people are all designed to copy; if they are not copying, they will be getting themselves mentally and physically as far away from you as possible, feeling too unsafe around this quality of movement and the unhinged mentality into which they presume it fits.

Now see what happens as you bring your hands in toward the center of this GesturePlane and give this statement with the fingers of both hands together at the top of the bridge of your nose—right at the center of this GesturePlane. Can you feel how mentally decided and assured you now are as you give this statement?

The area at eye level I call the GesturePlane of *thought*. Gesturing in this plane with the hands wide apart gives a feeling of the mind’s being split and undecided, and this instantly creates stress in both your mind and that of any audience. As your hands travel in toward the center of this GesturePlane, the mind becomes more focused on one point, and there is a feeling of decision both in you and in anyone seeing and reacting to this gesture.

At this point in our investigation let’s move our focus from the horizontal to a vertical plane that splits us right up the middle.

The WheelPlane

The center line of the body can be called the *WheelPlane*; it is an imagined line where the body is dissected symmetrically down the vertical center. (Anatomically, this is known as the *Sagittal Plane* or *Median Plane*, and it divides the body into the *sinister* and *dexter*—left and right—portions.) Gestures along the center of the body or the WheelPlane feel very decided

when they are placed at the horizontal height of the ThoughtPlane of thought.

If you also understand that modern neuroscience suggests that one side of our brain deals in cognitive processes and the other side deals in creative processes, you can see how symmetrical gestures out from the ThoughtPlane can split the cognitive and creative brain, and gestures to the center can cause them to synchronize. You will also find that if you gesture in the plane of thought with both hands to the left of the WheelPlane, it has a very different feeling from when you gesture to the right. For most people, if you place your right hand to your temple and proceed to recount some tricky multiplication tables, you will make the task easier than if you placed your left hand to your temple. And when you place your left hand to your temple and imagine a great day on a lovely beach, this exercise will be far less tedious and infinitely more pleasant than it is with your right hand to your right temple: this hand placement will give a much fuller and creative visualization. Each side of your body is connected to the opposite side of the brain, and for most people, the right hand is connected to the left brain and cognitive thought, whereas the left side of the body is connected to the right brain and creative thought.

Using this knowledge when speaking to an audience is really quite complex, but movement based on the knowledge of embodied cognition can be used to initiate certain styles of thinking. More on this in the next chapter.

Over Your Head

Start with your hands touching the top of your head, then raise them up into the air high above your head as you say the following speech: “I have given the board all the information we have on this matter.” Now try the same speech again while throwing your hands high above your head and sustain your gestures there.

All right—calm down now!

You were just then in the horizontal gesture plane that I call *ecstasy*. You can quickly experience the heights to which your energy can rise when you gesture with your hands above your head (see [Figure 6.1](#)). This is a plane that we may associate with the evangelistic speaker or the most highly

charged “motivational” speaker. It’s not for most of the business world’s day-to-day communication delivery (unless you work on the floor of a stock exchange) because the energy of an average business situation rarely rises, either mentally or physically, to the level of the ecstatic. Even if business really is *ecstatically* fantastic, most people would suppress a feeling of total ecstasy because it takes us to a place over which we have very little control. It might be fitting for the high-energy business speaker who is motivating a thousand people at a keynote speech to really hammer home the message. But for the day-to-day office talk, or even the company pep talk, it could just look as mad as a box of frogs. Within the world of business body language, we see the EcstaticPlane used mostly to suppress extreme feelings—as with the hands covering the top of the head to suppress the feeling of “I’m mad as hell, and I’m not going to take it anymore!”

Most seasoned business communicators will recognize that voicing your thoughts with your hands high in the EcstaticPlane can easily result in your being escorted from the premises by security, with an offsite exit interview conducted the next working day. Business is evolving daily, but it is probably not quite ready to value daily ecstatic outbursts from the workforce in any positive way.

You have been warned.

So you can see that the head area alone has three distinct universal planes of gesture split down the centre by the WheelPlane and each section with its own distinct meaning and uses. And all of this before we look into the intricacies of the myriad of expressions within the face itself. So now that we have some understanding of the wider gestural frame for the face, let’s look at some detailed expressions within the face, and learn about the most universal gesture to give from your head area in order to win trust and influence those around you.



Figure 6.1 Gestures in the EcstaticPlane

Lie to Me

At this point, we need to revisit Dr. Ekman's (1972) conclusion that the emotions and facial expressions of anger, disgust, fear, joy, sadness, and surprise are biologically universal to all humans, and that these feelings cannot be hidden as they flash across the face to tell of the psychological state within.

But before we take a look at what these facial expressions are, let's first do a test to see how good you are at spotting their emotional triggers. Look at each picture of a face in [Figure 6.2](#); these have been simplified to show only the salient points on the face that are needed for spotting six of Ekman's archetypal feelings that are encoded in facial muscles. Write down below each picture the feeling that you see, and then turn to the next page and check whether you spotted them correctly.

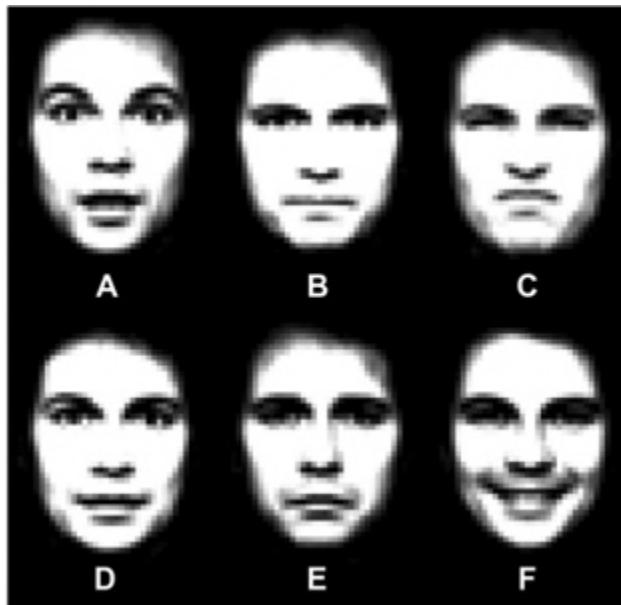


Figure 6.2 Six Universal Emotional Expressions

Here are the answers:

A: Surprise

B: Anger

C: Disgust

D: Fear

E: Sadness

F: Joy

How well did you do?

Even if you did well in this very simplified test of reading facial language, you will understand from earlier discussions that consciously using Ekman's knowledge to read others is full of potential pitfalls because

of our equally universal human ability, skill, and often habit of (or in some cases sheer delight in) being duplicitous.

The Indeterminate Smile

What the master of business body language needs is to be able to produce an indicator of acceptance in the face so that the audience feels invited into the communication. Once again, art has an answer, and it exists within a thing called the *indeterminate smile*.

Take a look at [Figure 6.3](#) and see how it affects you.



Figure 6.3 Indeterminate Smile

How do you feel when you look at this lip line? Do you feel yourself mirroring it and mirroring the feeling(s) with which it is encoded? Can you feel how you are invited in by this image of the slightly upturned lips, and even given a feeling that “something is *about* to happen”?

It is, of course, the smile of the *Mona Lisa*, and this smile has had an enigmatic hold on people for centuries. But the master, Renaissance visual artist Leonardo da Vinci, was not the first great artist to understand how the indeterminate smile (one that feels as if it could move to any feeling—laugh or cry or become angry or fearful) has a hold on human beings, drawing them into the face and giving them a sense of acceptance. Take a look at [Figure 6.4](#).

Again notice from the shape of the mouth that the person shown here is not quite smiling, yet the mouth is positive and inviting. Again, copy or mirror the shape of this mouth and begin to see how you feel with your face

muscles in this indeterminate smile position—*the edges of the lips just slightly turned up in symmetry*.



Figure 6.4 Ko-omote Smile

Laugh or Cry This slight smile is the facial key to inviting an audience to listen to you because, just as with Leonardo da Vinci’s *Mona Lisa* smile, the smile on Ko-omote varies depending on the viewer’s imagination or state of mind. The smile is positive enough to invite a viewer toward it with a feeling that he will be accepted, yet indeterminate enough that the viewer easily projects many of his own feelings onto the face of the communicator (the mask)—again to feel accepted.

In short, an indeterminate smile invites the members of an audience to look into themselves, and there is nothing that humans like more than seeing and examining themselves! As a presenter, when you use an indeterminate smile, the audience can feel more a part of you.

Here are the clear signals that we look for in the face to feel that we are accepted, and that, if portrayed confidently, will help to provide an atmosphere that will draw in an audience of one or many:

1. **A gentle smile.** This means that not only do the sides of the lips need to be upturned just a little, but the muscles around the eyes must also be congruent with the feeling. We can tell when the smile is “put on” or there is no smile *behind the smile*—in other words, when the intention in the mind is not congruent with the expression. You can use the in breath to achieve an inspired state that also opens up the eyes and gives congruence with a gentle smile.

2. ***The eyebrows slightly raised.*** This is the universal gesture of “I recognize you!” Every time we see someone that we know or that we are accepting, our eyebrows “flash,” i.e., they rise up a little very quickly. Therefore, if you keep your eyebrows very slightly raised, not only does this open up your eyes so that your listeners can see more of them and feel that they can trust you more because they are “seeing the white of your eyes,” but it also lets them feel that you have recognized them or accepted them alongside you. You will notice that this gesture does not tend to happen with anyone who has had Botox injected into the forehead. So the facial expressions (or lack thereof) of someone you know can suddenly become quite disturbing the first time you see her with Botox because there are none of the unconscious signals that she has recognized and accepted you. Such people often look as if they have lost their memory of you, although they are talking with you quite normally. Very weird, especially if it is your best friend of mother!
3. ***The head tilted slightly to one side.*** This gives your audience the “I’m listening to you” signal even when you are doing the talking. The head to one side is a universal gesture of *giving the other person an ear*. It displays the ears to clearly show that you are inputting information from them. You will also notice that tilting your head to one side feels very different from tilting it to the other. For many people, when they tilt their head over to the left, they get the furrowed brow of thought or questioning, because it sparks up their cognitive brain. And when they tilt it over to the right, there is a lighter feeling as the more open, creative brain is sparked into action. Try this out for yourself, with the knowledge that displaying either ear shows a level of engagement with your audience. Bear in mind that a long-lasting or perhaps exaggerated tilt gives a strong feeling of empathy from the communicator, and of course we mirror this, too. It does not, as some nonverbal communication commentators suggest, cause you to look subservient or give you a perceived drop in status. (At least only if you don’t view listening to others and having feeling for what they say, beneath your level.)

Moving Ahead

This chapter has looked at the potential positive and negative messages that are created by the face, and created by gestures around the head area, and how you can use gestures in and around the head to get your point across effectively and change the way others relate to you and so move toward you. You are learning that the head area is extremely complex when it comes to body language. So as a skilled communicator with expertise in nonverbal body language, you should always be looking for clarity and not complexity in this and all other areas. To help distill out any complexity that has you confused and could confuse your audience, keep on reading!

Chapter 6 Quick Study

Gestures around the head and face are extremely complex, whether they are gestures of the hands around the face or facial gestures themselves. Humans need visual clues to what is being said verbally. We not only read *expressions* in the face to gauge emotional context, but also lip-read to better understand the verbal language. A raise of the eyebrows shows others they are recognized. The mouth is also most important for inviting other human beings toward us with a simple smile. A tilt of the head show you are listening and creates a sense of empathy and gesturing wildly with your hands above your head should maybe be saved exclusively for the day your office lottery pool wins the jackpot!

Just Do This Now

1. Keep your hand gestures away from your face in order to allow your audience to see your face, giving it the ability to better understand your communication.
2. Practice presenting on the in breath to help form the gentle “indeterminate” smile, encouraging the eyebrows to rise very slightly.
3. Practice “giving an ear” to others when you are speaking with them through a gentle head tilt to one side (for most people, it’s preferable to tilt over to the right to show that you are actively and openly listening).

Chapter 6 Case Study

Theory to Practice: Careful

“Everyone knew that our senior vice president was working with a coach, but that did not seem like such a big deal. What started to draw our attention was when we all began to notice the same thing,” explains Arthur. Apparently the combination of a corporate edict for more face-to-face meetings and some coaching advice—badly given or ill received—created an ongoing office joke.

“At least five or six times in a conversation, she would raise her eyebrows like this.” Chuckling, Arthur opens his eyes as wide as he can. “It stopped after a while. I am not sure if or how it got back to her, but now, all you have to do is this (repeats eyebrow raise) to get a laugh from our team.”

Insight

It is true that raising one’s eyebrows shows recognition, which can foster trust and reciprocation. More specifically, the gesture is a literal “eyebrow flash.” This anecdote is consistent with the adage that “a little learning is a dangerous thing.” Subtlety is required in using any of these techniques. They are definitely tools, but you cannot wield them like jackhammers.

Provocation

What have others told you about body language that is now beginning to feel as though it could be untrue? What are you starting to recognize as a new truth?

7

From Complex to Clear Body Language

Clarity, Clarity, Clarity

Simplicity is the ultimate sophistication.

—Leonardo da Vinci

In this chapter you'll learn:

- Simplified body language for maximum effect
- What part of your brain is nonverbal
- The symmetry of powerful body language
- The secret of animal attraction
- How to confuse, obfuscate, and totally bamboozle with your body

It is the same with body language as it is with actual speech: the more complex the communication gets, the more likely we are to either misinterpret the message or have to “tune out” in order to stay sane. So the question, then, is: how does one deliver more complex messages without confusing the audience?

In this chapter, we will be taking a look at ways to display simple body language that will support and provide the foundation for *a more complex message*. In addition, we will look at how you can use confusing body language to your advantage.

First, let's get some things clear about the complexity of the human brain.

Use Your Head

How many brains do you have? This is pretty easy to answer ... you have only one brain. However, according to the research of Roger Sperry, a Nobel Prize-winning neuropsychologist, the cerebral hemispheres are divided right down the middle into a right hemisphere and a left hemisphere. Each hemisphere appears to be specialized for some specific behaviors (as was briefly stated in the last chapter and will be looked at in more detail now). Indeed, Sperry's findings are that both the left and the right hemispheres can be simultaneously involved in different, even mutually conflicting, mental experiences. But how does this play out in the body, and what is the benefit for business communication and winning body language?

Handy

Take a walk around any organization, and you'll find most people (about 90 percent) are right-handed or "right-hand dominant"—they prefer to use their right hand to write, eat, and throw balls of paper into the wastebasket. Most of the other 10 percent of the population is left-handed or "left-hand dominant." There are very few people who use both hands equally, known as "ambidextrous." In fact, most people also have a dominant *eye* that they use to "sight" or target something by closing one eye, using the open one to align a near object with it. Similarly, the dominant *ear* is the one that they prefer to use over the other. It's often the one that they cup a hand behind when they want to listen really carefully, feel that they have misheard, or are asking for verbal clarification.

Deconstruct

Working around the world and within many different cultures, I've had cause to think about and explore the universal structure and meaning of movement. Since my early studies I have drawn diagrams of the body and split it into sections, thinking and questioning myself about how to define the meaning of gestures in each of those sections, and how to combine those definitions to get the results that you

needed from your body, your mind, and the audience. Take the arm, from the shoulder to the ends of the fingers: “What does movement of the fingers mean? Perhaps intelligence? What about the wrist? Imagination? The elbow—notion? The shoulder—involvement; the core: action?” My new models have evolved from older ones by masters of applied psychology of movement such as Rudolf Laban and his protégé, the great acting trainer to amongst others Sean Connery, Pierce Brosnan, and Anthony Hopkins; Yat Malmgren. Over time, I have worked on distilling my ideas down to the ones you find described today in this book—the simplest and most effective models for nonverbal business communication.

Congruence of Movement

For a message that you send to stand the optimum chance of being interpreted correctly by the audience, it must be taken in coherently by both the left brain’s linguistic logic and the right brain’s nonverbal image processor. This means gesturing with more symmetry between the left side and the right side of the body. An asymmetrical gesture stands a very good chance of causing a cognitive dissonance between audience members’ left and right brain, especially when they are trying to comprehend the language by both listening and focusing on the movement of the speaker’s lips. As seen in [Figure 7.1](#), a symmetrical gesture can lead the eye more easily and quickly to the mouth. It creates a focal point at the head area of the body. Constant symmetry also means less difference between the two sides of the body, and so an increased ability for viewers to predict the outcomes of behavior. Thus symmetry feels safer.

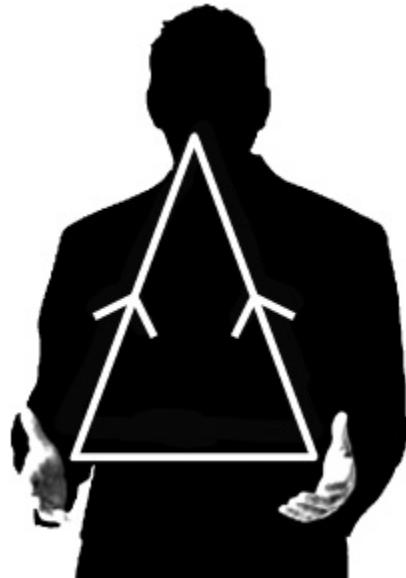


Figure 7.1 A Focal Point of Symmetrical Gesture

The more congruence there is between the gestures on both the left and the right side of the body and any words that are being spoken, the less chance there is of misinterpretation, confusion, or cognitive dissonance. For example, if you stand and place your hands symmetrically in the TruthPlane and say the words, “You can trust me,” notice how steadfast and confident you appear, sound, and feel. Now place one hand in the PassionPlane and the other in the GrotesquePlane and notice a decrease in credibility, physically, vocally, and psychologically, when you again say, “You can trust me.”

Let’s test this out further on someone close by.

To experience for yourself the amount of confusion that you can create by using asymmetrical gestures (different gestures on the two sides of your body) that have no relation to your words, you are first going to find someone to talk with. Look around; pretty much anyone will do. As you talk with this person, make sure that your right and left hands are consistently at different horizontal levels. Furthermore, find as many moments as you can to change those horizontal levels. During this exercise, your hands should never be at the same horizontal GesturePlane. As you gesticulate in this way, see what happens to the expression on the face of the person to whom you are talking. Notice how he relates to you both

physically and verbally as a strong indicator of how well he understands the content that you are exchanging with him.

Because you have been constantly changing your gestures yet also keeping them asymmetrical, a huge amount of dissonance is created for your listener. No doubt you will have witnessed this confusion for yourself. Indeed, some of you will have noticed that the person with whom you were speaking actually took a step further away from you (potentially showing an avoidance response), and in some cases will have found a reason to exit from the conversation entirely. It is uncomfortable to be on the receiving end of a speaker who is using incongruent and asymmetrical gestures. However, not only is symmetry simpler and easier to understand in the body, but it also appears that humans prefer it and are more attracted to it.

Classical Beauty. Plato, understanding that symmetry is attractive to the human eye, wrote of the “golden proportions” in the human face: the width of an ideal face would be two-thirds its length, while the nose would be no longer than the distance between the eyes. Today, certain proportional ratios have been scientifically proven to be inherently attractive to the human eye along with symmetry between the left and right sides of the face.

Award-winning psychological researcher Dr. David Perrett of St. Andrews University, Scotland, now believes that symmetry is the secret to how we are attracted to form. Studies have shown that babies will spend more time staring at pictures of symmetrical individuals than they will at photos of asymmetrical ones. Among adults, it has been shown that when several faces are averaged to create a composite, thus covering up the asymmetries that any one individual may have, these composite faces are deemed more attractive by more people.

Numerous scientists in the field of biology have found that the preference for symmetry is a highly evolved trait that is seen in many different animals. Females from swallows to swordtail fish, for example, prefer males with more symmetrical tails. The bottom line is that research shows that beauty matters—just look at any magazine stand and the number of beauty magazines that are on offer. It is no secret that beauty in all its manifestations pervades society and affects how we engage with one another. Bearing in mind the impact of symmetry on how we are perceived, we can help an audience perceive us at our most “attractive” by practicing

symmetry in the body when communicating, giving us a true business advantage. And if, for any reason, you should ever wish to be off-putting with your body language, go for asymmetry.

Silent

As a theatrical consultant in movement for theatre companies worldwide, I have often worked with groups performing in languages other than English (which is the only language in which I am able to hold a credible conversation). Sometimes the languages have no relation to the English, French, Latin, or German that I might recognize, so I have no understanding of the verbal content of the work. What a gift—it means I can concentrate entirely on the story that the *action* is telling me. Often I might stop rehearsals and say, “I don’t get it. . . . I’m lost. I can’t see what is happening here!” The director explains the text or the plot or the emotional journey to me in English, and it is my job to add in what had been missing in the nonverbal action to tell me (and thus any audience) this. The result is theater that can be understood at a visceral level, leaving the mind free to really listen and understand the complexities of the text—a much better audience experience. Even now, I often work with my fingers plugging my ears or the sound turned down on video playback when I am helping speakers, those making TV appearances, or business presenters and politicians. That way, I can choose to concentrate solely on the movement and the feeling it will be giving to an audience.

Dissuasion

Here’s an effective way to see how asymmetrical body language can work to your advantage when you are communicating. Imagine that during a presentation, when you are talking about your competitors, you are using positive speech but asymmetrical gestures. You can add some very complex

gestures, both asymmetrical and shifting across all the horizontal and vertical planes of gesture. How does using this asymmetrical and complex nonverbal language make *you* feel about the credibility of the competition? If you want your audience to steer away from the competition and go with your business, even though you may be using positive verbal language, you won't be "selling it" for your competitors—you will, in fact, be creating a feeling of confusion around their offering.

Now imagine that when you are talking about the product or service that you are promoting right now, you switch your body language to symmetrical gestures in the TruthPlane. Can you feel how your content is elevated above that of the competition in the minds of your audience, although you were using complimentary verbal language while discussing both? By using asymmetrical and complex gestures, you can easily cause dissonance around content that you want to devalue in the audience's mind, and by using simple symmetrical gestures, you can promote ideas in an audience's mind.

Notice that the further the gestures depart from each other on a horizontal level, the more extreme the dissonance gets until it can easily begin to look quite unbusinesslike, unprofessional, and too bizarre for almost any office setting (see [Figure 7.2](#)).

Although there is no doubt that wildly asymmetrical gestures can have a certain attractiveness and sense of adventure to them, for the world of business, they are less bankable. So in the next chapter we are going to look at how to be not only simpler but even more focused with your mastery of nonverbal communication in order to bring you the results that you desire.

Chapter 7 Quick Study

Gestures with bilateral symmetry are easier to watch and read, and are perceived as more attractive. As a result, symmetrical gestures are more powerful than asymmetrical gestures, which can cause dissonance between the right- and left-brain functions in your audience.



Figure 7.2 Asymmetry in the Body

Just Do This Now

1. Keep your gestures bilaterally symmetrical. You'll be easier to understand and, strangely enough, perceived as better looking and as such statistically have more potential for success!
2. Use asymmetrical gestures to add tension to a communication.
3. Gesture asymmetrically up and down your body to totally baffle and confuse any audience.

Chapter 7 Case Study

Theory to Practice: Asymmetry Is Ugly

Tina is in a difficult position. She has been given the task of delivering options for changing the procurement procedures for her region. Her boss

has been very clear that she wants options, not recommendations. Tina has been thorough in getting input from everyone whose support will be required for success. Option A is clearly the best.

In presenting this option earlier, Tina feels that she was not able to clearly articulate the advantages. The delay came from her boss asking for a reevaluation of option A against options B and C. Further delay will be frustrating for everyone.

Insight

Instead of trying to add support to one argument, you can actually reduce the attractiveness of the other arguments. If Tina were to consciously bring asymmetrical and confusing body language into her description of options B and C, her boss would see those as being less attractive, and would be likely to gravitate to option A as a result of its being presented symmetrically in the TruthPlane.

Note: As with all tools and techniques for influence, the user assumes an ethical responsibility.

Provocation

When is it acceptable to use powerful nonverbal influence and persuasion techniques, and when is it totally unacceptable?

8

Directing the Pull of Your Presence

Focus Is Magnetic

People do not lack strength, they lack will.

—Victor Hugo

In this chapter you'll learn:

- The secret behind the secret
- Tribal patterns to present by
- Evolutionary influence techniques
- Magnetic mind control for business communicators
- Imaginative forms for physical messaging

Have you ever wondered how your body language can help you to succeed in a business situation? You must have done so at one point, or you wouldn't be reading this book. Anyway, some say a way to win is by influencing the agenda of those around you. Just as you can set a verbal agenda for a meeting, you can also silently set a nonverbal agenda with your action items at the top and ensure that people conform to it through your influence. So, right now, we are going to look at exactly how you can become a genius at *making your presence felt* every time you communicate and drawing people toward the outcomes you need.

An Open Secret

There are many books and courses out there at any given moment—right now, old and new—about how to attract whatever you desire in business toward you, be it anything from money to success or other people. Many of these books and courses have at their central core an idea that is often called the *law of attraction*. Simply put, this is the philosophy that people's own thoughts (both conscious and especially unconscious) dictate the reality of their lives, whether or not they're even aware of it. So, essentially the law of attraction says that if you really want something and you truly believe it's possible, you'll get it by directing your attention toward it. And if this is to be believed, then by the logic of the law of attraction, giving a lot of attention and thought to something that you *don't* want means that you'll get that, too!

The Unconscious Mind

The great psychologist Carl Jung, whose work was focused on creating a marriage between the conscious and unconscious elements of the human mind (introducing us to terms that are now commonly used in the psychological assessment arena, such as *introvert* and *extravert*), conveys through much of his work the idea that all human beings are connected together via a collective unconscious—"a reservoir of the experiences of our species."

This is, of course, most interesting to the seeker of business body language knowledge who already understands that the techniques within this book are designed from, and act upon, the unconscious mind through the use of images created by the physical body. You are, right now, exploring how to change people's minds using powerful pictures, or, as Jung might have classed them, *collective representations*. So let's explore more deeply the mechanics of the internal world and how images work in and on the mind—the *imagination*.

Imagination

Imagination is often thought of as the faculty of forming mental images or concepts of things that are not actually present to the senses. Yet, in fact, neurologically, the same part of your brain that is creating the picture of, say, the reality of this book and everything actually around you that you are

seeing right now is the same part of your brain that creates any pictures that you might imagine, or indeed daydream or sleep dream. Understanding this puts a slightly different slant on how we might view reality and fantasy as different from each other, yes? And because imagination is fundamentally a facility through which we all make sense of the world, some evolutionary psychologists believe that it has allowed humankind to solve problems with a virtual reality system that is more than equal to reality itself. These incredible mental simulations of possibility have ultimately increased our fitness for survival.

Furthermore, the imagination has the ability to invent or entertain with the inspirational solutions it conjures up to the problems that were once considered unsolvable. The imagination is perpetually moving humankind forward. Breakthroughs in science and culture have often been born out of images created in the mind. Indeed, the word imagination itself is derived from the word *imago* meaning a perfect image. What if we were to play with the imagination, both our own and that of our audience, using universal images in order to make a strong connection between our own mind above and the body below, connecting both to our audience? What would these perfect images, these *imagos*, look like in terms of physical language?

Platonic Shapes

Plato is a good source for answers here when he talks about the theory of “Forms,” which he does in formulating his solution to the problem of universals. The Forms, according to Plato, are archetypes of the things we see all around us.

To understand this a little better, let’s think of it in this way: a Form is a perfect, objective, unchanging “blueprint.” For example, suppose we have a triangle drawn on a chalkboard. The specifications for a perfect triangle is that it has three straight sides, with the ends meeting to create internal angles that, when combined, have a sum of 180° . The triangle on a chalkboard is far from perfect, so it is only our understanding of the *Form* “triangle” that allows us to know what the drawing is.

When we communicate through gesture, the more we try to bring ourselves toward the essential form of that gesture, the more we will

describe an archetype that others can innately understand and be drawn toward. OK, so how do we find the essence?

The Form of Your Message

Pick an objective—what do you want from the communication or intend to happen out of it? Maybe you want a raise in status or in pay, or perhaps you want to sell double the number of units of product that a customer normally purchases or have the members of your staff cheer when you tell them the good news about this quarter’s results. Think clearly of your outcome, and decide the action you should perform that will move you toward that outcome in the most direct way. Be sure not to clutter the goal you have set for yourself with other ideas or processes, and be sure not to muddy the action needed to get it with unnecessary movement. In short, keep this mantra:

Make a choice, make it bigger, and keep it tidy.

As an example of this idea, let’s go back to our CFO and the “It’s been a great year” speech. If this is the truth, and the CFO intends for us to understand that this is the truth, then why not just stay in the TruthPlane when delivering the message? Why do anything else? Why “change it up” or “give it some variety”? And when executing the plan why cloud it by mentally focusing on the intention behind the communication. Just perform it as physically planned, commit to the TruthPlane, focus on world outside and be available to change—action and reaction, just as in life. Now you are communicating naturally—authentically. Remember we don’t walk around in life fixated on our intention (it is subconscious). For example, are you thinking about your intention behind reading this book as you read it? No, you are committed to the action of reading and reacting to what you read. The reason behind reading it is long gone from your conscious mind!

“Make a choice, make it bigger, and keep it tidy” means that you can make that physical language great enough to create an essence that consumes attention, and that very quickly your audience can mirror, empathize with, and will be drawn into.

Stage Fright

A business client came to me with the most severe case of stage fright that I've ever come across: whenever he presented, this person would break out in hives (swollen, red bumps on the skin, medically known as urticaria) all over his body. Even from quite a distance, the stress was quite obvious for all to see. Critically for my client, his superior in the company was using this stress reaction as a weapon against him, which was, I am sure, responsible to a considerable extent for exacerbating this acute symptom of extreme stress. (This kind of "leadership" is not uncommon, unfortunately, and only strengthens the theory that people don't quit their jobs—they quit their managers!) In just a single session with him I prescribed against the lengthy attempts of other performance "experts" to dispel this anxiety with repetitive positive thinking or affirmation, and instead asked my client to employ an attitude of complete acceptance of his anxiety around public speaking. We reframed the fear as quite normal for the situation, yet unhelpful on a professional level. With hands in the TruthPlane to not only countermeasure the physical effects of the anxiety, but also create an aura of calm, solid professionalism when speaking. The next day he gave a presentation hive-free! Not only this, but he now gives talks to mass audiences and he has moved ahead of his manager in the organization—as I expect was the fear that was at the heart of the bullying. (As a good friend of mine says, with more than a hint of sarcasm, "If you liked school, you'll love work!") In just about all cases of stage fright, battling the fear is never the answer. Accepting it is the first step forward. Bullying, however, is not acceptable. And you cannot bully the unconscious mind with relentless positive thinking, but as many great magicians have found you can reprogram it with archetypal symbols and action.

The Bottom Line

So now, using what we've learned, let's get right down to the age-old fundamental secret of physical persuasion and influence that causes others to move with you emotionally and mentally.

Be clear with your actions—and minds will follow.

Establish clarity in your movements based on your desires and objectives for communication. Then take control and focus your body—compared to the brain, it is a much larger organ, and it can quickly draw the minds of everyone around you into alignment. Remember: first we breathe; then we react; lastly (should there be enough oxygen left over), we think.

Once you have the will to control your body with enough clarity for it to be easily mirrored, your listeners are designed to “read your mind”; they will empathize with your desire and work with you to achieve it. You will copy each other—and people who are like people, like those people!

To reiterate an example that I've mentioned before, if you want your audience to get excited by your idea, well, get excited yourself. *Make the choice* to get emotionally involved, *make that choice bigger* (don't get a little bit excited—get very excited), and *keep it tidy* (don't add a splash of merriment or a hint of irony or an apathetic twist). Now decide on the movement to use with the audience. You could use the PassionPlane to create excitement in yourself. So make that choice and stick with it. Don't back out halfway and drop to the TruthPlane. Stay with the physicality you have pre-prepared to communicate to your audience as a symbol of your intention for the desired effect. In this way you take pure movement to the audience for the outcome you want and not mental intentions that will soon be lost from the conscious mind in the heat or anxiety of meeting them face to face—never making it to solid actions.

You can quickly form a “tribe,” with your audience emulating *you* as the speaker, and emulating not just simple movement, but the vision that it represents. Though this focused, magnetic process of physical and emotional mimicry is technically primal and primitive, we are now well beyond the primates in how we can use it when we are communicating

important messages—any monkey could copy another monkey reaching for a banana, but only a human, with our developed mirror neuron system and advanced right-brain imagery and metaphor system, can copy reaching for the stars.

Evolved Influence

Advanced understanding of the evolution of communication and our predisposition to learn through mirroring can help us understand how humankind's highest cultural talents are not nature but nurture. For humans, everything can be communicated, and therefore everything can be learned. That is why communication is of the utmost importance to humankind.

Your greatest business achievements will boil down not to a genetic disposition for success, but to your ability to handle the information that you give and receive in such a way that it is distilled into valuable meaning for other human beings: *intelligent communication*.

So in the next chapter, we will learn a fundamental vocabulary of pure movement with which you can meaningfully engage your audience.

Chapter 8 Quick Study

The most influential keys to the human mind are images that resonate universally, or archetypes. These are forms that we recognize as being connected to us, and toward which we naturally gravitate. The easiest way to get close to and master the art of communicating with archetypes is by making clear decisions about the outcomes you desire from a communication, and then decide and execute the biggest, simplest action repeatedly to achieve this outcome. Focusing on the outcome that you desire and then performing only the actions that will achieve that outcome is a route to the most direct form of communication.

Just Do This Now

1. Make a choice, make it bigger, and keep it tidy.

2. Decide what outcome you want from a communication, make that outcome even greater, and do not add any more outcomes.
3. Decide what you physically need to project to achieve that outcome, make that physicality bigger, and do nothing more.

Chapter 8 Case Study

Theory to Practice: Do One Thing Well

A recent shift in corporate strategy toward global teams creates an interesting situation for Erin in her salary negotiation. She has reported to her new boss for only five months, and she has never met him face to face. As part of the process, she has received 360-degree feedback on her performance over the past 12 months. Most of the areas of improvement speak to her lack of leadership in empowering others. She is fairly certain that this is a comment on her naturally flat demeanor.

She will be sitting down with her boss next week, while he is in town. Demonstrating passion may lead to a larger increase in salary. She is also aware of the fact that trust will be crucial to fostering a good working relationship with a remote boss. Can she show both sides at once?

Insight

The TruthPlane and the PassionPlane gesture areas send very different messages. In higher-risk situations, and with people who are relative beginners with these techniques, simplicity is always safest.

Erin could approach the meeting either way, but she will have more impact if she picks just one message—either trust me (TruthPlane) or see my energy (PassionPlane)—and executes consistently with that decision.

Provocation

What do you want? What can you do physically to get that? What would happen if you simply did that action to the exclusion of all else?

9

Holding Your Audience's Attention

Captivating and Compelling Rhythms of Movement

A child wants some kind of undisrupted routine ... a predictable, orderly world.

—Abraham Maslow

In this chapter you'll learn:

- The eight archetypal levels of tension and how to use them
- Why we get addicted to old routines
- How some communication “crashes” the brain
- Methods to hot-wire the mechanics of audience change
- Rhythms that turn brains on

How can you be entertaining with your body language in business? You don't need an arsenal of corporate knock-knock jokes to accomplish this feat—it's all about turning on the brain of each audience member, and it's easier than you think. The brain is a pattern-recognition machine that is constantly trying to predict the near future. It feeds on repetition, and it can handle a little bit of a surprise. However, the brain has a tough time handling several surprises in succession, or *unpredictability*. Of course, you may feel that there are many things you enjoy that are very unpredictable: action thrillers at the cinema, roller coasters at the theme park, and comedians at the club. Yet all of these are framed in the safe world of entertainment. The action thriller would be unbearable if it were real, the roller coaster would cause you to black out if it went on for more than a few

minutes, and imagine spending a full day being told jokes by that comedian!

Repetition on the Brain

The simple and conservative use of neural resources is for a human being to seek out patterns or places that hold a certain amount of predictability. When the brain finds the familiar and the predictable, it does not have to keep gathering data, but can simply repeat the last set of data it received by predicting that there has been no change and using imagination to create an idea of the world. This mechanism has helped us and other advanced living organisms prosper by not having to use our time and resources gathering data on elements of our existence that are vital to our survival but that change infrequently; instead, we can shift our attention to opening up new frontiers. For example, when did you last check to make sure that your home had not disappeared? If you are not in it right now, then you can only imagine that it is still there. However (and most insurance underwriters will agree with me here), you are pretty well assured that it is still around (it's a low-risk item for just upping and leaving), which means that you can concentrate at work. Imagine sitting at your desk and thinking of your home, but having no imagination: "Oh, my! I have to go! My home has disappeared! I can't see it!" Thus, we are all to a lesser or greater extent creatures of habit, preferring to stay within boundaries that our imagination can safely predict within so that we can get on with advancing ourselves a little further.

Suffice it to say that our brain likes to know that the patterns that normally occur from moment to moment will not change considerably. We crave certainty, and this makes strong predictions preferable. In the absence of good, stable levels of positive prediction, the brain is called upon to use dramatically more of its resources on the simplest of tasks. Thus, humans seek out, move toward, and even reward stability and certainty. We avoid, retreat from, and often punish change and uncertainty—sometimes even just the *threat* of change.

One Fell Off

Here is an example that will illustrate this point further: when you perform the action of picking up an apple in a grocery store, the sensory system, sensing the position of the fingers at each moment, interacts dynamically with the motor cortex to determine *where* to move your fingers. Now, your fingers don't draw on fresh data each and every time you perform this action; you pick up an apple from the cart. The brain draws on the memory (plays past images) of what the apple is supposed to look, handle, and feel like in the hand, and this information is based upon expectations from, let's say, the last time you were in the market choosing fruit. No new data required; you are, as they say, on autopilot, almost sleepwalking in the supermarket.

But if the apple were to feel different from that last experience—perhaps it is moving in your hand with the rhythm of a small escaping rodent—you would immediately get a surprise and pay great attention. This unpredictability would be punished, perhaps by your dropping the apple and moving away from it quickly. Some people might shriek and climb into their shopping cart—and who can frankly blame them?

Although this is an extreme example, it nonetheless demonstrates that even a small amount of uncertainty can generate what we might call an error response in the brain. This sort of response takes one's attention away from one's goals, forcing one to pay attention to that error. For the business audience, it does not compute, or sit right, if something—or, more to the point, *someone*—is acting in a way that is incongruous with the particular backdrop of expectations. Some neuroscientists have likened this effect to having a flashing printer icon on your desktop when the paper is jammed—the flashing cannot be ignored, and until the problem is resolved, it is difficult to focus on other things. And so, in the case of business communication, your listeners cannot concentrate on your content, your strengths, and perhaps the nuances of your message (that is, really trust and understand you) if the part of the brain that generates the alarm is flashing an error message at them because they are not getting what they expected.

For many, the incongruity of, say, a business speaker's actions not sufficiently fitting his words can be so great that it almost generates what could amount to a “blue screen of death”—a fatal error (Mac users, don't be smug and pretend you don't have your own version of this!)—and the listeners shut down. They drift off and look elsewhere, or alternatively, they

reach for something very predictable like their BlackBerry, which can be relied upon to report back “A” when you press “A”—highly predictable and thus now creating a sense of certainty and control for them.

Taking Cues from the Audience

Various forms of unconscious nonverbal communication from an audience, such as the use of handheld devices; the touching of hair, face, clothing, or objects; and drinking or eating, are good examples of potentially “self-soothing” actions—the desire to have sensory contact with and experience of something that is predictable and controllable. This is also an essential element of boredom—our minds switch off and disengage when we cannot connect with the experience, and we certainly cannot connect with anything that we cannot predict sufficiently within its context. This can happen when we are confronted in a meeting with, say, a communicator whose actions in no way fit her words. For example, she might say, “Let’s all look up at this chart on the projector screen,” while she herself is looking down at her laptop monitor, “You can all see what the figures mean,” she says.

Unfortunately, the listeners cannot see the figures, as they are too small, and therefore they have no idea of what the figures mean. So the brain searches for something it can connect with; seeing a bottle of water, the listener takes a sip, unconsciously thinking, “Looks like water and tastes like water ... tastes like water again ... tastes like water again,” each time giving the brain a hit of its reward-for-recognition chemical dopamine, as opposed to thinking, “What is this person doing and saying? I can’t understand it ... the actions don’t fit the content... how long will this continue?” and having the natural stimulant dopamine withdrawn as a punishment for being in an unpredictable environment. Self-soothing by the audience is often a result of being exposed to communication that is erratic, does not make sense, and is possibly incoherent.

Predictability and Change

Conversely, the act of creating a sense of certainty is rewarded in the brain, and examples are everywhere in daily life. Music is one such example, where simple repeating patterns enable us to fulfill our subconscious need to predict the flow of information, and in turn generate increased levels of dopamine in the brain—the reward response. The music turns your brain

on, tunes you in to the content, and takes you away from (or mitigates) the effects of some of the unpredictability you were in before you heard it. Hence you put on your favorite music to calm you down.

Put simply:

Predictability is rewarded.

However, there is an evolutionary counterprinciple that brings tension to this:

Change is necessary.

And so the key question to answer is, how do you change an audience with an engaging surprise rather than a disengaging startle? What are the tensions that create fresh, engaging rhythms, and what are the tensions that create dissonance that repels? What is the rhythmic makeup of entertaining business body language that can win attention?

Framed

I've worked with a number of politicians at the highest levels of office, and elections are always the most interesting times for this work. You can see how the art of changing one's physical language can profoundly affect the way in which an audience of voters reacts to a verbal message. It is also a time when you can use body language strategically to destabilize the competition, say, in a debate scenario, by using specific gestures and rhythms that your opponents will follow, avoid or be compared against. This means, for me, not only studying the client's natural body language, but also knowing the idiosyncrasies of his opponent's movement when they are under stress and how they can be influenced to display this. I am not interested in the psychology of why they do what they do—only in how the movement looks to another human, and how that human is then liable to

translate the meaning of that look and even mirror it or be repelled by it. So the work I do in these cases addresses how non-verbal communication can be used to high level strategic gain, and for political influence and persuasion beyond just the words.

It's All about the Rhythm

You should know that there is a huge difference between rhythmic and repetitive. A great beat is actually *rhythm*, rather than simple repetition. A repetitive beat has no change; it is thoroughly mechanical and engineered toward total accuracy and consistency. These are not inherently human traits (we are far more complex), and therefore human beings do not trust a simply repetitive beat as being genuine, whether it is the monotony of poorly written or produced music or the steady drone of a boorish CEO. We need to see a measured level of human inconsistency for a product, be it music or management, to *feel* natural rather than synthetic.

Rhythm has little skips, jumps, and suspensions in it that lend humanity to the beat and keep it alive. Great music has rhythm. Great poetry has rhythm. Great visual art has rhythm. Great dancers have rhythm. Great communicators know and use rhythm to engage their audience in their own heartbeat, life, and humanity.

So what is the archetypal vocabulary of rhythm in the human body, and how can we move with that rhythm in a way that engages the business audience? Even more to the point, how can we move with a rhythm that engages the audience with a predictability that is rewarding and which contains some surprises that are entertaining? We want to keep our audience on the edge of its collective seat, not falling from it in a narcoleptic stupor. Luckily, there are indeed rhythms that can help induce satisfaction, yet awaken people's senses further, and you are about to learn how to use these rhythms.

The Eight Archetypes of Physical Tension

The best way to use rhythm with an audience is through the eight clear archetypes of physical tension. All of these states of physical tension can be

used as part of body language by the professional business presenter to engage, persuade, and influence the members of an audience—to change their bodies and so their minds. A good piece of entertainment, sport, or even a dinner party has an audience, spectators, and diners sitting in great anticipation at times. If there is sufficient *tension*—and by this we are talking literally about tension in the muscles—the participants don't get bored, look at their watches, or think about what else they could be doing.

All too often, the communications that we experience in the business context are not like this. Indeed (and unfortunately), it would not be unfair to suggest that more often than not, they are quite the opposite: tedious and enervating. So, what is it that we need to look at to make our physicality compelling and engaging?

When a communicator's body isn't “engaged,” her whole content becomes saggy and turgid. On the flip side, when communicators are engaged physically, their communication is immediately more interesting. And that comes from engaging the muscles of the body in action. The audience's reaction is its engagement with the communication, caused by its mirroring of the clear tensions in the communicator's body (empathy with the speaker).

Now, of course, if the tension in the communicator's body constantly changes, then it is less possible for the audience to mirror this behavior, and so it will *lose attention* and empathy. If the audience members cannot discern *one clear* tension state in the communicator, then again, they can mirror only confusion. However, if you can simply and safely make a transition from one state of tension to another, your audience will follow. And so here are *the Eight Levels of Tension* that your muscles use: No Tension, Relaxed, Neutral, Deliberate, Alert, Agitated, Entranced, and Total Tension. Try them out on yourself for size.

1. No Tension

First, while you are sitting try to drop all tension from your body. Take away all muscle activity in every part of your body over which you have any control. Get as close as you possibly can to losing all rigidity in your muscle tone. You may begin to understand that this is the amount of

physical tension that you have in your body when you are totally, totally relaxed, or even asleep. It is often called a catatonic state.

Slumped in your chair looking barely alive, you may suspect that this tension level is wrong for most business communication needs. Yet you also may be able to think of times when you've communicated in a business situation where parts of your body and mind or your audience have been close to this state at some level. If this is not what you want, then be sure to do and project something different. How about the next tension level up from this?

2. Relaxed

Now summon just enough tension in your body to be able to now stand or sit more upright, have a slightly straighter spine than in the first tension state, and get closer to holding your head upright. Your arms and your head should still be heavy, but you will find, if walking, that you are able to move in a fairly straight line, and so you'll find that your thinking is a little more focused. Some people liken this second state of physical tension to "walking in the heat" or to recovery from illness. Some feel that it is like being half asleep or having just awakened in the morning. It can also have a "laid back" or "cool" rhythm to it.

Again, imagine communicating one-on-one or to a larger audience with this physicality. Or even better, just act it out now and see the results you get in your vocal quality—pitch and cadence, rhythm and tone—along with the type of content and style that you naturally feel you want to present with your current tonality, musculature, and rhythm of body and mind. Maybe you need to be a little more laid back in some meetings, to take the pressure off and allow for more creative thought. But could this tension and rhythm in some circumstances also be unhelpful in persuading, influencing, or entertaining your audience, in drawing your listeners toward your content or simply communicating your trustworthiness as a professional?

If you are seeking to present a laid-back, casual manner and the laid-back thinking style that it provokes in you and an audience, then the relaxed tension state is certainly the one for you. Kick back and let the good times roll! But if your communication situation needs something a little more

emotionally distant and factual, see if this next tension state could be useful for you.

3. Neutral

Now simply raise enough tension in your body to be physically “present.” Use enough tension to hold in the muscles of your face and your whole body and sense the environment around you, yet also retain a modicum of relaxation. When you move your body toward a predetermined objective in this tension state, can you feel how economical your movement has become? It is almost as if you are pure movement: there is no past history behind your action, and so there is no remorse or pleasure and no excitement or pessimism concerning the action upon which you are about to embark. You are simply in the action for the sake of the action. You are strong, effective, and wholly economical. What happens when you speak using this tension state? What is played out within the rhythm and cadence of your vocal quality? What do you think is suggested by the rhythmic quality of your movement as it cuts through the space?

Some describe the feeling of performing in this tension state or viewing a person in it as being unemotional and detached, but quite powerful. It is also interesting to note that you can achieve this tension state by locating your centre of gravity at the dead centre of both your TablePlane, Door-Plane and WheelPlane as noted in the appendix. Now let’s add an edge of energy to this.

4. Deliberate

Bring enough physical tension into the muscles of your legs, arms, upper and lower body, hands, and face to feel compelled to be slightly more forward in your action. Give yourself physical tasks to perform, and have enough tension in your body to create a feeling of wishing to complete the task. You should now have more internal feelings of satisfaction in your physical movement, and you should also be feeling a step-up in tempo from the neutral state. Certainly if you now compare the tempo, rhythm, and physical tension in this deliberate state to those in the catatonic and relaxed states, you will find how much more effective this tension level is for getting the job done.

Many people view this state as feeling very “normal” to them. Yet, judge now—how normal is this deliberate state? Do you function with a deliberate tension and rhythm for the majority of your day, and, more important for your work in presenting business body language, do you communicate in this tension state the majority of the time?

Do you sometimes slip into communication autopilot—a more neutral tension state, slightly detached from the action of the communication? At times have you communicated in a tension state of relaxation? If the answer is yes, was this a useful message to send to your receivers, or not? Now let’s step up the tension to the “fifth gear.”

5. Alert

By adding a further shift up in physical tension, you can move to a place where your senses are now wide awake, and you are, in turn, in control of your physical response to that stimulation. You may find that your mind is now inquisitive about what it senses and that your body is very much motivated to explore and push forward into space. You may find that you are cutting directly through the space to reach your objectives and complete tasks.

Imagine yourself right now presenting to an audience using this tension state and speaking with the rhythm that it gives you. How much does this feel to you like a powerful state of tension for your body and mind to be utilizing when you are communicating? It may feel like a little more tension than is ordinary—but then communicating to groups can be an extraordinary thing, and so a little “more-than-ordinary” energy in the body and mind may well be a good message to send, and necessary if you are to function at a more “peak-performance” level. Think about the rhythm of thinking that this tension state produces and how it may benefit your audience to think in this style. Now, let’s push this further—perhaps too far, depending on what reaction you are trying to produce.

6. Agitated

Raise the tension across your body a further step up until you find that the objects around you are too much for you to encounter; you should have enough tension in your body that you feel you need to avoid coming into

contact with the things in your environment. Increase the tension in your muscles until you find an edge of paranoia in your mind relating to the environment you are in, and even about your own thoughts and the movement of your own body.

Your body and your mind will feel more “held back” or “blocked” in this state. Some people have described this state as feeling as if their impulses are being stifled—“I want to move, but I can’t.” There is a great deal of strain in this tension state, and it is interesting to imagine or perform a communication in your workplace under the physical conditions and resulting rhythm that this agitated state presents to you and your audience.

How usual is this state in communicators? Well, I can bet that you see it and do it a great deal in business. How useful might it be for you to present this state to others and for them to mirror it and absorb it into themselves? It is certainly not relaxing, but as a positive, it could create a state of suspense in an audience, for example, and this would be great for keeping the audience engaged in moving on to the next thing you are about to say. Yet at more extreme levels, it could easily unnerve your listeners by being too chaotic and unpredictable, and the paranoia that this state produces will be unhelpful for many businesses. Yet not all high tensions are negative—so let’s increase the tension.

7. Entranced

Put your body further into tension so that you now get a sense of being elevated and lifted off the ground and compelled to move forward. The tension in all your muscles should be very high, but not so high as to hinder your ability to move; although your tension has moved out of “agitated” and its chaotic rhythm, you will still feel unbalanced, but in a softer, more flowing way. This could feel blissful to you. You may feel as if you are in a rapturous state.

Now imagine communicating with another person or a group in this tension state. Do you ever communicate with others using elements of this tension state and its rhythm? Although it is quite extreme, have you ever seen others in this state, or communicating with elements or degrees of this state, and projecting this tension state from the movement of their body? This is the tension state that is embodied by the most evangelistic of

business speakers. It projects an almost spiritual state. And it can certainly be used when you want to get across to an audience a message of quite awesome proportions—a new product launch or a huge merger that needs the physical performance of the message to be of epic proportions is a perfect customer for this tension state.

Finally, let's look at what happens with the maximum tension in your muscles.

8. Total Tension

Put your muscles into a state of total and complete tension—so tense that you simply cannot move any more, with every muscle in your body as contracted as you can possibly make it. Now imagine communicating with others from within this tension state.

While this tension state is extreme to the max, you can still appreciate how we all can often unwittingly incorporate an element of it into our communications. For example, imagine being caught out by a difficult question: your body freezes, and your brain locks. You fear that you do not have a clever, intelligent answer that correctly asserts your status in relation to the subject. Stuck now in this state of total tension, you can only deliver a short answer though your clenched teeth in an aggressive manner. You've lost your cool. This is also the tension state that can appear when we are extremely anxious. But given that you now know the other tension states that are available to you, you can more easily, quickly, and effectively shift to one that is more useful for the purpose of your message; just as with verbal vocabulary, having a greater physical vocabulary means that you have more options available to you, and so you are a more agile and powerful communicator. If you recognize that you are hitting a state of total tension, just shift, and take your audience with you. Learn to change your intention *physically* instead of mentally (as its derivation from the Latin implies: *tendere*—to stretch) and you are in command of your own psychology and of those around you by the fastest most direct route—the physical world of images.

Mnemonic

As a way to remember these tension states, name them easily, and so have further control over them as tools to use (or pitfalls to avoid), here they are listed alongside a couple of ways of describing their properties to help you remember this progressive sequence:

1. No tension: exhaustion, sleep
2. Relaxed: cool, casual
3. Neutral: economical, robotic
4. Deliberate: managerial, just-so
5. Alert: inquiring, is there a bomb?
6. Agitated: evasive, there is a bomb!
7. Entranced: blissful, in love with the bomb
8. Total tension: shock, the bomb has exploded!

Uses and Abuses of the Eight States of Tension

Having a fuller vocabulary of physical tension, you can now be more conscious of the tension that you use in your body when you are communicating. You can also use these tensions in getting what you want, given that your audience is designed to copy you. If you engage your audience with high tension, your listeners can become excited or anxious. If you engage them with low tension, they can become relaxed and even tired.

And, of course, you can move them from a relaxed attitude to an anxious one by using the higher tension states in communicating with them, just as you can calm them down by using the lower tension states.

By having more control of your own and so your audience's tension, you have more control of your listeners' attention and so their decision making.

For example, you can communicate in the cool tension state to gain rapport and so engender trust within a group that is casual toward your content. Now that you are all in sync, you can lead the group and build tension around the subject. This is an influence technique that is often referred to as "pacing and leading," where you first match the state where

your audience is in order to gain mutual trust and then lead that state to where you want your audience to be.

Think how you can now approach an audience in the tension state of alert or “is there a bomb?” in order to provoke your listeners to inquire about the subject—to open up new categories in the mind from a tension state that gives a good level of breath and so oxygen to the brain.

You can also lead an audience into a neutral state. This could propagate objective, calm, nonviolent communication—just the facts. And then, if you need to move the meeting on at a controlled yet industrious pace, you can shift up to the deliberate tension state, or a managerial “just-so” attitude: calm yet active; thoughtful yet productive; and steering well clear of the tension that could escalate into a feeling of “the bomb has exploded” and a meeting full of anger, fear, or just too much surprise to sit comfortably alongside. Now if you need to create meetings, presentations, and speeches that have everyone on the edge of his seat, waiting for the next person to get the chop and be fired on the spot, then for sure the tension of “there is a bomb in the room” is for you. Now you can start to think about the feeling that you wish to provoke when you communicate and pick the tension state that is going to get that feeling for you.

Moving the Feeling

Affecting emotions is very important to business communication. Feeling, you see, is partly in the way your body *feels*—the tonality within your very cells. If you want to move a person’s feelings, you will need to move her physically, and now you have a clear map of the tensions that all of us humans can have and share together. You can see what might clash and what might click. If you are clear in displaying the map within your own body, your audience can drive to the destination—the intended feeling—with you. If you are unclear, then your audience will go its own way—and it is anybody’s guess where that might be. It could certainly be in a direction that is totally opposite to the journey and destination that you had intended in the content of the communication.

But of course some people are “stuck in the mud” of their own feelings on a subject. So, too, are they stuck in the physicality that is a result of that feeling and opinion on any matter. For those in your audience whom you

need to physically, emotionally, and intellectually shift, if they seem entrenched, it can seem to be totally impossible to move them on any level at all. Yet there is a most powerful technique of nonverbal communication that can move mountains, and it is coming up in the next chapter.

Chapter 9 Quick Study

Tension in the body is a great indicator to others of your intention. When others mirror that tension because it is clear, you have their attention. The rhythms in your nonverbal communication that are stimulated by the tension in your muscles are indicative to others of your psychological state, and also indicative of your engagement or disengagement with the matters at hand. You can therefore influence and persuade by moving yourself, and so your receivers, through different states of tension and into desired states of attention.

Just Do This Now

1. Relax your audience by relaxing.
2. Excite your audience by raising your own tension.
3. If your listeners are relaxed and you want them to be agitated, then join them in relaxation and start to move your tension slowly but clearly toward a higher state of tension in your body. Have a specific tension when you communicate to get specific attention from your receivers; choose the physical frame for your message, and in turn influence the mental attitude with which it is understood.

Chapter 9 Case Study

Theory to Practice: Tension Adjustments

The current work disruption is moving into its second month. Union and management representatives gather in a hotel meeting room for the weekend. The PR messages emanating from both camps assert: “This time

we are serious.” As the discussions push into the wee hours of the morning with few concessions from either side, tensions rise and tempers flare—but do they have to?

Insight

The common expectation of negotiations tactics is to increase the level of tension and cause the other party to “cave.” Greater amounts of tension felt by individuals reduce their ability to evaluate alternatives and solve problems.

In any conversation, negotiation, or interaction, our tendency is to want to mirror the other person. Understanding the continuum of tension helps us control movements up and down on that continuum. The deliberate state is most effective for collaboration to solve complex problems. Consciously staying in (or quickly returning to) that state will bring the other person there with you. This may lead to more effective conversation.

It works the other way, too. Raise your level of tension, and you can find yourself in a very heated discussion, which may be exactly what you want to do.

Provocation

What is your intension right now?

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10

All-Embracing Body Language

Influencing the Physical World with a Word

The art of acceptance is the art of making someone who has just done you a small favor wish that he might have done you a greater one.

—Martin Luther King

In this chapter you'll learn:

- The number one thing that human beings desire
- Nonverbal influence in a word
- Body language that makes people stars
- A winning handshake
- Bad language that loses friends and alienates people

In business, the way we interpret patterns is sometimes the key to keeping our cool: the stock portfolio manager has (hopefully) seen some very consistent patterns of stability and growth in the market, whereas the client may see only relative chaos and inconsistency. So the manager sends out messages to calm the nerves of his clients, who are starting to feel that he is gambling with their finances. A simple chart presenting the value of the top 100 stocks over time shows the client that, on the whole, quite consistently the largest-valued companies keep on getting larger in value when judged over long periods of time—and so the client breathes a sigh of relief. This simplified picture of predictability hides the real day-by-day volatility of some stocks, a picture that would send the client back into a state of panic.

Investment

You will have discovered already that the currency of nonverbal communication has to have an overriding feeling of consistency, stability and thus certainty in order to attract an audience to connect with it and lead that audience to invest its time and energy with the communicator. We all move toward verbal language that speaks of stabilization or certainty. We also move toward any physicality that speaks of an association with these things: happy, healthy faces and bodies, for example, are seen as attractive to human beings. Many people who are seen as attractive know the secret that causes them to stand out in the crowd and attracts us to them. To understand that secret, first you must understand a very important concept that our brains link directly to our survival—*status*.

Status

This is about relative importance, the “pecking order,” and seniority. In society, large groups, small groups, and even in one-on-one conversations, people have an idea of their status in relation to others. We are constantly sizing each other up and trying to determine where we stand, and this uncertainty affects our mental processes in many, many important ways.

Social hierarchy is a very logical system. The brain thinks about status using circuits similar to those that are used for processing numbers: our sense of status goes up when we feel that we are rated “more than” another person. When someone has this feeling of superiority, the brain’s primary reward circuitry is activated, which once again increases dopamine levels—the key chemical component in the brain’s pleasure and reward system. Japan’s Department of Cerebral Research has shown that any increase in one’s own perceived status produces a good feeling similar in strength to that produced by a financial windfall. And of course, on the flip side of this, the perception of a potential or real reduction in status can generate a strong threat response.

Tests using social rejection as a lever to cause the participants to lose status have shown, with electromagnetic resonance brain scanning technology, that such a reduction in one’s status results in the same regions of the brain showing up as active as with physical pain. Thus, in business as in life, *being rejected literally hurts*.

Raising Other People's Status

We naturally and unconsciously move toward increasing our status and away from decreasing our status. So it stands to reason that if you could communicate nonverbally in such a way that you were able to increase another person's status at work, that person would unconsciously be attracted to you and your business message. Of course, this would also have to be done in such a way that your own status was not lowered—your unconscious mind would probably block you from committing any actions that might raise another's status at the cost of your.

So what if there were a way, a nonverbal technique, to raise another person's status without losing anything yourself—would you use it now? Well, good news: there is—and here it is:

Accept everything.

Let It In

How exactly do you “accept everything” with your body language, you might ask? Well, it is pretty simple, and the effects are astonishing. You must put yourself into what I call the *YesState*.

Remember, the human mind is naturally programmed to assign a negative perception to anything that is unknown. It's a primal survival mechanism. And this shows in your body language every second of the day when you come across an unknown entity—for example, somebody in business who is new to you or somebody who is known to you who has a new idea. Even somebody who is known to you and has a known idea that merely has some element of unpredictability about it will be met with some element of negativity. Instantly your brain goes, “Uh-oh! Oh, no!” and alerts you to a potential problem within the interaction, and this alarm frames the whole communication.

When you respond to an idea or a person in a way that gives you pause, your audience can see the elements of resistance in your body—you don't have to say anything (remember that potentially 55 percent of the feeling that people have about another person's intentions is based on what they see

—and they can detect every tiny nuance of movement, tension, and rhythm in the other person’s face and body unconsciously). When you are resistant to a new person or idea, that person can tell that something is wrong, but she is left to wonder what the problem is: is it the way she looks, her ideas, what she said, or how she carries herself? It does not really matter because your body language says that you don’t accept her, and so there is an instant drop in her status. And a perceived drop in status will most likely cause her to either withdraw or attack.

Either way, at a subliminal level, you are no longer on ideal terms with your audience in the meeting, presentation, or speech. You’ve lost your listeners, or even worse, if you are compelled to be aggressive toward them, they now mirror that, and feel aggressive right back toward you. That is a result of what I call a *NoState*; this is our default state for most of the interactions that we ever have. It’s not a bad thing—indeed, it saves our lives on a daily basis. But it does not move us forward; it is simply trying to keep us stable. It does not allow us to take an opportunity by dealing with the risk in an intelligent manner.

The YesState

In order to get into this nonverbal state of acceptance that can display a positive message to audiences of any size, we are going to take on a mental attitude of acceptance and positivity. However, there is no great psychological preparation for this, only to just now review as much positive verbal vocabulary as you can think of. Here is some to get you started:

Yes / okay / good / agreed / certainly / definitely / exactly / sure / true / yeah / totally / always / by all means / tell me more / you are right / of course / absolutely

As you read through this vocabulary, can you feel the difference that these words are making in your body? Can you feel how much more open you are becoming and the energy that you are now emanating? Spin the words slowly through your head and enjoy what they do to the feeling of tension and rhythm in your body. Do you feel more open now?

The accepting attitude of the YesState projects from the body by causing it to open up the belly and chest area to an audience, moving them full on to the audience to be seen. The belly tends to lengthen, creating a taller body figure and so increased status, yet vulnerability to the audience. This is a confident posture. The hands become more expressive and focus around the TruthPlane, and there is a gentle smile on the face and a gentle tilt to the head to show listening. The whole body is more compelled to move forward toward an audience and gain greater proximity and so potentially a greater level of intimate relationship (more on this important point in the next chapter).

Exercise: Walk the Self-Talk

Here's an exercise: take a walk around a public place with these words—a vocabulary of pure positivity—swimming around in your head. Make a decision to have these "yes" words as your inner monologue. Allow your internal voice to focus only on words that have positive associations of acceptance. Start with the word yes and then move on to as many others as you can; then just repeat the ones you like the most over and over in your head with no effort, because you need to pay attention to how others react to what they see. Remember, you are reciting these words silently, but notice how others look at you more, notice how others seem more drawn to you, and don't be surprised if you get stopped and asked for help or some such thing. Why? Because you now have the aura of someone who can deal with things! You look as if you are open and you won't rebuff or judge other human beings. You are now someone that people want to go to because you accept them—this is the YesState.

Reduce Your Threat

Why is this YesState so useful? Well, it can be surprisingly easy to threaten someone's sense of status accidentally. A status threat can occur through giving advice or instructions, or simply by suggesting that someone is slightly ineffective at a task. Many everyday conversations devolve into arguments that are driven by a status threat (the desire not to be perceived as less than another). When threatened, people may defend a position that doesn't make sense to avoid the perceived pain of a drop in status. For example, in most people's business lives, the question, "Can I offer you

some feedback?” generates an emotional response similar to that evoked by hearing the footsteps of a potential attacker behind you at night.

Take performance reviews—the ninja warriors of corporate status ambush. Unless a person is 100 percent confident that he will be getting a perfect review, these evaluations are universally perceived as status threats. You, the manager, say, “This is just an informal chat about the excellent work you’ve been doing and *where you can improve*,” and now the employee is lost in a fit of limbic-brain rage because the word *improve* implies that he is lacking in something, and is therefore lower in status than the people who happily possess the commodity he lacks. It frankly does not matter that you framed the lack, the “minus,” with a “plus”; the brain still receives a message that suggests that it’s now in a place where one of the fundamentals of survival, a stable status, could be dwindling. The person under review will either disengage to find the resource (status) elsewhere or fight you for yours.

Of course, you don’t really have to say anything negative because you are communicating the message, for the most part, nonverbally: it is detectable in your body language and your tone of voice. In fact, it does not matter if you say only positive things because when the body sees the NoState or perceives negative nonverbal signs in or around any kind of performance review, it is immediately defined as a bad review—no matter what the verbal content of the review may be. Of course, the brain of the person under review had already NoStated the whole process in advance because he had no prior knowledge of what would be in the review—“If it cannot be predicted, it is bad.”

Performance reviews can be ineffective at stimulating behavioral change no matter how you frame them because they are delivered with negative and closed body language. Many managers giving reviews say that they are extremely anxious and fearful about criticizing colleagues or, as they are often told to frame it, “offering areas for improvement.” Those who are being reviewed pick up on the manager’s anxiety and mirror it until very soon both parties spiral into a negative feedback loop. But if managers were able to give their reviews with a body language of acceptance, displaying open body language—with the torso and the belly unprotected by the arms and facing straight on, with the head tilted slightly to one side—then, even failure might seem to have some status and the review might be paid

attention to. This does not mean that people are promoted when they are incompetent, only that they can now listen to the review because it *looks* less threatening to their status.

One scientific study showed activation of the reward circuitry in the brain when people were simply given positive *verbal* input—this occurred when participants were told the words “that’s correct” by a repetitive computer voice. With the YesState, you don’t have to verbalize the positive vocabulary, but only to let the internal positive vocabulary infect your nonverbal communication—which, as we’ve seen, is the communication that really counts when you are creating a feeling, positive or negative. And for anyone who fears that she will inadvertently give her workforce too much nonverbal praise, inspiring a parade of requests for promotion and increased pay, it is widely reported that because of the deeply rewarding nature of status, giving positive feedback may reduce the perceived need for a raise in salary.

Acceptance

The YesState will help you recognize that there is absolutely no downside to projecting a physicality of total acceptance to your audience. When your listeners first set eyes on you, their unconscious feeling should be, “I am wanted.” From the very day we are all born, the thing we really need and even crave from others (once we have been fed) is the feeling of being *accepted* by them. To see in their faces and in their whole body that we have a positive place with them and that we are welcome is what we desire most. If you can give people that feeling, then you are truly an attractive human to be around, along with all that you say and stand for. Watch the Hollywood stars on the red carpet: total YesState (the open body language, gentle smile, and tilt of the head as the paparazzi fire off a hundred flashes in their face and ask a thousand crazy questions). The most gracious and starlike of them accept us, their audience, even when we invade their space in a quite brutal fashion, and we love them right back for it.

You too can use this brilliant technique when you feel you are being “attacked” in business. When information comes that seems like it is a slight on you or your work, keep in the YesState and accept the attack nonverbally by opening yourself up to it right into your vulnerable belly area—the TruthPlane. Nod your head and give a gentle smile, opening your

eyes to all the information within that assault. Stay on the in breath and take your time to react as you need to in order to persuade and influence your assailant to a better point of view for him. You will be awed by how he nods his head at your points, and by mirroring your open body language back to you, quickly moves toward your side of things.

Some of you may recognize this technique as a physical one used in many ancient martial arts to manipulate and reapply the aggressors energy in a positive way.

Push and Pull

Probably the most effective gesture of acceptance is to pull something toward you, and the most effective gesture of rejection is to push something away. So if you make the gesture of *bringing your audience toward you* in the TruthPlane or the PassionPlane, people feel more accepted, and you indeed feel like you accept them more. Conversely, a *pushing-away gesture* will cause them to feel rejected and help you to feel as if you are rejecting them.

The cognitive results of these accepting and rejecting gestures were studied at the Center for Cognitive and Social Neuroscience in Chicago, and a definite preference was found for content associated with a pulling-in gesture. So speak and gesture toward you and you will show a preference for those to whom you are speaking, and they, in turn, will mirror a preference for you.

Bulls and Bear

Before working with the president of a very large trading organization, I was warned what a bear of a person he was, and that I should be ready for plenty of resistance, out-and-out aggression and not to be intimidated by his high level of intelligence. This is a warning that I routinely get from human capital departments when I am training high status individuals and teams often considered by their company to be the “brightest and the best of their kind anywhere in the world.” These people always turn out to be fairly normal

human beings when they are treated as such. I often move the halo effect around them to one side by asking if they remember the day that they became CEO, president, or premier, and how on that day they suddenly became the funniest, most intelligent person in the room and a speaker who can keep their organization enraptured. Yet overnight they had not managed to find a better understanding of comedy, they were down several million brain cells, and they had not assimilated any further conscious competence in public speaking in their sleep. Remember that when you get the office of power, you inherit many coercive levers that cause your organization to act brilliantly as if you are a great leader.

Anyhow, I met the big bear, and as I expected, he gave me a bone-crunching handshake. I immediately gave him the upper-hand handshake (I give you the training for this later in the chapter), while telling him what a good strong handshake he had, smiling all the time and nodding my head, accepting the potentially aggressive move by using the YesState. He, in turn, smiled immediately and nodded his head and relaxed, as I then told him to take a seat and began to insert instructions as to how his training with me would proceed. He was now under my influence. The big man just wanted to feel safe. However powerful anyone is, all he is looking for is acceptance.

The Upper Hand

Here's another great way to give others a huge sense of acceptance and status every time you meet them by using the time-honored greeting, pattern, and, for many, cultural norm of the handshake. You are now going to learn a piece of body language that causes anyone whose hand you shake to get a great sense of pleasure from being with you. First, let's look at the significance of the handshake gesture in our communication system—why it exists, what it does, and how that works.

History of the Handshake

Certainly within the majority of Western Hemisphere cultures, there is an age-old tradition of gripping right hand to right hand with another person that you meet; and in Eastern Hemisphere cultures there is a very prominent tradition of bowing. Now certainly, it is fair to say that both these traditions come from an understanding of hierarchy. In the bow, it is often traditional for the lower-status individual to take his head, and in some extreme cases his whole body, to a lower level than that used by the higher-status individual. This creates almost a horizontal depiction of the numerical status—a “bar graph” of hierarchy for everyone to see. Traditionally, in most Eastern sword cultures, this gesture had the extra “bonus” that whoever held his head in the higher position had a greater chance of chopping off the other’s head first. Thus, the lower of the two would have been submissive to the point of putting his life at the mercy of those higher in the pecking order.

The handshake is a little more egalitarian in that by clasping their right hands together, both parties involved in the greeting instantly recognize that neither has a tool or a weapon in that hand—nothing dangerous is being concealed. Thus the handshake tends to be initiated once two people are in close enough proximity to each other that each can no longer see the feet of the other within the peripheral vision—i.e., they are so close that they are unable to both get eye contact and see foot movement and so are unable to compare the emotional information in the face to the information displayed by the feet concerning the larger intention of the body. For this reason, we look for more information from other parts of the body in order to predict what the other person’s intention is and judge that against the look on her face and the words that she may be saying. Shaking hands is a perfect way to understand the possible intentions of another human being through the tension, rhythm, direction, resistance, heat, and moisture in the hand. In addition, the hands and arms are now much closer to striking distance, and so there is more threat of danger. Hence we have a ritual whereby we get to touch the other person—sense the energy in her skin (is she tense, aggressive, passive, calm, or feeling some other emotion?), and also notice if she does in fact have anything hidden in her hands that could harm us.

Disarming or Alarming

Although the handshake is egalitarian, this simple cultural norm is often used today to show dominance. Some people, for example, will give you (consciously or unconsciously) a “crushing” handshake in order to display their greater physical strength relative to yours. Other people will unconsciously employ a flaccid grip to give you the idea that you have more strength than they do—in other words, to demonstrate their submission. However, if during a handshake, either (or both) party does not get to feel the palm of the other’s hand—i.e., if full contact is not made in the area of flesh between the thumb and the index finger of both parties, and so the palms also do not get good full contact—this instantly causes a reaction of movement away from the now potential threat.

In short, it is alarming not to feel the palm of the other person’s hand in a handshake. Try it out with a friend or a good work colleague—it is most interesting with someone you know and trust fairly well, because when you shake hands with him you do not give him the palm of your hand, then you will notice a very quick change in his face, maybe even a universal facial display of disgust, fear, or even surprise. Even though the two of you know and trust each other to a higher degree than most, your unconscious mind, which is protecting you second by second, does not take this fact into account. Your unconscious mind perceives only that there is information that it does not have, and therefore it is unhappy—the result is “retreat, be cautious, or attack.” So it is clear that to build trust, an effective handshake always gets good full contact palm to palm. And not only can you build trust with a handshake, but you can raise the status of another person without lowering your own. But first, what *not* to do.

Getting the Upper Hand

Even with good palm contact, it is possible to shake hands in such a way that you become dominant, thus lowering the other person’s status and making her shut out your message: simply turn her hand slightly over during the handshake so that your palm is *on top* of hers. This gives you more control of her arm (it is easier to push your whole weight down on her arm and control it than for her to bring her weight and center of gravity upward to push up against gravity and your arm’s strength). When you have the “upper hand” in a handshake, you put the other party at a physical disadvantage. You have “one-upped” her, her status is lowered, and now she

is fleeing or fighting you. Try this with a friend or colleague and see what happens, both in her facial expression and in her full body language. Do you notice the aggression (locked eye contact, squaring off of the shoulders, and so on)? Or do you see her become passive (dropping eye contact and lowering her head, along with some folding in at the stomach and across the shoulders, and maybe even a step back)?

Also notice what happens if you push your upper hand along with your colleague's closer toward and nearly touching her stomach area—right into her TruthPlane, one of the most vulnerable areas of the body. Do you notice how she instantly becomes passive? Even if she might have been aggressive at first, once your hand moves into this very vulnerable area of the body, her unconscious mind knows that she has been compromised, and it will wait for further instructions from the higher-status individual. You could even now put your left hand on to her right elbow, taking control of her forearm. This handshake is almost as controlling as any "greeting" can get, and using it is the secret to losing friends and alienating people! Get someone to give you this handshake so that you can feel how bad it is to receive it, and by doing this, you'll stand a great chance of never, ever, accidentally or even purposely, doing it to anyone else. It should be reserved only for when you have such a great business that you wish to lose deals from the onset or when as a leader you have come to the realization that you are a master of the universe and all should quake in your presence!

Giving the Upper Hand

Of course, knowing all this, you can use the opposite version of this technique to give another person status. Doing so instantly raises his engagement with you because of the sheer unconscious pleasure it gives. What if every time you met someone, you could now make him feel like a million dollars? Here's all you have to do to make people feel that way: when you shake hands, simply turn the other person's hand quickly and gently so that it is slightly over yours, and at the same time quickly and gently move both your and his clasped hands closer toward and into your vulnerable stomach area (right at a level with the belly button—the TruthPlane).

Try this out and you are going to be truly astonished at how the corners of your handshake partner's mouth instantly turn up into a smile and he

steps in toward you and makes great eye contact. He feels good with you and relaxes. And when he feels good with you, then everything around you, including the message you are giving him, is good.

Get Ahead

By now we have adequately covered the mirroring concept. When you have an audience, its members will more often than not begin to mirror your actions. Accept, then, and notice how others will mirror you and your accepting attitude—your YesState and all the body language that goes with it. For example, in the YesState, we are more predisposed to make nodding head movements up and down, which in Western business culture has the inference of positivity and agreement. When we are in the No-State, we are more inclined to shake our heads from side to side in what many would agree is a “no” gesture or has a negative inference.

In many cultures, the head nod is most commonly, but *not* universally, used to indicate agreement, acceptance, or acknowledgment. Different cultures assign some subtly different meanings to the gesture. However, nodding to indicate yes is widespread and appears in a large number of diverse cultural and linguistic groups. There are varying theories as to why nodding is so frequently used to mean yes. One simple idea is that it is a form of bowing, indicating that one is prepared to accept what another person is saying or requesting. It is also noted that babies, when hungry, search for their mother’s milk by moving their heads vertically, causing them to suckle, but decline milk by turning their heads from side to side in the “no” head gesture to shake their mouths away from the source of food.

This is why the business body language expert is looking to *give* gestures of acceptance, not to search the room to see who is sending them out. The master of nonverbal persuasion uses his own powerful “yes” gestures to cause others to copy and mirror the accepting attitude, and so creates an atmosphere in which possibilities are opened up. The influencer then uses his communication to put forward the new options into the positive space.

Remember, great influence and persuasion has more to do with the messages that you know you are sending out than with the messages that you think you are getting back. To be plain: body language reading in business is for fools! (Or for the very, very expert, with a great deal of focus

and time to assess all the variables.) Don’t go there. Especially when you have such a capacity to influence others around you, reading body language is rather like trying to read the complex weather systems across the whole of the globe when all the time you are holding in your hand an instant global rainmaker! You must fully orchestrate your nonverbal message to fit the results that you are looking for. Therefore, you need to be able to work the entire room with your nonverbal communication—and that is why the next chapter is about how to create spaces that influence many bodies, causing them to interact together to your advantage and to their group benefit.

Chapter 10 Quick Study

The more you *accept others*, the more they are disposed to accept you and act in your favor.

Just Do This Now

1. Use the YesState. Think with positive vocabulary about everything you see and hear during a communication in order to accept it (not necessarily agree with it). This will create an overall nonverbal atmosphere of acceptance with open body language that invites others into you.
2. Use “pull” gestures frequently to confirm acceptance of others and acceptance for your content.
3. Give others the upper hand when greeting them with a handshake. Remember that people who give status and advantage to others are seen as having enough to give away.

Chapter 10 Case Study

Theory to Practice: It’s All Good

The visiting workgroup from Japan is arriving for two days of meetings and greetings. You have been home and back to the airport twice because of the flight delays caused by the Pacific typhoon. You were supposed to be with your boss and the two integration project leads when you met the arriving group, but it is 2 a.m. and you are the only one who could make it to the airport to meet these people.

Your Tokyo office has contacted you, saying, “They can’t wait to see the fall colors,” and this hangs heavy in your head because a wet Indian summer has kept things lush and green. So much for the planned drive through the hills tomorrow afternoon!

As the five-person delegation approaches, a million questions erupt in your sleep-deprived mind: Do I shake hands or bow? Bow to the group? To individuals? In what order? Firm handshake or soft?

Nuggets of cross-cultural insight return to you:

- Don’t be too overbearing; Japanese are more subdued.
- Smile, but don’t show your teeth.
- Make small talk about the weather.
- Match their number of people in meetings whenever possible.

(Argh!!)

Insight

The most effective piece of insight for such situations, cross-cultural or not, is to relax and accept. Acceptance breeds acceptance. If you consciously think, “Yes, good,” your body will relay that feeling, which will be returned by others.

- “Yes, he looks quite flustered, maybe a run-in with customs … that can happen.”
- “I am here by myself to meet a very important group of clients … yes, indeed!”

- “Yes, we just had a confusing exchange regarding whether to bow or shake hands ... OK.”

The relaxation and acceptance will be apparent to others. In turn, they can relax and mirror acceptance back to you. Now everyone can take it easy and make connections.

Provocation

What is the most positive cross-cultural gesture for you to make?

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11

Position Yourself for Success

Presence, Place, and Power

You can have power over people as long as you don't take everything from them.

—Alexander Solzhenitsyn

In this chapter you'll learn:

- How you can easily lose the advantage of territory
- When close is *too* close
- How to control Maslow's pyramid of needs
- The science of “faking it” for money
- How to gain intelligence by choosing the right seat

The idea of *territory* comes up quite often in thoughts, theories, and practices on nonverbal communication, and of course in business, so you could well be quite familiar with the idea already.

The idea of animal territories was most widely popularized by American anthropologist Robert Ardrey in the 1960s with his book *The Territorial Imperative*. Ardrey challenged previous assumptions about human development with a theory that a high level of territorial aggression was the fundamental characteristic that distinguished humans from their less aggressive primate ancestors, and consequently was the evolutionary catalyst to modern human beings. This theory influenced cultural icons such as Stanley Kubrick: it is obvious in Kubrick's film *2001: A Space Odyssey* (widely recognized as one of the best films ever made). In this work, the awakening of human intelligence is depicted as being the result of a violent act. Still today, there is much debate and theorizing regarding the

relationship between the evolution of Paleolithic technology (the hand axe) and advances in human cognition. For example, recent research in evolutionary and developmental psychology hypothesizes that the extra neural mass essential for the dexterity required in manufacturing hand axes also supported early verbal language. This idea certainly helps substantiate the theory that humankind's advanced physical development as a response to surviving the environment, laid the ground for neurological developments allowing verbal language to eventually flourish.

Ardrey's influential work on aggressive territorial behavior and evolution can also be seen in the reptilian mindset of Oliver Stone's 1987 movie *Wall Street*, widely understood as a critique of capitalist excess. This idea is best expressed by Michael Douglas's character, Gordon Gekko, who claims, "Greed captures the essence of the evolutionary spirit." It is certainly no overestimation that territory is hugely important in business—as you would discover if you arrived at your place of work to find someone else sitting in your space, eating a snack, and looking through your files, uninvited and unannounced.

Territory around the Office

When we are under stress, we can easily stake a claim on whatever resources we believe to be ours (and maybe some that we merely think *should* and need to be ours). For a communicator using influential body language, it is essential to present a physicality to others that does not fire off a reaction in their brains telling them that their territory is being invaded. More often than not, you are looking to present an image that says, "I am here to offer you more resources or to bring back the resources that you have lost to others." Put simply, "I am here to feed you—not to feed *on* you and your territory."

Messages that will suggest that you are taking over include leaning on, touching, or standing in close proximity to another person's objects (which includes just about everything, such as fixtures, stationery, computer equipment, or furniture). Leaning against an object, while seemingly innocent enough, can be perceived by others as dominating and intimidating. To observe someone leaning against a wall, or hanging in a doorway or a passage, can make us feel that the person leaning is displaying

an attitude of ownership over that exit, entry point, or pathway ([Figure 11.1](#)).

Often, if people do not *own* the property themselves, they will seek to own the pathways to the property, thus canceling out the benefit of ownership. What status can owning a place have if you can't get to it? It is the same for workplaces: hanging out at the water cooler, and so creating a territory around the vital resource of water and the social hub of the office, can at times be more powerful than sitting behind the president's desk—especially when the office air conditioning breaks down on a hot day, or if a widely viewed event, such as the Academy Awards or the Super Bowl, took place the previous night.



Figure 11.1 Territorial Display

Calm and Assertive

When you walk into someone else's territory, you are metaphorically walking on eggshells with potential land mines buried underneath. How do you deal with this? Once again, you must remain calm and assertive. Be sure that you feel centered in your belly area—balanced, with your hands and gestures open in the TruthPlane. You are looking to project an image that says that you can stand on your own two feet, and that you will not take any resources away from the other person. In short; when you move your

own vulnerable center into the space, you are being assertive without being aggressive—something that is an immense relief to the other person, whether she realizes it or not.

There is, of course, a sense of relief when further basics of survival are supplied and respected while communicating; therefore, whoever has taken control of the provisions (food and drink) and the light and heat (air conditioning, blinds, or lighting) commands a great deal of status and so attention from others in the room. To be the provider of all the basics of sustaining life has a huge significance, drawing others toward you. What being in this role absolutely does *not* do (contrary to what others may believe) is take you down in status to the level of a subordinate servant. It can be a powerful thing to serve the coffee! Great leaders pour the drinks sometimes. John Maxwell, the multimillion-selling author of *The 21 Irrefutable Laws of Leadership*, says, “The measure of a leader is not the number of people who serve the leader, but the number of people served by the leader.”

Maslow’s Hierarchy of Needs

We can glean from this concept that the fundamentals of territorial behaviour center around the *basics of survival*, all of which are to be found right at the bottom of Maslow’s Hierarchy of Needs, a representation of various types of needs that must be met in order for an individual to be happy and healthy. This theory was developed by American psychologist Abraham Maslow. Maslow is considered one of the fathers of twentieth-century humanistic psychology, and an innovator in psychological theories that diverged from Freud’s ideas around “sickness” and the mind, focusing instead on *what human beings need* if they are to be healthy and happy.

Maslow saw the needs of humans as being arranged in tiers. The most basic needs, at the bottom, are physical—air, water, food, sleep, sex, and the basic bodily functions. In the next tier come safety needs—security and stability in areas such as health and property, employment, resources, and the family. In a still higher tier are psychological or social needs—for belonging, friendship, love, sexual intimacy, and acceptance. The penultimate level is the need for esteem—to feel achievement, status, responsibility, and reputation, or the respect of others. At the top of it all are the self-actualizing needs—the need to fulfil oneself, to become all that one

is capable of becoming: acceptance, problem solving, creativity, and spontaneity. Maslow felt that unfulfilled needs in a lower tier would inhibit the person from moving to the next level. His illustration: “Someone dying of thirst quickly forgets their thirst when they have no oxygen.”

We can apply this model and way of thinking to communication: someone whose territory is being invaded, with her status being potentially lowered or vital resources pilfered, is unable to listen effectively to your presentation on how she can grow her business more creatively. She cannot listen to your vision statement expansion if you just took her last and only pen to illustrate it. And a member of your staff may find it hard to listen to and respect your instructions if you are sitting on his desk, making a nonverbal claim on what little territory and space he may have as his own.

Establishing Your Territory in a Room

How you orient yourself and others within a room or around a table is vitally important to how comfortable everyone’s own status is in the territory. Watch out for objects such as furniture and fixtures that create barriers between you and your audience. The classic example of this in business speaking is the podium, a throwback to a medieval castle where feudal leaders commanded the people from a safe and protected distance and height (because they feared the arrows and spears that the people wished to throw at them due to their autocratic rule!). The podium, for the modern-day speaker, denies the audience any visual or physical access to the speaker’s whole body—especially the hands in the all-important TruthPlane and so can be a barrier to trust. This is true unless the podium has some sort of insignia at belly height, giving a symbolic social stamp of approval and status (the U.S. presidential podium is a good example, with the seal of office, the “eagle within stars,” and the words “E Pluribus Unum” all placed at TruthPlane height to the speaker). In all other cases, the area that we trust the most is hidden from sight for no good reason. The audience cannot see any open hand gestures, unless they are over the top of the podium at chest height—and at this height, in the PassionPlane, the speaker is more likely to go over the top emotionally and become overly passionate or too direct. You should consider moving away from the

podium into more open space, in order to show your openness to the crowd (both literally and metaphorically).

Also, if you are seated while you are giving a speech, pull your chair back from the desk or table and make sure that it is high enough so that you are communicating from your TruthPlane over the top of the table. This will relax the people in your audience: they now have access to your vulnerable stomach area, and you look confident. For a good example of communicating effectively while sitting behind a desk, just look at any news anchor. His desk is always set at a height such that the hard copy of the news sits on top of the desk, and consequently cuts directly in at his TruthPlane. Furthermore, his hands rest on the desk at belly height. There is no mistake or coincidence in this placement: the image we get is that the news reader is trustworthy and his news is *fact* and not simply subjective editorial opinions.

Born to Be Mild

I was once engaged by a prominent criminal defense lawyer as an expert witness in a conspiracy to murder trial involving an alleged criminal organization; I was to give my expert opinion on some video evidence that was being put forward as key evidence by the prosecution. Over two days of examination and cross-examination, I explained how the evidence clearly showed to me that the accused showed signs of extreme stress and was under duress. The defendant displayed clear signs of wanting his alleged co-conspirator (actually a paid police informant) off his territory. He was pacing up and down, avoiding eye contact, and constantly looking away from his home, gradually leading the police “plant” off the property; these were not the actions of two people who were “thick as thieves,” but more of a victim and aggressor. In court and out of my usual territory, it took all my skill and technique not to fall into the traps set by the crown prosecutors through their relentless questioning that hoped to cause me to become anxious, aggressive, and destabilized. They knew that if they could cause me to lose

my calm by badgering me for several hours non-stop, I might certainly lose some of my credibility with the court. Once again—simply holding my hands in the TruthPlane (quite a feat over two days, even for me) kept me confident and stable even though I was out of my element. The verdict came back not guilty.

Two's Company

The way people group together and the distances they maintain apart from each other are also extremely important for understanding and therefore engineering body language that drives others toward your goals. This is especially relevant when you are facilitating meetings, running brainstorming sessions, delivering training, or doing something similar.

The *number* of people who are in a room together, and how they are placed, will have a definite bearing on your comfort level in most situations. Notice how when two parties come to meet they will often sit on opposite sides of a table. This is automatically adversarial in terms of the territory. There is now a “my side” and a “your side,” with a large gulf in between. It is easy, then, for *groups* to sit on either side of a table and unwittingly set up an adversarial meeting of “your team against my team.” For example, parliaments are often deliberately set up in this aggressive manner, with the psychological barrier of a no-man’s-land that people are traditionally banned from crossing (unless they are changing their allegiance, or “crossing the floor,” as it is called). In order to overcome this problem in a business setting, you can simply mix up potentially adversarial groups with each other. Doing so quickly breaks down the power of the largest antagonistic marker in the space (the table) and discourages “taking sides.” You will be helping people to see others’ points of view by placing them where they can literally get the best perspective.

Playing to a Crowd

Remember, once a person sees more than four people at one time, her unconscious mind defines that number as *lots*, or *a crowd*. How

intimidating it is, then, for someone to walk into a room with anything more than four people in it: “Oh, no, a gang!”



Figure 11.2 Gang of Five

The solution to this problem is that if you wish to create an environment that is welcoming to potential clients or partners, you should organize your team in such a way that you break up the numbers of people grouped together so that your team is less intimidating when guests enter a meeting room. If you wish to be most inviting to a business guest or group entering a space, be sure that the people who are receiving the guests are grouped in twos or threes, rather than standing around looking like a big gang ([Figure 11.2](#)).

Distance Learning

The details of the ways we treat territory and a group (or groups) within it are mapped out in the work of anthropologist Edward Hall, who had a great rule that described his theory on the effect of people being close or far away from each other, or *proxemics*, as it became known: “Like gravity, the influence of two bodies on each other is inversely proportional not only to the square of their distance but possibly even the cube of the distance between them.” So, the closer you come to someone, the greater your

influence over him becomes, and, of course, the greater his influence over you.

Body spacing and posture, according to Hall, are unconscious reactions to often subtle changes in nonverbal communication. Social distance between people, he believed, could be reliably correlated with physical distance, i.e., people of equal status will be physically closer than those of unequal status just as the closer you are to someone emotionally, the closer you become physically, all of this according to the following delineations made by Hall in his *American Anthropologist* article “A System for the Notation of Proxemic Behavior”:

- *Intimate distance*, used for embracing, touching, or whispering: close phase, less than 6 inches (15 cm); far phase, 6 to 18 inches (15 to 45 cm).
- *Personal distance*, used for interactions among good friends: close phase, 1.5 to 2.5 feet (45 to 75 cm); far phase, 2.5 to 4 feet (75 to 120 cm).
- *Social distance*, used for interactions among acquaintances: close phase, 4 to 7 feet (1.2 to 2.1 m); far phase, 7 to 12 feet (2.1 to 3.6 m).
- *Public distance*, used for public speaking: close phase, 12 to 25 feet (3.6 to 7.5 m); far phase, 25 feet (7.5 m) or more.

From these guidelines, you can see that as a presenter or speaker, the further you are away from your audience, the less social, personal, or intimate effect you are able to have upon them. Therefore, we might say that in order to create more impact on the members of your audience, you must have greater spatial intimacy with them, and so one would guess that you should move toward them (and there are many communication coaches who say exactly that).

However, we must bear in mind how easy it is to cross important boundaries of spatial acceptability (as we have been looking at with respect to status infringement through accidentally laying claim to another person’s territory by “getting in his space”). It is simply not enough to say that “trust increases when we move closer to people” or that you should “move into the personal space of the audience to make key points in your presentation

more impactful.” You also run the risk of intimidating your listeners and lowering their status with this same move, either through towering over them from on top of a stage, or looming over them seated (as though you have the “higher ground,” so to speak), or by invading their space by getting too close. The latter is easily counteracted by using the following principle: When you are communicating live and in close proximity, if you move into a position that is so close that you cannot see the feet of others while making eye contact, it is likely that they cannot see yours. Once they cannot see your feet, you have crossed an important *spatial boundary*, because they will not be able to predict your gross body movement without dropping their eye contact from your face, where they are trying to judge the finer elements of “feeling.” From a distance at which your audience members can see your whole body, they are able to predict both intention and feeling. In physical performance this is known as “the throw.” Go beyond the throw and you intimidate and initiate a retreat or attack response.

So if you cannot see each other’s feet in your lower peripheral vision, some kind of physical contact (often a handshake) will be necessary in the business context to positively establish trust.

How High?

How does our physical height factor into all this? Historically, raising or lowering your “height” in relation to another person has been used as a means of establishing either a superior or a subordinate relationship; in other words, raising or lowering your *status* in relation to another. We refer to a member of royalty as “Your Highness,” whereas individuals who commit negative acts are called “low,” “low-down,” or “lowlife.” Who among us wants to be “looked down on,” or to “fall short” of the targets? And equally so none of us wants to be perceived as being on our “high horse,” “on a pedestal,” or all “high and mighty.”

An expert business body language practitioner should regard his physical height only as a tool to help others, not to dominate others. If you are taller than most, whether you are male or female, your body will look naturally dominant (especially if you are also broad across your shoulders—true for both men and women). Vertically blessed readers of this book, you come to

the table with high status already programmed into your appearance! If you then start to add further signals of dominance—a loud voice; bigger and broader gestures; clothing colored with aggressive reds or black and yellow combinations (used in nature as warning signals, no less)—then you stand an excellent chance of unwittingly being very threatening to others at a base brain level. For those of you who are shorter than the average, give yourself a little more distance from those who are taller than you. Your slightly more distant perspective of taller people will make them appear less vertically dominating to you and stop you from having to hold your head at a full 90-degree angle to make eye contact.

Too often however, extremely tall people unconsciously compensate for their natural status edge by stooping over and lowering their heads so as not to dominate their shorter superiors in the organization. Again, the solution for the tall is quite similar to that for the short: simply step back a bit and you will automatically become less dominant, without having to try to lower your physical presence by stooping and crunching in at the stomach, collapsing the chest, and putting yourself on a negative out breath.

Live Long and Prosper

Despite what we may wish to believe, many height studies show that on the whole, taller people are more successful, are healthier, and live longer than short people. For example, a 2006 *New York Times* article cites a group of epidemiologists at the University of Bristol in England who have published studies showing that taller people, after controlling for various factors, are less likely to die of coronary heart disease, respiratory disease, and stomach cancer than shorter people. The underlying socio-economic foundation for this may be in a study from one institute of management that recorded the heights and salaries of well over 2,000 managers at the director level and found that every inch of height above the company norm added almost \$1,000 to that person's salary package, and this held true equally for both sexes. Other studies have also shown that height is linked to financial success: in one study focusing on Wall Street, every inch of height added \$600 to a person's bottom line. The same correlation has also been found in government departments and universities, where people are supposedly promoted based on their competence, not their height. One American study showed that tall people not only got the best jobs in American firms, but

also received higher starting salaries. Those who were over 6 feet 2 inches tall got 12 percent more than those who were less than 6 feet!

Short of you taking this information and immediately buying platform heels or booking a major operation to extend your legs, the business body language technique that will help you is to simply *stand tall*; if you are already tall in stature, you should still stand tall, but be aware that if you are physically dominating others, this can cause the fight-or-flight response. Remember, successful executive managers use the skills of influence and persuasion that we have outlined in previous chapters to mitigate the potential threat that their height might bring. Humans are looking for a strong person who will be on our side—not one who will be against us. Do not heed the advice of Machiavelli to the Prince: “It is better to be feared than loved.” He died in poverty 13 years after writing his famous treatise on government. Clearly he had no trusted friends by then, and he probably was not feared by too many people at that point either, at least not in any advantageous kind of way.

And for the majority of us who are not the tallest people in the room—don’t worry! You can still command status at any height. Research has found that the more someone is perceived as having high status in an organization, the more he is also perceived as being taller than he really is. Indeed, in one university experiment, a student talking to other students who had been introduced as *their professor* was perceived as being half a foot taller than when she was introduced to a different group of students as their peer. No wonder a simple promotion in title can sometimes be more effective in retaining key people than a raise in salary. A greater amount on your personal pay-slip does not make you appear to be taller and more powerful to anyone, yet a company news letter congratulating you on your move up from vice president to senior vice president could potentially give you a three-inch height advantage in terms of perception. And perception is reality. Fake it and you’ll make it!

But what of the integrity of your authenticity, you might ask? Well, I say that it is only *the experience* that others have of you and that you have of yourself that can be considered genuine. So use your imagination and enjoy creating a great experience around yourself and allow your audience to feel what is authentic about it. As the famous American writer William S. Burroughs said, “You cannot fake quality any more than you can fake a

good meal.” And after all, the Scarecrow in *The Wizard of Oz* needed only to receive the physical diploma, not the actual education, to recognize that he had an extraordinary brain.

Perspective Makes a Difference

It is easy to change physical position or perspective and, by doing so, change the brain’s perception and functioning. Try this on for size: sit in a chair and get someone to stand close and over you to maximize the height difference. Next, ask this person to reprimand you as loudly and forcefully as possible. Then change positions: you stand up while your colleague sits and reprimands you from the chair. You’ll find that not only will your colleague find it nearly impossible to do this, but his voice will sound different and lack any authority. Of course, this is unusual (and could look kind of silly at the office), but it will give you a sense of how well you listened to your reprimand and the attitude it produced in you when you were being height-dominated. Did you notice your fight-or-flight mechanism kicking in? Try repeating the same exercise with your colleague at different levels of sitting, standing, and even lying down. When someone is lying down, the difference will be far more pronounced—you won’t take the reprimand seriously at all.

Breaking Down the Barriers to Communication

Whether you are communicating with one person in a room or with many people in a meeting, the fewer barriers there are between you and your audience, the better for persuasion and influence. Here are some further ideas for controlling the space to your advantage.

In rooms, you could take away the table between people, or at least to communicate nonverbally over the top of the table as much as possible. You could also seat yourself at the corner of the table at a 90° angle to the other party in order to minimize the barrier and the “you versus me” message of 180° positioning, but still leave some element of table space between you so that the other party can feel safe.

When you are standing up to present, you need to balance the height advantage against the height dominance. The fact that those sitting close to

you now have your hands at their eye level can be really quite threatening. They simply will not be able to listen if your hands are intimidating them at this unconscious level. It is often prudent to put yourself a few people away from any key decision makers; by having a safe barrier between their seated positions and you standing, they will feel protected and more relaxed. Also, you can think about placing them to your left. Doing so can cause the image of these powerful people to be processed in the more creative part of your mind; thus, you will be able to interpret consciously any of their body language as having more opportunity—being more positive. When you see them in this way, you are more likely to give positive body language, and they are more likely to mirror this back at you. When they are placed on your right, you are more predisposed to think of them as critical and look at them with a frown, and so, in turn, they will mirror this back at you. Or even worse, you will ignore them altogether, and they may well ignore you.

It is really quite interesting how *where* an individual member of an audience places herself in the group has an effect on the information that she takes away with her. With this in mind, it is useful to explore how you can orchestrate who sits where, depending on the strategy you have for whom you need to influence and, conversely, who really does not matter so much. Of course, it would be lovely if the world conformed to the idea that everyone is equally important, but that is just not true, now, is it? Not all members of a business audience have equal power. And so, to optimize your effectiveness and efficiency in meeting your objectives, you must focus on the influencers and the decision makers.

Noted body language writers Allan and Barbara Pease conducted an interesting study in which they observed the manner and extent to which delegates participated in a seminar based on where they were sitting in the room, and also how much of the presenter's content they could recall afterward. The result was what the Peases called the *funnel effect*. When the participants were sitting in a "classroom style," there appeared to be a "learning zone," shaped like a funnel, that extended directly down the center of the audience and across the front row. Those sitting in the open end of the "funnel" participated the most, interacted most with the presenter, and most recalled the content after the event. Those who participated least were those sitting in the back or to the sides; this group

tended to be more negative about the seminar, was more confrontational, and had the lowest recall.

An Experiment in Learning

We might expect that the people who are most enthusiastic about learning about the topic would be the ones who would choose to sit closest to the front, and those who are least enthusiastic would sit in the back or to the sides. With this assumption, the Peases conducted a further experiment to determine whether the funnel effect was a result of where people *chose* to sit based on their interest in the topic, and also whether where a person sat affected his level of participation and retention of content *regardless of interest*.

They found that regardless of the prelearning level of interest, participants who were placed up front retained more information after the event and participated more; the participants who were placed to the back and sides retained less than usual and participated less. If you want someone to really get the message, then orchestrate the seating arrangement so that key decision makers or thought leaders are placed up front or in the funnel. Or follow in the footsteps of some presenters and trainers by abandoning the classroom-style meeting concept for speaking to or training smaller groups, and replace it with the horseshoe. Evidence suggests that horseshoe seating results in more participation and better recall as a result of the increased eye contact between all attendees and the speaker. Of course, sometimes you have little control over the setting for your communication, but when you do, you can now use that ability to orchestrate the seating arrangement in order to orchestrate the outcomes.

Engaging with Your Team

Your body language in groups is important when you are presenting as part of a team. The audience will be watching the body language of not just whoever is presenting at any given moment, but also the other members of that team who are not speaking. How the nonspeaking members are poised indicates to the onlooker how well regarded each team member is within the team—and is therefore an indicator of team unity. A united team equals a strong team equals a strong offering of a product or service. When you are

presenting with your team, the simplest and most effective way to get the message that your team is strong across to your audience nonverbally is that whenever one member of the team is speaking, everyone else thinks to themselves, “My friend who is speaking right now is amazing.” The audience will notice the subtle body language that this mantra produces and will tend to mirror it. How simple it is to influence and persuade an audience into joining with a feeling. Equally so, how easy it is to pay *no* attention to how you reflect upon others with your nonverbal communication, and bring the whole team and project down as a result. Of course, not only can you stir feelings within your audience, but you can also take your audience on *a journey* of feeling—and this is what we will look at in the final chapter.

Chapter 11 Quick Study

Despite the suits and ties, businesspeople are territorial animals. You must be respectful of that territory or you will cause them to retreat or advance aggressively with respect to you and your ideas.

Just Do This Now

1. To gain trust whenever you approach another person, display open gestures and show the palms of your hands in the TruthPlane.
2. Once you are within the distance where you cannot see the feet of whomever you are talking with in your peripheral vision while maintaining eye contact, extend your hand and give that person an upper-hand handshake with a light smile to put him at ease.
3. To build good rapport, find ways to sit or stand that do not put large barriers between you and others, block exits, or cause you to overshadow others with your height.

Chapter 11 Case Study

Theory to Practice: Networking

You are at a networking cocktail evening, and suddenly you are at “alert.” The woman across the room is the very person who can best help take your career to the next level, and here is your chance to make an impression and hopefully secure a follow-up meeting. The stakes are high, and you want to make sure you do everything right. Silently, you ponder how your approach should change in different cases. What should you do if she is

- Standing up across the room?
- There when you turn around?
- Sitting at a table or on a couch?

Insight 1: Standing Up across the Room

If you are approaching someone new from a distance, ensure that he can see all of you as soon as possible. If you can’t see someone’s feet, your defensive reactions are initiated. It may be a matter of determining your timing so that the target person has a complete view of you as you approach.

Insight 2: There When You Turn Around

In some networking environments (often the more popular ones), cramped quarters can limit your ability to provide your “full view.” Also, serendipity may put a target person around a corner or in at the back of you as you turn. If this is the case, you can counter the natural territorial defenses by making body contact through a handshake. Quickly sending a message of safety will increase the effectiveness of a first interaction.

Insight 3: Sitting at a Table or on a Couch

Recalling the imperative of status, it is important that you get to the other person’s “level” as soon as possible in the interaction. Taking a seat, squatting, and down on one knee are effective ways to reduce height differentials. Everyone is familiar with the discomfort of having someone hover around your table or, worse, behind or beside your office chair.

Provocation

How is someone invading your territory? How are you mirroring this behaviour and invading his in return, or invading others that are less protected'?

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12

Moving Your Audience

Strategies for Nonverbal Influence

It is not the strongest of the species nor the most intelligent that survives. It is the one that is the most adaptable to change.

—Charles Darwin

In this chapter you'll learn:

- What a “physical narrative” is
- How Hollywood can help you make your case
- The Fact, Care, Do structure
- How to move your audience emotionally on *any* subject
- How to use the “Zeigarnik effect” to keep your audience hooked

If you reflect on all the persuasive nonverbal techniques that are now in your possession, you may notice that a great deal of emphasis has been placed on the benefits of making very clear choices and sticking to them. Hopefully, you will have even adopted the mantra, “Make a choice, make it bigger, keep it tidy.” In this final chapter, you are going to learn how to apply this idea in different contexts and with a few twists to engage an audience with your message even further. We are going to investigate how to further maximize your influence by actually *moving the audience*, provoking its members to journey through certain emotional and intellectual states when we speak. We will also look at *physical change* as a way to influence—a clear departure from some of the previous techniques, which focused on physical stability and constancy as a tool.

In other words, now that we understand the rules, we can understand how to break them effectively. If you have been practicing the techniques

throughout this book and are beginning to master nonverbal communication in business—getting closer and closer to presenting at your best every time—you are ready for this next step. Even if you have mastered the fundamentals, it's important that you leave room for variation. Great leaders such as JFK have said, "Change is the law of life and without attention to it we miss the future." For your own progress with the important work of this book, you must recognize, as the first century BC proverb writer Publilius Syrus did, that "It's a bad plan that admits no modification." And it is this effective use of change and surprise that we will look at right now.

Physical Narrative

At the heart of any communication tactic, and at the core of any strategic approach to getting a message across, exists a necessary skill. Anyone who wants to build trust in business simply must have the capacity and to *influence* human decision making—to be a great *persuader*. Such a person must have the ability to modify the actions of others in accordance with his own desires. As modern depth psychology has shown, the human unconscious mind expresses itself in images, metaphors and symbols rather than in words of concrete meaning. If you wish to have a conversation with your own and your audience's unconscious master, in order to influence it at the deepest levels, you must do the same. With *non-verbal* influence and persuasion techniques, you are physically, vocally and environmentally expressing images, metaphors and symbols that can quickly move people through a progression of deep changes—whether it be toward a new feeling, a new thought, or a new physical place.

Not by coincidence, the idea of moving an audience through a progression of changes is also the function of a story or a narrative. Without change, there is no story. So in order to take an audience on a journey to a new feeling or thought, and furthermore, to persuade its members to make decisions that are in line with *your* own goals, you have to take them through some changes in their own physicality. Let's investigate further.

Hollywood

Just take a look at the classic structure of a Hollywood film, a perfect example of the modern version of storytelling. Syd Field, one of the most

popular screenwriting gurus of recent years in the film industry, has written several books on the subject of story structure. His ideas about what makes a good script have become very influential. In his articulation of the ideal “three-act structure,” he describes how a film must begin with “setup” information (Act One); only after this can the protagonist experience the “inciting incident” that gives her a goal, which must then be achieved. The protagonist’s struggle is to achieve this goal, the “confrontation” (Act Two), is a more subtle turning point with an often devastating reversal of the protagonist’s fortunes. The final element (Act Three) of the film depicts a climactic struggle by the protagonist to finally achieve her goal and the aftermath of this struggle.

Certainly, it is very fair to say that the majority of the classic story structure is built around the protagonist’s encountering a problem and then solving it. It is with this in mind that your nonverbal communication must be adaptable, able to move your audience beyond the impasse and to transform it and others in the process. So let’s look at exactly how to use *non-verbal progression* to move through a simple story and create quite an impact on your audience.

The Setup Let’s look at a business message that you are delivering to a group that, although its members are already working well together, needs further motivation to keep doing well—to stay ahead of the game.

First, we need to understand that if the group is already doing well, then its members may not be actively looking for new or further opportunities. So the story, “You are doing great. . . . Now how about we work harder and do even better!” probably will not motivate the audience.

To put it in terms of Syd Field, the setup of the story is, “Things are going great.” To move things along further, you might drop in this comment, which acts as the inciting incident: “But when we look over our shoulders, we can see the competition, not only coming to take away the extra resources that we have accumulated, but threatening the very foundations upon which all of this is built!” This story structure is compelling because it swiftly takes the audience from pleasure to pain—in essence, the common Hollywood dramatic model.

We needed words to help us deliver the inciting incident, but it takes rock-solid body language skills to get the message across fully and inspire the audience to react appropriately. Before we progress to looking at how to move the audience back toward pleasure, let's see how, using our non-verbal communication skill, we *physically* move our listeners from pleasure to pain along with this verbal narrative.

Acts of Transformation

One of my most influential mentors was once giving a speech in the streets and, being quite the agent provocateur, was managing to whip the assembled crowd into a very aggressive fervor—not for him, but *against* him. He riled up the crowd to such an extent that they chased him across the city with a mind to beat another point of view into him. A master of transformation, he ducked into an alley as the crowd passed and tagged onto the end of the mob—screaming for his own death! Studying with him, I understood that adaptability is the only surefire strategy for success (and survival), and I work with all my clients to help them have a high degree of that adaptability when they communicate so that they can *accept* the most extreme and often dangerous situations—working with them rather than against them.

The Confrontation The first part of this presentation or speech—we'll call it “You're Great!”—can be performed starting in the TruthPlane because you are stating a fact: it is *great* that the team is great at what it does, and its members should rightly be praised. They trust this message that they see in the TruthPlane, and they will continue to listen because they are gaining status and their brain's reward system will be delivering pleasure to them. You can choose to increase the level of excitement in this first part of your speech—raise their heart rate, breathing, and blood pressure—by bringing your gestures up into the PassionPlane when you are describing the team's achievements and how it has exceeded expectations by delivering above

and beyond what others might normally have achieved (because you started your speech in the TruthPlane, this will seem like a natural progression, rather than an exaggeration).

Moving into the PassionPlane at this stage is particularly advantageous in the context of applying our Hollywood story structure to this communication: raising the energy and passion just before the drop that is about to come will maximize the effect—both physically and emotionally—of the inciting incident. Your audience is receiving its reward, and your increased excitement is adding further positive stimulation to the reward processes in the brain. Now, just as those in your audience are getting hooked on the increased levels of their own dopamine, you are going to drop a bombshell and send them into withdrawal, both physically and mentally.

The Climactic Struggle Now you have entered the final part of the three-act structure. Drop your actions back down to the TruthPlane, and let the audience know that there is a problem. Now, people don't generally like problems when they are confronted with them directly; they can switch off mentally from them as an avoidance of the threat, or even mentally downplay their own involvement in the problem (sidestepping the issue or passing the buck.) To avoid this outcome, we'll use a device based on the Zeigarnik effect. Bluma Zeigarnik was a Russian psychologist who, in the 1920s, discovered the principle that explains that an unfinished idea sticks in the mind better than a finished one (more on this suspense technique later). Zeigarnik's principle basically means that you can keep an audience hooked by saying, "There is a solution, which I will talk about once you understand just how severe the problem is." At this point, you drop your arms to the GrotesquePlane. Now you can go into the negative details.

Since you have been in the TruthPlane prior to this, confirming facts that the audience knows to be true, you will have established trust. The audience members will now emotionally follow your drop into the GrotesquePlane and be likely to take your bad news seriously. They can hear the tone of your voice and see your body. They can see the physical change that this story is making in you, and they begin to copy it. The change is stark enough to cause them to be withdrawn from their pleasurable state. They now demand the restoration of the good feeling that they had been in

previously. They want you (and, by extension, themselves) to get back up to truth and passion—and away from the grotesque.

When you next *lay down the solution* for them, moving back into the TruthPlane, they immediately follow, willingly joining in with this new feeling and buying into the solution you propose. You can once again take them with you back toward and into passion as you describe the great results that they will have once again from their now-renewed extra effort.

Persuasive

In following this structure, you are using nonverbal communication to cause an audience to motivate itself: you are producing a compelling physiological imperative that assigns greater meaning to the less tangible business imperative. In other words, the potential pain of losing business opportunities is not as tangible as the current discomfort caused by the withdrawal of pleasurable chemicals in the brain that your nonverbal messages are instigating. By overlapping these nonverbal cues with your verbal content, you have effectively attached the feeling of pain to the business prognosis—and now the potential for pain makes sense because it *feels* real, and feeling is reality because it is the meaning that we attach to whatever we sense.

You are now using body language to create emotional meaning around the words and linguistic images that you are creating.

Body Language Is Real Language

Just as in any communication system, the more versed you become in the meaning of the vocabulary you use, the more power you have over yourself and therefore over others. Notice that in the example given, the manipulative effect is very powerful and clear. Yes, we are talking about being manipulative, and that's because *all* use of language is manipulative. Language is a tool that can be used for good, bad, and everything in between. The choice of how to use that tool is yours. Indeed, it stands to reason that much of the time we are accidentally and unconsciously manipulating others with our tools of language.

Your aim in reading this book should be to understand how to use the tool of nonverbal communication to consciously manipulate your audience, for good or bad (preferably good), but never, never by accident. As Dr. Frank Lutz, the renowned Republican pollster and linguistic engineer of consent during the Bush administration, says, “It’s not what you say, it’s what people hear.”

You have the opportunity to become an artist—a poet with your *nonverbal communication*, and affect those around you purposefully, elegantly, and with the potential for great returns. However, this work is only for the brave and the bold. Remember the words of British author George Orwell, whose intense opposition to totalitarianism and passion for clarity in language led him to say, “During times of universal deceit, telling the truth becomes a revolutionary act.”

Verse and Chapter

So let's now create a really short nonverbal progression and some linguistics to go with it to illustrate how simple and poetic the proper usage can be. You are going to move from the TruthPlane to the PassionPlane and then back to the TruthPlane again. This is a very simple *rule of three* narrative progression that comes full circle in terms of the physical positions taken. The rule of three narrative model is very important to nonverbal communication, as it has a natural suspension programmed into it. For example, One and Two set up the expectation of Three, which can either fulfill the expectation or surprise the audience.

In Japanese Noh theater, there is a traditional narrative progression in three parts called the *jo*, the *ha*, and the *kyu*. This is a form of telling stories that was hit upon by Zeami (a Japanese classical dramatic writer of the thirteenth century). *Jo-ha-kyu* means anticipation, release, payoff. Tension builds, bursts into climax, and finishes quickly. All of this has similarities to the Western concept (Aristotle's) of thesis, antithesis, synthesis.

Okay, so clearly the rule of three story structure is classic. Now let's add physicality to a textual structure that I call Fact, Care, Do. First off, during the anticipation created in the TruthPlane, you tell the audience a “Fact.” This should usually encompass some problem facing your audience; because the problem is unresolved at this point, the audience members

experience anticipation, or suspension, that will keep them “hooked” as they journey with you through the next two parts. Also, because the problem is delivered in the TruthPlane and with the YesState, they are engaged by it, not driven away by it. And, of course, the *fact* of the problem is sincerely expressed in the TruthPlane and accepted as truthful by the audience.

Next, we move to the “Care” element of the piece. This part consists of you describing the emotional bond with the problem: how you and your audience care about the problem and the feelings it provokes. Remember, people buy into the *feeling*, not the text. Your hands should be lifted into the PassionPlane at this point in order to escalate people’s heart rates and breathing intensity at this moment.

During this part of the Fact, Care, Do sequence, you are raising the level of suspense—there is as yet no resolution, either physically or in the content. Your audience members are hooked in with the suspense, both in their bodies and in their minds. Both the *fact* and the *care* are part of the anticipation segment of this story structure—so, now comes the release that will move your listeners toward the payoff.

You lower your hands to the TruthPlane once again, and there is now a sense of completion to the movement and an imposed sigh of relief as you explain what you/they are going to *do* about this problem, and how much you care about it. Your listeners are now attaching the feeling of relief to the *action* that you are talking about. Only now are they predisposed to accept and agree with the course of action that you describe, because they can literally *feel* how it brings them back to a more stable, pleasurable state, away from the suspense and anxiety over the subject. The payoff for all this is the action that they will now *do* for you to keep this state stable. Often you can linguistically state the action that you are looking for in the “Do” part of the structure.

It’s quite a simple plan programmed with archetypal resonance: movement that can connect directly with your audiences’ deepest decision making faculty—the unconscious. Your mental intention behind the message has been solidified within a concrete action plan. Now you can mentally relax and allow yourself to be adaptable to playing your audience with these movements. You can be open to them, available to their

reactions. You now have the golden opportunity of truly moving out together on your vision.

Language and Power

All that remains now is for you to personally explore the vocabulary of physical language that you are now able to bring to your messages. Practice the simplicity of this language and see for yourself how, by employing it, you can directly affect your audience. Be careful never to get stuck in a rut of nonverbal norms: your power to survive is in your power to adapt. Adaptation is the gift that keeps all life on earth thriving in an environment that changes by the minute.

Don't get stale in your physicality—keep moving and keep changing, and you will be able to cross from business niche to business niche with great fluidity and elegance. Your communication ability is founded on not only your desire to change the opinions of others, but your openness to changing your own opinion as well. The information in this book will give you the most solid foundation for your own personal exploration, and final mastery, of how you nonverbally communicate with those around you for business persuasion and influence. So I urge you now to immediately use anything that is working for you, and recommend that you immediately discard anything that is not. Using *focus* and *simplicity* to discard is more powerful than "practice makes perfect" for methods that do not instantly resonate with you.

Now that you possess the fundamentals, it's time to let your own experimentation with and testing of techniques inspire new ideas. Quickly you'll discover which techniques work best toward your goal of artful and effective communication. As you expand your knowledge and experience with these nonverbal techniques and become increasingly savvy at using your body language, you will hone your own personal style in the art of nonverbal communication.

Thank you for reading this book. I hope that the words I have written have led you to an understanding of some new and advanced techniques in nonverbal influence and persuasion, and also an understanding of the bigger communication picture and what that means to us all. I would like to leave you with one irrefutable idea, an idea that is as fundamental to non-verbal

communication as it is to verbal. Keep this quote in mind as you journey forward with persuasion and influence through your mastery in business of winning body language:

Broadly speaking, the short words are the best, and the old words best of all.

—Winston Churchill

Chapter 12 Quick Study

Attaching gestures that create feeling to narrative structure compels an audience through a progression of feeling; an audience can be influenced to feel an emotional connection with information that would otherwise have had little effect on it. Therefore, you can get an audience emotionally involved in just about anything by attaching the right progression of nonverbal communication.

Just Do This Now

1. Use Fact, Care, Do to give a simple three-part story structure in your presentation.
2. Attach clear nonverbal gestures to a compelling narrative in order to move your audience toward an emotional state in response to your presentation. For example, give a fact in the TruthPlane, explain how the audience might care about that fact in the PassionPlane, and then explain what you are all going to do about it back in the TruthPlane.
3. Take the audience members on a clear physical journey that will persuade them to act upon your advice.

Chapter 12 Case Study

Theory to Practice: Drama and Business, a Winning Combination

Jay has developed a start-up company into a successful and sustainable business. The growth numbers have been impressive: from three employees six years ago to approaching one hundred this past quarter. However, Jay is worried that the necessary formalization of some business processes has reduced the level of passion in the organization. He used to be directly involved in all hires, but there are a number of employees with whom he has had little meaningful interaction, if he has had any at all.

He is addressing an all-hands meeting later this month, and he wants to send a number of messages. The business is solid and sustainable, but he also wants to counter any feelings of complacency because the company isn't doubling its revenues anymore. Last year's revenue growth was a mere 4 percent.

Insight

Employees and others who are involved in the success of an organization deserve to be told a story that involves feeling and emotion. They are entitled to some drama. A speaker who is comfortable using different techniques can orchestrate her body language to fit with the structure of her speech in telling the story.

One effective structure is Fact, Care, Do. In the example given here, the Fact portion of the discussion could focus on the negatives of revenue growth, in comparative terms, changing from "triple-digit" to merely a "single digit." The body language here could veer into the out breath and GrotesquePlane areas with demonstrably less energy and tension. This can contrast with moving into the Care area, where TruthPlane language instills safety and trust in the things that are going well, and the company remains solid. Do, which speaks to actions moving forward, can be punctuated with PassionPlane gestures and elevated levels of tension and involvement.

As with any story or drama, the telling is as important as the scripting.

Provocation

With all that you understand now of winning body language, how will the story change for you and where do you see it ending?

Concluding Thought

Intelligence is the capacity to receive, decode and transmit information efficiently. Stupidity is blockage of this process at any point.

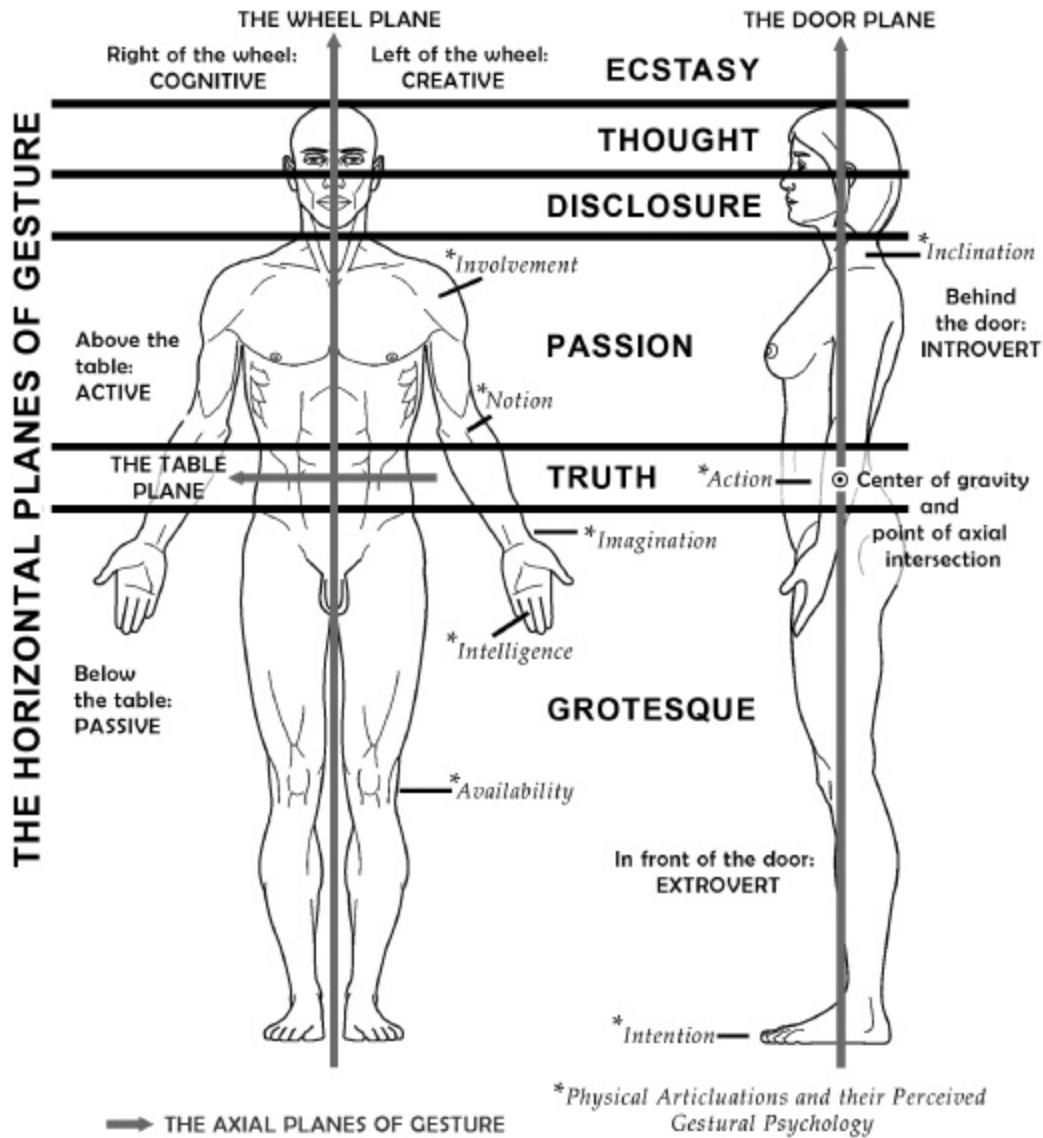
—Robert Anton Wilson

(January 18, 1932–January 11, 2007)

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Appendix

The GesturePlane System



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About the Author

Mark Bowden received his university degree in performance in the U.K. and studied the gesture control methods of Jacques Lecoq's Laboratory of Movement in Paris. He worked with some of the world's most ground-breaking theater companies, appearing in multi-award-winning stage and screen productions globally and training internationally recognized actors and directors. He has worked with leading practitioners of movement psychology and built upon the influence techniques of Dr. Milton Erickson. He is the creator of TruthPlane, a unique model of training for anyone who has to communicate to an audience, and his techniques are now used by top executives and political leaders around the globe who want to gain an advantage beyond words when they speak. He has a reputation for being one of the world's expert performance trainers, and he is a highly sought-after trainer in business communication at universities including McGill and the international top 10 business school Schulich at York University in Toronto. His client list of leading businesspeople, teams, and politicians currently includes presidents and CEOs of Fortune 50 companies and prime ministers of G8 powers. He gives business presentation training to groups and keynote speeches worldwide on persuasive and influential verbal and nonverbal language and communication structures to *stand out, win trust, and profit.*

Mark can be contacted at mark@truthplane.com and followed at www.twitter.com/truthplane.

For videos and further resources to accompany this training, visit www.truthplane.com.

Chris Irwin, coauthor of the “Theory to Practice” sections, can be found via his consulting practice’s site at www.MicroOB.com.

WINNING BODY LANGUAGE

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SALES PROFESSIONALS

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To Tracey for always making the impossible possible.

—Mark Bowden

*To my wife, Diane, and my mother, Jessica, in appreciation
of their unwavering support for everything I do.*

—Andrew Ford

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Concluding Thought

Appendix: Mark Bowden's GesturePlane™ System for Sales Professionals

Further Reading and Resources

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Preface

I first met Mark Bowden in March 2008. I was introduced to him via two associates who had “just met this great public speaking coach and body language expert!” and thought I should meet him too. Both Mark and I were based out of Toronto, and so, curious, we arranged to meet over coffee.

You might be wondering why I say “curious.” I was already a very accomplished public speaker and seminar leader in the world of sales performance management. My ratings were always top of the top. I had a loyal following of fans and workshop attendees across North America and beyond. Yet two of my best supporters were adamant that I meet with this communication coach. You can imagine that something started nagging at me as to why exactly they were being so insistent.

Now, prior to venturing into my profession as a consultant—launching Sales CoPilot in 2006—I had been (not to blow my own trumpet—but I will) a pretty successful salesperson, sales manager, and even scaled the heights to be president of a division in an enterprise software company. Great communication had gotten me some distance professionally, and it would have been fair to rate me as an above-average presenter. Indeed, some would have said a pretty damned solid—even “expert”—communicator. But don't take my word for it: as a young man and at my mother's encouragement, I had joined Toastmasters and successfully completed my 10-speech curriculum, to achieve what was called at the time the Competent Toastmaster certificate. Ask my mother and she'll dig it out to show you! So, through upbringing, training, and extensive professional experience, I was no wilting flower—comfortable with myself and comfortable in front of others, whether one-on-one with the CEO of a multinational, speaking before a packed convention, or in front of a couple of dozen industry specialists hammering me for solutions. Then why should I need a communication coach, even “one of the great ones”?

When I sat down for coffee that day, it was with an air of (probably healthy) skepticism as well as an unusual edge of negativity. You've seen it from the other side of the table, no doubt. Everything about your prospects, the way they sit, speak, and look at you when you talk says, "Okay, prove it!"

Then Mark calmly and confidently walked in, shook my hand and smiled, sat down next to me, and asked me some questions ... and everything changed.

It was one of those pivotal meetings that we all find periodically in our careers. The influential impact of Mark's immediate insights and subtle coaching (there and then—in Starbucks) quickly extended past my presentation skills and into more general professional sales communication, and beyond! But I will begin here in the arena of presenting.

As a speaker I am a high-energy guy. I bring truckloads of enthusiasm and a freight train of passion to my work. I am absorbed by and immersed in the world of sales, and so I have amassed a wealth of domain expertise in system and process design, messaging, management, and coaching. When facing a group, I draw on this knowledge with warmth and enthusiasm. I am gregarious and put myself out there—you have to, to win attention and respect. If you don't give heart and soul, then your clients won't either.

When I present, I constantly strive for an interactive environment. Just like in any sales communication, seminars work best if the content is driven by the client's needs and you travel together toward shared insights. So it was in that meeting over coffee with Mark, as he gently questioned me about my communication style and I responded, that I had a shocking insight: *my passionate energy, in great part manifested through my body language, was creating a serious risk to my bigger business objectives.* So much so that at times I was overwhelming my audience and thus suppressing the interactive, conversational engagement that both they and I valued so highly.

I hired Mark on the spot to coach me going forward—now how's that for *his* sales ability? This took two forms: Mark reviewed some videos of past seminars I had facilitated. He then had me "present" to him, and we videotaped those sessions.

During our time together, Mark introduced me to his unique GesturePlane™ system, something you will learn more about in this book but at the time was not yet published and became available to the wider public through his first book, *Winning Body Language*. The only way to get Mark's groundbreaking training then was face-to-face, and so at a high price financially. Today you can quickly learn exactly what I learned back then by simply reading this book and trying out the nonverbal and psychological techniques in Mark's unique GesturePlane system. As he taught me: the mind and the body are interconnected—how the mind feels, the body in some way echoes or resonates. Yet Mark's GesturePlane system is unique in its understanding of how to more extensively utilize the extraordinary personal and social power of this connection—in reverse!

What your body displays—the minds of both you and your audience echo.

In my case, my customary public speaking body language was working *against* my intention of inviting interaction and collaboration. And as Mark quickly predicted, it was also wearing me out and interfering with my ability to be fully present to my audience, especially when it came to listening. Not to jump too far ahead, but Mark Bowden's GesturePlane system breaks the body up into horizontal gestural sections that align with some predictable feelings, judgments, and an élan—the quality of energy—an audience will inhabit when you use them. Whether you need your audience to empathize with the open and honest effect of the TruthPlane™, or the high energy of the PassionPlane™, or kept away from the low energy and disinterest brought on by the GrotesquePlane™: put your gestures at the appropriate horizontal level, and your emotion, attitude, and energy will follow that lead. In short: engage yourself in the corresponding body language to the engagement you want from your clients and customers. Be the change you want to see.

I was in the PassionPlane way too much: overpowering my audience or exhausting them. This not only interfered with their taste and stamina for interaction but also inhibited my own ability to listen to subtle feedback as I focused on pushing out a kilowatt performance every time. Not the best combination for a customer-centric sales conversation.

Don't get me wrong—just like you now, I was still a very, very good communicator, successful with my current audience and clients. But like hypertension in a 40-year-old, the damage is hard to see at first, yet cumulative. Looking back, I can see numerous instances where my posture and power either inhibited my audience from sharing fully and freely or inspired me to jump on a “dissenting opinion” way before I knew its true colors. To further disclose the true colors of my personality profile: when I describe myself as high energy, I'm not kidding. In one personality test, the Hogan Assessments of Personality Inventory, I scored super high on energy. The prize: I am an enthusiastic and passionate leader. The punishment: under pressure, or when tired, this energy can bubble over into aggression and be disruptive. In leadership coaching, the coach would focus on helping a leader with my profile to manage this energy level in order to reduce the risk of intimidating members of the team.

Working with Mark, I saw this balancing act with greater clarity. Through TruthPlane, he gave me the key to achieving the right balance—not through the way I thought, but the way I moved.

The GesturePlane system gave me a new insight and new controls. The difference in my work was noticeable and measurable. Mark had a great description of the difference in those early days that is worth repeating: “At the end of your presentation, did the audience respect your content, or did they respect your content and want to go for a coffee to spend more time with you.” Before working with Mark, I was earning great respect for my content but spending too much time afterward alone over coffee when I would have been better served enjoying my latte with a lineup of prospective clients, eager to converse more with *me*.

Now, not only am I better at engaging my audience to move further into productive sales conversations, but I better engage myself. My mind stays clearer; my focus is easier to maintain. I am more aware of the environment I'm creating and how I can influence it in support of my message. If I feel my energy rising and it serves no useful purpose to my goals, I can literally stem the flow on purpose. You see, the body is not just a reflection of the mind; the body can influence the mind. Left unattended, the body will follow and express or indicate in some way your emotional state; however, if you attend and maintain awareness of your body, it will influence your

feelings, attitude, and energy. This is the magic of Mark's research and practice.

One of the insights I offered to Mark after our work together was that I found the greatest impact in my one-on-one communication. In my personal interactions when coaching salespeople, entrepreneurs, or selling to a customer, my energy issue was of course just as prevalent as it was in speaking. I ran the risk of my energy level overwhelming the listener and interfering with the interactive intent of the message. In worst case scenarios it could actually be intimidating. After working with Mark, I had a new tool that allowed me to turn the volume down when needed.

Now when I want someone to interact, share, be engaged, I can use my body language to create an environment and atmosphere that invites the audience to enroll in the process. If faced with a low reacting, disinterested audience, I can use my body language to help draw them out and share with me in spite of themselves. It is not manipulation—it is about using the most fundamental social instincts developed through thousands of years of human evolution, and before that several million years of continuity between species—the instinctual behavior we inherit from deep in our DNA.

Mark's focus has traditionally been with leaders and speakers trying to inspire audiences with just the right impact. But his work at its core is about ensuring that you create the *environment* for any communication to be most effective. It is this element in particular that brought me to collaborate with him on *Winning Body Language for Sales Professionals*. A sale, at its best, is a collaborative effort with the customers to find the right answer for them. The best salespeople are greater listeners than they are talkers. They build strong interpersonal trusting relationships. Learning to manage your body language to support the creation of this atmosphere, whether meeting a consumer on the floor of a retail store or trying to convince the CEO of a large corporation that you can help him sleep better at night, is an opportunity to separate you from those who let their emotions run riot with their message.

In this book we will be walking you personally through Mark's unique principles of body language, nonverbal communication, and behavior, based on his extensive explorations and expertise in the arts, evolutionary psychology, neural architecture, and embodied cognition. We will then

apply those principles to the many scenarios you face as a salesperson and hear from some top experts, bringing their unique and powerful insights from a diverse set of experiences. All this to help you create environments that maximize your chance for success and give you *Winning Body Language for Sales Professionals*.

Whether you are an established sales professional from any walk looking to get the edge on your competition and step up your game to the next level, or a young rookie looking to hit the ground at a rate that others just won't know exists—then we welcome you.

Andrew Ford
SalesCoPilot.com

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Mark Bowden

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Finally, but most important, I would like to thank my wife, Diane, for her unwavering support and positive reinforcement in everything I do.

Andrew Ford

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Introduction

As you pick up this book to start reading, the question is—why would body language be so important to sales? Either you have already answered that question for yourself, bought this book, and are now well on your way to discovering powerful new nonverbal tips, tricks, and techniques that will help any sales professionals to build trust and credibility with their customers and clients; or you need that question answered for you before you commit to buying your own copy of *Winning Body Language for Sales Professionals* right now.

Of course, a third possibility is that you do not believe that having a better understanding of nonverbal communication could have any significant impact whatsoever on a sales process for you, and you are reading this introduction in spite of yourself. Good, you'll like the next paragraph.

You are right—there are theorists on sales who insist that people simply buy any product or service in order to fulfill a technical need. They say that buyers wish to move away from a “pain” they are experiencing, and everything about the alleviation of that “pain” can be dealt with by getting exactly the right features wrapped into a product or service. When you as the salesperson can do that for them, they buy. So there is no need for any of this “soft skill” body language hokum when you sell. Competitive advantage comes down to how well you make your offering fit the niche of the problem. Only technical cataloging is needed to represent a product or service to a new or existing customer. The catalog will clearly state the “gap” the customer or client is experiencing and link that gap to a product or service that fills the need. This catalog could be printed (expensive), online (cheap), or human (very expensive). But all it needs to do is accurately communicate a fit between the product or service and the gap, and *bingo*—they buy.

If you did not nod your head at least partially in agreement with that last statement, then please put this book down (it does not belong to you—and if it does, go and get your money back from the retailer; you've made a serious error). Get yourself over to the "Fantasy" section of the bookstore—you'll like it better over there.

Right, that got them out of the way.

The combination of "Field of Dreams" theory and "build a better mousetrap" strategy in the real world has caused thousands of inventive products and services to gather dust; to be lonely, forgotten, and abandoned in the dark basements, bright imaginations, and crushed dreams of their creators. Because most stuff simply can't sell itself.

Clients and customers have to *trust* before they can buy. It comes down to the sales professional to help build the trust and credibility that engages a client or customer. Great salespeople build trust, credibility, and engagement faster and more easily than average salespeople. Their behaviors differentiate them from the crowd, enroll their prospects in the sales process, and lead everyone to the most successful outcomes.

We buy from the people we trust, and we keep on buying from people we keep on trusting. We buy from credible people, and we make referrals to those we find trustworthy and credible. We hang out with people who engage us, and we see them as leaders. Yet, how do we actually *know* whether to trust anyone as a credible leader or not?

If people were buying from you, how would they know instantly that you were a person they could trust to keep their best interests at heart? What mechanism and process would they utilize to instantly and accurately judge your credibility, and so comfortably decide there and then to engage with you to lead them along the sales path—and maybe also even take the greatest risk of bringing others in their team along for the ride?

For many hundreds of thousands of years we *Homo sapiens*, like our 2.5 million year old ancestors from the *Homo* genus, along with many other animal organisms across our planet have survived and thrived by unconsciously judging the *physical behavior* of others in order to quickly work out whether another entity's actions are "safe" or "suspect"—if they are "friend" or "enemy"—and to what degree that prediction can be trusted over time; that is, is it credible and thus worthy of confidence and further investment. The ability to use complex verbal language is very new to

humans (approximately 100,000 years old), and so we still instinctively rely on taking in each other's nonverbal behavior in order to discern the intention or feeling another human being has for us. By judging others' body language, we quickly decide if we can walk along a path with them, if we should back out right now, or if we should force them out of our territory immediately.

And so it is with sales: the prospects decide if they should take the sales journey prescribed by you, or invite you to join them on their prescribed path, or see you out of their space before you've even opened your mouth to say, "Can I help you?" or "What are the most pressing business issues for you, today?" They decide quickly, instinctively, and quite often irrevocably, and they decide based on nonverbal behavior.

Now let's not get this wrong—what you say to a prospective customer or client with your verbal language is always of great, great importance. It is the icing on the cake. But if there is no cake, then often all we are left with is a sticky mess: a saccharine, unwholesome experience with no long-lasting feelings of benefit. It is this lack of a solid foundation that gets us into the territory of "snake oil"—when the "miracle cure" that was promised verbally from the back of a buckboard wagon turns out to be a rancorous disappointment when we get home.

The "cake" for any sales professional has to be your body language, your nonverbal communication, your behavior during the sales process. Get this layer of behavior right, and people trust you instantly, feel they can trust what you say, and then attach those feelings of trust and confidence to being in your company, your organization, your brand, and of course ultimately have trust and confidence in what you have to sell to them.

So the reason this book is important to you is that ultimately *people buy feelings, not things*. Remember that. In fact, let's say it again and underline it to emphasize just how important understanding this is to your increased sales success from today onward: People buy feelings, not things. Every step customers take along the sales path—every interaction they experience — gives them feelings, and that is part of how your product or service is judged. Everyone who is (or is not) a buyer for you subconsciously keeps a mental checklist of positive and negative feelings and adjusts the score as he goes. Feelings such as safety, belonging, confusion, clarity, and prestige

will certainly have contributed to the tally before you have even introduced the technical features of what is on offer to the buyer.

Now once again, it is always totally understandable to be thinking, “You know what ... my product is so awesome that I can overcome all those petty feelings that potential customers have!” And once again some of you (who should have put down this book a few paragraphs back and started rereading *The Lord of the Rings*) may be right: a really good product that provides an overwhelmingly positive feeling, or leads to many positive feelings, can overcome almost anything. But this is rare at best and most usually a fantasy.

Here’s some reality. This book can help you to personally construct a sales experience that in a significant and sustainable way increases the neurochemistry responsible for the good feelings and the human connection that ultimately helps buyers feel they have done the right thing, made the right choice, made their life more stable and predictable, and that they are holding a valuable resource that has a high status in their social group. And this is the case whether it is a complex business-to-business sale or the most simple—but no less important—business-to-consumer transaction.

This training will help you create the right environment to host the deep experience any buyer is looking for. Because (although ordinarily any Request for Proposal will omit this point, and customers generally will not utter it as they walk into your place of business), as any medical doctor knows, *the presenting problem is not the real problem*. The initial “painful” symptom that motivates any of us toward a sales consultation can in some cases be the result of a haphazard or Band-Aid solution we have executed in order to quickly deal with or perhaps even ignore the *real* underlying issues that we *should* actually be addressing.

Whatever the case, there is greater meaning attached to everything we buy. And it can be the job of the highest performing sales professionals to help their customers and clients define and understand that meaning; to take customers on an exploration of that meaning and have the buyers feel truly comfortable with the direction they eventually take alongside them. That sales professional has to use *influence* (to get “inflow” with the clients, empathize with their current course—accept their feelings) and eventually *persuasion* (to move them hard). This is in essence a structure

for helping other human beings with a behavioral change, and in the case of sales, for moving them from nonpurchasers to purchasers.

To move them along on this journey in a faster, more comfortable, and powerful way, this book is going to help move you through mastery of your nonverbal communication so that you can consciously control and adapt the environment around the person, your client, whose behavior you wish to change. Once again, it is important to note how words are still important here. No doubt there are some amazing things you can do with words to influence and persuade others into some dynamic changes in behavior. Yet, if given the choice of changing the environment around the trickiest prospective customers in order to change their behavior *versus* talking them into a change, many experts in influence would take the former as having the greatest leverage when it really matters most. Why? Because language is highly, highly complex; whereas movement, though full of complexities as well, remains a vastly simpler communication channel by which to consciously influence the unconscious mind and, importantly, the behavior it governs, toward some very predictable outcomes.

Let's look at an example from the animal world.

Imagine an ant—a social insect with a very simple mechanical and neural system, which causes it to make its way to food and other resources the individual ant and its colony need to survive. Now, place your ant at one end of a flat, white surface, and place a food source for the ant at the other end. You will find, perhaps unsurprisingly, that the ant takes a very quick and direct journey toward the goal—the food source—it is instinctively designed to go for. Now take your imaginary ant and place it at one end of the exact same square footage of a sandy beach with its food placed the same distance away again. What do you imagine happens now? Well, if you do this with a real ant, its trajectory toward the goal will show a lot of twists, turns, about-faces, back-peddling, missing-it-by-a-mile, and general “noodling around” types of behavior: irregular, unpredictable, downright complicated, and mind-bogglingly inefficient.

Without seeing how easy it was for your ant to get what it wanted the first time around, this second experiment could lead you to suppose that ants have some very complicated behaviors around searching for food, or as a group are not very bright; or just that “we got a dud'un 'ere!” But with the knowledge of both instances, it turns out that the complexity of the

behavior is a response to the complexity of the environment. The ant itself is using a set of very simple rules to move it toward its goal. In this ant, it is the interaction of these rules with the environment that actually produces something akin to moving a “tricky customer” to see the solution.

So shall we *speak* to the ant about how it could better move through the environment or see if we can swap the sandy beach for something a little easier for the ant to navigate?

This is not such a facetious a question as it might at first seem. The ant, like us, has a gene for language switched on. It can communicate through the emission of pheromones—chemicals that trigger a social response in members of the same species—exactly what it predicts the *future* may hold for others at a distant location. This ability for what communication experts call “displacement”—being able to refer to objects, places, and events that are “not here” and “not now”—is one of the factors that can categorize an organism as possessing “language.” So if you were to learn or become enabled with the ant’s language, you could signal to it the best path to take for its future success. Yet you can see how this is all going to pan out: while you are busy trying to code the best way to get your message across to the ant, it has of course walked off in the opposite direction. By the time you’ve really honed your message, the ant has moved on as a worker to an ant farm in your competitor’s territory—or so you hear.

So rather than learning the ant’s unique language and laying down a complex set of instructions for it, and knowing that it is the ant’s *environment* that is causing unhelpful behaviors—some would much prefer to place it within a simpler environment for it to achieve the goal, if they could.

This is what *Winning Body Language for Sales Professionals* is all about. In order to change the behavior of your current prospects and clients, we are going to work on changing the environment around them. We are going to control the nonverbal communication environment around ourselves and others in order to help both us and them hit the targets desired. By using clear and simple behavior, we will influence and persuade clients and customers toward the feelings that imbue the goal of buying from you with a meaning that is resonant for them and that they *really* want.

You are going to learn how to change your own physical environment—your own body language and nonverbal communication during any sales process—in order to control your own behavior and to influence the feelings and meaning that the sales process has for you and everyone around you: partners, team, clients, and customers. You will learn how to *control the conversation, connect with your customer, and close the sale—without saying a word*. And ultimately by reading this book and following its tips, tricks, and techniques, you and your customers will feel more satisfied with the sales experience than ever before. So read on and be prepared to move both your customer and *yourself* to the next level.

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A-B-C. A-Always, B-Be, C-Closing. Always be closing, always be closing.

— Blake, *Glengarry Glen Ross*, David Mamet

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1

Primary Impressions

Getting Past “Indifference”

There is continuity between species ... Man with all his noble qualities still bears in his bodily frame the indelible stamp of his lowly origin.

— Charles Darwin

In this chapter you'll learn:

- The important science around nonverbal communication
- Exactly how your primitive brain sees others
- The pitfalls of the primal snap judgments others make about you
- The most important first impressions to give—and to avoid
- More powerful roles to play in the sales process

If legend is to be believed, prostitution is the world's oldest profession. In other words, it could stand to reason that selling sex is the oldest sales profession we have. However, back in the days of prehistory there were other essentials to our human survival potentially just as important as sex and reproduction, such as: food, heat, shelter, and safety. All of these, including sex, could be used as currency and exchanged for whichever of the others was lacking for survival. But of course any one of these became valuable only when in short supply.

If we presume that our early ancestors were either more promiscuous or perhaps a less sexually repressed society than today's, we can expect there may have been no supply issues to a mutually high demand for sexual activity in prehistoric times. And so, back then there might have been no real reason anyone needed to convince, persuade, negotiate, or influence anyone else into sex! Some psychologists suggest, then, that prostitution in

fact evolved not from the selling of sex, but from the selling of sex with limited attachment or responsibility. If this theory is correct, the oldest sales profession is not the selling of tangible sex but of an intangible *future* in which, after the sexual act, there would be “no strings attached.”

Why is all of this being brought to your attention? Well, some say sex sells. And so the hope is that it has hooked you into reading this chapter a little farther.

Value Propositioning

In theory, selling is at its core simply this: offering to exchange something for something else. The something of value being offered may be tangible or intangible, real or conceptual. Both the *something* and the *something else* are most often seen by the seller and the buyer as of value. And it is implied that the process between the buyer and seller will proceed fairly and ethically so that both parties end up rewarded.

This kind of transaction has been happening from the very first day a group of humans found themselves hungry and short of fuel to cook an antelope they found dead and decaying on the dry African savannah. They may have looked over at a neighboring family with a stack of wood and signaled to them in an effort to determine if they would be interested in “going halves” on some safe *roast* meat in exchange for the fuel to cook it with.

Trusting in the Sale

As long as there is a tangible demand and a tangible supply, with something tangible to exchange that is equally or more valued, there is potentially an easy exchange to be had. But if there are indeterminate factors to the exchange, which cannot be immediately sensed and so are *intangible* or conceptual, then the buyer and/or the seller have to go on *trust* that the

correct order of events will occur to ensure that the agreed upon set of circumstances will prevail to satisfy the transaction for both parties.

Ultimately, both parties shake hands and trust that the deal will culminate in the exchange of something real. However, in any exchange like this there are often looming questions: Will there be the supply or payment asked for and expected? Will it happen in the time span agreed upon? Will the concept discussed work in reality? Will it keep on working? If it stops working, what will the after-sales service be like? Will the supply be used in an incorrect manner by the buyer, causing him to abuse the after-sales service?

Of course, all of these factors and many, many more exist in the future and can be talked about verbally by the parties involved in the transaction; but what you are going to be finding and facing over the course of this book is that the “talk” around these intangible futures is often not enough to gain those initial levels of trust needed to *start*, or for that matter maintain, any profitable, long-term sales relationship.

And That's a Guarantee

Predictability is a key to trust: if we have seen that what you say turns out to be true once, twice, maybe three times, then we can start to predict that you walk your talk and do what you say you will do. However, if we have never done business with you before, then what is the mechanism for us to know that we can predict you are trustworthy? What needs to happen so we don't have to take some kind of blind “leap of faith” and risk being disappointed and out of pocket if “faith” turns out to be ill placed in you?

“Trust Me—I’m in Sales!”

We use nonverbal communication, including body language, as one of our major data sources to make what are inevitably long-lasting snap judgments about whether we can really trust someone or not. We all do it—and we

always have done it. And as you will be finding out, even with technological advances in modern communication, we are still reliant on nonverbal communication as a primary source of raw data for creating our *feelings* about whether we are making the right decisions when we buy.

What does science tell us about how much we rely on nonverbal communication in deciding whether we can trust someone?

If we extrapolate from the famous studies of Albert Mehrabian, professor emeritus of psychology, UCLA (*Decoding of Inconsistent Communications and Inference of Attitudes from Nonverbal Communication in Two Channels*, 1967), it certainly appears that the nonverbal elements of human communication are particularly important in transmitting information that influences and forms the receiver's understanding of the *emotion*, *attitude*, or *intent* behind the message being communicated. Indeed, this is true to such an extent that it is suggested that body language accounts for 55 percent of that data, tone of voice accounts for 38 percent, and the verbal content (i.e., the words) supplies 7 percent of the data used by the receiver to gain an overall *feeling* of the attitude, intent, or emotion behind what someone is communicating. This implies in turn that the emotion, attitude, or intent that others *feel* we are communicating is likely to be more heavily linked to our nonverbal message than our verbal one.

If the Clothes Fit...

With all this in mind, try this on for size: Imagine you are selecting an item of clothing from a store. You take a few pieces to the changing room and come back out a few minutes later wearing one of them in order to check out the look in the store's full-length mirror. You turn to the sales assistant and say, "How does this look on me?" You notice his nose wrinkles slightly, the corners of his lips go down, and his lower lip depresses—a reaction of *disgust* is on his face. Will you be buying this piece of clothing now? Possibly not? Let's go back in and try on a different piece, and while you are changing, think about the following:

Dr. Mehrabian's findings have led the majority of communication experts to conclude that to produce effective messages, the words, sound, and body need to support one another. They must be *congruent*. In the case of any incongruity, the receiver of the message will trust the predominant *nonverbal* cues rather than the potential literal meaning of the words.

Out you come again from the changing room wearing a second piece. You take a look in the mirror again and then turn and ask the sales assistant, "How does this one look on me?"

"Fantastic!" he replies, which *sounds* very promising, but once again you see that same look of disgust, and on top of all this he is now shaking his head rapidly from side to side and with a hard swallowing motion in the throat and also scrunching up around his eyes.

You may never shop here again, because the staff members are not all that adept at offering positive help; however, it is fair to say they make it abundantly clear (nonverbally) how they feel about *your* choices.

What is the point of all this getting dressed and undressed? Well, given this second insight from Dr. Mehrabian's research, it is fair to say that in general we humans *need to see it to believe it!* So how did this continuing reliance on nonverbal communication to establish and sustain trust come about? Let's go further back in history to before humans had the ability to communicate verbally to when our nearest ancestors first made an impression on the planet.

Facts Are Rare

We are going to take a scientific view on exactly why we human beings communicate in the way we do today. First, a quick discussion about science.

Is science true, and the only *real* story? There are no guarantees; and science is certainly not meant to be a faith. With science, a "fact" that seemed true and certain yesterday may tomorrow become uncertain; and yet it may become possible again the day after that. The scientific

community can often then rethink, reexamine, reevaluate, and find that the “facts” were misguided, misjudged, or misinformed.

Can’t science make up its mind? In many areas of scientific study, new data and knowledge are coming in all the time. These can change (and hopefully improve) scientific theories and the way they are tested, along with the experiments and instruments used to test them. Science has been constantly changing our view of reality, and those who are scientifically minded or practiced have to ensure that the scientific theories fit the scientific picture, and vice versa. Science can in some ways be seen as *the best idea we have today based on how we went looking for that idea*. And it is on this scientific basis that the stories and ideas around evolution, biology, and human communication you are about to read arrive to you.

Out of Africa

Today, all humans belong to one population of *Homo sapiens*, undivided by species barrier. However, according to what is known by many as the “Out of Africa” model, this is not the first species of hominids: the first species of the genus *Homo*, known as *Homo habilis*, evolved in East Africa at least 2 million years ago, and members of this species spread to many different areas of the African continent. A little later (1.8 million years back), *Homo erectus* evolved, and by 1.5 million years back had spread across the world as it looked then. This Out-of-Africa theory, supported now with research using female mitochondrial DNA and the male Y chromosome, says that modern *Homo sapiens* evolved in Africa 200,000 years ago, began migrating from Africa between 70,000 and 50,000 years ago, and eventually replaced the preexisting hominid species in Europe and Asia.

Our ancestors stretch back hundreds of thousands of years and more. And a good chunk of our behavior is inherited from the early humans who had no neural capacity (or need at the time) for spoken language, let alone the cultural ability to sustain it over generations. But of course, these earliest ancestors did have nonverbal communication. So what was its purpose?

Social Control

The primary purpose of nonverbal communication is to manipulate the actions of others in a social group *right now*—and not at a later date. Nonverbal communication is designed therefore for *immediate effect*. The nonverbal communication that we are talking about here and throughout this book is not indexical or symbolic, that is, it is not a type of manual sign language, as for example when someone points at something and makes a barking “woof, woof” sound to say, “That thing over there I place in the category of *dog*.”

When we talk about body language in this book, we are referring to the most primitive of nonverbal communication designed to change the behavior of others immediately by signaling the emotion, attitude, or intent that you have for the situation *now*. For example, you may unconsciously throw a look of *contempt* (the corners of your lips tighten and rise on one side of the face) at your sales partner, who (alongside you on an important face-to-face sales call) points at the framed picture of a person on your prospective customer’s desk and makes a “woof, woof” sound. A nonverbal facial gesture of contempt such as this is just one of many primitive social signals designed to communicate *immediately* to another in your group that they have broken a social rule designed for the survival or “fitness” of all—in this case the sales team and your company as a whole—and in doing so the communicator runs the risk of exclusion from the group. In this example, it is the unspoken social rule of “do not offend the potential customer by suggesting they have a family member who resembles a dog.”

The Archimedes Principle

So body “language” is not, strictly speaking, a “language” at all, if we understand that one of the deciding characteristics for language is its ability to *displace*—displacement in communication is the ability to represent events or concepts that occur in the past or the future. Languages can be used to communicate ideas about things that are not in the immediate

vicinity either spatially or temporally, or both. Our primitive nonverbal language does not have the capability to do this.

For example, there is no physical way, except for the use of complex sign language, signal, index, symbol, or other representation, to communicate to another human being: “How about I drop by with a sample of my new product *next week*, when I hope you’ll be over your quite understandable anger at my sales partner’s abject rudeness; perhaps then you will be better able to see how our company’s product fits your company’s five-year growth plan that we’ve been discussing together over the last six months. Meanwhile, I’m now going back to the office in order to convince our sales manager to fire this joker next to me for single-handedly jeopardizing months of work with this inappropriate attempt at some kind of comic mime!” You can, however, display your sincere and continued good feelings *now* toward your prospective customer by saying those words while smiling warmly; and you certainly will communicate your current negative feelings and intentions toward your coworker *now* by the flash of anger in your look toward them. Nonverbal communication is powerful and economical, and the right nonverbal signals *now* could mean the difference between saving the client or losing the client forever.

It is nonverbal communication, with its rapid fire of emotional, intentional, and attitudinal data, that causes others to quickly and most fully comply and change their behavior in often a fraction of a second. This economy in the use of nonverbal communication is its power and advantage over much of our verbal language.

Dr. Dolittle

Nonverbal communication in human beings is fundamentally an “animal communication system.” In other words, human nonverbal communication conveys information between us that relates to basic individual survival, mating, and social needs. Some communications are hard to fit into a single one of these categories.

For example, a nonverbal signal of appeasement, used in confrontations when your enemy looks to be winning, is a social signal *and* a survival

signal—if you don’t make it, you could get hurt. But it might be fair to say that no nonverbal signal falls outside of these categories: no animal communication signal or nonverbal signal can be used to communicate exclusively about the weather, the scenery, or your neighbor’s latest drama—though a signal can communicate your attitude, emotion, and intention with regard to how you are situated for survival, mating, or social positioning within those environments. What is most important for an understanding of the limits of nonverbal communication as this book defines and examines it is that it certainly cannot communicate the future plans or past experiences of all these things.

Lazy Speech

Why, before the evolution of human language, did humans not have the ability to displace and therefore reminisce about past events, or plan and coopt others into often quite conceptual activities around the future? The simple answer is that *evolution is minimalist*. Any organism will do only the very least to fit into and exploit its ecological niche. Our ancestors required only nonverbal Animal Communication Systems (ACS) to survive, and so language did not develop until it was necessary for our survival as a species. Once the environment around early humans changed so that displacement became an advantage, any subtle movement toward the capacity for language was “fitter,” and so survived, and that capacity was then passed on through the genes to the next generations.

We are designed to adapt when it is of benefit to our survival through the process of natural selection; beyond this, the brain and the body do nothing more than they have to. We are limited by what we have to work with, that is, the bodily shapes and mental abilities at any given moment, and the behavior that this architecture and its qualities make possible within the environment.

Darwin said that adaptability, and not intelligence or strength, is ultimately the key to a species’ survival, even if it means evolving into a new species better adapted to thrive under new conditions. Humans developed language as our surrounding conditions changed; the extra

energy needed by a large neocortex to produce verbal language proved to be worth the cost, as opposed to facing the decline of our human species.

To understand more about this and why nonverbal communication is so powerful, let's take a quick look at the development and evolution of the brain. First: what do brains do?

Noggin

The brain takes information from the senses, analyzes that information, and translates it into commands that get sent back to the muscles. Remember, *evolution is lazy*, so brains don't do what they don't have to do, mainly because brains are energetically expensive. That's why some processes are looked after simply by the way the body interacts with the environment. For example, breathing out is passive; once you have breathed in, breathing out eventually happens as a result of air pressure. Similarly, when you walk, the downward motion of your foot is effectively enabled by gravity's effect on the mass of your whole body drawing it down toward the earth.

The next step of processing is done by the *archipallium* (primitive brain) or *brain stem* as some call it; this can be thought of as the *instinctual brain*, and some refer to it as the *reptilian brain*. Although the human brain uses about 20 percent of our entire energy, the part therein that is most essential to survival—the brain stem—uses only a fraction of this to, first, preserve the homeostasis, which it does by monitoring many conditions, both internal and external—anything from keeping our internal body temperature relatively constant within a narrow range to warning you when you are about to bump into something. But its range of behaviors more or less ends there: for example, it is not conscious of itself. It cannot make decisions about itself and then build new ideas about what course of action it should take. It operates only as a preprogrammed monitoring and response unit. It receives information about the environment from the senses and the body as a whole, and sends it to be analyzed for identification. Then, based on a threat analysis, it instantly executes a course of action.

But where does it get its method of analysis? How does it see the world?
And upon what values does it judge it?

Talk to the Lizard

This reptilian brain is part and parcel of the *Reptilian Neural Complex*, or the *R-Complex* for short. This is a name given to the brain stem as described above, combined also with the structures of the medulla, pons, cerebellum, mesencephalon, basal ganglia, globus pallidus, the amygdala, and the olfactory bulbs (Figure 1.1). The term itself, with its reference to reptiles, is derived from the fact that comparative neuroanatomists (scientists who compare the anatomy of brains) find that the brains of reptiles (and birds) are composed almost exclusively from these simple structures. They find that this R-Complex is responsible for instinctual behaviors involved with aggression, dominance, territoriality, and ritual displays typical across a variety of species in the evolutionary chain from fish to us humans.

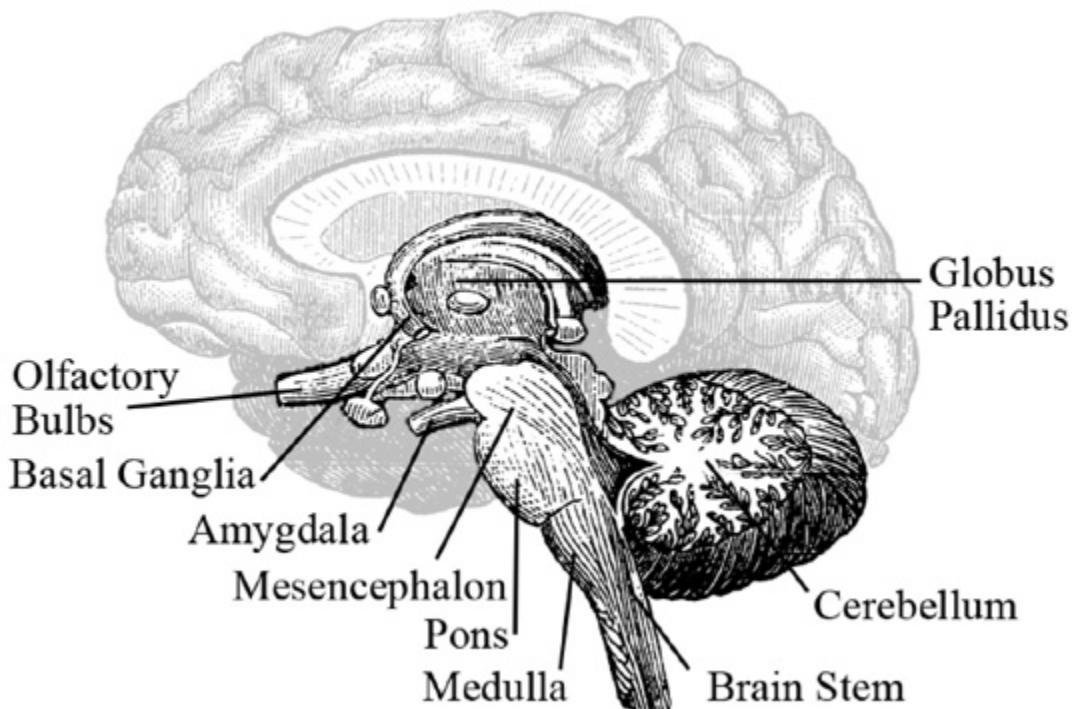


Figure 1.1 The Reptilian Brain

Remember that essentially *all models are wrong, but some are useful.* The useful thing about this model is to recognize that the system employed by our instinctual brain is inherited from ancestors stretching back farther than any *Homo sapiens* and back as far as 500 million years to a prereptilian state. In *On the Origin of Species*, Charles Darwin made two claims with particular relevance to this: that there is continuity of species, with each species today being descendants of prior ones; and that natural selection is the mechanism by which species change. In our DNA there is evidence that both of these statements are currently scientifically correct.

Just like our reptilian ancestors, the simple, instinctual brain gets first bite at all data. It gets to make unconscious snap judgments about that data in order to do the bare minimum to preserve life in our ecological niche. This aspect of the brain senses the immediate surroundings, and based on what it detects, quickly instructs the body to respond and react—some of these instinctual reactions are literally millions of years old. They are as such tried and tested, fail-safe responses to the stimuli.

Lazy Thinking

Nonverbal communication may provide some information that will reach your conscious mind, but that is merely a by-product. The primary function of your nonverbal communication is to get others to do things that will enhance *your* fitness. (If they enhance their own fitness too—well, that's just lucky for them!) Thus the impulse to “freeze” when a predator is detected at some distance is a “flight” gesture so the predator does not notice you and will expend its own energy furthering the distance between you by simply moving on. A simple unconscious action by one being can cause behaviors from the other that will render the situation to be fixed to the first’s advantage. What need is there to fix a potential problem using your precious resources of critical thinking and complex physical action when an inexpensive gesture (in terms of your use of energy) can change the environment for others and cause them to react in a way that changes the situation to suit your own fitness?

With nonverbal communication that is designed to respond to tricky situations and manipulate other beings, you can see why the signals have to be bound to the “here and now.” You can’t respond to a situation in a distant time or space (at least you couldn’t before the invention of communication technologies that could produce real-time communication over distance—though all such technologies, from fire and smoke signals to personal video communication, are still relatively young compared to our body and mind). Our nonverbal communication has developed, for most of its history, within an environment that dictates, “You can’t manipulate somebody who isn’t there yet.” What may appear to be a limitation in nonverbal communication is born out of a basic survival necessity.

Categorically Moving

Nonverbal communication causes humans to unconsciously initiate preset strategies, or reactions, to the signal. It is not conceptual nor is it designed to elicit conceptual responses. A concept is something you can “think with.” Nonverbal communication is designed to elicit a *categorical* response; in other words, we categorize the nonverbal signals coming at us, instinctively deciding how to order information—is that approaching shape a “tiger” or an “apple” or a “sales assistant”? Categorization allows for quick thinking when conceptualization could slow us down.

Looked through the lens of evolution, you might see how the brain’s ability to make snap judgments best contributes to an animal’s fitness: it decides what’s out there, what dangers it faces, what opportunities await, and quickly instructs the rest of the body how to react. It’s food—approach it! It’s a predator—avoid it! It’s healthy and of the same species—check if it’s available to mate! It’s moving but unidentified—freeze until further notice! Most of the time, of course, it’s none of the above; no problem, go on doing whatever you’re doing. What is important for this system is that the brain has to make a quick decision. So it divides things into categories that differ starkly from one another for quick classification … if it is definitely food, no way it can be a predator.

And so the four simple categories that our primitive, reptilian brains have for everything that makes up our environment including other humans can be best described as:

1. Friend
2. Enemy
3. Sex
4. Indifferent

Customer Survey

What does all this mean to the sales professional? Every time you meet your clients, their primitive and instinctual brain within a fraction of a second simply cannot help but put you into one of those four categories. Equally, your brain stem does the same with them. With more than 7 billion human beings on the planet Earth, the default category into which you are most likely to place others every time your reptilian brain meets someone is “indifferent”; and perhaps unsurprisingly, their reptilian brain is predisposed to place you in the “indifferent” category by default as well.

Why must “indifferent” be the default category? If we were predisposed to see everyone as “friend,” we would not reach our individual goals because we would be so obsessed with socializing. A predisposition to see everyone as “friend” is contrary to our predisposition for survival and fitness: we would risk being stripped of all our resources by those few people who turned out to be predators and attacked before we could change our mind about them. Conversely, if we categorized everyone by default as our “enemy,” we would be in an acute state of paranoia; never able to leave the house, that is if living in a house was even a viable option, as we would assume it had been built by an enemy and therefore totally unsafe! Finally, if we categorized by default everybody as “sexual partner” ... well, you can imagine!

How does the brain make these classifications? Think of it like this: how do we know to approach an apple and avoid a tiger? How do we

differentiate an apple as “friend” or resource from a tiger as “enemy” or predator? Do we need little packages of data in our heads, one labeled “apple,” and the other “tiger”? Certainly not. A certain rhythm and pace of movement, or a combination of colors, can be used to alert us to something most likely in the predator or enemy category. The glimpse of a hairy coat, a distinctive growl, a particular movement, an odor—any of these or any combination of these could trigger the appropriate set of responses to help us “avoid” an imminent attack, just as the rosy colors of ripening fruit and its sweet smell can alert us to initiate an “approach” response and move closer to investigate further a promise of food.

Can We Get Back to the Sex, Please?

Why does nonverbal communication deal only with survival, mating, and social signals? Those areas are the only ones where the correct response to signals will significantly increase fitness in an ecological niche and therefore increase the chance of survival. Clearly, if at one time there were animals that signaled their sex in their species alongside other animals that didn’t, the first lot would meet and mate more often than the second, so eventually every member of the species would make those signals.

However, our primitive signals suggest “mate now” and not “mate forever.” And as many sales professionals look for long-term sales prospects, not short-term flings with the customer’s purchasing power, our primal flirting signals though attention grabbing are shortsighted; and so getting ourselves as sales professionals stuck into the “sex” category will not likely increase our long-term sales “professional fitness.” (This is not intended, however, to overlook the obvious power of sex in advertising, packaging, and some sales scenarios to initially alert and stimulate a buyer, the expertise around which would fill another book for marketing communications professionals.)

Equally, we can see that if prospective clients put us into the “enemy” category, they will be alert to us and wary of us. Then however we direct our verbal content toward them, even if we are saying words we think should be received as a benefit to them, our words will be framed within

the context of “enemy,” and they will avoid any positive relationship with our words, instead only able to view us and our content as potentially predatory. However, as we now know, we are by default likely to be shoved alongside our verbal message, product, or service, into the “indifferent” category; so not a “predator,” but certainly not a “resource” either, and not an opportunity for procreation—therefore no immediate use to the survival of our prospective clients or their companies. This means we are simply not seen or heard again unless and until we send the right signals to get us into one of the three categories that get attention.

So our best option for creating and maintaining a long-term relationship with prospective clients that is positive for sales is to get ourselves firmly into the “friend” category: to show that we are there to supply to them, feed them, be of service in their quest for greater resources and ultimate survival. Exactly how we signal nonverbally in order to always fall into the friend category is the work of the next chapter.

Chapter 1 Quick Study

We believe and trust *what we see* more than anything else. If you produce nonverbal communication to members of your audience that you are a “friend,” that is, you have resources for them, then you increase your prospects that they will open up to you and what you have to sell them. Equally, if you display body language that alerts the primitive brain that you are the “enemy”—in other words, a predator to their resources—they will close down to you and your offer. And if you don’t appear as either of those—they probably just won’t see you at all, unless they think you are sexy!

Great sales professionals act as our friends, not our enemies.

Just Do This Now

1. Look at the people immediately around you. Do you categorize them as “friend,” “enemy,” or “sex,” or are you “indifferent” to them? What are

- their behaviors that currently cause you to categorize them as such?
2. Think about your best customers or clients and which category you would put them into.
 3. Think about potential clients or customers whom you did not “hit it off with.” What category did they touch on for you? And what might this mean going forward?

Theory to Practice

The graffiti artist Banksy says, “People either love me or hate me, or they don’t really care.” Regardless of whether you like him, dislike him, or have no idea who he is, he rather proves his point doesn’t he?

Go into a public space and count the people who you feel have not noticed you—are indifferent to you. What must you do in order to quickly reduce that number—yet not cause people to be alarmed by you?

A Body of Knowledge

Jennifer La Trobe is the founding partner of Creative Connection (creativeconnection.ca), whose core offering is to recommend valuable problems. She and her partners, Tim Caswell (U.K.) and Chris Irwin (Canada), help their clients succeed by building awareness of the narrative and directing attention where it will be most effective. Here she talks about the roles we can most powerfully play in sales.

What on Earth Were You Thinking?

There is a philosophical supposition that our actions betray our beliefs. We can easily find examples in the actions of salespeople:

- The belittled female “car shopper” brings a male friend with her to the car lot in order to get serious attention. (“Do they think I can’t buy a car alone?”)
- The confused “computer shopper” feels patronized by being told what he should be looking for. (“Why can’t someone ask me what I am using it for?”)
- The frustrated “home renovator” is exasperated by being told that the choice among 60 odd countertop variations is “completely up to you.” (“I come here for help and they give me none!”)

Backing up from the observed action, can we assume that there are salespeople out there who firmly believe things like:

- Women don’t buy cars alone.
- The average person has no clue what kind of computer they need.
- Who am I to tell you what kind of kitchen counter you want?

Guaranteed, these beliefs will have been well supported by evidence from past experiences. As the salesperson, you don’t have to change your beliefs, but it is possible to put yourself in a different role in the story. If you have mastered the role of “expert,” can you equally well portray one of these:

- Detective: can you solve the mystery of “The Perfect Countertop”?
- Facilitator: can you help this person work through their intimidation of technologies?
- Ally: can you partner with a driver to find the best car for her?

It starts between your ears, and it finishes in what you say, how you act, and how you move. The role you choose is largely up to you.

Annie Izmirliyan (williamvastis.com) is a wealth management coordinator with one of North America’s top ranking advisors, working with individuals, families, and business owners to design a

holistic wealth management experience. Here she talks about the attitude she takes toward body language to help her get clients to be most comfortable revealing sensitive personal and financial matters.

Financial Body

Always questioning the effects of body language in business relationships, I trained with Mark Bowden and found the answers I had been looking for. Those answers have not only made me aware of my instinctual reactions to events, situations, and people, but they also helped me consciously choose my behavior around others.

I work exclusively with high-net-worth clients. Regardless of the unique pressures that come from working with people of this status, there is a more universal challenge I face in planting with them the all-important seeds of trust, that no financial expertise, professional licenses, or designations can counter: when new clients first meet me they need to confide in me and reveal the most sensitive information about their families, their finances, and their dreams for the future. They must trust me.

Mark says that our brains subconsciously identify each other as being allies or friends quite instantly. So I need to be fully aware of not only the signals I am sending out to enhance our business's already trusted brand, but I also need to be fully aware of my own instinctual reactions to the client's communication, and then clear in controlling my responses in a way that helps our clients be most comfortable and open with me.

2

Winning Trust with a Wave of Your Hand

The Truth Behind Nonverbal Signals That Sell

*Half the battle is selling music, not singing it.
It's the image, not what you sing.*

— Rod Stewart

In this chapter you'll learn:

- How to stay calm and assertive by selling from the TruthPlane
- The universal signals that command credibility immediately
- Neuroscience that connects you with your customers
- Exercises to test your new nonverbal skills
- Tips from a top performer

Listening to the advice of the average salesperson, motivational guru, or body language expert, each generally suggests that when selling under pressure, you are best to “grandstand” with a show of aggressive body language that suggests you are a powerful adversary who will not be shown the door—an “Alpha” with sales-professional-of-the-year invincibility.

Should you listen to this advice?

No—it's total hog. That's what makes it so average.

Instead, you are about to learn the key piece of nonverbal communication, understood in every culture around the world, that shows that you are nonconfrontational, open, available, and accepting of others' attitudes.

Some of you may well be thinking, “That's a weak strategy,” and you'd be quite wrong. The prospective clients or customers at any presentation,

meeting, store, or milling around at the trade show are not looking for someone who is going to outgun them. They are instinctively looking for someone who is going to help them, someone who is giving off the signals that he is a “friend,” there to preserve and build everyone’s resources, not deplete them. If you look as if you are out to diminish the status of others—be a predator to them—they will intuitively put you in the “enemy” category, and you will get a sharp response straight from their primitive fight-or-flight system: they’ll retreat, attack, or just plain old play dead in front of you!

The Old Songs Are the Best

The following simple piece of body language, hundreds of thousands of years old, and still as applicable today as it ever was, has been totally overlooked by nonverbal communication “experts,” sales presentation trainers, and motivational gurus around the globe. It has been handed down through an elite community of visual communicators across centuries and, until the publication of *Winning Body Language*, lacking any fully documented explanation of its powerful properties. It is only now with this book focused toward sales professionals like yourself that it might finally be able to be profited from commercially. So, to that end, here is the signal that instantly lets customers or clients know that your intention toward them is wholly benevolent and that you can be trusted implicitly:

Gesture on a horizontal plane extending from the navel.

Okay, so what you may be thinking now is, it can’t be that simple! Yet, as you are about to experience and learn for yourself, it really is. And to prove it, let’s do some practical work helping you more fully understand and experience the incredibly influential and persuasive powers of working within this “friend” position on the body, which we’ll now call the *TruthPlane*. To get you there, let’s first start in an entirely different

horizontal plane of gesture, one that is widely used where the categories of “indifferent” and “enemy” get most played out.

Hands Down the Worst Exercise

Stand tall and upright but allow your hands to hang down by your sides (below the waistline) in what we call the GrotesquePlane of gesture (explanation of this shortly). Pay attention to your breathing rate. Note the pace and the quality of the breaths in and out that you are taking; for example, is your breathing slow-paced, fast-paced, or what you might describe as mid-paced? Do you feel as if you are taking in deep breaths, shallow breaths, or something you might describe as somewhere in between the two? Do you feel you are taking in a greater volume of air than you are breathing out, or vice versa, that you are breathing out a greater volume of air than you are breathing in?

As you stand, notice some details of your physical stance as a whole when your arms are hanging down on each side of your torso. How stable are your legs? How erect is your spine? How does your head feel right now on the top of your neck? How does your face feel? What are the muscles in your face doing, and what do you think is the nature of the expression shown by your mouth, your eyes, your forehead, and across your face as a whole? In addition to this, how do you *feel* right now? Describe that feeling to yourself; even name it if you can. Many people get a considerable feeling of “heaviness” in the physical, mental, and emotional sense. Consider whether that is what you are now feeling as well. Finally, take note of anything you experience beyond what has been outlined, and remember it all for comparison later.

Exercise Your TruthPlane

Again, make sure you are standing tall and upright. Now bring your hands up from your sides, where they were hanging, to your belly button, gently

interlacing your fingers so that both your hands are held comfortably and lightly with your palms softly touching the navel area of your stomach. Can you immediately feel a difference in the way you are breathing? Is your breathing faster or slower than before? Has your breathing become deeper or shallower, or even perhaps more balanced? Do you feel that you are breathing out a greater volume of air than you are breathing in, or is there a sense of equilibrium to your breathing? Take any other note of how your breathing is now compared to how it was when your arms were hanging down by your sides.

Bringing your attention to your body as a whole: how are you standing right now? For example, how secure do you now feel in your feet and legs? How does this compare to how your stance was in the GrotesquePlane of gesture (i.e., when your arms were down by your sides)? What do you feel and think about the position of your spine and how your head now sits on your neck? Can you feel a difference, and if so, what makes up that important difference for you? Again, pay attention to your face. How do the muscles around your mouth, eyes, and forehead feel? What is the expression that you now feel that you have, and what feeling goes with that expression on your face? Can you describe the feeling it gives you to have your hands gently in the plane extending from your navel, and can you give that feeling a name? Also take note of anything else that you have experienced or thought since taking up this second position of the hands, especially in relation to your earlier experience of the GrotesquePlane.

Quickly drop your hands once again down by your sides into the GrotesquePlane. How fast do you revert to the original breathing pattern, stance, positioning, and feelings that go with this position? Now bring your hands up to your navel area and allow them to gesture anywhere in the horizontal plane that extends out 180 degrees from the center that is your navel ([Figure 2.1](#)). Be open with your gesture, giving clear access to the stomach (your elbows are bent, with some easy space under your arms, not flapping in the air, nor should they be digging into your sides). How quickly does the feeling that goes with the new physical position change?



Figure 2.1 Gesturing in the TruthPlane

Calm and Assertive

Many people describe the feeling they get from having their hands in the navel or the belly-button area (either hands interlaced or gesturing out) as being “centered,” “controlled,” “collected,” “composed,” or “calm” (generally a lot of things beginning with the letter c); but also, just as you will have experienced, they get a sensation of level-headedness, balance, and abundant energy.

Winning Body Language Theory

Why do we get a feeling of security and calm when we place our hands in this navel area (TruthPlane) and gesture from there? Why do we feel this equilibrium when gesturing from there as opposed to the feelings of lethargy and apathy many experience (setting ourselves up to get stuck in the *indifferent* category), or sometimes anxiety and aggression (preparing for battle, and so looking like an *enemy*), which comes when our hands are hanging in the Grotesque-Plane, whether to the sides, across our front, or clasped together around the back (or in our pockets)?

A primary reason is that just a couple of fingers' width below the belly button is the point where the sagittal, coronal, and transverse planes of the human body intersect. In Chinese and Japanese tradition (along with some Western sports practices), this is considered the physical center of gravity for the human body—a specific location at which the whole system's mass behaves as if it were concentrated. This center of mass is the point at which the whole of a body can be acted upon by gravity. Act upon a body's center of mass and in many cases you are very likely to act upon that whole body. As some engineers might agree, *the most productive input of energy to affect any mass is at its center*. So it is in the area of our navel, or belly button, that we have the most balanced center of gravity when we are standing still on firm ground. Hence the feeling of physical stability that is produced when you stand with your hands anywhere in this plane extending from that belly button region. Here you are aligning more of your mass to the center of that horizontal plane and so focusing your physical stability.

Selling It from the Stomach

The stomach is an important area of focus in sales communication skills for reasons that stretch beyond gesturing. Simply breathing from the stomach is

a great way to feel at ease during a presentation. Before we can perform any action at all, we of course need oxygen as fuel. It is no surprise that the belly button or navel area plays an important, even essential role in breathing techniques practiced all over the world, from the Qigong's "embryonic breathing" and storage of vital Chi energy, to the foundation of any opera singer's powerful volume and range.

Another great example is in stage acting. "Breathing from the belly," which mainly involves controlling the muscles of the diaphragm, is an invaluable professional technique, the purpose of which is to draw air into the bottom portion of the lungs before the chest muscles expand and draw further air into the upper portion. This centuries old trick-of-the-trade dramatically increases lung capacity and therefore the amount of oxygen available from each breath, allowing a stage performer maximum vocal strength. Control of the diaphragm is also used to regulate the pressure and volume of air passed over the vocal cords, producing a more consistent and certain tone in the human voice.

And there is further convincing evidence for the powerful application of this technique within sales communication: this center point on the body, often called the "one point" or "dantien" (red wheel) in Eastern practices, is linked directly with the adrenal glands—the area hormonally responsible for the extreme stress response of "fight or flight."

Navel Intelligence

The adrenal glands are situated (as their name indicates, *ad* in Latin meaning "near," and *renes* meaning "kidney") on top of the kidneys and in front of the twelfth thoracic vertebra. The adrenal glands are chiefly responsible for regulating stress responses from your hormones. These hormones all play a part in the fight-or-flight response activated by the sympathetic nervous system. In simple terms, the adrenal glands link the thoughts of the brain to the physiological and physical action in the human body. They link to our primitive brain, but instead of thinking, just chemically react when stimulated.

So, whether you, as a sales professional, want to also join in with the ancient beliefs of the East or not, it is pretty clear from a couple of hundred years of modern Western endocrinology that the navel is indeed a control center for your biological mechanism for coping with stress. And certainly there are plenty of sales situations that get even the most experienced sales professional stressed out!

You Slay Me

On top of everything else, the stomach area is vulnerable to attack. Not only because, as you read earlier, it is the center of gravity—an attack in that area of the body can easily take a human to the ground, giving a predator further physical advantage and reducing any ability to escape—but because this part of the body holds some delicate organs that are unprotected by the rib cage (a protection the heart and lungs benefit from). We humans evolved from on-all-fours ground-dwelling mammals of the forest into upright walking Homo sapiens of the open African savannah. Our earliest ancestors benefited from the advantages this upright position had to offer of seeing long distances across the planes and catching the scent of food or predators over the distant winds; along with an added ability to exhaust prey by running them out over miles of open distance, and avoiding predators by being able to swiftly shift the body to one side.

But this progression upward also left the core of our movement and many of our most important digestive, endocrine, and excretory organs vulnerable. And so it is not surprising that when we are under stress, we respond by crunching our stomach muscles in to protect that vulnerable area—or simply move it away from any perceived threat. We certainly are not programmed with a pattern to expose this central area under threat of attack. Therein lies the most important implication of this gesture: when you consciously use gestures in the TruthPlane, both you and those around you have a natural response of *calm*, because a display from the TruthPlane means there is *no threat in the room*.

However you wish to look at it, the insight you need to take away from this unique “discovery” and documentation of the TruthPlane and how the

environment—your own body included—affects your mind and the minds and moods of others (embodied cognition), is this:

When the hands gesture within the TruthPlane, an energized calm, confident, and balanced effect is felt by both the communicator *and the receiver*.

Not only does having your hands in this position affect *your* body language, but it also affects your whole nonverbal presence, and in turn the feelings your audience have about *you*, your attitude, and your intention.

And because of the interconnected nature of our physical system, your vocal tone is influenced by the GesturePlane you are in. Your actions become congruent with your intentions and feelings, and your vocal tone becomes calmer and gains a more trustworthy note, rhythm, and cadence. This is another reason why the technique is so effective—it changes one's voice quite profoundly and without the laborious vocal exercises that many other performance, presentation, and sales coaches recommend (only for you to then forget to perform when a feeling of pressure or crisis hits your sale). By using the simple technique of gesturing in the TruthPlane, you are utilizing your powerful preprogrammed reactions to simple body movements. Let's try it out.

An Exercise in Ordering Anxiety

It is time for you to experience the calm, confident, active effect of placing your hands within the TruthPlane while you are under conditions of stress. You are going to order a couple of pizzas from two different outlets.

Okay, you are thinking, what is so stressful about that? Well, here is the catch: you are going to walk into two retail stores, neither of which makes or sells pizza, or indeed any type of food or drink. A clothing store would be a good choice, or perhaps a bookstore. Because you know that entering a clothing store and asking the assistant for a pizza is potentially (if not definitely) embarrassing for you, this should cause your central nervous

system to push your sympathetic nervous system into activating the stress-regulating arrangement of organs situated toward the back of your belly. Indeed, you should get a shot of adrenaline as you approach the store, and certainly a shot as you approach the counter or the fashion assistant with your food request.

For some of you, just imagining putting yourself in this situation will already bring on the adrenaline rush—that odd churning feeling in your stomach, dryness in your mouth, and the color draining from your face. So, for those of you who are unable to complete this exercise for whatever reason, you may try it in your imagination, because it may already be doing a great job of firing up your fight-or-flight response just as a thought experiment.

The GrotesquePlane

In the first store or shop, make sure you have your hands down by your sides in the GrotesquePlane. Try to monitor the level of stress and anxiety you feel, and take careful note of the type of response you get from the assistant. Understand that some of you may not even make it into the store because of the high levels of fear this exercise provokes!

The TruthPlane

Now for the second store: place your hands anywhere within the horizontal plane that extends at the height of your belly button. Allow about three ordinary breaths in and out with your hands in this area to balance out the oxygen levels in your bloodstream and restore equilibrium, particularly in light of your experience in the first store (or your experience outside of the store, for those of you who are, for whatever reason, acting out the physical instructions solely in your imagination).

Walk right into the store and keep your hands gesturing anywhere in the TruthPlane as you approach the service counter or assistant. When you ask

for help with a pizza, be sure to gesture with your hands moving only within this horizontal plane. Keep your hands totally level on this horizontal plane that potentially spreads out a full 180 degrees from the center point of your belly button and goes out and beyond your personal space. Pay close attention to how you now cope with this stressful situation (or your imagined stressful situation), and pay close attention to the effect you feel you are having on the assistant this time around.

Debrief

Now that you've done this exercise, how did it go? How did you feel the second time around when your hands were stabilized in the belly area, as opposed to hanging by your sides in the GrotesquePlane when you approached the first shop? Did you feel more in control of your breathing the second time around (either for real or in your imagined encounter)? Did you feel more control over your feelings of stress the second time around? Did you notice any calmer reactions from the person with whom you spoke? (I'm sure you may have an understanding by now that presenting shop assistants with this moment of dissonance is extremely stressful for them too.) Did you find that this very simple piece of body language made an enormous difference to the situation, not only in providing you with stable feelings of balance, breathing, and bravery, but also in the type of reaction you got? Did others pay more calm attention to you?

Tone

What did you notice about the nonverbal element of communication in the tone of your voice when you were gesturing in the TruthPlane? Did you notice, as others often do, the calm and gently upward-inflecting tone, as opposed to the downward intonation of the GrotesquePlane? By now you will be starting to understand how making simple and clear decisions in the way you use your body language promotes clear decisions in the sound of your voice, along with clear decisions from others around you. You will

also be getting the picture of how this simple idea of keeping your gestures within the TruthPlane affects how confident you feel and the confidence you display, not only in your body but in your voice. So let's look now at the most important factor in all of this: the effect that gesturing in the TruthPlane has on your potential clients and customers in sales situations of every kind.

Under the Influence

When you are under stress, you cannot stop your adrenal glands from doing their job because you cannot stop your brain stem from instructing them to do their job—the process is involuntary. Your reptilian brain is not under your conscious control, least of all in times of stress, when its purpose of saving your life really comes into its own. However, by physically keeping your gestures in the TruthPlane, you can effectively introduce a countermeasure to the reaction in the brain stem and in your adrenal glands. (Those of you who have tested this in the crazy pizza experiment should have real proof by now.)

And here's a really exciting part of this for anyone in sales interested in being persuasive and influential (and that should be *you*, by the way): you can now present this countermeasure to your natural reactions under stress and enable others to unconsciously mirror that countermeasure and reduce *their* stress along with you. Understand this: your prospective customers and clients are programmed at a deep level to *copy*. They are designed to copy the clear confidence (or to copy any feeling, for that matter) that you portray nonverbally, and to frame any verbal message with that same intention and emotional atmosphere through a process often referred to as “theory of mind.”

Emotion, Mirrors, and Empathy

Being able to infer the intentions of other people is an extremely important ability for humans in their social interactions with others. It's a large part of what makes humans such a social species. Think of the advantage of being able to tell simply from the way someone else handles a rock whether he is just studying it or getting ready to throw it at you. Psychologists describe this ability as being part of a *theory of mind*. This is the idea that humans (and possibly a few other animals too) recognize that others have minds like their own and can make quite accurate hypotheses about the beliefs, desires, intentions, feelings, and mental states of others.

A primary way of establishing some theory of mind is of course in the way most people can easily read the emotions of others from subtle facial expressions and other, bigger physical behaviors. (This is of course what many call “body language.”) This process of “reading” the emotions of others is initiated by cells in our brain, often referred to as *mirror neurons* (more about them later), that cause the stimulation of the muscular activities underlying these kinds of emotion-expressing behaviors.

Have you noticed how, if you imitate facial expressions or physical gestures and movement associated with emotional states (like fear, sadness, joy, etc.), you can actually start to feel at least a little bit of the emotion itself and sometimes get quite overwhelmed by it? Indeed, many professional actors use this “physical” method of acting in order to access a real—or as some might refer to it, “authentic”—emotional state of their own in order to project through the character in the drama they are playing. Of course, when you watch that performance on film, the actor’s emotions ended long ago (likely soon after the director yelled, “Cut!”). But your theory of mind about the character’s mental and emotional state, made up from your own mirroring of their physical state, creates an emotion in you that is transferred back onto the projection of the human (or monster, or animation, for that matter) on the screen. The character’s emotions feel real—and they are. But that’s because they are now *your* emotions. You have become “empathetic.”

Empathy can be thought of as the ability to experience someone else's reality. "Mirroring" could most likely be described as the neural mechanism by which the actions, intentions, and emotions of other people can be automatically understood. Based on this theory, the recent discovery of mirror neurons (circa 1980) is considered by some as an important piece in the puzzle of how we connect with others and therefore how we are social. For communication to succeed, both the individual sending a message and the individual receiving it must recognize the significance of the sender's signal. Mirror neurons provide a mechanism for sharing the significance or meaning of the message, which can often not be encoded in the message itself.

Placing your hands in the TruthPlane is the single most effective way for the business communicator to fight back effortlessly against natural stress reactions and send out a clear signal to clients and customers that there is no problem and everyone can be confident. After all, why would you be displaying and drawing unconscious attention to this very vulnerable stomach area (both in terms of physical balance and unprotected vital organs) if you were under stress and, from your brain's point of view, "under attack"?

This is why not only do you feel more confident in this physical position, but others around you become more confident as well: they feel that you are confident, calm, stable and balanced, attentive, intelligent, and, most important, honest, authentic, and trustworthy. They become empathetic to your attitude, joining in and aligning with these feelings alongside you. You may even see them "mirror" your movements in the TruthPlane as a strong indicator that they are feeling just like you because they *like* the feelings you have and consequently they "like" you. You may also notice that in addition to mirroring your movements in the TruthPlane, they mirror your vocal intonation and the meaning associated with it. It has been observed that when a noise is heard, the motor neurons associated with the physical actions needed to create that sound are activated in the listener. For example, when we hear chewing noises, the neurons involved with moving the mouth are activated! So everything you do, including the

way you speak, gets copied by the receivers' brain in an effort to identify a fitting action, intention, or emotion they have experienced themselves.

Taste Test

Here's a quick experiment: take a look at the two silhouettes in [Figure 2.2](#) and ask yourself which person you trust more. Which of the two would you trust more if you were to hear the words from them, "It's a great product for you"?

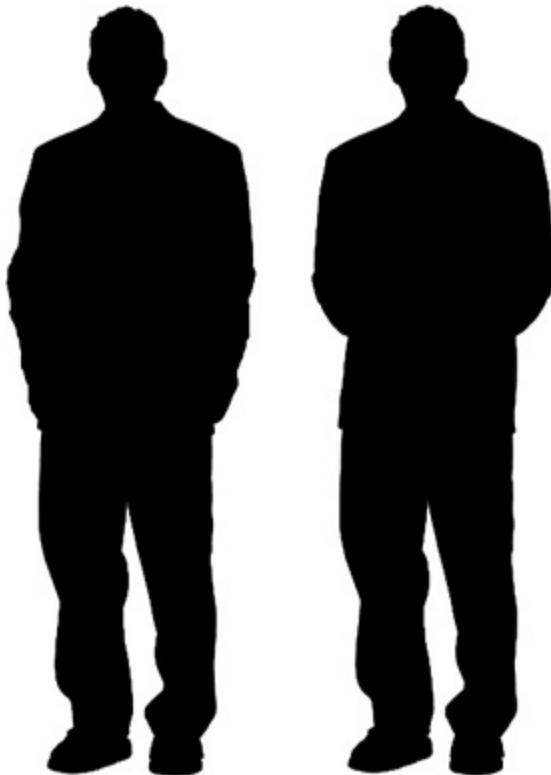


Figure 2.2 GrotesquePlane Versus TruthPlane

Even with simple silhouettes, when the hands appear to be in the GrotesquePlane (the hands appear below the waistline), it's interesting that the viewer feels less assured and less trusting, compared with how we feel toward the silhouette with the hands at navel height (in the TruthPlane).

This is because of our reptilian brain, which is designed to look at simple body positioning and movement in order to make a quick decision as to whether the other person is a potential threat or a potential friend. Considering the pictures, it may seem illogical for you to rate the two differently, because they both seem to lack a lot of clear information upon which to base a logical decision. But again, notice how remarkably easy it is for your unconscious process to quickly make a satisfactory decision as to which one you trust more, even though the figures are indistinct and monochrome.

Basic Body Mass Versus Cognitive Confusions

You can think of it this way too: in his book *Thinking Fast and Slow*, Daniel Kahneman talks about “System 1” and “System 2.” System 1 is our *intuitive* brain, which drives a lot of our behavior and decision making, much more so than our System 2 *analytical* brain. System 2 is engaged when we are puzzled, confused, and forced to think deeply about something. As a salesperson, you do not want buyers to be puzzled, confused, and forced to think deeply about your intentions toward them. You want them to react to you in System 1—what Kahneman describes as “a place of cognitive ease”: the nonstressful decision making our brain often prefers—this is the response the TruthPlane invites. By inhabiting the TruthPlane, it says to the buyer that you do not pose a threat; you are a friend and you are open. It creates an environment that invites engagement and dialogue. As a salesperson all you can ask when you begin the sales process is to start from a position that inspires trust.

You will be interested to know that contrary to many people’s beliefs about what parts of the body are more important to us in how we interpret the emotions and intentions of others, facial features are initially not as important as the bulk of the body mass, particularly the position of the center of gravity and the hands. Scientific analysis has shown that a major part of emotional recognition as a prescreening device for social interaction comes from the body alone and excludes the face. The way people move

their bodies tells us a lot about their feelings or intentions, and we use this information on a daily basis to communicate with each other.

News Flash

For an easy-to-see example of the power of using the TruthPlane to sell an idea or a concept or to give information about events and their meaning to you, just watch any TV reporter, presenter, or anchor delivering a piece of factual news: yes, that person's hands are in the TruthPlane. As professional communicators to a mass audience, many of these people unconsciously understand (or have been trained in the TruthPlane system) that if they place their hands at navel height, they will feel and sound more confident, and the viewers will feel confident with that anchor delivering the important "factual" information of the day. When people stand with their hands in the TruthPlane and deliver the story, we all start to feel that everything they are saying is factual. Yet we don't know why we're sure—we simply trust it. This is partly based on clear signals in body language and tone of voice as old as humankind, signals telling us that this human being (the reporter) is to be trusted, and therefore what she says is *selling* us the truth!

Try It Right Now

You should begin to use this most important body language gesture to win trust immediately. Try it right now with your friends and colleagues. Notice your confidence; notice the clear, calm quality in your voice; and notice the positive attention you get instantly. Notice others who do not use this plane of gesture when it would serve them well. Can you imagine how much better you would respond if they were selling to you from the TruthPlane? Decide right now how you are going to use this powerful secret of winning body language to your immediate advantage when you make your sales calls today, and then read on for much, much more.

Chapter 2 Quick Study

Benefits of gesturing in the TruthPlane: the primal stress response experienced by both you and the receivers of your sales message when you communicate under pressure, or in a situation of “indifference” to your message, can be counteracted by *placing your hands anywhere on the horizontal plane that extends out 180 degrees from a center of the navel—or, as we call it, the TruthPlane.* Open gestures in this plane are the most effective way to engender trust with other humans in microseconds.

Just Do This Now

When you communicate, place your hands as much as possible in the TruthPlane—the horizontal plane that extends out from the navel area; in anatomical terms, at the “Transverse Plane” or “Axial Plane” that divides the body into cranial and caudal—head and tail—portions.

Use the TruthPlane to cause your body and mind to be calm during sales communications.

Lead your prospects, clients, or customers to become confident in you and in themselves and their decisions by placing your hands and gestures open in the TruthPlane when you communicate with them, unconsciously framing their access to your vulnerable belly area.

Theory to Practice

Grab a video camera; your smartphone will do fine. Pick a topic for a short story—your last round of golf, a current event, what happened during the drive home today, anything simple. Set the camera up to record you speaking. Now, while you are recording yourself, tell the story first with your hands in the GrotesquePlane, at your sides—do not lift them above your waist. Then tell the same story from the TruthPlane.

Now looking back at the two videos, what was the difference?

In the GrotesquePlane, you may notice that you were possibly struggling to find the words and add any interest or color to the story. Compared with your story in the TruthPlane, it was most probably boring and dull, and you may even have almost fallen asleep during it. In the Truth-Plane, everything was easier; the ideas in the story came to mind more quickly and were easier to share. The story was most probably more interesting too, and you were more engaged as a viewer watching it back.

If you do this experiment again but choose two different stories, you will find that any viewer will remember a lot more of the details of the story told in the TruthPlane than the story told in the GrotesquePlane.

A Body of Knowledge

Shaun Prendergast (represented by Wintersons—nikiwinterson.com) is one of the United Kingdom's most renowned performers and a founding member of Kenneth Branagh's Renaissance Theatre Company. He holds a distinguished career in film, television, and theater internationally, both as an actor and a writer. He trains performers at the Royal Court Theatre and Sir Paul McCartney's Liverpool Institute of Performing Arts, and he works with performers such as Sting. Here Shaun talks about how a knowledge of your own physicality can help you understand if you might be unwittingly putting other people "on ice" toward you.

Cold Comfort

Body language is an essential part of acting because all of us have a physical life, a set of movements, stances, and physical attitudes that communicate our thoughts and attitudes to others. Obviously, if you're playing a character, it's essential to work out what they would be communicating, consciously or unconsciously, and to develop a physical life that belongs to the character.

To illustrate this: I was once being directed by Dame Judi Dench alongside Kenneth Branagh. Judi said that whenever the character I was playing entered onto the stage, she wanted it to be like there was “a cold draft in the room.” I found this difficult—I’m a gregarious, party guy. That night Mark Bowden came to dinner and we talked about my character (Don John from *Much Ado About Nothing*), how he felt, his bitterness, and the ways I could show this through his behavior. The next day, in rehearsal, I had developed a way of moving that was still, self-composed, and very deliberate. Nothing wasted, and most importantly for the feeling of icy coldness, absolutely nothing given away. Not a word was said, but it was obvious to every member of the audience how Don John got no pleasure from life.

Working with Mark, I had understood how to analyze my own body language and to notice other people’s and what it said about them too. Just like if you’re buying something, you look for openness, honesty, and friendliness—not closed, coldhearted, and “disdained of all.”

3

Types and Territory

Sales People and the World of Sales

There are two kinds of people in the world: those who divide the world into two kinds of people, and those who don't.

— Robert Benchley

In this chapter you'll learn:

- How to manage the risks of the “salesperson” stereotype
- Ways to physically categorize your customers to help them buy
- How territory affects “fight and flight” with your clients
- The “upper-hand shake” to win trust on first contact
- Three ways to open your heart to buyers

Life is so much easier for us when we can consciously put people into boxes: categorize them by knocking the less discernible or more problematic edges off, and then putting them into a pigeonhole—typecasting them for the role we expect them to play throughout the sales process and maybe throughout our lives in general. Indeed, it takes so much less neural resource to do this that it is precisely what our brains do for us by default.

You have now heard about how the primitive brain makes its first snap judgments and determines if we are “friend,” “enemy,” “potential sexual partner,” or is otherwise “indifferent” to us. You are no doubt learning to be more conscious of your own nonverbal behavior and have perhaps tried projecting yourself into one of these categories by choice rather than as the subject of unconscious reactions of others. You can now choose to use more effective body language in order to have the best opportunity of being

placed in the “friend” category by using the TruthPlane when you meet, help, or present to a client or customer.

And so in this chapter we will begin to think about how we judge others, and how we may be judged by others on a more subtle level, with respect to ideas we all carry with us about “personality types.” We’ll look at how this knowledge can translate into powerful body language techniques to manage ourselves and others throughout the sales process.

In a Class of Your Own

When we talk about *personality type*, we are often referring to some idea of a psychological classification based on a theory that we have about other people’s state of mind, an explanation of why they take the actions they do, why they behave in a particular way. Some of these classifications may be based on science, some on personal experience, some on intuition, and some on pure guesswork (and some perhaps from the astrology column of the *National Enquirer*).

Whatever your method, these judgments are not necessarily correct nor are they necessarily incorrect. Many of the instinctual “gut reactions” we have of others are spot-on correct; some newspaper horoscopes sum up the reasoning behind others’ behavior in spookily accurate ways. Equally, some of these judgments are totally out of whack, even those made on the most scientific basis. In all judgments there are risks. The job of this chapter is to help you manage the risks inherent in the subtler judgments people make about you based on your nonverbal behavior, along with the risks inherent in the judgments you make about your prospective and current buyers based on how you see them too.

System Thinking

There are many systems out there that seek to quantify and/or qualify the differences between people that often prove helpful to employers and

managers who feel they can gain some advantage by being alerted to some of the risks and benefits that come with various “types” of people. You may very well have been assessed by one of these systems at one or more times in your career.

Some of these assessments see the differences in human personality as “either/or”: e.g., someone may be seen as either an introvert or an extrovert; alternatively, some others see traits as part of a continuum—where you can be somewhere on a sliding scale between say an extrovert and introvert. As with all models, even if incorrect, they can be useful because they are at least a starting point to thinking more deeply about others and their actions, and more importantly, about *yourself*. The downside would be that such models can be used to justify quick decisions about others based on a limited, distorted, or deleted map of their humanity. Some of those less thoughtful decisions can turn out wrong (just as some of the more thoughtful ones turn out wrong too).

So how can we simplify our understanding of people to a useful degree in order to start thinking about them quickly and clearly and then work toward nonverbally influencing their behavior to buy from us?

Jung? He Was When He Started!

One of the most influential ideas concerning personality originated in the work of famous psychologist Carl Jung. His theories on different fundamental psychological attitudes led him to categorize people into primary types of *psychological function*, expressed in either an “introverted” or “extroverted” form.

According to Jung, extraversion (also commonly spelled “extroversion”) means “outward turning”; and perhaps unsurprisingly, “introduction” means “inward turning.” These specific definitions vary somewhat from the popular usages of the words (for example, words like “gregarious” for extrovert and “introspective or quiet” for introvert are commonly used). A human being’s preference for extroversion or introversion is often called an “attitude.” Cognitive function (i.e., thinking) can operate in the external

world of behavior, action, people, and things (extroverted attitude) or the internal world of ideas and reflection (introverted attitude).

Jung's model says that people who prefer extroversion *draw energy* from action: they tend to act, then reflect, then act further. If they are inactive, their motivation tends to decline. To rebuild their energy, extroverts need breaks from time spent in reflection. Conversely, those who prefer introversion *expend energy* through action: they prefer to reflect, then act, then reflect again. To rebuild their energy, introverts need quiet time alone, away from activity. In short: the extrovert's energy is directed outward toward people and objects, and the introvert's is directed inward toward concepts and ideas.

You can no doubt see how in any sale there is a benefit to extroverted behavior and a benefit to introverted behavior from both the sales professional and the buyer. It is fair to say that the salesperson stereotype is that of the extrovert, and that indeed many great sales professionals and role models in sales lean that way. But you can recognize that sometimes it is imperative to lean toward introverted behavior, for example when the buyer needs to be led in reflecting upon concepts and ideas. Just as it is essential to be able to lead introverts through a more extroverted set of behaviors—moving them into external action around the buying process, as with physically testing the product or service by consciously moving into that attitude yourself. Well, here's how you can do just that.

Shut the Front Door

Here is a technique that has been kept secret for quite a while now. This technique did not even make it into *Winning Body Language!* Not because it is not a powerful technique—far from it. Rather, because the right professional audience of salespeople and specific context were needed for its introduction. So think about the following exercise carefully, and then, even better, do it now:

Standing up, imagine that you have a line going from your ear to shoulder, down your hips, down to the anklebone. This line divides your body laterally. Using your imagination, transform that line into a two-

dimensional plane that cuts the body into two. The front of your body—face, chest, stomach, kneecaps, and toes—is in front of that plane. The back of your head, the back of your neck, your back, behind the backs of your legs and heels, are all behind that bisecting plane.

Now, concentrate on your center of gravity, the point a couple of inches down and a couple of inches in from your navel. Imagine that that point is dead center on the plane cutting your body in half laterally. You can think of it this way too: imagine a door frame, and as you step into that frame, get yourself in the exact center, positioning your center of gravity so it is in a place where the door frame—if transformed into a bisecting plane—would cut through your center. Now you are at the center of what we will now call the “DoorPlane™” ([Figure 3.1](#)).



Figure 3.1 The DoorPlane

How does it feel? Do you feel calm and assertive? Do you feel a sense of strength? This is the kind of general feeling that many, many people get when they are at the center of the DoorPlane.

Now feel your center as you move it in front of the DoorPlane—just a couple of inches, maybe (keep your feet still for now). Can you now feel a surge of energy moving you forward? Do you feel like moving (although you are sitting or standing still)? Move your center even farther forward of the DoorPlane and feel the surge of more aggressive energy come into you. Is this a feeling you have when you are in “sales mode”? Now bring yourself back to the center of the door plane and feel the calm and assertive feeling come back to you. Feel how it is more of a neutral place to be. A better place to listen from perhaps, and certainly not instilling in you the feeling of “going in for the kill,” as when you are far in front of the DoorPlane.

Now let’s experience being behind the DoorPlane. Center yourself in the DoorPlane and get the feeling for that: calm and assertive, available and adaptable, resilient yet open to change. Now pull your center to just an inch or two behind the DoorPlane and notice the feeling of “retreat” or “avoid” that it might give you. Can you already sense what some would see and describe as an “introverted” nature, as opposed to the more outwardly energized or extroverted feeling of being in front of the DoorPlane? Often, people find the resulting physicality of being behind the DoorPlane more thoughtful or inward looking—reflective.

Now pull your center even farther back from the DoorPlane and see how this affects your feelings. Can you feel that you are now closing down to the outside and becoming more cautious and self-conscious? When have you felt like this in a sales situation? How useful to the sale might this feeling have been? A guess is that this more extreme introversion is often not so useful for the sales situation. So now pull yourself back to the center of the DoorPlane and notice how your feelings quickly change back to being calm and assertive again. Push your center forward and notice how you quickly get energized and aggressive in comparison.

Notice how you are in charge of these states and feelings of being passive or aggressive when you physically take charge of your body language. Now remember from [Chapter 2](#) how those around you are designed to mirror you. What do you think you could achieve if you use this technique to affect your own state when selling, and in turn affect the buyers around you?

Big and Small

Mike Bosworth, the author of *Solution Selling*, used to conduct a short thought experiment early in his sales training seminars to help train salespeople in how to be more relevant and effective when selling to executives. He would draw two stick figures facing each other on a flip chart—one large, the other small. He would then invite the audience to identify the salesperson in the picture. Before you read on, conduct the experiment for yourself; take a look at the diagram in [Figure 3.2](#) of the two stick figures facing each other. For you, which of the two figures is the salesperson and which is the customer? Which is you and which is the customer?

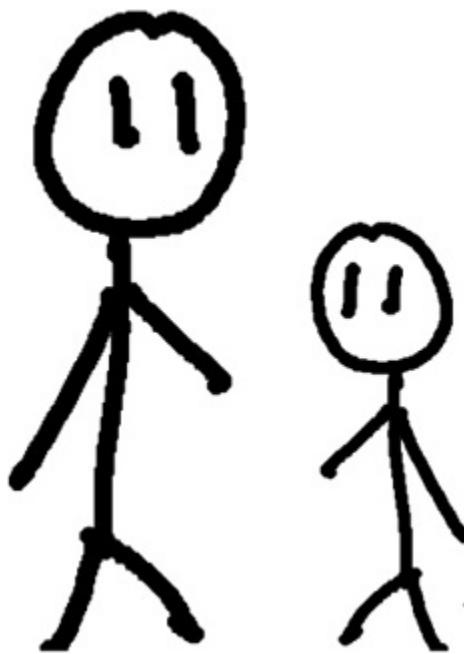


Figure 3.2 Who Is Selling to Whom?

The way you initially see this might say something about how you instinctively, or perhaps culturally, feel about yourself within a buyer/seller relationship. But the real purpose of the experiment is to illustrate that the minute you come into a situation as a salesperson, you ignite a reflexive response in the buyers based on *their* stereotypes or quick and simple judgments about “salespeople.”

In the case of some, it might be that whenever they come into contact with a salesperson, they lose respect for and are conditioned to look down upon them—see them as “small.” The result is that everything the salesperson says will likely be seen as not terribly credible, even viewed with suspicion. Alternatively, for others the salesperson may trigger a response of feeling small, fearing that this person might bully them into spending on something they do not want or need.

For the salesperson, everything about this binary big/small classification situation is bad news. If the buyer decides to align himself with the large figure, then the seller will need to work to assert herself as an equal. If the buyer selects the small figure, the salesperson needs to be careful not to intimidate the buyer and scare him away. And it gets more complex if you are meeting with a group that has a mix of feelings!

From the perspective of body language and nonverbal communication, the implied question is: “How do we work within these emotional realities of the buyer, and not trigger the wrong reaction?”

The Doors of Perception

Go back to the feelings you got practicing the techniques from the DoorPlane exercise and notice how “in front of the door” feels “big.” Think how it would feel to sell, pitch, or present to a customer from this position. Do you think your clients or customers would themselves be big or small when you presented yourself to them with this physicality and feeling? Now step a good two feet in front of the door and feel the surge of energy. How big and powerful do you feel now? Maybe you are feeling quite aggressive so far in front of the door, with the sensation that those around you are smaller and really need to “get out of your way.”

Now see how easily you can dial that feeling back by centering yourself once again in the DoorPlane. In fact, dial it right back by stepping a foot behind the door. How different does this now feel?

Do you agree that somewhere in the center of the DoorPlane lies the starting point for being physically and mentally *available* for consulting with your client toward a sale?

All the World's a Stage

During a sale, you may need different orientations of “size” or status in relation to your client. At some stages in a sale you may need to encourage buyers to engage with you in an open, equal way. At other stages you may need to take command of the situation and be “big” in order to be most helpful to them. And there are equally some moments during the process of a sale that would benefit from taking a “small” approach in order to influence them forward.

Using your ability to orient yourself within the DoorPlane, you can quickly dial your size up or down in relation to your customer or client, and even in relation to the broader definition of space you are inhabiting—because you also need to manage how you make that impression on and within the bigger environment as a whole, including the space, objects, and other people who are external to the client or customer. You need to control how you affect the whole territory around you, sometimes under the most difficult of circumstances.

Territorial Triggers and Trust

When we are under stress, we can easily stake a claim on whatever resources we believe are ours (and maybe some we think should be ours) for the taking—those of immediate use. However, for any sales professional, it is essential to present a physicality to others that does not fire off a reaction in their primitive brains warning them that their territory is being invaded. Messages that can suggest you are “taking over” include leaning on, touching, or standing in close proximity to another person’s perceived property (which includes just about everything—fixtures, stationery, computer equipment, furniture, and even people). Leaning against an object that is likely deemed to be in their territory, while seemingly innocent enough, can be perceived as dominating and intimidating. Observing someone leaning against a wall or hanging in a doorway or a passage can make us feel that that person is displaying an attitude of ownership over that exit, entry point, or pathway. The person

comes across as too big for the space—taking up too much territory—which could definitely cause others to feel small in return.

Taking a look at Abraham Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs, he posits that the fundamentals of territorial behavior center around our basic survival needs, all of which are to be found in the bottom two tiers of the hierarchy: the first of these tiers covers physiological needs, i.e., air, water, food, sleep, sex, and the basic bodily functions; the second tier up covers safety needs, like security and stability in areas such as health, employment, resources (including property), and allies. Maslow felt that unfulfilled needs in a lower tier would inhibit the person from gaining satisfaction on the next level. His illustration: “Someone dying of thirst quickly forgets their thirst when they have no oxygen.”

We can apply this model and way of thinking to sales: someone whose territory is being invaded, and so feels that his status is being chipped away at, is unable to listen effectively to and appreciate your sales presentation.

Within the neuroscience and chemistry of engagement, the human brain is constantly scanning for clues as to whether a situation holds risk or reward. Our brains are therefore looking for how we might rank in relative importance to others (i.e., our status) by judging the perceived resource others have in relation to what we have. The brain asks: “Does this environment give me a high rank (plenty of resources) or a low rank (a deficiency of resources)?”

If the brain perceives it has a “high rank” and so high status, it triggers a reward response by delivering elevated levels of the “feel good” neurotransmitter *dopamine* to the brain, which in turn triggers an “approach” response in the body (in some cases the whole body literally moves forward). Incidentally, in this case the actual physical environment gets placed firmly in the mind into the “friend” category.

Conversely, a decrease in perceived resources, and thus a lowering of rank or status—as assigned by the environment—triggers a threat response, and the actual environment gets put into the “enemy” category. In this case, levels of dopamine are depressed, which in turn triggers an “avoid” response where individuals will physically and mentally retreat from the environment. Again, this reaction can be so bold that they literally walk out of the room.

Establishing Your Territory in a Room

Therefore, how you treat the space, orient yourself and others within a room or around a table, is vitally important as to how comfortable others feel about their own status or rank within the territory. As well as staying clear of claiming a stake to exits and other important points in the room, watch out for objects such as furniture and fixtures that create barriers between you and your clients or customers.

Physical barriers blocking you from your clients will also block your ability to use the most effective body language for getting into and staying in the “friend” category: others cannot see your *open* hand gestures (an open hand being the primitive signal of “no tools—no weapons,” explained later in this chapter) unless your hands are over the top of the furniture, and so often at chest height. At this height (in what we call the PassionPlane—read on for more detail), the sales professional is more likely to go over the top emotionally and become overly passionate or too direct.

You should consider moving away from the furniture into more open space, in order to show your openness (both literally and metaphorically). Also, if you are seated while selling, pull your chair back from the desk or table and make sure it is high enough so you are communicating from your TruthPlane over the top of the table. This will relax the people around you: they now have access to your vulnerable stomach area, and you look confident.

For a good example of communicating effectively while sitting behind a desk, think again of the behavior of a news anchor. The news anchor’s desk is always set at a height at which the hard copy of the news sits on top of the desk, and consequently cuts directly in at the anchor’s TruthPlane. Furthermore, the anchor’s hands rest on the desk at belly height. There is no mistake or coincidence in this placement: the image we get is that the news reader is trustworthy and that the news is fact and not simply subjective editorial opinions. News entertainment uses this image in order to place the anchor firmly in the “friend” category for a viewer’s primitive brain.

The PassionPlane

Place your hands in the TruthPlane and monitor your approximate breathing rate and the extent to which you are filling your lungs with air. You will probably notice that when your hands are in the TruthPlane, you are breathing steadily and fairly deeply—right down into your diaphragm. Now shift your hands up to your chest height and notice the difference. What has happened to your breathing rate? Into which part of your lungs are you predominantly bringing oxygen? You will have noticed that when you set your hands in the chest area—specifically the horizontal plane of gesture that comes out from just a couple of inches above the sternum (the center and bottom of the rib cage, at exactly the level at which you can best feel your heartbeat)—your breathing rate quickly increases and you breathe more into your chest than in your belly. Some of you may have already noticed an increase in your heart or pulse rate that automatically goes along with this.

It seems that gesturing with your hands at chest level automatically increases your breathing rate and heart rate and produces a slightly shallower style of breathing. Also, try talking: do you notice the increased upward inflection of the voice? This implies nonverbally that there is still more to come: it creates tension and suspense, causing any listener to be hooked into the sound in order to hear it completed with a downward (“it’s over”) tonality.

By using this upward intonation, you are instigating the members of your audience to demand completion of the musical cadence, and they will be hooked until they are satisfied. Do you also notice that your body feels more suspended? There may be a feeling of “something is about to happen” when you have your hands up, gesturing in the chest area. The mirroring or copying that you by now know to expect from your listeners causes their breathing to also be suspended. They are now looking for a deep outbreak and will remain hooked by you until you let them off the hook by giving a strong outbreak accompanied by an instruction for action. And with all the energy that your performing in this state has built up in them,

there is a surplus of energy they need to expend with action (or risk a build-up of toxins).

Your call for action is all the excuse the body needs to redress their energetic balance by getting up and going for it. The excitement of the energy you are creating, both in your body and in the tone of your voice, is bestowed upon the verbal content of your speech.

When your hands come up to your chest and you gesture and speak ([Figure 3.3.](#)), there is an energetic buzz, particularly in contrast to the loss of energy and potential depression in the Grotesque-Plane and the level-headed stability of the TruthPlane. Gesturing from the chest area literally raises your oxygen level, and thus your energy level, gets your blood pumping from your heart, and compels those around you to do and feel the same. This is why we will call this area the *PassionPlane*.



Figure 3.3 Selling in the PassionPlane

Colorful Salespeople Versus Dull Customers

Levels of trust can go up as well as down depending on how passive or aggressive you are, or are perceived to be by the others in the room, and depending on the situation. This is an especially complicated system to navigate and manage for the sales professional. Salespeople are often thought of, stereotypically, as aggressive, “extroverted” (as discussed above), often gregarious. If we look at one aspect of this salesperson stereotype, they are *expressive* communicators.

Drs. Robert and Joyce Hogan, widely credited with demonstrating how personality factors influence organizational effectiveness, came up with an assessment system for personality and behavior that is relevant to this discussion. One dimension of Hogan’s Leadership Challenge Survey is “color.” Color is loosely translated as a person’s impact on an audience or a room. Salespeople typically have personalities with high scores on the color scale.

The challenge this may impose on an organization is that a salesperson with a really high color score is one who dominates the room at the expense of all others. Wherever you score on this color scale, as a salesperson you probably have been doing a reasonable job with expressive communication. However, you will find that many buyers score near zero on the color scale. These people are low reactors, passive participants in a conversation, especially if they are facing a “fast-talking salesperson.” The job for the salesperson of gaining the trust of the buyers in these situations is to draw these low reacting, potentially “introverted” personalities into an engaged and trust-filled dialogue without triggering all the “avoid” responses potentially associated with the salesperson stereotype effect.

The opposite pressure exists when facing buyers who would score high in color. They will naturally lean toward dominating the conversation and may insist on leading that conversation. The challenge for the salesperson is to influence the flow of the conversation with high-color buyers without

overtly challenging their authority and taking their territory. The key is to get and maintain an equal status, and again win their trust.

You can now watch out for whether your customers or clients are “in front of the door” or “behind the door” or in their neutral position. If there is a need to be more “colorful” than your clients, then push yourself farther in front of the DoorPlane. If you need to dial back the color in relation to the buyers, then bring yourself to neutral or just a touch behind the DoorPlane. If you wish to show an equal rank to them in how colorfully you communicate, then consciously mirror the levels to which you feel their center is either in front of or behind the DoorPlane.

Watch also for the degree that your customers or clients are in the PassionPlane. High on the color score often goes hand in hand with the PassionPlane, and low on the color score may find them gesturing in the GrotesquePlane. Again, you can mediate and regulate the situation by elevating or lowering your gestures accordingly, along with noting how your proximity to them within the territory may be pushing your relative color higher or lower.

Let’s go into more ways to think about relationships and space.

Distance Learning

The details of the ways we treat territory, and a group (or groups) within it, are mapped out in the work of anthropologist Edward Hall, who has a great rule that describes his theory on the effects of people being close to or far away from each other, or “proxemics,” as it became known: “Like gravity, the influence of two bodies on each other is inversely proportional not only to the square of their distance but possibly even the cube of the distance between them.” So, the closer you come to people, the greater your influence over them, and, of course, the greater their influence over you.

Body spacing and posture, according to Hall, are unconscious reactions to often subtle changes in nonverbal communication. The social distance between people, he believed, could be reliably correlated with physical distance, i.e., people of equal status will gravitate toward each other, and so

be physically closer than those of unequal status; just as the closer you are to someone emotionally, the closer you become physically.

Note the delineations made by Hall in his *American Anthropologist* article, “A System for the Notation of Proxemic Behavior”:

- Intimate distance, used for embracing, touching, or whispering: close phase, less than 6 inches (15 cm); far phase, 6 to 18 inches (15 to 45 cm)
- Personal distance, used for interactions among good friends: close phase, 1.5 to 2.5 feet (45 to 75 cm); far phase, 2.5 to 4 feet (75 to 120 cm)
- Social distance, used for interactions among acquaintances: close phase, 4 to 7 feet (1.2 to 2.1 m); far phase, 7 to 12 feet (2.1 to 3.6 m)
- Public distance, used for public speaking: close phase, 12 to 25 feet (3.6 to 7.5 m); far phase, 25 feet (7.5 m) or more

If we apply these guidelines to selling, the farther you are from your client, the less social, personal, or intimate effect you are likely able to have upon her. Some experts have called this phenomenon “exponential attraction.” Therefore, we might say that in order to make a greater impact on the members of your audience, you must have spatial intimacy with them, and so one would guess that you should move toward them (and there are many communication coaches who say exactly that).

However, we must bear in mind how easy it is to cross important boundaries of spatial acceptability; as we have been looking at with respect to status infringement through accidentally laying claim to another person’s territory by “getting in his space.” It is simply not enough to say, as some do, that “trust increases when we move closer to people” or that you should “move into personal space to make key points with greater impact.” You run the risk of intimidating your customers and lowering their status with this move, either by moving too close into their territory or, if you have a natural height advantage, through towering over them, or looming over them seated (as though you have the “higher ground,” so to speak).

One way to instantly overcome the potential for lowering of status due to proximity or simply height is to (in the Western business culture) *shake*

hands. But in the right way! Remember earlier in this chapter you were introduced to the idea of making customers and clients comfortable by using open hand gestures (the primitive signal of “no tools—no weapons”). Well, read on to understand how the secret of a great handshake is to “give them the upper hand.”

Disarming or Alarming

Although the handshake is egalitarian, this simple cultural norm is often used today to show dominance. Some people, for example, in certain circumstances, will give you (consciously or unconsciously) a “crushing” handshake in order to display their greater physical strength relative to yours. Other people will unconsciously employ a flaccid grip to give you the idea that you have more strength than they do—in other words, to demonstrate their submission. However, if during a handshake, either (or both) party does not get to feel the palm of the other’s hand—that is, if full contact is not made in the area of flesh between the thumb and the index finger of both parties, and so the palms also do not get a good full contact—this instantly causes a reaction of movement away from you, the now potential threat. In short, it is alarming not to feel the palm of the other person’s hand in a handshake.

Try it out with a friend or a good work colleague; it is most interesting with someone you know and trust fairly well, because when you shake hands with him and do *not* make contact with the palm of your hand, you will notice a very quick change in your friend’s face, maybe even a universal facial display of disgust, fear, or even surprise. Even though the two of you know and trust each other to a higher degree than most, the unconscious mind, which is protecting us second by second, does not take this fact into account. The unconscious mind perceives only that there is information it does not have, and therefore it is unhappy—the result is “retreat, be cautious, or attack.”

Clearly, to build trust, an effective handshake should always make good full contact palm-to-palm. And not only can you build trust with something as simple as the right handshake, but you can also raise the status of another person without lowering your own. But first, what not to do.

With good palm contact, it is possible to shake hands in such a way that you become dominant, thus lowering the other person's status and making him shut out your message: simply turn his hand slightly over during the handshake so your palm is on top of his. This gives you more control of the other's arm (i.e., not that you would, but this puts you in the position that you could easily push your whole weight down on his arm and control it, making it difficult for him to bring his weight and center of gravity upward to push up against gravity and your arm's strength).

When you have the "upper hand" in a handshake, you put the other party at a physical disadvantage. You have "one-upped" him, lowered his status, and now he may be fleeing from you or fighting you. Try this with a friend or colleague and see what happens, both in his facial expression and full body language. Do you notice the aggression (locked eye contact, squaring off of the shoulders, and so on)? Or do you see him become passive (dropping eye contact and lowering the head, along with some folding in at the stomach and across the shoulders, and maybe even a step back)?

Also notice what happens if you push your upper hand along with your colleague's closer toward and nearly touching his stomach area —right into his TruthPlane, in fact, one of the most vulnerable areas of the body. Do you notice how your friend instantly becomes more passive? Even if your friend might have been aggressive at first, once your hand moves into this very vulnerable area of the body, his unconscious mind knows he has been compromised, and it will wait for further instructions from the higher-status individual (you, in this case). You could even now put your left hand on his right elbow, taking control of his forearm. This handshake is almost as controlling as any "greeting" can get, and using it is the secret to losing friends and alienating people! Get someone to give you this handshake so that you can feel how bad it is to receive it, and by doing this, you'll

stand a great chance of never, ever, accidentally or on purpose, doing it to anyone else. It should be reserved only if you have such a great business that you wish to lose deals from the onset, or when as a leader you have come to the realization that you are a master of the universe and all should quake in your presence!

Of course, knowing all this, you can use the opposite version of this technique to give the other person status. Doing so instantly raises his engagement with you because of the sheer unconscious pleasure it gives. What if everytime you met someone, you could now make him feel like a million dollars? Here's all you have to do to make people feel that way: when you shake hands, simply offer your hand first with your palm facing up, so the other person's hand lands on top of yours. Then *gently* move both your and his clasped hands closer toward and into your vulnerable stomach area (right at a level with your belly button—your TruthPlane); you can do this by stepping gently forward into the handshake. Try this out and you will be truly astonished at how the corners of your friend's mouth instantly turn up into a smile and he steps in toward you, making great eye contact. He feels good with you and so relaxes. And when someone feels good with you, then everything around you, including the message you are giving, is good. This is a particularly attractive habit for physically imposing and "high color" salespeople. When you meet others on the extrovert side of the equation, or who are smaller in stature, give them status, roll your palm in the handshake up slightly and draw them ever so slightly into your TruthPlane. You will help them relax and open the doors to trust.

If you continue to physically dominate others, you stand a good chance of causing the fight-or-flight response in them. We are all looking for a strong person who will be on our side—not one who will be against us.

Reading Them Like a Book

As you've been reading this chapter, you might have noted that even when you categorize humans into a binary set of "types"—introverted/extroverted, big/small, colorful/dull, passionate/passive, etc.—human interaction during your sales process is still a complex system to manage, and at the end of the day is largely based on assumptions we make.

It is a big risk when we go into the business of attempting to "read" the body language of others to get intelligence (and not what we focus on in this book, opting instead to arm ourselves with the best body language tools to make ourselves more effective communicators)—since "reading" is based on your perspective and not theirs. Given this, what is the most foolproof way to assess someone else's body language to get a useful sense of his or her internal state?

The best question to ask yourself in order to glean some understanding of the body language of someone else is to question whether that person seems "open" or "closed" to you. What kind of detail is the unconscious mind looking for? It checks to see what is happening in the face. For example, are the eyebrows up and open? If so, this leaves the eyes on display and therefore vulnerable; if the eyes are vulnerable, it stands to reason that the person may be open to you, that is, she does not see you as a threat. Is there a gentle smile on the lips? Remember that the smile is a signal for "is good now." Again it stands to reason that if a person has a gentle smile (not a massive toothy and therefore potentially aggressive grin), she is open to you—she feels that situation is good now.

Think also about the body at large. Is it oriented toward you or away from you? Are the gestures they make relatively open at the belly? Again, if the torso is exposed toward you, then it stands to reason they are open to engaging with you, i.e., they see you as a benefit and not as a threat. Now of course none of these gestures mean with 100 percent certainty that a person is open to you, just as the opposite scenario—a closed face, closed body—does not absolutely mean that the other person is therefore closed to you. Indeed, it has been seen in scientific testing that the conscious reading of body language by anyone other than the most expert of experts, and even then only when this expertise is included in a wider intelligence system, is

there any possibility of having a better than 50-50 chance of reading body language correctly.

However, your unconscious mind is brilliant at sending you a *feeling* that can help you judge someone else's feeling. Trust your gut reaction, instincts, and your feelings about a situation, and then test that in the sales situation by questioning, and using your own body language to adapt and influence the situation toward the sale. When you have mastered that with one other person, you could be ready to try it out with a whole new tribe of people.

Chapter 3 Quick Study

Personalities are complex, to say the least. However, it can be useful to make quick judgments about whether people are open or closed to you, aggressive toward you, or passive in the sale. Having these judgments can help you decide in the moment how you need to act in order to lead them in the best direction for the sale. But beware ... people are also territorial animals. You must be respectful of that territory or you will cause them to retreat or advance aggressively with respect to you and your ideas.

Just Do This Now

1. Use the DoorPlane to judge how passive or aggressive you are in relation to your customer and client, and attenuate your attitude in order to help your prospect move into either an extroverted or introverted attitude to best fit the stage of the sale.
2. To gain trust whenever you approach another person, display open gestures and show the palms of your hands in the TruthPlane.
3. To build good rapport, find ways to sit or stand that do not put large barriers between you and others, block exits, or cause you to overshadow others with your height.

Theory to Practice

When it comes to “big versus small,” perspective makes a difference, and it is easy to change physical position or perspective, and by doing so, change the brain’s perception and functioning. Try this on for size: sit in a chair and get someone to stand close and over you to maximize the height difference. Next, ask this person to reprimand you as loudly and forcefully as possible. Then change positions: you stand up while your colleague sits and reprimands you from the chair.

You’ll find that not only will your colleague find it nearly impossible to do this, but his voice will sound different and lack any authority. Of course, this is unusual (and could look kind of silly at the office), but it will give you a sense of how well you listened to your reprimand and the attitude it produced in you when you were being height-dominated. Did you notice your fight-or-flight mechanism kicking in? Try repeating the same exercise with your colleague at different levels of sitting, standing, and even lying down. When someone is lying down, the difference will be far more pronounced—you won’t take the reprimand seriously at all.

C. S. Lewis, author of *The Chronicles of Narnia*, once said, “Enemy occupied territory is what the world is.” How is someone invading your territory? And how might you be mirroring this behavior? Do you ever accidentally walk through a doorway and invade your clients’ land? What do you see them doing in return—fight or flight?

A Body of Knowledge

Bruce Van Ryn-Bocking (thereptilianbrainatwork.com/blog) is an expert in human behavior in the workplace. He writes about the neuroscience of workplace relationships and workplace performance. Here he talks about a simple way to act around others to help you quickly get the best start on any sales relationship.

Open Hearts and Minds

Every person in love knows when their lover's heart is open and when it is closed. A closed heart usually precipitates the question, "What's wrong?"

Of course, when we speak about open and closed "hearts," we are talking about the limbic system—a part of our brain that takes a pivotal role in mediating emotions and relationships, and compels us to raise our young, live in families and villages, work and play together.

All human beings (except those with some sort of brain dysfunction) have the innate ability to know when another's heart is open or closed. This is because we are "tribal" in nature, and staying tuned to the mood of the alpha male or female is essential to staying in the tribe (and therefore to our survival).

I'm sure that your own personal experience will have shown that not only is it more pleasurable to have a conversation with an open-hearted person, but that you are much more likely to do business with that person than with a person who is either indifferent to you or who is closed.

The problem is that hearts open and close—depending on the weather, time of day, level of stress, anxiety about monthly sales targets, previous experiences, amount of sleep, etc.

Therein lays the problem for us salespeople—whenever I meet up with a potential client, my heart can be at either end of the "open/closed" spectrum. And the prospect will know this intuitively, before I even open my mouth.

So—what to do about this?

My goal is to have an open heart whenever I engage with a client or prospective client, or even someone whom I have no idea might ever become a client (a best friend or sister-in-law might be a potential client). Besides, I think it is the right thing to do!

How to do this? Here are three tips that might work for you:

1. Develop the ability to know whether your heart is open or closed. Ask friends and family if they think your heart is open or closed, and check against your self-perception. Also, notice when you are full of self-criticism. Chances are those are days when your heart is closed.
2. Develop the ability to open your heart intentionally. Most of us just do this unconsciously, and don't know how we did it. Set a goal to do this. Practice doing it (practice makes perfect).
3. When all else fails, pretend that your heart is open (fake it to make it).

Opening your heart to others can mean that their reptilian brain puts you in their “friend” category. That’s the sweet place for doing business.

4

A Tribal Bazaar

Culture, Connection, Carnival, and Closing

Whenever it was feasible, I prefer to eat the rude.

— Dr. Hannibal Lecter

In this chapter you'll learn:

- Body language to connect you with the team
- The science of “pack mentality”
- Sales dress sense
- Tactics for managing yourself within an elite crowd
- Signals that attract a “predator” to you as a “victim”

Call it a clan, a gang, a network, a family, or call it a company: whatever you call it, whoever you are, tribes are everywhere. Groups, companies, departments, teams, markets, professional disciplines, and anywhere people with a common purpose or common experience gather, tribal behaviors will certainly be seen.

Identifying the tribe or tribes you are working with and understanding and accepting their behaviors can be essential to winning the sale. This is because every tribe has rules around how members behave and interact. Every tribe has some shared values, beliefs, rituals, customs, goals, concerns, and signals that drive how they perform. This behavior can also display the relative rank or social status of each member, and help you understand the influence each member may have. As a salesperson, you must find a way to work within the rules, hierarchy, and behavior to ensure you reach a status that will allow you to have respect and influence within

the tribe for at least a short time—and in some cases the rest of your professional and even personal life.

A Taste for the Tribe

As an outsider, when the members of the tribe trust that you are aligned with their social order, you can be awarded the necessary status to participate in their decision making. Lose that trust and things can turn out pretty badly for you. Just look at the number of sales professionals who have exited the meeting room in which they just pitched, got straight on the phone to their sales manager and cried, “I GOT EATEN ALIVE IN THERE!”

Now, the last *actual* recorded cases of tribal cannibalism were during 1976, in the Jayawijaya Mountains in the Central Highlands region of Indonesian Papua New Guinea, where four Dutch missionaries were killed and eaten by the aboriginal Kombai tribespeople. It allegedly happened because the Dutch priest and his 12 companions tried to ban the locals from the indigenous customs (judged by missionaries as “pagan”), and they destroyed by fire some of the tribe’s precious ritual items. Their intolerance for Kombai rituals and customs likely communicated a disregard and disrespect for their beliefs and values and so caused the ironic tragedy of the Dutch Christians ultimately ending up as the sacrificial lamb on the dinner table.

The key in sales is to be invited to sit around the dinner table and be part of the company—not be the actual meal itself! The word “company” is etymologically linked to the Latin *con panis*—“with bread” or “to break bread together.” As the saying goes, “Families that eat together, stay together,” and many companies are still family enterprises. You may well be selling to some of them. And a group of disparate shareholders often work on instilling corporate values for everyone to live by as a “corporate family.” Think about that word “corporate,” which means “to be united in one body.” It is the job of the long-term sales professional to be invited into that united body, cooperate within the corporation, and celebrate with them

in the provisions that are collectively brought to the table: to join the carnival and eat the feast!

Second Sitting

Let's take a moment to think about food, family, and company. Chances are you have already eaten at least once today—or if not, you will before too long. For many of us in a first world country, most of the time eating is a daily event that is so routine it is taken for granted. For many families, resources are abundant, and for others they are sometimes scarce. Some families buy what they want when they want; others must carefully plan how to get by day to day. However, there is no escaping the biological necessity for food. Everyone has to eat something—more or less nutritious and more or less regularly, whether you are going to purchase it in advance or on a leaner basis—as and when you need it.

Because the simple act of eating is essential to our biological survival, it is also extraordinary for its endless culinary forms and the cultural manners that go with it. This makes it a central part of cultural rituals designed to bond and deepen social relationships. Eating in a family is both a symbolic and a physical necessity. Across culture and time, food sharing is an almost universal medium for expressing such things as fellowship, hospitality, duty, gratitude, sacrifice, and compassion. Eating together is a universal symbol of trust and interdependency.

Thus, the physical imperative of eating when directed into a shared meal can be an enormous opportunity to display your nonverbal alignment to the goals, values, beliefs, rituals, customs, concerns, and signals of the tribe at whose “corporate table” (lean or opulent) you wish to be invited, graciously included, and accepted at.

Yet often you find it to be an exclusive meeting.

Sticky Toffee Puddings

Consider for a moment being in a sales call with two other people, both from a tribe different from yours. Imagine if this tribe was the Alumni of England's Cambridge University. But one of the two people is your sales partner on the sales call, and the other is the buyer.

The two Cambridge tribe members quickly and easily slide into the tribal ritual of status placement. They share the names of common contacts, perhaps other classmates and professors. They share the dates of their attendance and domain disciplines. Very quickly they position each other within the hierarchy of their tribe and establish a rapport that can support their sales conversation. They have formed their foundation of trust.

Wonderful, but what about you? You did not, in this case, attend Cambridge, but a top university in another country. So while the other two are connected, how can you gain temporary status in the tribe to participate credibly in the conversation? They may not make it easy for you, as they simply may not recognize that you are being unconsciously placed as an outsider to their clique, with your sales partner unwittingly bringing down the strength of your own sales team.

Other tribal scenarios that you may recognize play out in selling situations across the world include: a software salesperson selling to partners in a law firm, a junior salesperson on a call with his boss, a young female salesperson presenting to a room full of middle-aged male executives. The context and circumstances are different from the example above, but the goal of gaining temporary status in the tribe to be able to hold your own, and even lead the sales process, can be a persistent challenge. So how can we get a handle on the culture of the tribe from the physical behavior of that group and work our way in?

Influence: Go with the Flow

Rituals and customs can be simple to detect because often by their very nature they are more physically based. What is the ritual of having a meeting? Is it like some of the U.S. big box stores or some Japanese manufacturing corporations where there may be a group chant beforehand? Who ritually sits where? Is it acceptable custom to leave the meeting table

and walk around? How do others address each other or display that they would like to talk and add a point or ask a question?

The key here is to observe behaviors and show accepting body language around them—open gestures, listening, gently smiling, and gentle nodding of the head. You don't have to join in with the customs and rituals, and you certainly don't have to join in any that would make you feel *very* uncomfortable, but you do need to show that you *accept their behavior*. The wrong gesture of surprise, fear, disgust or, perhaps worst of all, disdain at the behavior of a group to which you are looking to establish a good relationship can get you “eaten” in the meeting for coming across as rude in the eyes of the group. The members of the tribe may not consciously understand why they now have feelings of aggression and animosity toward you. But you will certainly leave with the feeling that you are not wanted and have been “seen off” by them.

So take great care to keep yourself solidly in the center of the DoorPlane and in the TruthPlane while any behaviors that may feel alien to you are being played out. That way you stand a chance of appearing non-judgmental while internally you may still be screaming, “WHAT IS GOING ON HERE?”

A-Ω

Values are more difficult to pick up in the behavior of others, but of course you can look out for the way individuals share the valued resources within the hierarchy, and make sure that *you* respect that too. You may find that the “alpha” person in the group is given more space and more time. You may find that alphas take up a lot of territory, a lot of real estate in terms of both time and space. Alphas tend to gravitate toward the ends of the table, the positions of control with easy lines of sight to everyone else and important resources.

An alpha will often not be found sitting with her back to the door, for instance. And somewhat like a wolf pack, the rank order is maintained through ritualized posturing within the environment. Psychological warfare is preferable to physical confrontation, meaning that high-ranking status is

based more on personality or attitude than on size or physical strength. And just like a wolf pack, there are those at the bottom of the pecking order—the omegas who can be used to absorb aggression from the rest of the pack and keep the relations between alphas and betas stable.

Unfortunately, sales reps can often be invited into the den to act as an omega—a kind of punching bag or kicking post upon which the alpha and betas can safely exercise their aggression with each other—and then send packing. You probably don't want to do this more than once with the same gang! However, another way to look at it is that when you have this position, you are at least in the tribe, just very low down in its ranks. Now comes the job of working your way up to beta level.

Watch out for how people physically greet each other and present themselves. Alphas assert their presence and tend to stand straight. Others in the hierarchy will adjust their positions to try to keep the alpha in front of the DoorPlane and stable. They will never want to drive them onto the back foot either physically or metaphorically unless they are making a play for the alpha position. They will never turn their back on an alpha unless by accident or because something else is happening in the environment that threatens the social order.

Observe and “mirror” (subtly copy) the behavior of the others in the group as far as it helps your positive relations with the decision makers, but also be conscious of the rank at which you are hoping to fit in within the hierarchy. Be respectful of the others in the room, but do not be afraid to assert yourself with body language that hints at the rank you believe you should be awarded. Take territory if you feel you need it to function at your best—give territory if you feel others need it to function at their best.

Affiliations to Appearance

Picture the following male sales professionals all selling the same service, and ask yourself whom you would trust to give you the most factual information when selling you a complex service:

- The casual guy with beard and open-necked shirt

- The lean, smooth, designer-glasses and all-in-black type
- The businesslike, short-haired, serious suit-and-tie
- Silver-haired man-in-a-jacket, softer, more friendly

Isn't the first consideration what they say and the strength of their evidence, rather than how they look? Maybe not? Because we treat people's appearance as a clue to their values. We expect the "Suit," for example, to be a person who thinks people should stand on their own feet. "Beard" believes in more equality. The designer type is a cool individualist. And the older guy defends tradition. These types are of course crude generalizations, but adapted roughly to those used by researchers at Yale University's cultural cognition research project. Moreover, it turns out that in tests, the Suits like to receive their information from like-minded Suits, and bearded gentlemen from like-minded men in beards, and so on. What cultural cognition means is that people form perceptions about the facts mostly in line with their existing values and cultural types—of which appearance is one part.

The reason people generally react in a close-minded way to new information is the risk that the implications of it may threaten them. So when the implication of some data affirms your values, you think about it in a much more open-minded way. Therefore, when it comes to agreement, how we identify with people is often more important to us than the facts they have to share. We trust whomever we identify as most likely to share our values and thus be less of a risk to us. And of course the way we dress and groom, the behavior we display, are the signals of the tribe with which we should be identified. We like the people who are like us, and we like the products and services from people we like! "Liking" is a major component of intimacy and bonding. The quicker we can get a client to like us, potentially the quicker we can move to the close.

Like other social mammals—wolves, whales, and apes, to name just three—we humans have an architecture in our brain that facilitates these

tribal behaviors. And a knowledge of how it functions can help us understand how to use tribal instincts to our advantage.

Limbic Theory

Throughout its evolution, the human brain has acquired three components that progressively appeared and became superimposed, just like in an archeological site: the oldest, located underneath and to the back; the next one, resting on an intermediate position; and the most recent, situated on top and to the front. They are, respectively:

1. The *archipallium*, or primitive brain, which we have talked about in earlier chapters, comprising the structures of the brain stem—medulla, pons, cerebellum, mesencephalon, the oldest basal nuclei—the *Globus pallidus*, and the olfactory bulbs. It corresponds to the reptile brain, also called “R-Complex” by the senior research scientist at the American National Institute of Mental Health, Paul MacLean, who in 1973 proposed the Triune Brain model ([Figure 4.1](#)), where the brain can be categorized into three subdivisions corresponding to three consecutive evolutionary eras: the reptilian, the limbic, and the neocortical.
2. The *paleopallium*, or intermediate brain, comprising the structures of the limbic system. It corresponds to the brain of other mammals too and is essential to social behaviors.
3. The *neopallium*, also known as the superior or rational brain, comprises almost the whole of the hemispheres of the neocortex and some subcortical neuronal groups. It corresponds to the brain of the mammals, including the primates and, consequently, the human species.

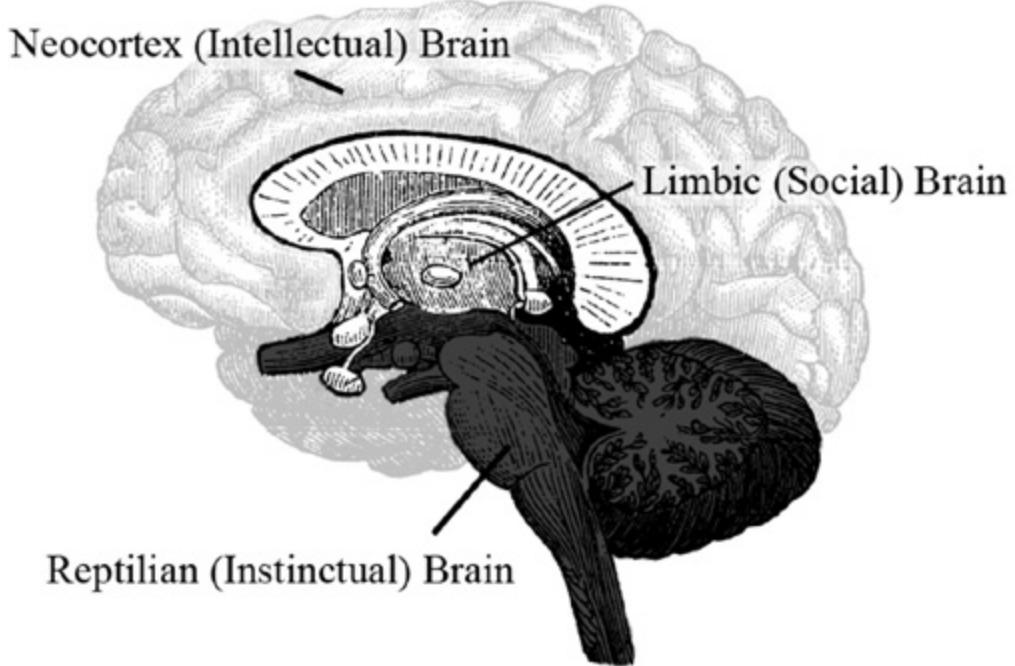


Figure 4.1 The Triune Brain

According to MacLean, they are three biological “computers,” which although interconnected, have retained, each one, “their peculiar types of intelligence, subjectivity, sense of time and space, memory, mobility, and other less specific functions.”

The primitive (reptilian) brain, we know, is responsible for instinctual self-preservation. It is there that the mechanisms of aggression, repetitive behavior, and instincts for approach, attack, flight, feeding, mating, and the involuntary actions indispensable to the preservation of life are developed.

The limbic system (from the Latin word *limbus*, which implies the idea of a circle, since it forms a kind of border around the brain stem) commands certain social behaviors that are necessary for the survival of all mammals. Here, specific affective functions are developed, such as the one that induces mammals to nurse and protect their young, and develop ludic behaviors (playful moods). Some would say that subtle emotions and feelings beyond the reptilian reactions of good/bad—approach/avoid, like joy, sadness, and disdain, to name but a few, are developments originated in the limbic system. This system is also responsible for some aspects of personal and group identity.

The third cerebral unit and final development is the neocortex or rational brain—a highly complex net of neural cells capable of producing a symbolic language, thus enabling humans to exercise skillful intellectual tasks such as reading, writing, and performing mathematical calculations—the mother of all invention.

Ancestral Advantage

This evolutionary perspective brings some clarity to behavior. Early vertebrates, having only what is now our brain core, optimized their survival in a variable environment with the sole use of instincts for finding, killing, and ingesting fuel, energy sources, avoiding others that would find, kill, and ingest *them* as fuel, and finally reproducing their genetic code. However, some animals survived better in their ecological niche by forming cooperative groups rather than competing individually.

Within the cooperating group, new social interaction properties that had evolved from genetic mutation caused the organisms to be fitter for the niche and so to stand more of a chance of passing on their genetic instruction to *be social* and have the brain to be social to the next generation (survival of the fittest). Antisocial behaviors were superseded by a completely different new set of survival optimizing social behaviors among allies—so tribal behavior, some might say, is more “evolved” behavior.

However, under immediate threat of danger and under extreme conditions, the social behaviors of the limbic brain are not appropriate, while those of the reptilian brain are more likely lifesaving. The reptilian brain can therefore gain instinctual executive function when under threat, stress, or duress. Hence, under the right conditions, the most social of us revert to antisocial behaviors! And that includes *you* and your customers.

Finally in our brain’s evolution, with the arrival of the bilateral cerebral cortex, unwieldy chunks of multisensory cerebellar primary memory can be greatly reduced in size and converted into abstract summaries. Thus, abstract reasoning permits the reductive transformation and manipulation of complex information into a format that the mind easily manipulates.

What that last bit of waffle really means is that you can hold your past tucked away in your mind as memories—compressed data, if you will. And then pull them out and unpack them to predict your future through imaginary scenarios played out in your imagination. The benefit: this permits the evaluation of survival problems and their solutions by the safe production of imaginary trials, and their imaginary survival outcomes based on past experiences. It has also led to the development of abstract forms of communication called language and mathematics and this book, for example.

From these bases came a new form of self-awareness in us humans. This intellect sits high and mighty above the earlier reptilian and social executive brain instincts, intuition, and judgment. Yet again, under stress we can lose control of our individual intellectual function to our collective tribal and primitive behaviors. This means the lofty concept of the new technology of a better mousetrap that you are selling may not be heard by potential buyers and their tribe if you put pressure on the values they already hold dear as a group concerning mousetraps (in order to survive but not excel—remember, “evolution is lazy,” it does just the minimum to survive). And the more you push the idea onto them, the more stress they feel, until they resort to reptilian brain thinking and you get eaten! The key to getting through is to always start your pitch by displaying an *acceptance* of their tribal values, which can be as easy as wearing the “national costume.”

Tribal Dress Codes

In many societies and throughout history, people of high rank have reserved special items of clothing or decoration for themselves as symbols of their social status. Only Roman senators could wear garments dyed with Tyrian purple; only high-ranking Hawaiian chiefs could wear feather cloaks; and in China before the establishment of the republic, it is reputed that only the emperor could wear yellow.

Military, police, and firefighters often wear uniforms, as do workers in many other services and industries. Schoolchildren often wear school uniforms, while college and university students sometimes wear academic dress. Members of religious orders may wear uniforms. Sometimes a single item of clothing or a single accessory can declare one's occupation or rank within a profession.

Dress can symbolize a movement from one state to another (home to work and vice versa). It can show allegiance to a group, and the status, duties, and entitlements therein. It can protect against harm; it can create a hygiene barrier either physically (in the case of doctors) or metaphysically (in the case of priests). All in all, the way we dress has a profound psychological effect not only on those around us, but on us too.

Ethnocentric

In many regions of the world and across time, national costumes and styles in clothing and ornamentation declare membership in a certain village, caste, religion, etc. A Scotsman may traditionally declare his clan with his tartan (though most kilts seem to be worn at weddings by lowlanders looking for a romantic affiliation to a tribe for a day—and the opportunity to wear a knife in their sock without being arrested). A French peasant woman identifies her village with her cap or coif. A Palestinian woman identifies her village with the pattern of embroidery on her dress. Clothes can also proclaim dissent from cultural norms and mainstream beliefs, as well as personal independence. In nineteenth-century Europe, artists and writers lived *la vie de Bohème* and dressed to shock: female emancipationists wore bloomers, male artists wore velvet waistcoats and gaudy neck cloths. Bohemians, beatniks, hippies, Goths, Punks, Skinheads, Emos, and Little Monsters have continued the tradition in the twenty-first century.

In Tonga it is illegal for men to appear in public without a shirt, whereas on the nudist beaches of Saint Tropez it is totally fine if not a little overdressed. In New Guinea and Vanuatu there are areas where it is customary for the men to wear nothing but penis sheaths in public—

whereas this is uncommon and considered quite out of the ordinary on both Wall Street and Western Main Streets. Private organizations may insist on particular dress codes or standards in particular situations. Hierarchical management styles of the past that have shifted to more egalitarian flatter organizations may signal this with a more relaxed “casual Friday” dress code. Religious bodies may insist on their standards of modesty being maintained at their premises and events.

The Laws of the Land

And so to business and sales: employees are sometimes required to wear a uniform or to conform to certain standards of dress, such as a business suit or tie, because they need to appeal to a certain type of customer.

In the recent remake of the movie *The Adjustment Bureau* with Matt Damon (2011), Matt Damon’s character, David Norris, in a confession during his election-losing speech, takes off his dress shoe and holds it up to the audience, explaining that his handlers have determined that his shoes cannot be so polished and shiny that he looks like a banker and turns off the common voter. At the same time they cannot be too scuffed or he will turn off the bankers as voters. The tone of the movie is that this is disingenuous somehow, but the reality is, as salespeople we are all making sure our shoes are “just right” in order to be accepted as a trustworthy guest member of the tribe. It matters: we just tend to dislike it when someone points it out to us, or judgmentally puts it into woolly contexts like “authenticity” or “being true to yourself.”

White collar workplace clothing has changed significantly through the years. In the general corporate office, appropriate clothes are clean and business casual (dress shirt, polo shirt, trousers, skirts, etc.). Suits, neckties, and other formal wear are usually only appropriate in law offices and financial sector offices. Previous business dress code eras (the 1950s in the United States) featured standardized business clothes that strongly differentiated what was acceptable and unacceptable for men and women to wear while working. Today, the two styles have merged; women’s work clothes expanded to include the suit (and its variants) in addition to the

usual dresses, skirts, pants, and blouses; men's clothes have expanded to include bright colors and flamboyance.

Casual wear on the job entered the business world with the advent of a much more relaxed clothing expectation that came with the "Silicon Valley Tech" culture. Additionally, some companies set aside days—generally Fridays ("dress-down Friday," "casual Friday")—when workers may wear casual clothes. This practice has moderated somewhat since the end of the "dot-com" era. The clothing a company requires its workers to wear on the job varies with the occupation and profession.

The Casual Crowd

Business casual dress, also "smart casual," is a popular workplace dress code that emerged in white-collar workplaces in Western countries in the 1990s, especially in the United States and Canada. Many information technology businesses in Silicon Valley along with creative shops and media houses were early adopters of this dress code. In contrast to formal business wear, such as suits and neckties (the international standard business attire), the business casual dress code has no generally accepted definition; and its interpretation differs widely among organizations and is often a cause of sartorial confusion among the tribal members.

In general, business casual means dressing professionally, looking relaxed yet neat and pulled together. A more pragmatic definition is that business casual dress is the mid ground between formal business clothes and street clothes. Examples of clothing combinations considered appropriate for work by businesses that follow the business casual dress code is: for men, a shirt with a collar (polo shirt) and cotton trousers (or "khakis"); for women, a tennis shirt and trousers. Generally, neckties are excluded from business casual dress, unless worn in nontraditional ways. The acceptability of blue jeans and denim clothing varies—some businesses consider them sloppy.

As to knowing exactly how to fit in with a tribe by fitting in with the dress code, it's simple: hang out just at the edges of the tribe's territory and see what the members wear. Move your wardrobe further toward the

clothes worn by others in their environment. A good rule of thumb for a salesperson is to dress within one style notch of the tribe. If meeting with the frontline teams that tend to be business casual, say a polo shirt and khakis, put on a jacket to present yourself with just a little more gravitas, but not so much that you look out of place. If meeting with executives who wear suits but their teams are casual, then a jacket and tie combination could be fine. If the entire environment is in suits, then it is time for a suit too, or at least a blazer and tie, but you cannot get away with the absent-minded professor look here—save it for Harvard!

The goal is the same as those of the (fictional) handlers of Matt Damon’s David Norris character—be close enough to the range to not disrupt people’s cognitive ease in seeing you. If you don’t feel comfortable with wearing what they wear or you make a mistake and show up too far removed or missing a meaningful detail, then use your body language to show acceptance of their dress and to demonstrate your ease with the situation. Again, avoid looks of disdain, surprise, and disgust—from yourself and others around you—not to mention looks of fear when you encounter some piercings that look ever so painful. Always concentrate on being centered in the DoorPlane and open in the TruthPlane, and you may just get out alive!

Chapter 4 Quick Study

Even in a metropolis people work in “villages” or “tribes” that hold certain values they live by and that you must recognize if you wish to sell to them. The company values that are communicated on a website or via posters on the company walls are rarely the *real* “unspoken” values of the tribe. The unspoken values may be embodied within “rules,” and sometimes the rules will create an environment that causes or determines some of the underlying values. Often the rules are embodied in the policies and procedures that one is asked to adhere to and are even enforced within the company. It is worthwhile for a salesperson to acknowledge these rules and embody them along with the tribe, because these rules will speak to their values.

As a rule of thumb, observe the behaviors of the tribe and show acceptance of those behaviors with using open body language. This way you don't necessarily need to join in (it may not fit your values), but you can show that you are not disrespectful of others who have a different value system.

Just Do This Now

1. When meeting a new group of buyers, slow down a little and take your time to watch, listen, and mirror the behaviors that people show in the team you wish to become part of, dressing appropriately for that tribe.
2. When behaviors push against your own values, make a conscious effort to keep yourself physically centered in the DoorPlane and gesturing in the TruthPlane to keep your own reptilian brain from getting triggered to fight or flight.
3. Show curiosity in the customs of the group, and where possible, join in on the ones that involve food. For example: if they like to get coffee from the mom and pop shop on the corner, now is not the time to turn your nose up and say, "I only drink Starbucks!" Either join them gracefully or say you've had your dose of caffeine already, thanks.

Theory to Practice

The great individualist anarchist Henry David Thoreau said: "It is an interesting question how far men would retain their relative rank if they were divested of their clothes." Let's test that idea.

Dress up to go to the grocery store or a hardware store on a Saturday. The grocery store is probably somewhere you do not think to dress up, but if you show up on Saturday in your best clothes, watch how people react to you, especially the people working in the store. You will see that they treat you differently. Keep your body language in the TruthPlane and see what happens.

In the hardware store that difference may not command the same level of respect. You will look out of place; they will struggle to imagine you under your sink fixing that link. Combine this circumstance with body language in the *PassionPlane*, and in all likelihood the clerk will struggle to put up with you. You just will not fit with the sensibilities of the tribe.

Try the opposite: dress way down and then visit a high-end store. *If* they let you in, you will likely see a difference. They may be well-trained salespeople, but watch their body language to see how they react to your status. Now in this instance keep your body language in the *GrotesquePlane*; you might struggle to even get service.

Psychological phenomena are not just things that happen “inside” us, but what happens in relation to us—between us and our environments—and hence they are ecological. Our psychology is a response and a provocation to the environment around us, including the groups of humans we feel ourselves part of or not part of.

A Body of Knowledge

Tracey Thomson is an entrepreneurial consultant who helps companies grow through solid business development. Tracey is a driving force at *TruthPlane* (truthplane.com), managing and steering the company alongside Mark Bowden. Tracey’s background in entertainment led her to develop her own production company, creating a variety of entertainment concepts for theater and TV. Here, she talks about performing to fit in and get ahead with some exclusive foreign tribes.

Old-Skool Tie

In my early days as a North American woman working in the UK, I was automatically an outsider. In every meeting, I felt I was fighting to rise up from a lower status and prove myself.

This outsider status peaked while I was working with a London-based consultant as the business development expert. The consultant in question had brought me in to help launch an exciting new venture; and so, working through her well-established and phenomenal network of industry leaders in London, we were pitching this fresh opportunity for financial support.

Despite all best efforts by my trusted and well-connected consultant companion to champion my talents and respectability to our potential business partners, it seemed that I inspired their suspicion or, worse, indifference; it became apparent that in their eyes I might be more suitably placed staying quiet and taking notes, or perhaps fetching coffee.

After recovering from the shock, rage, and irritation brought on by the multitude of obvious slights coming my way—one high profile head of an important industry association refused to look at me to the point of keeping his entire body turned away from me for an entire two-hour meeting where there were only three of us in the room(!), addressing only my companion—I began to examine more closely what was actually going on.

My colleague shared a similar background to the people in her network, understood the same cultural references, sometimes had attended the same schools, knew many of the same people—in other words, she came from the same tribe. I had none of this mutual background to fall back on.

As my concern over my lack of status grew, so did more aggressive attempts to reverse this problem, which made it exponentially worse—I was nervously (and unknowingly) fidgeting, talking too much and too loudly, smiling enthusiastically at every opportunity, leaning toward the people in the meeting to the point of lurching over the table ... increasingly erratic behavior in meetings that was not helping inspire trust and acceptance; or in other words, crazy and desperate was clearly not the way to sell!

I had to figure out a way I could instantly establish myself somewhere in their field of understanding that inspired their trust (so I could effectively get to the business at hand), or at the very least so

they wouldn't see me as a threat or simply a nonentity. I became awesome at effectively using my body language to show I was listening. I would sit calmly in my chair so that people could clearly see me across a table, avoid any fidgeting, never rest my head in my hands, so that all was visible; I encouraged my companion to tone down any desires to gush about my talents in the meetings. Rather, we would focus on painting the picture of being a solid and trustworthy team that had every angle covered, so that with our intelligence, energy, and their resources we could and would nail this new business venture, ensuring success for everyone.

And it worked!

Ivor Benjamin is a stage director and chair of the Directors Guild of Great Britain. For over two decades he has been teaching Stage-Fight 101 to young actors and directors, and he has a wealth of knowledge on how actors should move in order to influence any audience, at a primal level, into feeling that real violence has occurred on the stage. Here he talks about the body language of “the victim” and how to avoid it in the sales situation.

You Talking to Me?

Stage-fighting is, of course, the opposite of real combat—it's more like a mime or dance. “Fighters” work together to create the illusion of violence—otherwise there would never be a second night or a second take. Most performers pick it up right away, but once in a while you find an actor who can't figure out how to mime a push, a slap, or a blow and does it for real! Oddly enough, though, it is often “the victim” who initiates this real violence in the way they look at their partner.

When someone feels they are being victimized, they find it very hard to look their opponent in the eyes. Often, failing to meet an attacker’s gaze results in a quick glance at the assailant and then an equally quick look away—something known as “the victim flick.” Not only does this eye-flick signal to an attacker that their victim is afraid—it triggers a deeper response, increasing aggression and

creating an inevitable vicious circle of “predator and prey” that can end in real violence.

Breaking that response is usually as simple as asking the victim to maintain steady eye contact—which is part of the technique of stage-fight anyway.

This done, attackers who are tricked into real aggression by the visible fear of their partner quickly resume their role as an equal partner in the “dance.”

5

Realizing Relationships in Sales

Pleasure, Utility, and Virtue

*I present myself to you in a form suitable to the relationship
I wish to achieve with you.*

— Luigi Pirandello

In this chapter you'll learn:

- The levels of relationship you can build as a sales professional
- How to take the heat off of you under criticism
- Setups for cooling down the conflict at sales meetings
- The body language of the consultant, coach, and trusted advisor
- Goals and gestures when selling to life partners

The ancient philosopher Aristotle classified relationships into three types:

1. **Relationship of Pleasure.** This is when you find a partner who's all about giving you a physical experience. It's about nurturing the body and senses—nothing very deep or long term.

The problem is with purely selling to pleasure in a situation where you want the customers to come back again: if they were unhappy or not completely satisfied on the physical experience level with you the first time, they are likely to go elsewhere next time. It is a purely transactional relationship. Worse still, they may warn their friends not to buy from you either. But if it was good, then they may be back to create what Aristotle would probably have called a ...

2. Relationship of Utility. This can be longer term, but only if relating with you brings social and personal status and power to the buyers. To put it coolly or quite simply, they are using you to inflame their egos on a more regular basis (and they may well do the same for you). That may look like stereotypical rich partner/trophy partner “sold mates”—rather than soul mates.

With utility comes a great experience with the product or service, and increased power and social cachet. If the person is going to buy often, the relationship may need to develop into a genuine friendship. As Aristotle might say, a ...

3. Relationship of Shared Virtue. This relationship makes both of you better people. It makes you ascend to a level above physical resource, power, and social cachet. There is challenge, learning, and the opportunity to maximize potential on many levels for both partners. The best sales relationships (long-term, repeat sales in many cases), and the “trusted advisor” status many sales professionals seek, are built on a relationship of shared virtue.

This chapter will show you how to use your nonverbal communication to create an environment that signals your intent to build a relationship of shared virtue and what many call “Consultative Selling.”

Win/Win

Aristotle also said that if you want to enjoy a thriving relationship built to last over the long haul, you must prioritize seeking a Relationship of Shared Virtue—instead of “superficial lures” and “material goods.” He went on: “Men imagine the causes of happiness lie in external goods. That is as if they were to ascribe fine and beautiful lyre playing to the quality of the instrument rather than the skill of the player.” So in the shared virtue model we admire the skill of the players on top of the goods or service they seek to provide. And whereas in one-off selling the buyer has the most to lose, in relationship selling, the seller can be the biggest loser if he sells something that is not wanted. Not only may the product be returned, but all future sales

may be lost. Trust-building is such a major activity in this approach that it can take up to half of any sales professional's time.

The foundation of a shared virtue relationship is the aspiration for a win/win sales result. The seller wants the buyer to feel that he got a fair deal, and the buyer, although she wants a good price, does not want the seller to go out of business. Many negotiable things beyond price are on the table, including goodwill and future opportunities. Relationship selling happens in any place where, along with the transaction, relationships are important too. In the same way as when two life partners are negotiating something, they will be more successful if both consider the relationship as well as whatever it is they each want.

B2B

A typical place where such relationship selling takes place is in business-to-business (B2B) situations, and even more so where selling and buying are both professional activities and full-time salespeople deal with full-time buyers. When the smart buyer has been on a wide range of sales courses, she can often see selling techniques coming from a mile away.

However, this sales relationship is also important in retail or business-to-consumer (B2C) situations. While the relationship here, depending on the product line, may be a single transaction or an opportunity for multiple transactions over time, the seller will do well to present a win/win posture and aim to build a relationship of shared virtue. The focus of the salesperson is to help solve genuine problems that her customers are experiencing, and she often takes time to acquire a deep understanding about her customers' businesses, using methods such as *SPIN Selling*, *Customer-Centered Selling*, or *Consultative Selling*. The goal is to deliver value for both the seller and buyer.

Relationships Under Pressure

In practice, selling is a pressure-filled business. The salesperson must deliver results measured against his quota, as in the end he gets paid to close business deals, not make friends. In many cases the buyer is under just as much pressure. Buying the right thing, getting it for the right price and terms, and having it do the right things are all results of the purchase that the buyer will judge and be judged upon. In this pressurized environment it is easy for everyone to fall into bad habits, jeopardize trust, and miscommunicate. Effective use of the TruthPlane and its ability to keep you calm and clear-headed in the face of pressure will help you build the right kinds of relationships that actually help the salesperson deliver the required results, and help the buyer make good decisions even in the most aggressive of situations.

If there is a conflict, you may tend to find there is another human being involved, because on the whole it takes two or more to have an argument. When there is conflict around the product or service you are selling, it is often the case that you—the salesperson—end up becoming an avatar for that product or service—you feel attacked! And so you can easily start to feel negative toward your customer or client, and the relationship of shared virtue comes under pressure.

Although there is some positive effect in having a potential buyer vent his problems, frustrations, and anxieties around what you are selling him, there is also a downside in that he may now associate you with many of those potentially negative and damaging feelings. This is why it is often a great idea to create a third point of reference you can associate with the product and service—something more transactional: a model, a diagram, a brochure, ready-made pictures, or a quickly drawn representation on a whiteboard that can become the nonverbal focus for both of you to push problems, frustrations, and tough questions at. It is now far easier for you to side with your client, to totally accept his point of view, because that point of view is now not directed so aggressively toward you, but toward this third point.

Drawing Them In

Imagine an architect attempting to influence and persuade a potential client to buy into a radical new design for her building. Without any physical third point of reference, the client physically faces the architect full on and delivers all the issues around what for the architect may be some very personal work. The architect easily becomes defensive, frustrated, and even angry at the client. And because from the client's point of view she is "just being helpful" in advising what will best suit her needs, it is easy to assume from the nonverbal feedback that the architect maybe does not like her personally. In return, of course, the client starts to "mirror" and not like the architect. A potential breakdown in the relationship is unconsciously happening right in front of their eyes.

Now imagine that the architect quickly brings out a pad of paper and rough-sketches the design. He moves the paper over to the client, gives her his pen, and says, "Show me what isn't working quite right about this design." The client points to the sketch with her pen as both of them face this third point and move their energy and critical attitude in toward that instead of the designer. "I get it," says the architect. And gesturing again toward the diagram adds, "Sketch out now what would work better for you." The client scribbles out some possibilities. The architect takes out another pen and says, "Let me make some suggestions to that," and begins to add ideas to the client's suggestions on the paper.

Instead of conflict between the parties, both are now working together on the same solution, and all potential conflict is directed toward a third point of focus. As the client's body language opens up and displays a feeling of ease around the design, the architect moves the drawing farther toward his own body and territory, lifting it closer to the client's face in order to bring her back to face-to-face contact with him. He smiles and nods at the new idea, takes the diagram off to one side, and now engages the client directly again.

You can of course see how the third point of reference is a great nonverbal tool for persuasion and influence. But what happens when that third point is another person? And if that person is you? How can you nonverbally manage your relationship in the sale when you are the "third wheel"?

My Friend's Amazing

As we have discussed, the environment around you has a huge impact on how people perceive you, and of course how easily they trust you. The *people* around you are part of your environment as well, and so the way they behave around you ultimately reflects on you and whether others can trust you or not. So how do you bring a new person into the sales process who may not have the credibility you have or may not have the same level of trust built with your client?

Well, of course you are part of your sales partner's environment, so you must present yourself in a form suitable to the relationship you wish to achieve between your client and your partner. And here's a way to do it: whenever your sales partner is speaking, presenting, or interacting with the client in any way, look at your partner and think to yourself, "My friend is amazing!" As your partner is talking to the client and you are thinking, "My friend is amazing," every now and then look back toward your client, and when you catch his eye, move your gaze back to your partner—again always thinking to yourself, "My friend is amazing!"

This powerful mantra causes your body language to become open and positive, and your client will mirror that feeling. As you constantly bring your gaze back to your sales partner, you will cause your client to mirror that movement and give his eye contact to your partner. This gives the new person in the relationship a good rank or status within the tribe you are forming together with the customer or client.

Now what happens when the tribe grows in size?

Them and Us

The number of people who are in a room together and how they are placed will have a definite bearing on how they relate to and engage with each other.

Notice how when two parties come to meet, they will often sit on opposite sides of a table. This is automatically adversarial in terms of the territory. There is now a "my side" and a "your side," with a large gulf in

between. It is easy for this to happen, for groups to unconsciously sit on either side of a table together and so unwittingly set up an adversarial meeting of team versus team. Notice how parliaments are often deliberately set up in this aggressive manner, with the psychological barrier of a no-man's-land that people are traditionally banned from crossing (unless they are changing their allegiance, or "crossing the floor," as it is called). It is no surprise that the British prime minister Sir Winston Churchill once said, "We shape our buildings; thereafter they shape us." So the simple solution is always to take away the "architecture" that supports the conflict—remove the table.

But of course this sometimes has some negative consequences that call for other solutions. In this case, you can simply make a conscious effort to mix up the parties from both sides of the deal. Doing so quickly breaks down the power of the largest antagonistic marker in the space (the table) and discourages embedding in the attitude of "your side." You will be helping both groups see the other's point of view by placing them where they can literally get each other's perspective.

Which of the sales meetings in [Figure 5.1](#) look the most collaborative and which the most confrontational if "black" is the buyer? What difference occurs if we make "gray" the buyer, and why?

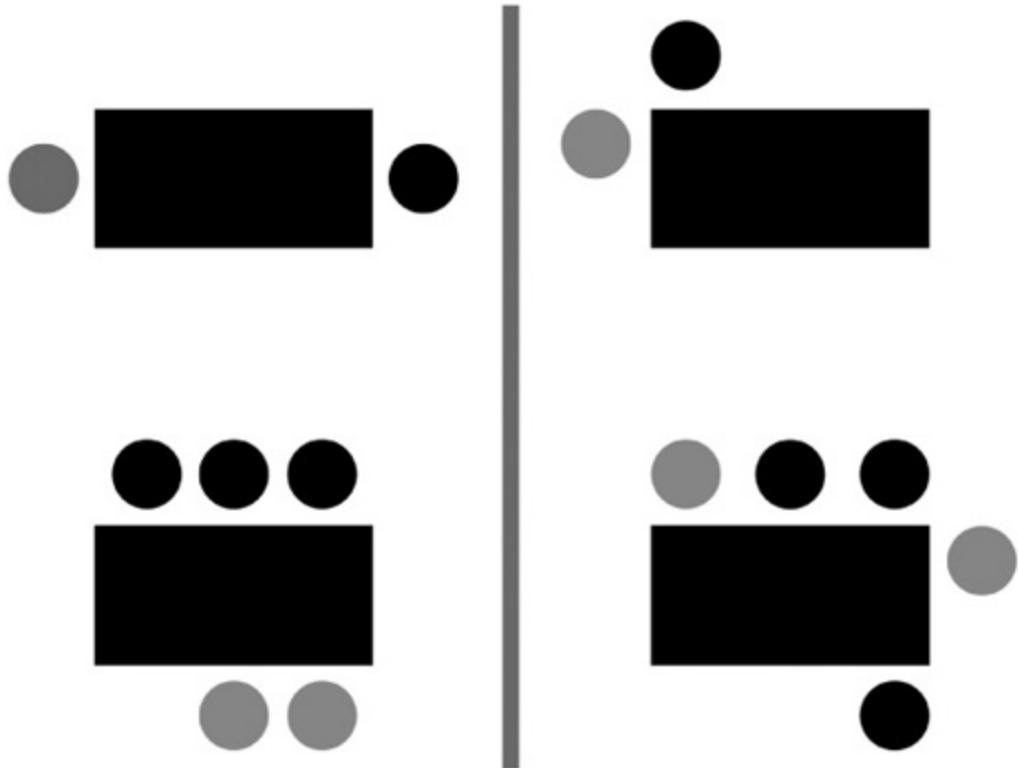


Figure 5.1 Confrontation Versus Collaboration

One, Two, Three, Four, Lots

Remember, once a person sees more than four people at one time, that person's unconscious mind defines that number as a crowd ([Figure 5.2](#)). How intimidating it is, then, for someone to walk into a room with anything more than four people in it: "Oh, no, a gang!"

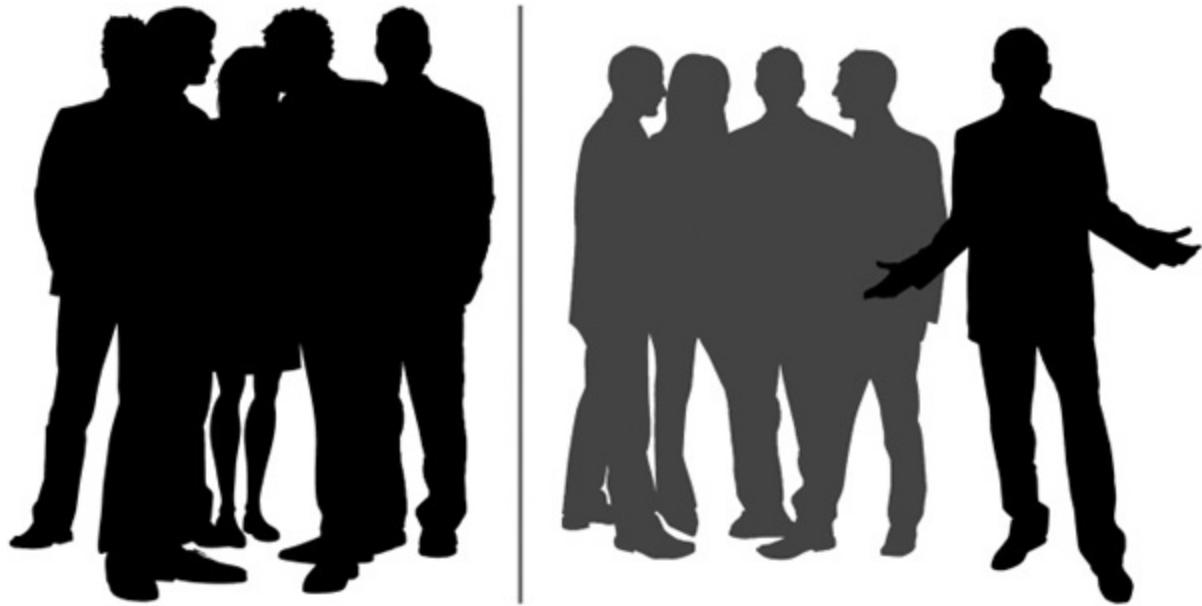


Figure 5.2 Conspiracy Versus Consultancy

The solution to this problem is that if you wish to create an environment that is welcoming to potential clients or partners, you should organize your team in such a way that you break up the numbers of people grouped together so that your team is less intimidating when guests enter the meeting room. If you wish to be most inviting to a client entering a space, be sure that the people who are receiving the guest are grouped in twos or threes, rather than standing around looking like a big gang.

The more you control the environment, the greater your chance of being able to control the outcome of that meeting, investigation session, or negotiation. As always, the first step in determining how to lay out a meeting room is to consider your objective. When your goal is to generate creative thinking and lots of new ideas around the sale, then the layout of the room must work toward that.

Get Creative

A “living room style” room with chairs or couches could be more appropriate for a thinking session where a free flow of ideas is encouraged.

The informality of such an arrangement invites playfulness and creativity. Perhaps the living room in a hotel suite is the best option in this case. But if you do not have the luxury of using a layout such as that, then place tables in a shallow U-shape so that as a facilitator you can write on flip charts that can be seen by everyone. Also, everyone should easily see and hear one another. Perhaps place the refreshment table in the room to the back or the side. This way, people can help themselves without leaving the room (because you know what leaving the room can become—a time to make or take a call, check in with the office, run into a colleague, and before you know it 20 minutes have passed without a key decision maker having been part of the process).

Have natural light if at all possible. A windowless room can make participants feel closed in. You don't want them to feel that way when you are looking for breakthroughs in their thinking! And certainly you don't want them to feel closed in during a negotiation where you need to open their minds to new ways of seeing the details of the deal—you will instead invite them to close their thinking down with an interrogation cell atmosphere!

We Have Ways of Making You Balk

The raw space in which you hold a negotiation can act to relax or press in on the negotiators. Generally, more space is better, although not so much space to bring on agoraphobia, or make people otherwise uncomfortable. Many negotiations have elements of confidentiality about them, and in such cases the room should feel appropriately private. When there are several people in the negotiation and they're sitting around a table, remember that they need space to get up and not feel squashed, which diminishes their rank and status. Looking for a relationship of partnership around the negotiation, you need to sit closer and to one side of the person you are looking to be aligned with. If you are negotiating within a group, then once again the long boardroom table setup, with opposing sides sitting to one side of each other in a "them and us" parliamentary type orientation, is potentially a recipe for discord. Try moving your negotiation to the private room of a Chinese restaurant, where traditionally the table is round and

there is a culture of sharing. Be sure that team members are sitting next to your client's team members so that the idea of "them and us" is broken up as much as is possible under the circumstances.

Sometimes even just an empty space where people can stand—for example, when having coffee—is a useful addition. In moments when they are more relaxed and have some comfort and stimulation from not only the caffeine but also the increased circulation (not sitting on the largest muscle in the body anymore), they can be opened up further to the opportunities you have for them. When you change the physical position, you stand a good chance of shifting the psychological position also. If the negotiations meet an impasse, you can take the opportunity to move people's perceptual position and free up their minds by taking the opportunity to physically move to another position in the room. For instance, you can stand up and grab a coffee while inviting your client over for one too, and then continue the meeting negotiation standing together and consuming a resource, rather than sitting with nothing! At every opportunity find ways to collaborate in a physical activity to promote mental collaboration and agreement.

Are You Triadically Skilled?

When one person alerts another to a stimulus by means of eye-gazing, finger-pointing, or other verbal or nonverbal indication, this is known as "joint attention." When one person gazes at another person and then points to an object, and then returns her gaze back to the other person, this is "initiating joint attention." The person who looks toward the referenced object is "responding to joint attention." And joint attention is referred to as a "triadic skill," meaning it involves two people and an object or event outside of the duo. Behavioral scientists have noted the important and unique role that eye gaze plays in the primal behaviors of establishing dominance, initiating and terminating aggression, indicating the location of food, signaling the direction of an approaching predator, and also within mating behaviors. But what is so interesting about this for sales?

Although a triadic eye gaze can also be used to regulate one-to-one social interactions, another major and unique function of a triadic eye gaze is that it can be used to reveal an individual's focus of attention and internal state—his desires and goals—and that's why in sales there is a primal advantage to bringing your customer or client's attention to a third point between you: a sales brochure, diagram, or sample perhaps. Maybe even the product itself.

Learn to Listen

Of course, agreement through collaboration moves forward only when another trusts that you are a listener. Listening, especially active (purposeful) listening, is the habit of trustworthy people. When you actively listen, you are giving others your maximum attention. There is a great question to ask yourself when you communicate: “Am I listening or *reloading?*” Unfortunately, many in sales are not really listening; they are preparing for their next chance to speak. Buyers can sense this, and it erodes their trust in the sincerity of the relationship. We all know that as sales professionals closing is all important; but with that as a focus, it is easy to be consumed by your own dialogue toward that goal rather than what the client is saying. By effectively managing your “listening” posture, you can help keep yourself focused on the buyer and really listen to her moving forward.

So what does listening look like?

Exercise Your Ears

Let's try some deliberate listening and see what works. Turn on the radio, find some spoken word on the Internet, or maybe just switch on the TV and then turn your back on the picture to *just listen to the voices*. As you do this,

drop your hands down by your sides and hold your head straight. How do you feel listening in this position? How engaged do you feel with the words that are spoken? How much time do you think you have to engage with what is being said? Do you feel relaxed, hurried, or is your mind simply shifting on to other more important things that have nothing to do with the words coming from the media? Perhaps these things are more related to you, rather than whatever the speaker is speaking about right now?

Keep on listening, but try another physical position. Bring your hands up to the TruthPlane. You can interlace your fingers gently, if you like, and just hold your palms facing your belly button. Or if you'd like to put more effort in, hold your hands open as you listen and gesture gently in toward yourself now and again, as if making the suggestion, "Tell me more." How does this feel to you? Carefully note any changes in your ability to listen from when your arms were down by your sides and you placed your hands in the TruthPlane. Are you feeling more engaged with what the speaker is saying? Do you feel you have more time to listen to whatever he is talking about? Would you rate this listening position as being better than in the first (hands down in GrotesquePlane) position?

Now let's add a further gesture to this: tilt your head gently to one side by about five to ten degrees. It's a very small movement. As you continue to listen to the speaker with your head tilted gently to one side, nod gently as you listen. Have your hands in the TruthPlane either gently interlaced over your belly button or making small gestures of the kind that signal you wish to get more from the speaker.

How do you feel as the listener here? Has your engagement with what is being said escalated? Do you feel quite engaged with what is being said? It stands to reason that if you are *feeling* more engaged as the listener, then you stand a very high chance of *looking* more engaged. And this looks and feels good to a client because there is very little that people enjoy more than the feeling that they're being listened to. To be listened to raises both your personal status and your rank within the tribe and so produces dopamine in the reward centers of the brain for a feel-good effect.

One last element to this exercise: as you gesture in the TruthPlane, your head gently tilted to one side and nodding as you listen, simply smile gently. How has this affected your overall appreciation and acceptance of what is being said? Do you now feel really good about what you heard? Do

you feel that not only are you listening but that you accept and appreciate what you are listening to?

Again, if it feels like you are listening, accepting, and appreciating the content, it's highly likely that a client of yours would feel it too—would feel accepted and appreciated. In life, it is generally rare for others to feel listened to, accepted, and appreciated. If you make yourself into a sales professional who always listens to your customers and clients, accepts and appreciates what they have to say, you stand a greater chance of being a unique person in their eyes. You stand a great chance that they will want a relationship of shared virtue with you, rather than one of utility or pleasure. And so you also stand a better chance than many other people this client or customer comes into contact with (including sometimes his own family) that he will see you as a trusted advisor—not because you necessarily give advice, but because you actively listen. This gives you more credibility.

Dropping Off into the Grotesque

In nature there are only two reasons for you to drop your arms: to rest or to move. With your arms dropped and your adrenaline pumping, your weight will start to shift in front of an audience, literally making you look shifty and making it difficult for those watching you to trust you. This shifting can easily escalate into pacing up and down. The brain says that if we have our arms by our sides, we should be moving, especially with all those people looking at and judging us.

But when you stand still with your arms hanging down, the body takes this as a signal to rest, or even sleep. That is the biggest reason why the room can get sleepy in a sales presentation: you are standing still with your arms hanging down. The potential buyers quickly copy the leader and let their arms relax in their chairs, sit back, and trance out. They become the living dead, just like the presenter. With the arms hanging down and the body still, a person's heart rate, breathing rate, blood pressure, and levels of oxygen to the body and

brain can decline quite rapidly, taking the brain's electrical activity to a state dangerously near the theta wave rhythmic cycle of sleep. The voice follows and drops significantly in tone (another nonverbal indicator of the meaning behind a message). This deeper voice then tends to drop even further at the end of each thought, and there are only three reasons for such a downward intonation: sleep, depression, and dormancy.

What do we mean by this?

If we look at the origin of the word “credibility,” we find it derives from the late twelfth century Latin *credo* meaning “I believe.” It is a feeling, an internal state. We project credibility onto others. So the question is, how do we persuade and influence others to have belief in *our* abilities and to join with us in a relationship of shared virtue—to let us be their trusted advisors? Because from this position, you can drive value-based sales conversations with the buyer efficiently; that is, with shorter sales cycles.

Way of the Dragon

Not only does your posture generally create a sense of credibility, but also the way you move that posture gives others a sense of your creed—what we should believe about you. This in turn can attract others to relate to you—or not. Of course, we know that the posture to use in order to deliver a sense of calm and assertiveness is open gestures around the navel area, that is, the TruthPlane. Keeping yourself just a little in front of the Door-Plane keeps you in a calm and assertive position—neither passive (way behind the door) nor aggressive (way in front of the door). Furthermore, stillness is an indicator of status within a social group, and therefore gives others the idea that you are calm and assertive.

So often we might try to get attention by moving around and making as much noise (be it sonic or visual) as possible to gain attention; but instead let's try to harness the power of stillness when we communicate.

Try this now: Think of a part of your sales process and get a moving picture in your mind about how you feel you move during that part of the process. In your mind watch yourself as if watching a film, and take notice of how you move. Listen to yourself speaking in this film, and take note of the quality of your speech, of its speed, tone, and cadence. Now pause that movement for a moment (don't stop breathing in this film of yourself, obviously!), press Play again on the you in the movie, and try to control your movements with more of a sense of "flow," avoiding sharp or staccato movements.

Notice how this affects your voice and the way you are able to think. Do you find that you stand or sit with a feeling of more power and status when your movement flows? Are you able to listen better to others? If so, remember how your customers and clients are designed to mirror your clearest and most consistent behavior. If you think you are able to absorb messages better in this state, imagine how your clients or customers who join you in this stillness will more fully absorb the impact of your message, and how they can be more adaptable, more able to change their minds.

In 150 BC a Chinese Taoist, Ho Shang Kung, said, "A dragon is still, hence it is able to constantly transform itself. A tiger is busy, hence it dies young." When calmness in the body replaces tension, anxiety often drifts away and the likes and dislikes, preferences and aversions, wants and don't wants—which can arise out of anxiety and cause conflict between you and others in relation to you—often begin to feel less significant. And of course, within the anxiety-producing environment of a sales process (anxiety producing because we never know for sure if the buyer will buy or back out), in an effort to reconcile this inner conflict it is all too easy to end up trying to manipulate and cajole the world and events in an aggressive manner to suit your own ends. It can end up as the proverbial "hitting your head against the wall." Instead of aggressive manipulation, try to be still and to accept the situations and relationships as they are right now, knowing that these things can change of their own accord.

So if and when aspects of the sale start to move chaotically (for any reasons, be they good or bad), try changing your thinking and actions to match whatever situations and relationships are *constant*. While a sales situation can get exciting with new ideas and details, often the excitement can build so much that the transaction as a whole goes off-track. (Trying to

manage the smaller details can divert the course and put you into postures that put you at risk of losing the credibility you've worked hard to build.) A considered and powerful long-term reaction to the unpredictable can be a better strategy than constant hard changes, as on the tiller of a boat tossed across rough seas, where you force the journey against all odds. Stay centered when the relationships get tough, and be an image of calm water for everyone to gravitate and steer toward.

Chapter 5 Quick Study

Long-term, repeat sales and the “trusted advisor” status is the preferred state for many sales professionals. This relationship is one of *shared virtue*, where there is challenge, learning, and the opportunity to maximize potentials on many levels for both partners; or as some may call it, “win/win” or “Consultative Selling.” Getting this status is not just about having the right product, service, gap, or consultative questions; it is also about showing up with the right attitude, being able to demonstrate physically that you listen, are engaged, can take and work with criticism and manage many sides and factions within the stakeholders present. Be adaptable, calm, and assertive when many around you may be stuck or simply losing their heads under the pressures of coming to the right solution.

Just Do This Now

1. Find ways to sit with a client so that the two of you are free from physical barriers, for example, at the corners of a table rather than across from each other, or in a lounge rather than a boardroom. Look for third points of reference to direct any aggression toward.
2. Adopt the physicality of “listening” rather than “telling,” even if you are giving instruction, for example, open in the TruthPlane, head tilted to one side, gently nodding your head with a slight smile on your face.

3. Be quieter both in how much you speak compared to how much you listen, and how much you move. Bring the tempo of your movement down and make your movement more direct, still, and flowing (adaptable like water) rather than indirect, abrupt, and staccato—like fire.

Theory to Practice

Are you generally a good listener or a bad listener? Who taught you how to listen? Anyone come to mind as your role model for the type of listening you generally do? How good would that role model be at your job today?

Think of someone who would be or already is brilliant at your job. Watch her to ascertain what behaviors she uses that show she is listening. Practice, mirror, or model those behaviors when you are next in a sale situation, and note what effect it has on the feeling of the relationship between you and your client or customer. You can even ask, “Do you feel that I have listened to all you need to tell me today?” and listen and work with the feedback.

A Body of Knowledge

Michael Bungay-Stanier is the senior partner at Box of Crayons (box-ofcrayons.biz), a company that helps organizations do less Good Work and more Great Work. His most recent book, a collection of essays by thought leaders on Great Work, entitled *End Malaria*, raised more than \$300,000 for Malaria No More. Here he talks about how the body language of a coach can help you guide your clients more easily toward a consultative sale.

Body Based Curiosity (It's Not as Kinky as It Sounds)

As a sales professional, it's tempting to think that coaching is just another word for giving people the advice they need.

Sure, perhaps you're doing it in a more caring-sharing way than old school command and control, but still it's clear that the expertise is flowing from you to them.

If you're a manager or leader, it's giving the guidance to your team to help them do better.

If you're in the field, it's helping your prospects see the light.

But if you want to be a powerful coach, and in doing so engage those with whom you're working in a more focused, deeper, and less transactional relationship, giving advice is the last thing you want to be doing.

The fundamental shift you need in your behavior is this: less advice, more questions.

Or to put it another way: less expert, more curiosity.

What's great is, you already know this.

You already know that question-based selling works much more effectively than advice-laden selling.

The tricky part of it all is that you also already know how tempting it is to slip into advice giving, solution-finding and answer-providing at the slightest invitation.

So how do you manage yourself better to resist the lure of advice and ask more questions?

The Change to Make

Let's assume your body has two states of being. One is the Expert Stance, and the other is the Coach Stance.

The Expert Stance is the position your body takes when you're giving advice.

Your job is to notice what your own Expert Stance is.

Mine? I'm sitting more forward and more upright in my chair. I'm wishing they'd be quiet so I could tell them what they need to know. I'm in my own head phrasing the persuasive point I have to make. My right foot might be tapping or twitching. My hands are tense. I'm nodding in a pseudolistening sort of way that really means hurry up and shut up.

Your Coach Stance is the way your body is when you're curious.

You want to notice what this is for you too.

For me, it's sitting back in the chair, noticing the hypotheses and conclusions I'm drawing, but not acting on them. My hands are still and more relaxed. I might have my hand up on my chin, I'm breathing a little slower, and my feet are still and on the floor.

Your Body Leads Your Brain

We tend to assume that if we think a certain way, our body will follow along. But I think that if you strike a particular stance, your brain will follow your lead. So if you see the value of being more coachlike in the way you work, don't think about it. Rather, embody it. Put your attention on taking up your Coach Stance and maintaining it as best you can. You'll find yourself in a place of powerful curiosity rather than tiresome expertise.

Rona Birenbaum is a fee-for-service financial planner and the owner of Caring for Clients financial planning (caringforclients.com). She and her team provide independent, holistic financial advice that demonstrates care and provides peace of mind. She is a master in the communication strengths and the subtlety needed to help clients choose the best way forward for themselves financially. And she's a genius at doing this with life partners. Here she talks about just that.

Is It Hot in Here or What?

When couples meet with me for the first time to discuss financial planning in general, and our services in particular, I never know whether the individuals are feeling aligned or in conflict.

Sometimes the conflict is clear right away. “He likes to spend on cars and computer stuff and doesn’t care about saving for our future.” Or “She doesn’t appreciate how hard I am working. I’m doing my best.” Or “He thinks I spend too much money on the children.”

Other times it is more subtle. One person does all the talking, while their life partner stays silent, not agreeing or disagreeing with anything said. Until I ask them, “So, is that the way you see it?”

There Is Always Tension

There are few topics of conversation more sensitive than money. But there is always tension of one kind or another within the mind or heart of any prospective customer.

That’s because there is rarely only one person involved in a purchase decision. Even when one individual has the final say on whether to purchase your product or service, there are always others who need to express their support either directly or indirectly.

What’s Your Objective?

Be honest. Do you just want to make a sale? If so, you can simply ignore the tension and steamroll toward it. Or do you want to use the product that you sell or the service you provide to enhance people’s lives (including your own)? That approach will define you as a valued supplier or trusted advisor over the long run.

Creating the Environment

My goals when meeting with clients in conflict are that they express themselves without fear of judgment, acknowledge each other’s perspective, acknowledge shared values and goals, and agree to work together on those common goals.

To achieve this, I try to maintain a relaxed and open physical demeanor. It helps me keep my mind open and listening actively. I sit in my chair and assume a relaxed, open position that leaves space for conversation. If there is a very reserved and potentially dominated individual, I will physically turn my body toward them and ask them to contribute. That tells the dominant person that it's "not their turn" and opens the floor for someone else. And the final point is I smile a lot, even finding the right moment for humor.

Nothing dispels tension better than laughter.

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6

Opening and Closing Acts

Sales Stages for Shorties

Put that coffee down. Coffee's for closers only.

— David Mamet

In this chapter you'll learn:

- The sales process as a three part story with a happy ending
- How to break the ice and not the china with customers
- Physical approaches to each part of a sales process
- Why being physical over the phone is attractive
- Not to overshadow prospective clients or your product

Many dramas have three acts: act one introduces the characters and sets the stage for the story; in act two the story unfolds, creating dramatic tension and intrigue; and then act three brings the story to its resolution. Within this structure there are comedies, where everything goes horribly wrong in the middle, but in the end everything comes right; there are tragedies, where the tensions throughout inevitably lead to bad, bad endings; and there are heroic adventures where the trials that appear destined to fail are fully overcome in the finale.

Like all of these dramatic cycles, many in sales would agree that their cycles are full of drama too. They transition from act to act and stage to stage, with each element of the journey playing out a predictable set of objectives to be achieved and obstacles to be overcome in order to get the desired ovation (the sale!) at the end of it all.

How you present yourself in each of these stages needs to align with those objectives to overcome the obstacle. Your *character* in all of this is

the way you behave—the choices that you make in the situations of jeopardy presented to you. Your behavior under pressure determines the character (e.g., hero, villain, fool, victim, healer, virgin, to name but a few) that your customers, clients, and team can perceive you as. Choose to take your clients through the wrong drama and you may find the only character to play is the fool. But choose to take your customers through the right order of events, and you will always find moments to appear as the hero to them. So let's set the journey with some standard steps in the buying process for you to align your nonverbal behavior with and to avoid the traps and pitfalls of becoming the clowns and villains of the piece.

The Sales Stages

Zeami, the Japanese classical dramatic writer of the thirteenth century, wrote that stories have a traditional three-part narrative progression: Jo-ha-kyu, meaning anticipation-release-payoff. Tension builds, bursts into climax, and finishes quickly. All of this has similarities to the Western concept of Aristotle's three-part thesis, antithesis, synthesis. And so it is no different for the traditional sales "rule of three" form known as Introduction, Evaluation, and Close. Every company or product can have subcategories to these three principal stages of the sale, but to all intents and purposes these encompass the mechanics of any sales process. Let's look at each one close up:

- 1. Introduction.** Like the first act of any play, its objective is to set the scene with the characters and context in anticipation of the conflicts that will unfold. For many organizations, the plot of this first act can include lead generation, where we introduce our company and offering to the buyer and try to make a connection that will trigger interest in evaluating our products or services against their needs. This act can also include our first meetings with the clients for the sale, during which the seller tries to identify the right allies for the buying side, and the buyer evaluates the sales team and begins to decide who is a friend, an enemy, or a dolt to be indifferent to.

Completion of this act signals the buyer's and seller's readiness to move to the evaluation stage. If either the buyer or the seller is left unfulfilled with respect to either trust or credibility with each other, then there is very little point to moving to the next stage of the story—it will not be acted with any vigor or heart, and undoubtedly will fizzle out of energy for the third stage and die before it gets there.

2. **Evaluation.** Like any good story, this is where the most interesting action is released. Everyone gets busy looking at and focusing on the buyer's needs and comparing the options available to the customer's obstacles. As the story unwinds around the abilities of the seller's offerings to meet the buyer's needs, the end of this stage should see the buyer ready for some decisive action.
3. **Close.** Just as in the best plays, films, and books, the payoff leaves us in no doubt as to some of the most important elements of the relationship between the protagonists. This means the determining moment of "as much as a customer can shake hands and buy at the end of this story, he can shake hands and leave." Yes, bittersweet but nonetheless a decisive moment for all the parties. Unfortunately for badly executed sales cycles, this decision is often no decision at all, but an all too obvious outcome; but when there is a winner at this stage, it is in the stakes of how trust and credibility are paid off; and if not a sale this time, then there are still episodes or sequels in the franchise to play out over the long game.

So now that we know the basic plot, let's look at the ways to physically play each moment to maximize the levels of trust and credibility scored at each stage in order to improve your ratings and give you a competitive advantage. The verbal and nonverbal patterns and levels you are going to study here are all part of working toward Rapid Resonance™ between limbic brains.

Frankly, My Dear...

Take the example of a basic sale on a retail floor. Introductions in stores can follow a painfully consistent pattern—shopper enters the store and begins to

browse the merchandise displays, and eventually a salesperson approaches and asks, “Can I help you?” They might insert a “Hello” in front of the question, but regardless, the answer from the shopper is virtually guaranteed to sound something like, “No thank you, just looking.” The salesperson now walks away and “lurks,” hoping the shopper will change her mind and ask for help.

There are a number of possible variations to this introduction. The clerk sometimes becomes immediately discouraged and so disappears altogether, impossible to find when the shopper *is* ready to be helped—and in these cases the shopper in return often mirrors that clerk’s behavior and despondently exits the store and moves over to the competition. The key learning here is that the buyer and seller have not made a nonverbal or verbal “feeling” connection, and thus greeted and exited each other’s company, their reptilian brains categorizing each other as “indifferent.”

How can we change this introductory step, and how can we get from an indifferent category to a friend category? First, let us look at the initial greeting.

Toto, Did She Hurt You?

Generally, salespeople in these situations approach the shopper and position themselves close but in the visual periphery of that person’s “social” space (remember our discussion on territory in [Chapter 3](#), where this is a distance of 7 to 12 feet), or bolder still within the “personal” space. This can cause a natural suspicious “freeze” reaction in the buyer, ever so subtle, but it is there and you know you’ve felt it as a customer.

“Can I help?” the assistant then offers, usually winning the standard socially acceptable rebuttal, “Just looking,” in order to see if the potential threat will withdraw out of the personal or social space and into a more public domain. If the assistant backs out of the buyer’s “grazing territory,” then they can relax and continue to peruse if the pastures of the store hold any great resource. But if the seller approaches too aggressively, invades the personal or intimate space, and even ignores the “just looking” response, then the shopper assumes “enemy,” and this negative stereotype

initiates a primal reaction: the shopper flushes and flees the store (either feigning some acceptable excuse, for example, looking at his watch or phone and retreating out into public safety, or backtracking and browsing his exit out).

Worse still, you might have even witnessed customers leap across a store with surprise because the assistant has blindsided them (moved fast into their peripheral vision within the personal distance—four feet away) due to their focus on the shiny merchandise. These customers often show a primal and very visible and vocal response of surprise, fear, and social embarrassment—not a great combination to start a sale!

Test this out yourself by observing customers in retail stores: notice the attitude they have as they enter the store, along with their rhythm of movement—for example, are they direct and quick or perhaps slow and tentative? Watch the eye contact they make with the merchandise in the store. What is your innate and instinctual theory as to how safe or risky their experience is right now? And what changes when an assistant comes into sight and starts to talk with them? Is there a marked change in their behavior? Does their muscle tone get softer or tenser? Do they get good eye contact or look away? Make a study of the interactions between customers and sales assistants in various stores and think about the ways body language and the behavior of the sales assistant could be changed in order to improve the experience and “safety” of the customer. Or if the assistant is looking to make great connections quickly, what is he doing physically that you think is facilitating this?

I Believe in America—America Has Made My Fortune

What if the salesperson did not approach the shopper? What if, instead, the salesperson assumed an inviting, nonthreatening TruthPlane posture and stood in plain sight well outside of the customer’s social space when he appears? What might this feel like to a potential buyer?

Well, imagine that the sales assistant is already well in sight of the customer as he enters the store (yet not blocking the entry or taking up personal or social territory the customer may need to assess the goods). Imagine the shopper's reaction, seeing a salesperson standing there with an inviting come-talk-to-me posture? Maybe the salesperson doesn't do anything except smile when the shopper looks at her and subtly and quickly raises her eyebrows in the universal gesture of, "I recognize you." How will the shopper respond? It will be a friend response, or even a "potential sexual partner" response, depending on a number of other factors!

Now what if the salesperson then approaches the customer in clear view, front to him, calmly yet assertively so the customer views her as predictable and therefore nonthreatening (instead of approaching from behind and effectively "blindsiding" the customer—causing him to jump across the shop floor in surprise and fear and crash into the merchandise, as we've all seen on occasions)? The open body language, an "eyebrow flash" of recognition (read about this next), and a gentle smile—so as to say "All is good now"—while staying well outside of the customer's social, personal, or intimate territory—will inevitably draw the shopper to the salesperson, and the salesperson can now begin her communication within the social territory, with perhaps the polite, friendly greeting, "Hello, how are you today?"

This, by the way, is called by some in the field of psychology and communication a *phatic question*—one of the "customary" social niceties of casual interactions, not emotionally revealing and with a set social response: often, "Fine thanks. You?" We say these things not because we want to elicit a response, but rather because they smooth out any friction in our social interactions. They are at the low end of the vulnerability spectrum and thus polite territory to enter any conversation from the *perimeter* of the social space.

Rapid Recognition

The eyebrow flash or "rapid eyebrow raise" is universal (with some cultural modifications) as a sign of greeting, and is also used by

some primates as a social greeting signal. Eyebrow movements in general play a major role in interpersonal communication in a variety of contexts. Surprise—positive and negative, flirting, approving, seeking confirmation, thanking, emphasizing, expressions of indignation, arrogance, asking questions; and in some cultures rejection, disapproval, and as a signal for “No.” However, the eyebrow flash, specifically, is universally used as a way of expressing a “Yes” to social contact—either requesting it or approving a request.

Upon establishing visual contact, the head is usually lifted a bit and the eyebrows are then raised for approximately one-third of a second, while a smile simultaneously spreads: as a concluding gesture the person often nods. The eyebrow flash is generally used when some prior friendly relationship already exists and so will often not automatically appear when strangers are greeting each other. Therefore, we can see the power of performing this eyebrow flash gesture in sales situations where a feeling of familiarity is of benefit, and yet the two parties ordinarily are a long way off this in their relationship. Within this context, to express contact readiness and/or expressing some kind of assent or affirmation can bring huge advantage.

All We Want Are the Facts, Ma’am

One step deeper in but still in the Introduction, we get to a second level of vulnerability in any conversation, which is referred to by some as “factual” communication. This form of communication includes questions that elicit straightforward observations to which no strong opinions might be attached. You can see the benefit of this form of communication in that it can give you useful data that helps you move customers forward into Evaluation, that they are happy to give after some initial phatic communication; yet,

they are most probably still not eliciting information or opinion that puts them at any physical or social risk. In the same way, you would not wish to be closer to them than their social space at this point. For the interaction in the store, this might sound like, “Is this your first time in our store?”

I Drink Your Milk Shake! I Drink It Up!

With the answers to factually based questions, you are ready to take the customer into revealing his views and opinions around the sales situation. This is a level up on a scale of vulnerability and further along the path of potentially moving the customer closer to “clicking,” or connecting with you and revealing some evaluative data. The statements and questions you ask of the customer or client to elicit similar statements or questions in this same category are called “evaluative.”

In the context of the store this could sound like: if the customer answered that he has not been there before to your above factual question, you can move him on to the evaluative question, “So, how do you like the way we’ve set out the store?” And if the customer has been to the store before, your evaluative question may sound like, “Welcome back, what did you like the last time you were here?” As you can understand, there is increased risk for both parties around the answers to these questions, that is, the evaluation of the customer could be negative: “I hate this store!” or “I’ve actually come back to complain!” In asking such questions and making such evaluative statements, we take a certain risk because we may take a position that is potentially in discord with others. Even so, the risk can often be limited, or even the chance of negativity quite low (if he’s come back to the shop, it is hopefully because he wants to buy again!). The upside is that it elicits from the customer a movement toward expressing his values around the situation, and consequently moves you closer toward understanding his motivation for being in your environment today; that is, how he may evaluate the ability of the store to meet his needs, even though at this point you may not know exactly what piece of merchandise will fill that need.

The shopper and salesperson are now in the Evaluation phase of the sale, and the salesperson having achieved “friend” status with the shopper, can now take an active role in the evaluation and move into his personal space with a collaborative posture. Everything up to and including this point is essentially transactional—that is, communication that conveys *thought-oriented* as opposed to *emotionally oriented* information about the buyer. It’s only when we cross the threshold to the emotional that we can have more connected interactions and be more willing to make ourselves vulnerable to others, thus opening up our personal space to them. Emotional information flow improves our chances of building a strong connection between the seller and buyer, which is of course a major advantage to the selling process.

Many retail sales never get beyond the transactional points. The average store clerk tends to think her role is to support the transaction process and tell the buyer about the product he is interested in, or worse, just play “Vanna doing a fetch and display” role to the buyer’s selected items. However, many believe the salesperson has more to offer in support of the buyer and should seek to get involved in the shopper’s decisions and help him consider his options thoroughly. And this begins by understanding what the shopper is looking for, why he is looking for it, and how he plans to use it. This calls for better questions and active listening, laid out in [Chapter 5](#), to the responses.

It's Been Emotional

Let’s consider that our example store sells sports shoes. One sales process might have the shopper bringing the salesperson a shoe from the rack and asking for a size nine, wide, and the salesperson dutifully running off to the basement to find a shoe that matches the request. A more engaged process would have the salesperson asking about the shopper’s running habits, running style, past experience with shoes that worked well, identification of any issues around running, and many others. So now the salesperson is looking to make statements or ask questions that will elicit “emotional” statements or questions from the customer.

In this situation it might have the vocal quality of a questioning, upward intonation on the phrase, “How do you feel when you run?” Other nonverbal actions might have the salesperson look at how the customer walks or runs to identify pronation, supination, or any other foot stability issues. The retail salesperson could then describe for the shopper the types of shoes in the store that fit this profile, based on the abundance of experience she and her colleagues have built up from repeatedly asking these questions and observing the responses. All the while, the conversation has been conducted to reinforce the idea of this salesperson as “friend” and to drive up her trust and credibility quotient. With high scores, the salesperson has a good chance of hitting “trusted advisor” status to be able to make a shoe size, color, and style recommendation that will best suit the needs, lifestyle, and, most important, the desires and motivations of that shopper.

It is now time to grab some shoes and help the shopper try them on and validate the recommendations. Here is where the salesperson can enter the customer’s intimate space with the opportunity to touch (within the appropriate limits of the shoe trade!). Gentle touch can increase levels of the hormone oxytocin—known for its effect on a part of the brain called the amygdala to reduce fear, anxiety, and stress and promote social bonding. Once again, questions that elicit emotions from the customer are of benefit. “How do they feel?” And this lays the territory and pathway to the highest level on the vulnerability scale, and so the most important statements or questions to ask in order to elicit and stand a chance of aligning with the customer’s values. These are called peak or “self-reflective” questions or statements and elicit introspection. Remember that through all of these interactions it is critical that the salesperson maintain an engaged, supportive, and trustworthy stance during this “proof step” in the Evaluation stage.

I'll Have What She's Having!

Questions and statements that elicit introspection are essential for the proof stage of the sale, as they give data around the *values* and *beliefs* motivating the customer at this time. Self-reflective questions in the context of this

shoe store might sound like, “How do these work with what is most important to you about running?” The answers that can be elicited from such a question are close to the apex of the vulnerability spectrum and increase your Rapid Resonance with the client; and so, if the salesperson comes no closer than the personal space (no intimate space close-talking) and keeps her body language open, affirming and accepting the statements that come back, the customer is inclined to view the sales professional as a friend of the tribe, that is, a *supplier* to the values and beliefs he holds as most important, and thus driving the customer’s behavior toward the Close.

In all sales situations it is ideal to get the customer to agree to the hypothetical vision of buying the product or service before trying it out. The proof step should be one that confirms the recommended decision, rather than be the driver of which decision to make. In other words, too many salespeople—especially in retail, but not limited to that environment—depend too heavily on the product to sell itself. The reality is that the product will inspire shoppers to buy it only if they can see themselves using it. The goal of the salesperson, by actively listening to the triggers and motivation of the shopper, is to begin to enhance that vision of life with the product the shopper needs so as to make a closable buying decision. In the case of the sports shop, trying on the shoes is not about “Do I like it?” but “Is this shoe the one that will fulfill the objective of the purchase?” The objective could be a very emotional one, like, “Do I feel strong and fast in these?” If “Yes,” then the Close has written itself.

Thank You, Sir. I’m Glad It’s Off My Mind.

A retail Close, when backed up by a well-performed Introduction and Evaluation, becomes smooth and natural. If all your verbal and nonverbal communication has served to score high trust and credibility scores with the client, and a status as “friend,” then the buyer will want to buy from *you*.

Now, you can begin to assume a far more assertive, leadership posture with the shopper. It will be subtle, but at this point it is appropriate to move yourself in front of the DoorPlane—make space again between the two of you and lead him to follow you to the point of sale. You can build a certain

momentum on top of his inspiration to purchase. The customer is now clearly in a feeling of desire for the product or service, and needs to know the actions to take in order to Close. Simply help him by physically and verbally taking him through it. In retail, this can sound like, “Come on over to the checkout and let me wrap it up for you” as you move out of his space and make a direct route to the payment area of the store.

I Do Wish We Could Chat Longer

In contrast to the retail story, business-to-business (B2B) sales, though following the same basic structures, can quite often have some different dimensions. Physically the seller may travel to the client and often over long distances. And/or the seller can work more over the phone, or by other electronic communication methods. Mentally, the B2B buyer usually has some idea why she needs something and why she is talking to a salesperson, that is, the buyer should have no business reason to consciously browse. So the Introduction to a B2B sale can quite often begin on the telephone, where either the seller or the buyer has placed the call.

Maybe the buyer is responding to a lead generation effort from marketing, either directly or via the website. In any case, both buyer and seller in that first call are trying to decide if their relationship should begin to move forward now, or not. This is a difference from the retail sale, in that the B2B sale has an element of decision from both the seller and buyer regarding moving forward: in the first contact of the Introduction, both are qualifying the other. In order to find the right answer, it is essential to initiate an open dialogue, one based on trust. But does body language really matter when people are talking on the telephone?

For many people the response to this would be no, since how can body language be important if the caller can't see the person he's talking to? Well, of course as you've heard in earlier chapters, the primitive brain that evaluates us immediately as either friend, enemy, potential sexual partner, or as being indifferent to us, is looking out for nonverbal signals in order to make gut level judgments. And remember also, if the customer has insufficient nonverbal data to make a quick judgment, she will default to

the most negative viewpoint, that is, you become the enemy. So it is in our interests to give maximum nonverbal data across the telephone. Now, of course you can see the compromise already—telephone has no visual content, which of course an audience is usually mainly relying on in order to make its judgment, so we need to enrich the nonverbal data in the tonality of the voice and also enrich the words we use, giving them more emotional content and painting more vivid pictures of our physicality and environment, and an emotional relationship to the customer or client on the other end of the line.

We have all heard the comment that you can *hear* someone smiling—and it is true. If we smile, our voice is lighter and higher and conveys happiness. If we show anger on our faces, the muscles affect our voice too—it will be deeper and more stressed. Facial expressions affect our voice, and our voice transfers key parts of a message to help the receiver understand what is being communicated. Whether the conversation takes place on the telephone or face-to-face, the facial expression, which is part of body language, plays a major role in the communication process.

The pace of the voice of people who are angry may be faster than normal, their voice may be deeper, their words may be clipped and sharp, and their breathing will no doubt be faster, which will also have an effect on how the words were uttered. Quite simply, their body language will have a massive effect on how the words are said, and that contributes to the nonverbal data in the sound of the message transferred, because when people speak on the telephone, their body language will still reflect their mood and feelings. It happens unconsciously.

Breathing patterns play a major role in how words are spoken. As the air from our lungs is exhaled, it passes over the vocal cords, which vibrate to make a sound. For the exhaled air to pass over the vocal cords smoothly, the passageway has to be clear. Crunch your body, and the passageway starts to become restricted. Restriction starts to happen when we sit down. This is because our normal reaction is to lower our head and shoulders. Try this simple exercise:

1. Stand tall and upright so the air passage is open and say, “Good morning.”
2. Sit down and slump into your chair and say, “Good morning.” Can you hear the difference?

3. Remain seated, but sit up in your chair, look ahead, and say “Good morning” again. Can you hear the difference this time?

Quite clearly, the position of the body has a fundamental effect on how words sound. When we are slumped, the words have a downward intonation, which could give someone listening to us the impression that we sound unhappy, unconcerned, or even bored and uninterested. This may not be the case—in fact it probably isn’t—but that is the message the person we are talking to will receive. So, sitting with your hands and gravity in general in the GrotesquePlane when you are on a call—though perhaps more comfortable for you, as it takes less energy and maybe makes you feel personally more relaxed about the call—may have uncomfortable consequences for the client at the other end of the phone and therefore elicit a negative response. It will take more energy for you, but you will get better results if on the important sales calls over the phone you use the TruthPlane and the PassionPlane when you speak.

Because even a subtle physical impulse affects the vocal muscles to such a strong degree, when you use body language over the telephone, your audience can *hear* your intention more clearly; the key is to concentrate on physically projecting that intention rather than merely intending it psychologically.

Lead your audience members to become confident in you and in themselves by placing your hands and gestures open in the TruthPlane when you communicate with them, framing their access to your vulnerable belly area and bringing unconscious attention to it—even over the telephone—affects your voice in a profound way. And remember, when the arms hang down and the body is still, the voice follows and drops significantly in tone (another nonverbal indicator of the meaning behind a message). This deeper voice then tends to drop even further at the end of each thought, with a downward intonation that can easily signal sleep or depression if the voice is quiet, or aggression if the voice has volume.

The Dormant Sales Pro

If you wish to send a child to sleep with a story, just pitch the tone of your voice down at the end of each line of text, and start the next line at the deep tone you finished the last one on. So your voice drops down and down like a flight of stairs. The tone of voice informs the old brain that it is time to relax the body and decrease the breathing rate, heart rate, blood pressure, and brain activity.

Certain chemicals are sent around the body to tell the brain to start shutting down some of the nonvital functions, most importantly, the conscious mind. The child's skin begins to go paler and waxy in tone as her eyes glaze over and her limbs begin to go limp. You see, it is not the story that sends us to sleep, but the tonality of the reading that gives us the instruction at a deep, deep level. And we have all certainly witnessed sales professionals who have put both themselves and their audiences to sleep in seconds with their downward-inflected tonality.

The Despondent Sales Pro

Next we look at the *depressed* downward tonality of the sales leader who tells us, "It's been a great year," but in a tone that says, "I am close to hanging myself... Dump any stock I've previously sold you, right now." As Dr. Mehrabian's studies concluded, given a choice between believing the content and believing the nonverbal messages, the unconscious mind will go with the nonverbal as being more trustworthy. Once again, hands down by the sides is a surefire route to creating a downturn in credibility.

The Despotic Sales Pro

Finally, there is the *loud-voiced* downward tonality, which is more prone to happen when the hands are down at the sides and the body is pacing or well in front of the DoorPlane. Pacing up and down in the space creates the overconfidence of being a moving target and puts more air into the lungs; the brain functions better with more oxygen intake and processes some of the fight-or-flight chemicals, so as not to depress and poison the system. However, the extra air

volume in the lungs gives a loud, forceful downward inflection that can sound overtly commanding, especially when mixed with an adrenaline fueled attitude—a product of the aggressive “fight” response.

This may be acceptable to a customer who feels he is clearly under threat from somewhere else and can sense that dangerous uncertainty personally; such people will be attracted to a strong command structure in the tone of the voice. It will feel more certain and so safer. More often than not, however, in the modern sales world the commanding voice seems too aggressive and often just crazy. Trust disappears because the audience members cannot see for themselves the imminent threat to which the sales professional seems to be having a strong response.

The later stages of the Introduction and the second two stages of a B2B sale (Evaluation and Close) almost always involve multiple people in the selling and buying organization and can also often include more than one selling organization. They typically take multiple events, pass through many steps in each stage, and can require multiple rounds of decision making. From the perspective of nonverbal influence, the complex sale simply creates multiple circumstances where every lesson discussed so far in this book comes into focus.

Dealing with finding your winning body language among these complex situations is the work of the next chapter.

Chapter 6 Quick Study

Just as in any discipline, there are forms to follow, and sales has a simple pattern to it: the Introduction, Evaluation, and Close. Each of these steps in the sales process can occur within myriad places or times; however, the order is a principle, and breaking that order will undoubtedly break the

relationship you are building. As the pattern moves forward, so too does the relationship, along with the way you can nonverbally relate in the space with a client or customer. The Introduction should be social, the Evaluation can be personal and even intimate, and the Close has an opportunity to be executed in the social space, bringing the journey full circle.

Just Do This Now

1. During the Introduction phase of a sale, keep your relationship within the social space, in order to keep the client or customer comfortable with your presence and allow him to get to know you and your product without any of pressures of personal intimacy.
2. In the Evaluation stage, know that there is an opportunity to lead the client into discoveries around how he values the service or product, in order for him to be fully motivated to buy. You can often move much closer to the client physically throughout this stage or move the meetings to more intimate, intense spaces.
3. Know that your body language counts over the phone too. Use everything you know about *Winning Body Language for Sales Professionals* when you are communicating electronically too.

Theory to Practice

There are products and services being sold using nonverbal stories all the time. Indeed it has been found in tests that information-laden logical ads don't excite the decision-making part of the brain as much as nonrational, more emotional image-laden ads.

Think about how you would sell if you did not have to deliver any facts and could simply show action and emotion to your buyers in order to compel them through your behavior rather than convince them through your intellect. What would your pitch be like if you could bypass the rational analysis and appeal directly to your customer's emotions?

Now that you've imagined this, how much of it might you credibly be able to add to your normal pitches, presentations, or selling style in order to speak to their real decision brain?

A Body of Knowledge

Farrell Macdonald (farrellmacdonald.com) is a top producing Realtor with Coldwell Banker Terrequity Realty in Toronto. He is a master at helping clients make fully informed decisions by educating them—rather than selling to them. A warm personality and a witty presenter, he is loved by everyone who meets him. Here he talks about how he physically works a space with sellers to bring them the buyers they need.

Tall Orders

When I list a property for sale, I first need a tour of the home. The space is foreign to me, but very familiar to the sellers. Although my personal opinion is irrelevant, I still need to make observations and suggestions from a *buyer's perspective*. In other words, I am charged with a professional mandate in a very personal space.

The seller needs to be unthreatened by me. But since I stand six and a half feet tall, any conversation that follows the tour is best had sitting down! Not only is this more comfortable for us all, but it allows me to sense a seller's unspoken signals.

For example: restlessness or rigidity may signal reluctance or resistance to ideas for improvement from a buyer's viewpoint.

Sitting together also allows me to maintain appropriate eye contact—critical in any culture to establishing trust. And more important, this setting allows me to send some of my own unspoken signals. As Mark Bowden has taught: gesturing from the midriff (the TruthPlane)—revealing my vulnerability—allows my prospective clients to feel at ease and to trust that what I am telling them is true.

Most important, it also ensures that I remain to be seen calm and assertive. And even more important—a respectful guest in their home.

In real estate, the path from foreign to the familiar can be traveled without uttering a single word.

Michael Leckie (michael@leckie.org) works for the world's leading technology advisory services and research company. He is a business leader and quite a brilliant manager, responsible also for his group's talent development efforts globally. His personal mission is to make the world a better place to work and live—one organization at a time. Here he talks about how he purposefully constructs his environment to connect nonverbally with his prospects—even over long distances.

Physical Phone FX

Winning Body Language is something that I use most often when no one can see me. Working with people all over the globe, face-to-face meetings can sometimes be impossible. And yet it is often a conversation with me that can trigger a potential customer to buy, or not. So naturally I need to connect immediately—and over the phone.

I make sure I have the environment I'm calling from exactly how I would want it if the prospective client were with me in person—free of all distractions. Then I communicate in a way that is comfortable yet energized and always fully present. For me this is standing and using the TruthPlane. I am a former consultant, and I spent a lot of time at whiteboards. So I still do this when on the phone. I'll draw up simple diagrams and take the prospective client through the process step-by-step saying, "Picture this ... now imagine what I'm drawing right now ... you can see it in your mind right?" Then I will keep referring back to the picture, walking them quickly through what is relevant and useful. Finally I can take a quick photo of it with my iPhone and send it in an e-mail as a reminder of our conversation. All these things remind me that I am focused on connecting with the

prospective client and being awake, engaged, and happy to be right there with that person at that time ... even when I am not physically there at all!

Niki Winterson (nikiwinterson.com) was an actress and producer before becoming a top-performing sales presenter on the QVC shopping TV channel. She went on to head Theatre, Film, and Television at Global Artists agency in London and is now one of the United Kingdom's top talent agents as CEO of Wintersons. Here she talks about how she used her nonverbal communication to create a character to gain access to hearts and minds at home—selling to millions.

Physical Relations in the Home

Body language is an essential part of selling on TV. The audience's initial introduction to you is entirely visual, and it is therefore vital that they understand the message your body is communicating. A great deal of thought has to be given to how one can best use body language to sell a product, and luckily I have worked with Mark Bow-den, who is a careful and thoughtful guide; also, when I worked as a top sales presenter, broadcasting across Europe's shopping television, I personally spent a long time working out the best way of presenting both myself and each product I sold, in visual terms. As I developed my ideas, I began to study the performances of the other demonstrators and noticed that the most successful ones took great care of three special relationships:

1. Their relationship with the customer
2. Relationship with the camera
3. And most important, their relationship with the product

With your TV *relationship with the customers*, put simply, you're a virtual guest in their home. We know when we enter someone else's space that there are rules, and that we should show what we might call good physical manners. We do not occupy the space selfishly, for instance.

My manner on television was always that of someone who would respect your space, your home, and your possessions. In the first 20 seconds of any demonstration of the product, I would use small, contained, movements—not constrained, for it was important that I looked natural, but contained—so that mentally I didn’t look like the sort of person who would knock over your ornaments! I always sold “in character”—my technique was to create a persona which was basically the same as the customer—I was a hardworking housewife who used these products because they helped me run a busy life within a loving family. I would be sure to mention my husband and kids a lot in the demonstrations, because I knew from talking to Mark that when we mention something we really love, our body will communicate the truth of that feeling—and that was important to me, to establish myself as a person with “true” relationships, because if the audience were convinced of my sincerity as a person, they would be convinced of my genuine respect for the product too.

With the *relationship to the camera*, it is very important to think of the demonstration as a drama in which the product was the star or “hero,” and I was, in physical terms, the “sidekick” or guest star. It was a very important rule never to place anything between the product and the camera. Never lean over the product or place myself between the product and the live camera.

The third and most important use of body language is in the *relationship with the product* itself. The number one rule: *always handle the product with respect*.

I have seen funny, talented presenters who tried to be “pals” with the product and play equal status to it. This can make for fun television but generally sees sales fall. Put simply, the product has to be more important than the sales presenter.

To this end, a great technique I used was to make it a mantra that in physical terms, the product solves my problems. So, for instance, when talking about a labor saving product, I would always give the product what I thought of as “talismanic power”: when talking about the product, I would refer to it with a tiny nonverbal hint of reverence—head slightly inclined, hands together in front of me, not

in prayer but in deference. And when I touched it, a weight would fall from my shoulders. I'd stand straighter, taller.

Always think of yourself as a person whose problem—physical, emotional, domestic, whatever—could be cured by the product. If you think that mentally, your body language will communicate it in the subtlest but most powerful ways.

7

The Complex Sale

Campfire Signing

*There is never any justification for things being complex
when they could be simple.*

— Edward de Bono

In this chapter you'll learn:

- Whom to seat where at complex sales events
- To manage the environment to support the right meeting culture
- Simple strategies for building community around change
- Powerful positioning for introductions, presentations, and closings
- How a great comic leads the community to listen

A “complex sale” describes a sale in which the seller must meet the needs of multiple influences on a buying decision. This type of sale is most often but not exclusively found inside of business-to-business (B2B) sales environments, because one of the common attributes of a complex sale is that there are multiple people on both the buying and selling side. Either way, in a complex sale the buyer’s requirements are inherently complex, with multiple dimensions to be addressed.

Often, the buying decision will be mission critical, at least at the departmental level if not the strategic level, and so could involve significant change for the buyers. For many of the people on the buying side, the decision will influence their position in the company, perhaps even their careers. For the sellers, typically, each successful complex sale is a milestone in reaching their annual sales goal. In other words, the stakes are typically high for everyone. No pressure, then!

All Together Now

The complexities of these types of sales generally lead to long sales cycles full of meetings and conversations; these sales can last weeks, months, even years before closing. For some very large strategic complex sales, the account development will stretch across multiple complex sales cycles and closing events. In other words, if you do complex sales, you are a sales professional involved in these accounts for an extended period of time and so will need to get along with everyone while you try to achieve your goals — and they are going to need to get along with you!

In addition to taking a long time, these multilevel sales, complete as they are with the meeting of and working with lots of other people, mean that you need to work *within the tribe of the customer* to achieve your goals. The latter part is interesting because you are trying to be accepted into this tribe, at least temporarily. Consider for a moment that the goal of all solution sellers in complex sales situations is to achieve the status of *trusted advisor*. This requires that you fit into the social hierarchy of the customer's tribe. This credibility is earned through your insights, how you treat people, and the borrowed credibility that comes from whom you know in the organization, along with how the senior status individuals lend you their status as the process moves forward.

Ideally, trusted advisors have a status that inserts them into the social groupings at a level that helps them lead and facilitate the customer in making a decision to buy. The deeper you can create feelings of familiarity for yourself within these groups, the more likely it is that you will be seen as part of the tribe. Imagine the potential influence on your sales goals if you had a matrix of contacts within your customer's tribe who saw you as part of the team working toward *their* objectives. From this integrated status, many different opportunities arise to influence the outcome of the sale. The value to a salesperson of being such an advisor is that you can work inside and outside of a tribe at the same time, which creates a fascinating perspective with multiple points of leverage to help move the sale forward.

In this chapter we will discuss how, through a greater awareness of the environments in which the many critical communication events happen in these long complex sales, a salesperson can increase the likelihood of being

accepted within the customer's complex organization and achieve the special status of trusted advisor needed to close successfully. Aligning your body language to fit within the complex groupings should become a key component of your overall sales strategy. It will allow you to evolve from a passive new entrant into a leader within the customer's hierarchical organization—guiding stakeholders to the right answers.

Supporting Your Sales Events Physically

The complex sale typically involves multiple people from both the buying and selling organizations, especially in the evaluation and selection phases. In [Chapter 5](#) we discussed some simple physical circumstances and how they affect relationships, and now we will build on those lessons within the complex sale context. As the seller, particularly the lead salesperson in a complex sales cycle event, you always focus on creating the right group environment to support your call objective, and on managing the space to ensure you have optimized the situation to support nonverbal communication that will help bring the attendees together with aligned collaborative intentions.

So when planning a sales event, it is essential to know your objectives. As obvious as this sounds, many salespeople do not give this step the care and attention it deserves. The clearer you are about your sales objectives in that call, the easier it is to create an effective plan. Also, the more you understand the buyer's objectives in the call, the easier it is to achieve those objectives, which typically in turn support your objectives.

In addition to the “published” meeting objectives, there is also a private set of objectives for the salesperson. These relate to: you understanding what kind of support you are gaining, testing to see if you are making progress, evaluating relationships, understanding the tribe, and setting up the sale for success. These objectives are often achieved by seeing how people work with you, with each other, the questions that are asked, the questions that are answered, and how everyone acts toward one another. The environment can have a significant impact on the achievability of these objectives: in managing the physical spaces to allow you to leverage your

awareness of how nonverbal communication can influence and persuade, you gain greater opportunities to put one more paddle in the water, giving more momentum to the certainty of closing the sale in your favor.

Spaces: Environments and Culture

The goal is to create a situation where the environment naturally invites people to feel connected and to avoid letting people fall into distributed positioning patterns that promote separateness or even confrontation. It is a dance, and the most important thing to remember as the sales choreographer is that you cannot let people know you are organizing the dance: who attends, the music, and the dance cards. The goal of the sales choreographer is to get all the dancers on the floor in the best place without their knowing they have been placed on purpose: it should all feel natural, as if the positioning is what any close group of collaborators would take with each other.

Before jumping into the specific examples, here are two spatial concepts for reference. The first concept is the idea of *triads*, and this of course leans heavily on work done alongside John King and Dave Logan, the writers of *Tribal Leadership*. They discuss the power of people working together in groups of three, a triad. The basic idea is that in a triad each individual is responsible for supporting the relationship of the other two. In other words, an individual's role is to work on helping the other two connect, communicate, get the most out of his or her interaction, and stay that way. Logan and King use this basic working structure as the fundamental unit to build a matrixed interconnected tribal organization that can work together, collaborate, and achieve great things.

This is a powerful perspective that helps the seller understand and accept responsibility for getting everyone to work together. The more you can set up physical spaces to promote a sense of triads among the people in a room, the easier it is to invoke the natural habits of the social (limbic) brain to draw people together. (We will look at how to build and integrate the triad formation shortly in the “Meeting Cultures” section.)

The second concept we would like to introduce is the metaphor of the “campfire.” When you think of a campfire, you probably think of a friendly, even familiar place. For most of us a campfire is a place we gather with only direct family or familiar tribes. It also calls for the idea of a central focus—the fire—around which the participants direct their attention. Some may even be assigned different duties related to the fire, from collecting wood, adding wood, and roasting marshmallows to singing a song or two for everyone to join in on the chorus.

Meanwhile, traditional business meetings and seating arrangements promote numerous opportunities to let people fall into antagonistic—or at least certainly less communal—position patterns. As a salesperson trying to enter a tribe and promote collaboration, these less communal position patterns are often counterproductive. The goal is to get everyone around the campfire and to bring the triads into place to ensure that everyone feels naturally pulled to work together.

The success of group meetings is affected by the size, furnishings, and environmental conditions of the meeting space. The furniture arrangement within a meeting space also affects the nature of interaction and participation among group members, which in turn determines the social influence of certain members of the group and ultimately how decisions are made. Seating arrangements are usually left up to chance, but where meeting participants sit can influence overall meeting effectiveness. There are some classic structures of the way you can arrange seating at a meeting. Just like the other behaviors, nonverbal communication and body language that we look at in this book, those structures create environments that promote specific outcomes negatively or positively toward the sale.

In many cases, as a salesperson, you do not have control of your meeting environment, but in some cases you do, and here are some ways you can positively influence your meeting outcome through environment by choosing a seating arrangement suitable to your meeting type. Prior to your meeting, consider the number of people and the level of interaction and meeting goals. Then match the seating arrangements accordingly based on the following cultural criteria.

Meeting Cultures

During the complex sale, people are going to come together and communicate throughout the sales stages and with objectives that relate to the demands of that stage. To support these different events, the salesperson will find himself inside one of three basic meeting cultures: Collaboration, Presentation, and Decision.

We call them “cultures” because the different meetings have different behaviors, rules, and customs that are naturally invoked. This is then complicated by the space the meeting is held in and the natural environment that space creates. It will be an environment that supports the culture or conflicts with it; for example, ever tried to use the corner of someone’s desk to create an interactive presentation when it is covered in reports and empty coffee cups? As stated earlier, unfortunately the salesperson often cannot control the space of the meeting, but regardless of that space, the salesperson still needs to attain the appropriate meeting culture to improve the chances of achieving the meeting objectives.

Let’s examine the meeting cultures:

1. **Collaboration.** When salespeople are working with the buyer to qualify an opportunity, activate a trigger, do discovery, or plan a buying process event, they are in this mode. Collaboration simply means an interactive process with people who are essentially equals working toward a common goal: let’s build this fire together. This meeting culture requires a high level of interaction, so the physical arrangements of seating must reflect *equality*. Equal contribution of ideas is easier when people are seated in a *circular* pattern: the campfire! Avoid positioning people in obvious positions of power, and instead seek round table arrangements that foster a feeling of contribution, collaboration, and community for all meeting participants ([Figure 7.1](#)).
2. **Presentation.** When salespeople are “presenting” to or facilitating an audience of buyers, either doing product demonstrations, PowerPoint, proposals, or making business cases, they are in the mode of facilitator with audience ([Figure 7.2](#)). As sellers, this puts you and your team in front of your audience. The goal, in alignment with gaining collaboration and connecting with the tribe, is to have these meetings as interactive as

possible. Presenters and facilitators need to move freely throughout the group, work one-on-one with individuals, and through hand gestures connect different “questioners” and “answerers” into dynamic triads, as introduced earlier in this chapter.

For example, when a buyer representative asks a question that the sales facilitator needs a supporting sales engineer to answer, the sales facilitator should position himself to form the top of a triangle: keeping his hands in the TruthPlane, stretching his arms out to form the lines of the triangle to connect the other two. Maintain this comfortable positioning throughout the dialogue, help them to connect and understand each other, and make sure the questioner is answered. The facilitator will be constantly creating these triads through the course of the presentation. Imagine the facilitator as a spotlight, constantly moving to bring different group members to center stage and make them look and feel good.

3. **Decision.** Meetings at which decisions have to be made are complex dances because the power in the room must always appear to be in the hands of the decision maker, but the salesperson, potentially with the cooperation of a buyer power sponsor, must lead the meeting to the decision outcome. It is a meeting where the seller may move in an instant from being passive, flexible, and receptive to assertive, firm, and projecting; and then maybe back again. It is an environment where all of the status earned toward *trusted advisor* must be used carefully. The buying decision maker must walk away from this meeting feeling confident and fulfilled, but at the same time the salesperson must get what he wants: a close.

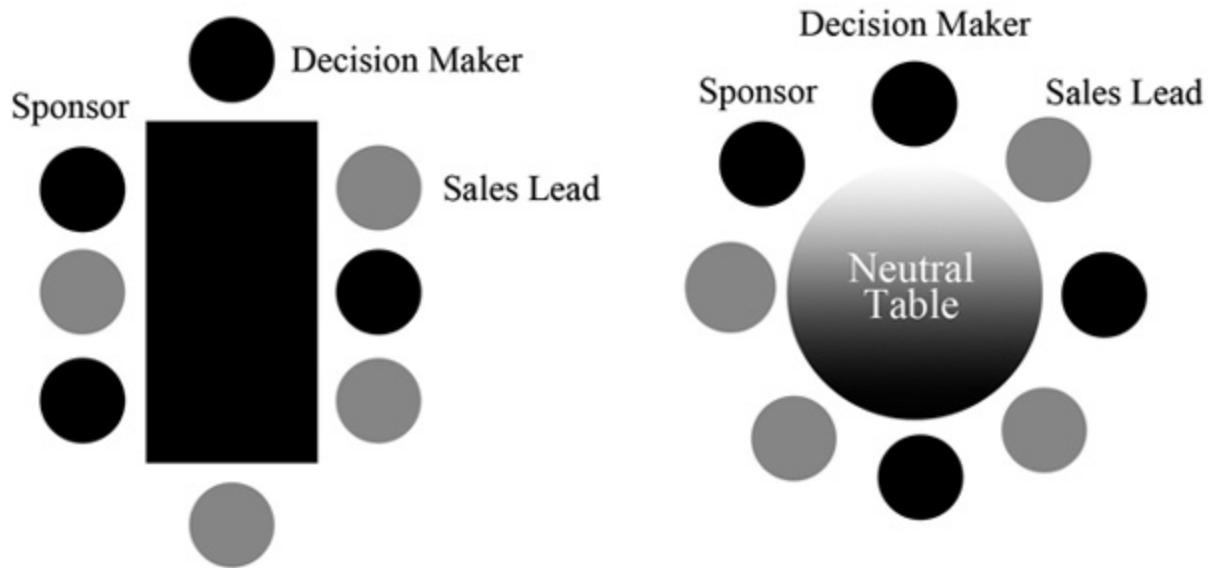


Figure 7.1 Collaborative Meeting Seating

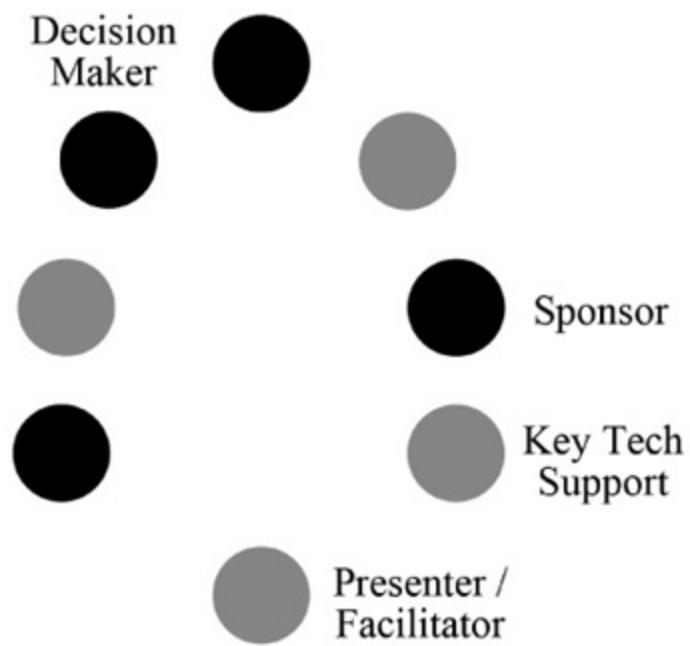


Figure 7.2 Presentation Positioning

Meeting at the Boardroom

In business environments the most common space for complex sales events is the boardroom or meeting room in the buyer's or seller's office. The boardroom table is an interesting environment that poses some interesting challenges. The shape of a boardroom table is typically rectangular, with single chairs at the head and foot and the same number of chairs along each facing side. This geometry has proven psychological impacts on how people interact. The control or power seats are at the head and foot of the table. People in these seats feel in control of the meeting, even if it is not their meeting. Side-facing seats are more peer-oriented.

Getting the geometry right to support a collaborative nonconfrontational environment becomes more complex with the more people you put in the room. Let us look at some combinations ([Figure 7.3](#)):

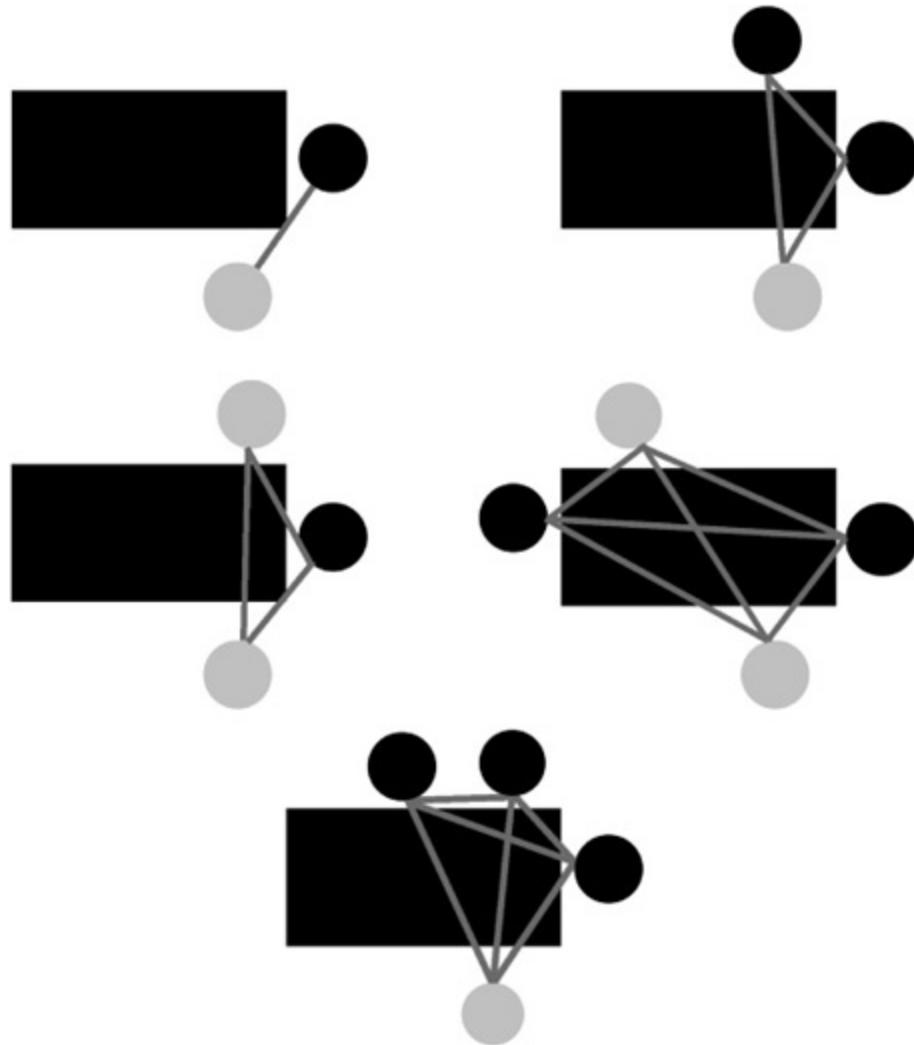


Figure 7.3 Triad and Campfire Settings

- **One-on-One.** Sit across if possible at a 90 degree angle to each other, although consider setting it up for the buyer to sit at the head or foot of the table. The reason we like this latter arrangement is that, although it suggests a power arrangement in favor of the buyer, it actually creates a body language opportunity to pull away from the table and offer a full torso view, but with security for the buyer at the corner of the table. The table and the buyer's position create comfort and a sense of safety; then, as you the seller pull back from the table, while sitting, you give the buyer the full inviting TruthPlane view of you. The table then is an anchor for the buyer, but not a barrier to you. Also, if you end up presenting anything, the corner of the table forms a natural point of a triangle to kick in triadic collaboration.
- **Two Buyers and One Seller.** Watch for a potential power play as to which one of the buyers may go for the head of the table. With the two buyers positioning themselves at a 90-degree angle to each other, on one corner side of the table, with yourself forming the third corner of a triangle, you have an instant triad to manage. Push yourself back just a little from your edge of the table and get in the habit of facing each person as he or she speaks. If the two of them are talking to each other, then you can engage in supporting their dialogue.

Another way to leverage this situation, however, is for you as the seller to take the head of the table if you want to position yourself as higher in the social ranking than the people you are meeting with, that is, because it is an early meeting with the goal to get to a higher authority in the buyers' company, or after coming from higher authority with a firm mandate (and it can even be a way of implying a firm mandate exists when it does not). But of course this is ultimately risky, with its high potential to cause discomfort for the buyers.

- **Two Sellers and One Buyer.** It is strongly recommended to invite the buyer to sit at the head of the table and have you and your sales partner sit on either side. The heightening of the buyer's status by positioning her at the "head" countermeasures any anxiety around being outnumbered.

- **Two and Two.** The natural tendency is to take the adversarial model and line up two across the table. Though this can work out okay, it is worth experimenting with pairings, buyer and seller on each side. This inspires a more collaborative approach. The feeling is a shift of focus to the speaker; so two sellers focus on a speaking buyer or two buyers on a speaking seller. The fourth person is in a comfortable position to observe and facilitate. Think of it as overlapping triads.
- **One Seller and Three Buyers.** Push to have at least one buyer in an end seat. One, this should indicate the power in the team. Two, it encourages more of a campfire model. Now the seller is just one more person around the campfire and can focus on all three buyers equally.

Work toward your preferred seating arrangement. It forces a change from the traditional “us versus you” boardroom sales environment. Your goal is to break down the power play and create a campfire model. These actions do not have to be overt; rather, they need to be subtle changes that allow all participants to see as much of each other as possible, which usually means minimizing the use of the table for defense. The table can be used for safety, but not defense. If you can get the triads flowing, rather than gang versus gang, and build a campfire environment that warms everyone up, you will inspire the meeting toward an aligned conclusion. The geometry will support the instinct for community and collaboration.

Power, Place, and Stanford

When it comes to examining the power behind exactly how you set up an environment in order to influence and persuade the outcomes, an extreme example is the Stanford Prison Experiment.

In 1971, psychologist Philip Zimbardo, former classmate of Stanley Milgram (who is best known for his famously shocking obedience experiment), was interested in expanding upon Milgram’s research. He wanted to further investigate the impact of situational variables on human behavior, so he set up a mock prison in the

basement of Stanford University's psychology building and then selected 24 undergraduate students to play the roles of both prisoners and guards.

The simulated prison included three six-by-nine-foot prison cells. Each cell held three prisoners and included three cots. Other rooms across from the cells were utilized for the prison guards and warden. One very small space was designated as the solitary confinement room, and yet another small room served as the prison yard. The 24 volunteers were then randomly assigned to either the prisoner group or the guard group. Prisoners were to remain in the mock prison 24 hours a day for the duration of the study. Guards, on the other hand, were assigned to work in three-person teams for eight-hour shifts.

After each shift, guards were allowed to return to their homes until their next shift. Researchers were able to observe the behavior of the prisoners and guards using hidden cameras and microphones.

While the Stanford Prison Experiment was originally slated to last 14 days, it had to be stopped after just 6 days due to what was happening to the student participants. The guards became abusive, and the prisoners began to show signs of extreme stress and anxiety. While the prisoners and guards were allowed to interact in any way they wanted, the interactions were generally hostile or even dehumanizing. The guards began to behave in ways that were aggressive and abusive toward the prisoners, while the prisoners became passive and depressed. Five of the prisoners began to experience such severe negative emotions, including crying and acute anxiety, that they had to be released from the study early. Even the researchers themselves began to lose sight of the reality of the situation. Zimbardo, who acted as the prison warden, overlooked the abusive behavior of the prison guards until graduate student Christina Maslach voiced objections to the conditions in the simulated prison and the morality of continuing the experiment.

According to Zimbardo and his colleagues, the Stanford Prison Experiment demonstrates the powerful role that the situation can play in human behavior. Because the guards were placed in a position of power, they began to behave in ways they would not

normally act in their everyday lives or in other situations. The prisoners, placed in a situation where they had no real control, became passive and depressed.

Theater Style

Typically, meetings with multiple participants on both buying and selling sides fall into the Presentation meeting culture, and often in “theater style” meetings. In the proof phases, and even the closing phases of a sales process, the theater style room provides a powerful setting. These rooms are designed, generally, to support the culture of presentation and interactive facilitation. In many B2B complex sales there will be demonstrations and presentations by the vendors. As sellers, this puts you and your team in front of your audience. If these meetings can be done inside of theater style rooms, it is a great advantage, as these rooms are designed to support interaction. Using the TruthPlane effectively in these spaces can help bond the facilitator and presenters to the audience.

Generally there are three types of Presentation (theater) configurations: boardroom, classroom, and U-shaped. In a business environment, U-shaped is preferred since it allows the facilitator and presenter to move within the audience area.

- The U-shaped arrangement promotes equality and participation. But if a Presentation meeting must use a boardroom, then try to turn the boardroom into a theater. The buyers should occupy the head of the table, and the sellers the bottom. The presentation materials, screen, etc., should be at the presenter’s end of the room. From this spot the presenter/facilitator can move and use gestures to promote triads and a campfire affect. For example, when a buyer representative asks a question that the sales facilitator needs a supporting sales engineer to answer, the facilitator should position herself to form the top of a triangle: keeping her hands in the TruthPlane, stretching the arms out

to form the lines of a triangle to connect the other two. Maintaining this comfortable positioning throughout their dialogue helps them to connect and understand each other and makes sure the questioner is answered. The facilitator will be constantly creating these triads through the course of the presentation.

- Classroom styles are risky, as they create an “us and them” setup that separates the facilitators and presenters from the audience. This is especially true if the classroom style has tables or desks in front of each row of seating. In these situations, place the visuals at the front of the room, and try if possible to keep a pathway open along either side of the seating. This can allow a facilitator to move up and down along the sides in support of a prime presenter at the front. It will create larger triads than the intimacy of the U-shaped theater but is one way to break down the “us and them” environment to support interaction.

The Office Meeting

The desk is the most obvious power symbol in any communication situation. In a buyer’s office, you are in the bear’s den; if the buyer is the executive, he’s a bigger bear. In this space the buyer feels in control and powerful. However, this can work in your favor (as the seller), as your buyer will likely feel comfortable, and as long as you work within the room’s context, he can actually be very approachable. This environment creates many interesting opportunities for body language:

- **Executive Office.** This is first denoted by its size. Next it might even be clean, as this is a thinking person’s desk. Finally, you might get lucky and be in with a real executive with a small meeting table with a couple of chairs. If this is the case, you are actually in a small meeting room not an executive office. These offices are sometimes used for qualifying, activating triggers, doing discovery, presenting business cases, and closing sales.

Part of this space is a personal office and part of it is a close social meeting space. And if it has large internal windows and the blinds are

open, it is now a public space! Be aware if you are invited for a private one-on-one, social meeting, or public performance. You also need to be adaptable for the proxemics and tribal nature of the meeting changing on a dime from a quick “get to know you” into a full-on public meeting. Always be prepared to move to a new stage in the sales cycle, relationship, or communication style to fit with the circumstance. In short: stay adaptable.

- **Contact’s Office.** The challenge with this office setting is usually its size. Unlike an executive office, these spaces are usually very utilitarian. Yes, they have chairs, but they are probably simple affairs, neither comfortable nor flexible. Typically between the seller and buyer there is a desk full of clutter. In other words this office is not designed for entertaining; it is designed for work. Sellers find themselves in these offices usually early in a sales cycle for qualifying and maybe even discovery.

A classic sign that a buyer is in the Choices phase of the buying process is a meeting that begins in one of these cramped spaces. You are entering the buyer’s work space because this search is a worker task now, not a strategic endeavor. This can be a difficult environment for a salesperson to feel comfortable in, as it screams to the seller, “You are wasting your time and not dealing with power!” The buyer is likely to be very comfortable, since he sits in that chair all day, every day. At this point in the sales process, where you find yourself in this type of office, keep in mind you want to connect to the buyer. Make sure you sit back from the desk, keep your posture strong and alert, and keep yourself in the TruthPlane.

Do not let the desk become a barrier or a shield. You are always working to create accord and take away discord. And although this may be contrary to some selling styles or sales strategies that recommend putting fear into the buyer, this is not the strategy here.

Fear Is Dumb

The methods of “selling to the reptilian brain” may not be as useful as you might imagine within a complex B2B sales situation. It is true that many decisions are based on fear, and the primitive, reptilian brain is particularly attuned to detecting fear. Yet in the case of a complex sale, instead of promoting fear, you should use your nonverbal communication to calm the reptilian brain, which affords you a greater opportunity for your ideas to make their way through to the buyer’s neocortex where complex ideas are able to be processed.

Chapter 7 Quick Study

A complex sale will often be “mission critical” to a business and could involve significant change for the multiple people on the buyer’s side. The decisions made could influence their position in the company, as well as their careers. For the seller, the sale could be a milestone too. Work toward your preferred seating arrangement. There are typically high stakes and high stress for everyone; therefore, your goal in meetings is to break down the power play enough to create a campfire model where the traditional “us versus you” boardroom sales environment is reduced, and the geometry of the meeting will support the instinct for community and collaboration needed to push a sale as big as this forward.

Do This Now

1. Work toward meetings with three or more in the room to create more community and stability around the ideas.
2. Create seating arrangements that push competing “gangs” into one community with an equal status among the members.
3. At decision points, mark out the decision maker with a high status position.

Theory to Practice

Before any important meeting, it is always worth spending a few minutes thinking carefully about the seating arrangements. The key to success is intelligence (getting all the data together and thinking about it); preparation (thinking and acting through how you wish the meeting to perform); and adaptability (being able to change as the environment around you changes). Here's one way to do all of this:

Intelligence. Get blank postcards and write the name of each participant (including yourself) on a card along with any important data about the participant that is pertinent to the meeting.

Preparation. Place the cards in formation as you think the seating should best be for the meeting to move forward the way you need it to.

Adaptability. Get a colleague in to look at the arrangement and to question you on the people, relationships, and rationale for the positioning at the meeting. Have the mindset to change things based on what you learn from your colleague's questions about the setup, and be ready to change things at the meeting too, for whatever reason.

Now, the only question left is how do you get everyone into these positions? Come early to the meeting with any materials needed for the meeting with the participants' names on the front cover. Lay them out in the arrangement required, and they are very likely to take the seats prescribed.

A Body of Knowledge

Jack Milner (standupanddeliver.co.uk) runs one of the United Kingdom's most innovative training companies and uses his background in comedy to help businesspeople move the stuff that gets in the way of communicating at their best. We all know a little

laughter can help seal the deal, and as Jack has said many times, “When they’re laughing—they’re listening!” and leading others to laugh can be a welcome relief from the leader in any long sales cycle. Here he talks about the three nonverbal ways a comedian wins the trust and attention of an audience and how this can relate to sales.

Comedy Body Language Wins Them Over

Just as a good salesperson takes charge of the “conversation,” so a good comic has to boss his audience and let them know he’s in charge. As soon as a comedian walks on stage, the audience decides on his suitability as “leader.” This is also true of the salesperson.

There’s a certain quality top comics have as they walk on that makes the audience lean forward in anticipation. You just know they’re going to be good. Conversely, and terrifyingly for any novices, the audience also knows if the comic hasn’t got what it takes. The buzz evaporates, there is a cold silence in the room, and as the comic opens his mouth, his words hang unwanted in the air before disappearing into an echoey void. And from that moment on, it’s going to be extraordinarily hard to win back the audience. This can be just as true in the sales conversation. Start off giving the wrong impression and there’s no way back.

So what is the good comic “doing” that is different?

I believe three things are happening here.

The first is the desire to tell his story. The good comic wants to be in the space. So in body language terms he is looking at the audience, walking forward toward the action.

The second is the building of instant rapport. The body language and face are “open.” Mark Bowden is much better than me on the specifics—but the comedian is, through open body language, building a connection with his audience.

Third, his walk reveals the style and personality of the comedian. We instantly “get” the comic persona through the rhythm he has

when walking on stage. And the authenticity of this is vital to the comedian's success.

The desire to tell a story, to be open and communicate a persona to the audience, means we trust the comedian the moment he walks onstage. And in the end we are much more likely to buy from the person we like and trust than the unlikable and untrustworthy person, however good the product.

Tamara Glick is the founder of Trademark Image Consulting (trademarkimage.ca) and has been working with individuals and corporate clients to develop their distinctive, authentic style for over 15 years. She combines her background in communication, fashion, and image with her corporate experience in advertising and marketing, and this expertise is sought after by the media nationwide. Here she talks about how to fit in at the top table with any tribe as a female sales professional.

Image Savvy Tips for Female Sales Executives

For as many options as there are for women's business dress, there are just as many pitfalls. The trick to finding the right balance of personality and professionalism lies in the ability to read the silent language of your clients' corporate cultures. Accurately reflecting this in your work wardrobe can simultaneously meet your clients' expectations and cause you to stand out from the crowd in the right way.

The Culture You're Working Within

- A sea of dark suits indicates a corporate environment. So, depending on whether skirts or pants are your preference, it's time to invest in fine quality items that follow ... suit.
- If women only wear skirt suits to work, you've found a traditional, formal corporate workplace. Pants are not unacceptable here, but look forward to knee-length skirts in flattering, business-appropriate styles (pencil, A-line, or fluted) with tailored jackets.

- Colorful, casual office? Inject personality into your outfits, and use creativity to set yourself apart. Up the ante with coordinated outfits in interesting colors, patterns, or fabrics.

Getting Dressed

- Find the “sweet spot”: this is the intersection of the Audience (to whom you’re selling) + Your Industry (what you sell) + Your Position (greater seniority = greater liberties).
- What qualities would be most relatable to in your position? Universally appreciated are polish, consistency, and professionalism. Begin here when building your work wardrobe.
- What’s your Style DNA? Adding a personal touch to your work wardrobe creates individuality, generates appropriate conversation, and can make you memorable among peers.

Winning Wardrobe

- **Nimble Neutrals.** Ensure consistency in your wardrobe by building around two classic neutrals that are great on you.
- **Mix ’n’ Match.** Choose a series of well-tailored pieces that create variety with a sense of cohesion.
- **First-Class Fit.** Reserve a portion of your wardrobe budget for professional tailoring to ensure an ideal fit.

Keep clothing freshly laundered and pressed. Check for wear on a regular basis, and be known for your attention to detail!

8

C-Suite Selling

Sight Beyond Sight

Treating illnesses is why we became doctors. Treating patients is what makes most doctors miserable.

— Dr. Gregory House

In this chapter you will learn:

- The new role of Complex Sales Professional
- How to walk through like a “Challenger”
- Provocative models for executive business-based sales
- Executive Presence: standout C-suite behavior
- When to ask and when to listen in sales

The Internet is changing the role of salespeople in the buying process. It is time to think seriously about what these changes are going to mean for all salespeople. This chapter will help you deal with how the Internet is changing the role of the B2B salesperson in the complex sale using your nonverbal communication.

Back in the old days—and they are not that far back, say the 1990s—salespeople had a lot more control within the buying process, particularly around information. The statistics say salespeople used less than 10 percent of the materials produced by marketing in their sales cycles. The reason for this is that in the complex sale, the salesperson was often shaping the company’s position and value into a context relevant to the prospect. In other words, the salesperson often had control of the message. What the customer understood about the selling organization came primarily from the salesperson, and often face-to-face. Salespeople were in control of the

message because they were the primary resource that customers turned to in order to understand the selling organization's offerings.

Today, the customer has undoubtedly looked at your website (2.7 billion people are Net savvy), where marketing's ideas are presented before that customer ever talks to a salesperson. In addition, before interacting with you as the salesperson, customers have probably looked you up personally on social media sites like LinkedIn or Facebook and already made their judgments about you. Finally, if there is anyone in the world saying bad things about your organization, they have probably heard all of that too. In short, the salesperson has less and less control over the message.

But this change in information, and to some extent power, is bad news only for the "product pusher" salesperson—or the old "brochure" salesperson. There are literally busloads of salespeople of this variety still trying to operate in this new "connected" and "screen-based" world, but they are an endangered species. Their primary value used to be telling the customer about the company's products and services, but this is redundant now. The Internet does a better industrial job of getting information across. This means that *you*, the salesperson, need to bring something more to the table, something of value to the buyer that they could not get from the Net.

Adapt to Survive

Some salespeople have no problem with the change because they have always offered more than product-centric information. These are the top producing *solution sellers*. They are the salespeople who engage the customer at the highest levels and offer real insights during the sales dialogue. They are also wired to challenge their customers' thinking, to open their eyes to unrealized opportunities or issues that the buying organization had not seen or believed were resolvable. Now is the time for these people. They are the fittest for the niche, and they will excel in this modern role.

The best description of the role this type of salesperson plays is found in the book *The Challenger Sale*, by Matt Dixon and Brent Adamson. These

authors do a great job of describing what the C-suite sale requires and how a Challenger salesperson meets those requirements.

To paraphrase their findings, supported by extensive study, the Challenger salesperson is a strategic thinker who knows enough about his products, customers, and the priorities of the C-suite, to have a business conversation of equals. In this conversation, Challenger salespeople can offer insights, make bold statements, and be relevant as advisors. They use these skills to activate triggers in their target clients for reviewing choices and initiating evaluations of options. These salespeople are also collaborators and consensus builders. They work within the buying organization to share their ideas, stimulate thought and discussion, and then rally the buying organization around an initiative. In short, they show up as trusted advisors, and everything they do in the sale reinforces that status until they have the credibility to lead a selection process.

The complex sale environment of the future (and many would argue the future is now) demands that the solution salesperson be a strategic-minded Challenger inside of target accounts. He must be able to take the messages of marketing, the results of a web search, and the buzz of social media and connect it all to the needs of the customer. His job is not to “show up and throw up” a lot of product detail, but to show up, show he understands and has information of value to customers by enabling them to achieve their business goals. The behaviors, habits, attitude, and processes of the very best salespeople in the past are becoming the table stakes for entry into complex sales in the future. To be one of these new breed of elite reps requires two things:

1. Understanding how to prepare for the key Power meetings
2. Understanding how to behave when you are in the key Power meetings

Chief of Concept

Strategic Selling, Advanced Selling, sometimes called Provocative Selling, is reserved for the boldest sales professionals. To be successful at it requires a combination of skills and attitude. These skills include a deep grounding

in the fundamentals of senior executive level business management decision making combined with master level selling skills. The attitude begins and ends with the confidence that you belong in that room because you grasp executive issues as well as they do and can truly contribute to moving their thinking forward. This type of selling is not for the faint of heart, nor is it a place you can pretend. This is serious business and demands the discipline in your craft found only in professionals dedicated to the effort of bringing all the elements together.

The critical moment of a strategic sales cycle happens when the salesperson meets with the key senior executive. This meeting is not a sales call or a closing call—it is a *concept* call. Your understanding and governance of “time” here is a nonverbal key to displaying your understanding and allegiance to C-level values. There is no time in this meeting for long drawn out discovery; this is not where the salesperson asks open-ended questions hoping the executive will “share the pain.” The salesperson shows up with a *hypothesis* that does things.

First, the hypothesis includes assumptions about the organization’s current state based on deep and extensive research. The salesperson must be able to reach into relevant facts that reflect where the organization is right now. Second, the hypothesis should identify the root causes of any negative implications in the current state, and the salesperson must present this “root cause” positioning in a coherent and credible way, while at the same time in a calm and assertive manner. And finally, the hypothesis must propose a course of action that will remove or otherwise remediate the “root cause” to create an improved “future state.” In the end it will all fall down, however, if the future state is not relevant to the goals, issues, and priorities of the executive’s organization. A well-executed strategic call ends with support from the executive for the hypothesis and agreed-upon next steps to either prove the assumptions or prove the solution changes, identify the root causes, and support the future state.

Captains of Industry

Thinking back to our stick figures in [Chapter 3](#), there cannot be any “sales stereotype behavior.” This has to be two businesspeople sitting down to a business conversation about their two organizations and how they can work together. The salesperson has to achieve trusted advisor status from the outset.

How, you might ask, is this different from any other sale?

In typical sales cycles, either the salesperson has an “offering” (a solution) and seeks to trigger the buyer to want to look at it. Ideally this looking begins with the salesperson and the customer doing “discovery” (research) to determine *the fit* of the solution and its potential impact. Or more typically, the salesperson learns that the buyer has already initiated an evaluation, maybe choices, and the salesperson is now in with all the other vendors. Either way, the salesperson asks for the customer to dedicate her time and resources to work with him to determine if the solution is the right one for the organization to achieve its goals.

In a Challenger sale, to use the language of Dixon and Adamson, the seller has already completed most of the discovery before meeting the executive. He shows up with the business case—he’s not showing up asking to build the business case. The call pattern shows the prospect, “This is your current state, right?” If the answer is yes, then, “This is what is causing this current state. Do you see it now?” If the answer is yes, then, “This is the desired future state and this is what should be done to get you from your current state to there, okay?” If the answer is yes then the Challenger can now facilitate discussions that start the Choices and Evaluation. The persuasive and influential structure that is being used to present here and build the business case we call the “PentaPoint,” and it can be set out in the following way:

1. Where are we now?
2. How did we get here?
3. Where do we want to be?
4. How will we get there?
5. What will we do first?

Note how the structure takes the buyer on a physical journey. It is designed to *facilitate the buyer toward* embodying the situation so that the buyer can experience it and be *moved* by the story. The salesperson needs to be both assertive and collaborative in presenting this story. He needs to lead, but as a “partner,” not a vendor. If you are going to meet a senior executive in a target client company in the hopes of creating a champion for your ideas, you have to bring that senior executive a business idea that helps her. And as such, this is a conversation that may never even mention your product, service, or offerings. This is a business conversation about the circumstances and opportunities for the customer’s business as it tries to achieve the goals of its strategy. Unfortunately for most salespeople, this is one of the most difficult things to do. Why is this?

Dead Set

Everyone, not just salespeople, everyone—CEOs, CFOs, project managers, through to frontline customer service people—struggles with a phenomenon you can call *Product Bias*. Quite simply, the Product Bias is like a filter over your eyes that obscures your view of the world (a neural structure in your limbic brain founded on values that keep your behavior in line with your tribe). This translates into the allegory of hammers and nails—if all you have is a hammer, then every problem looks like a nail. In the context of the Product Bias, the hammer is your offering and the nails are your prospects. In other words, your offering is always the answer.

The way the Product Bias manifests itself in sales and sales planning sessions is that the selling organization answers every question with a description of how its product would help. There are two problems with this bias: first, it sounds salesy and bores the customer. Second, it tends to limit the seller’s view of factors outside his solution; in other words, it tends to make it look like the answer is easy. At the executive level this draws suspicion because it demonstrates that the seller is just selling. The executive wants someone who can have a complete conversation about the company’s circumstances and who does not bring out a solution until what really needs to be done has been described.

These conversations therefore require that you display the body language of someone who is *suspending judgment*, that is, you have suspended your product bias for now and are open to all inputs, view, and attitudes about the ways to proceed. Ask yourself: “What would someone who has no bias to your product do? How would that person behave?” Now do that! It may look like clearing the decks of all materials about your product or service, or taking the meeting in a neutral zone, well away from symbols of your offering. You will of course keep your nonverbal communication open, calm, and assertive—in the right starting place for your prospect to understand that you are there to perform critical thinking with her, rather than touting your preformed opinions about the fit of your product or service to the problem.

Ford's Three Simple Questions

In November 2004, in the gym of a hotel in Jacksonville, Florida, I learned a valuable lesson I will share with you that unlocks the key to every sales conversation and stands today at the center of our sales consulting practice. First some context:

1. There was a TV in the gym playing CNN.
2. It was right after the U.S. presidential election in which George W. Bush won his second term.
3. I am Canadian and was wearing a Roots Canada T-shirt with *Canada* across the chest.

Early in my workout session I decided to try the hotel’s fancy bench press machine whose operation, in all honesty, had completely confounded me. There was one other person in the gym, a gentleman of 60 years or so, and he was kind enough to volunteer to show me how to use the machine. I thanked him and got to work on my sets.

A few moments later John Kerry, the loser in the election, appeared on CNN. The sound was down, as I recall, so I do not know what he

was saying, nor was I much interested in it or his demeanor. Anyway, the friendly gentlemen who had helped me with the equipment turned to me and asked, “So what did you folks in Canada think of the election?”

If Mark had been with me, he would have seen my “freeze” response. Some of you reading this now might be Canadian, or at least know one or two Canadians, and therefore it should not shock you to hear me describe us as terminally polite, and in this case I tried to be no different. I quietly replied, in a neutral voice, not wanting to offend, “I guess we were not too worried either way.” Ooops! This was pretty much the worst answer I could have offered.

The gentleman turned out to be a Baptist minister who proceeded to give me a 45-minute sermon on why this was the wrong answer! But the reason this event has stuck with me for so long is that the key fundamental principle the minister shared with me instantly became a cornerstone of my sales training.

He said, in all situations there are only three things that matter:

Why are we here? What is wrong? And what should we do about it?

This is a profoundly powerful set of questions, and it applies deeply to the complex sales model. If you consider for a moment that if you do not agree with the customer on why we are here and what is wrong, it is going to be really hard to agree on what to do about it.

With this attitude, you can bring them your analysis and the facts that support it. And here is the structured way to walk them through this challenge with executive presence:

1. What are you trying to do?
2. How are you doing it now?

3. What are the consequences of how you do it now?

And finally:

4. How would our offering dissolve some consequences?

Diving into the Deep

Researching the “what” answer should be the most straightforward. It can be found in annual reports, news announcements, speaking engagements by the executives, in company mission statements, or from industry research. The goal for your business case is to understand “what” the customer’s strategic goals are, how those goals are measured, and what the obstacles are to achieving those goals. One of the reasons that many complex solution sellers choose “verticals” is that it makes it easier to understand what different customers in that segment are trying to do; your conclusions are more repeatable, and your cycle time between target identification and completed research is shorter.

Once you know what your buyers are trying to do, you can begin your research to find out how they do it now. What processes, tactics, and strategies are they deploying to achieve their goals? The best source of getting this information is often by contacting people inside the target company at the operational or management level—but *not* the executive. The idea is to get your facts as straight as possible before reaching up to the executive.

Your research is complete when you can answer the first three questions: *What are they trying to do? How are they doing it now? and What is going wrong because of how they are doing it?* The next step is to form a hypothesis grounded in the how they do it now and how they could do it. Again, as much as possible this hypothesis should not make specific mention of your solution; rather, it is focused on the *how*.

For example, if a prospect company was dependent on seeing specific information in order to make key decisions and that information today reached the decision makers via a paper report that was compiled at the end

of every day, a consequence might be the timeliness of the information and the opportunity cost of the lag in that information reaching the decision makers so they could take action. If the prospect in this example said, “Yes, that is a problem,” and then expanded on the answer with examples of decisions that were delayed by reliance on the paper report, which had a clear negative impact on the business, the seller is set up to create a “What if” answer: “What if that information was available on your tablet?” The buyer can now imagine what the implications would be if the information was available in real time. This should lead the buyer to ask the seller, “How would you do that?” Now the seller can bargain for proof, and understand how the buyer would evaluate a solution. “I think we can help, we should evaluate it, but assuming we can prove it, what would be the process your organization goes through to do that evaluation?” In other words, we now have agreement with the buyer on what she is trying to do, how she does it now, what goes wrong, and how a solution could change or eliminate the consequence and get to a more desirable result. The seller and buyer can now collaborate on how to evaluate if this answer is achievable and is as good as it sounds.

The above example is pretty simple, and it would usually take more than one or two solutions to motivate a large sale, but the point of the example is to show the value of getting agreement on the *What? How? and What's wrong?* before collaboratively painting the solution picture. Finally, all of this stage setting should be done as much as possible without mentioning the offering; in other words, avoid that product bias. You are discussing an idea here, not selling a product.

Having a Balanced Attitude

The more congruence there is between the gestures on both the left and right side of the body and any words that are spoken, the less chance there is of misinterpretation, confusion, or cognitive dissonance. For example, if you stand and place your hands symmetrically in the TruthPlane and say the words, “You can trust me,” notice how steadfast and confident you appear, sound, and feel.

Now place one hand in the PassionPlane and the other in the GrotesquePlane and notice a decrease in credibility, as well as physically, vocally, and psychologically, when you again say, “You can trust me.”

Let’s test this out further on someone close by.

To experience for yourself the amount of confusion you can create by using asymmetrical gestures (different gestures on the two sides of your body) that have no relation to your words, you’ll first have to find someone to talk with. Look around; pretty much anyone will do. As you talk with this person, make sure your right and left hands are consistently at different horizontal levels. Furthermore, find as many moments as you can to change those horizontal levels. During this exercise, your hands should never be at the same horizontal GesturePlane. As you gesticulate in this way, see what happens to the expression of the person to whom you are talking. Notice how he relates to you both physically and verbally as a strong indicator of how well he understands the content that you are exchanging with him.

Because you have been constantly changing your gestures yet also keeping them asymmetrical, a huge amount of dissonance is created for your listener. No doubt you will have witnessed this confusion for yourself. Indeed, some of you will have noticed that the person with whom you were speaking actually took a step farther away from you (potentially showing an “avoid” response), and in some cases will have found a reason to exit from the conversation entirely. It is uncomfortable to be on the receiving end of a speaker who is using incongruent and asymmetrical gestures. However, not only is symmetry simpler and easier to understand in the body, but it also appears that humans prefer it and are more attracted to it.

Many psychological researchers now believe that symmetry is the secret to how we are attracted to form. Studies have shown that babies will spend more time staring at pictures of symmetrical individuals than at photos of asymmetrical ones. Among adults, it has been shown that when several faces are averaged to create a

composite, thus covering up the asymmetries that any one individual may have, these composite faces are deemed more attractive by more people. And numerous scientists in the field of biology have found that the preference for symmetry is a highly evolved trait seen in many different animals. Females from swallows to swordtail fish, for example, prefer males with more symmetrical tails.

The bottom line is that research shows that beauty matters; just look at any magazine stand and the number of beauty magazines on offer. It is no secret that beauty in all its manifestations pervades society and affects how we engage with one another. Bearing in mind the impact of symmetry on how we are perceived, we can help an audience perceive us at our most attractive by practicing symmetry in the body when communicating, giving us a true business advantage. And if, for any reason, you should ever wish to be off-putting with your body language, go for asymmetry.

Here is an effective way to see how asymmetrical body language can work to your advantage when you are communicating. Imagine that during a presentation, when you are talking about your competitors, you use positive speech but asymmetrical gestures. You can add some very complex gestures, both asymmetrical and shifting across all the horizontal and vertical planes of gesture. How does using this asymmetrical and complex nonverbal language make you feel about the credibility of the competition? If you want your audience to steer away from the competition and go with your business, even though you may be using positive verbal language, you won't be selling it for your competitors. You will in fact be creating a feeling of confusion around their offerings.

Now imagine that when you are talking about the product or service you are promoting right now, you switch your body language to symmetrical gestures in the TruthPlane. Can you feel how your content is elevated above that of the competition in the minds of your audience, although you were using complimentary verbal language while discussing both? By using asymmetrical and complex gestures, you can easily cause dissonance around content that you want to devalue in the audience's mind, and by using simple symmetrical gestures, you can promote ideas in an audience's mind.

Baited

There are three distinct stages to this sales process: Research and Consensus Building, the executive meeting to gain Power Sponsorship, and using the sponsorship to lead the buying organization through the Evaluation process.

Research and Consensus Building is about reaching into the organization to validate your hypothesis, gain support for it, and prepare to meet the executives. This phase is a little different from a sales cycle initiated by the buyer (as we looked at in earlier chapters) in that there is no formal evaluation. As salesperson you must gain access to this tribe, inspire collaboration, and lead its members to a deeper understanding of their situation. The calls and meetings in this stage require you to register as a “friend” with everyone you contact. Your body language needs to be collaborative and authoritative: you are not trying to be seen exactly as an equal here; you want your various audiences to engage with you, but you want their perspective to be that they are talking to an authority figure—more than a trusted advisor, you are a subject matter expert for a specific business solution.

Now imagine you are in the target organization, having your meeting with your first contact, and that contact suggests introducing you to someone else. You and your contact head to the cubicle of the other person for you to meet. Adopt the attitude of the person introducing you. Mirror his moves as you approach and enter the territory of the person to whom you are being introduced. Use your body language to raise the status of the person you are being introduced to, and as the conversation begins to develop, find ways to be open, calm, and assertive in your nonverbal communication. The start of the introduction will most probably have a two-on-one orientation to it. See how quickly you can open the orientation to the “campfire” or “triad” setting discussed in [Chapter 7](#) to create a sharing of status and rank, and build the feeling of a tribe.

Okay, your research is done; you have talked to a few people, built your consensus, found your sponsor, trust your facts, and you have your hypothesis: it is time to call or get a sponsor to set up the meeting with the big cheese! The average salesperson is terrified of going into the heat of the C-suite! Don't forget, the executive will smell fear! You will lose all credibility if your presentation is full of great ideas but is presented by someone who looks like a caged predator ready to jump the moment the bars are opened, or timid prey who knows he has ambled right into the "shark's cage." And to add chum to the water—these people are busy. Their time is valuable, and they and their organization cannot afford to waste it, so they may have little or no patience with salespeople making presentations from the product bias.

On top of all this, understand that many corporate cultures at an executive level do not openly use the language of problems, implications, or failure; they want to be seen to discuss opportunities, results, and success (even though their reptilian "problem/solution" brains can often be on high alert for threats and fixes). The first part should have come out of your research, and you use those insights to set the stage for a further conversation about alternatives.

Against the Clock

When this meeting starts, you have to be successful in the first three minutes or you will lose this audience fast. This means two things: you should rehearse your opening before the meeting, ideally with your sponsor in the buying organization that set up the meeting. The second is that you of course need to get your nonverbal signals in line to reinforce the message and establish your suitability. You are talking to this audience about its strategy; you have to look like you belong in the conversation and can deliver on the idea. The first piece is your responsibility. Now to the second piece: how to make sure your body language sets the right environment and helps achieve your goals of collaboration and authority.

Remember this checklist:

1. Be as *visible* as you can throughout the meeting: come out from behind furniture, computers, lecterns, coffee cups, pads and pens, and do not hide yourself behind furniture or props or behind your own limbs—uncross your arms and your legs and keep your hands away from your face.
2. Gesture predominantly in the TruthPlane: get your hands in open palm positions and your gestures in the horizontal plane that extends from your naval.
3. Keep balanced and *symmetrical*: keep your body and gestures as equal on either side of your body as possible. Keep your movements simple and uncomplicated. Be physically consistent: make your choice, make it bigger, and keep it tidy.
4. Be *predictable* and direct with your actions. *Slow down*, and move toward your objectives in a straight line.

All of these, as you know by now, calm your audience's primitive brain and allow the participants to open up their tribal brain to accepting you, and their logical brain to thinking through your thesis and proposition with an open heart and mind.

The Hive

Once the executive meeting is complete and you have buy-in from that Power Sponsor for your hypothesis, it will be time to prove that the solution can be delivered and will work. This will start to look like a regular complex sale evaluation except you will have a different status. In this case you should not look like an outsider trying to get in, but an inside advisor with sponsorship from the very top. This demands that your body language always engages, but also echoes that higher authority support.

Imagine you have a group of people in a discovery sales meeting. There are up to half a dozen representatives from the target organization. Your original sponsor is in the room from your consensus building effort, but the Power Sponsor is not. You, with the permission of your sponsor, will lead

this meeting. And here is where some really powerful nonverbal influence and persuasion is going to come into play.

The members of the tribe are “anchored” (attached or triggered unconsciously) to their leader (the Power Sponsor) by that leader’s nonverbal communication. And so it is the leader’s nonverbal communication you are going to mirror in this meeting in order to borrow her status, rank, or authority during your messages. Now, you are not going to do this in a blunt and obtuse way with some kind of badly acted mime, pastiche, or impression of the leader, because you don’t need to. What many in the world of influence and persuasion forget when it comes to what NLP might call “pacing and leading” or “mirroring,” is that for people who have their brain correctly socially wired—that is, their limbic brain is fully functioning, as it is with the majority of social humans on our planet—they are already mirroring the leader. That’s why the leader has accepted them.

So you are going to think about what you and your sponsor physically do when you meet together, and about whether your actions together are the same, similar, or resonant. Is there a speed and rhythm that you both adopt? Are there some specific gestures you both adopt? Is there a pattern of speech and tonality that you feel you both fall into together? Collect your thoughts and data around this, then decide which behaviors you can most easily control, and then concentrate on performing with these behaviors to the others in the meeting. You are finding the essence of nonverbal behavior. You are sensing and adopting the “archetype” of the group’s tribal leader and have her “spirit” in the room with you. In this way you bring the power of the Power Sponsor into the space even without the sponsor being there!

Chapter 8 Quick Study

Complex sales are evolving to raise the bar for all sales behavior. The days of carrying brochures and talking product are going to end soon. As a salesperson in the B2B market, you need to do your homework, build up a broad business understanding, and then develop expertise in specific

industries as they relate to the offerings you represent. With this foundation, you will then need to place yourself into the executive suite and behave as a native and a leader of the tribe. This evolution in the sales role is a great opportunity, but it will be an opportunity whose rewards are granted only to the most disciplined sales professionals who perform their craft with talent, skill, and deliberate practice.

Just Do This Now

1. In everything you do around presenting yourself at an executive level, including your nonverbal presence, answer the questions: *Why are we here? What is wrong? and What should we do about it?*
2. Present yourself with executive presence: be *visible*, in the TruthPlane, *symmetrical*, and *predictable*.
3. Mirror some nonverbal traits of your Power Sponsor that communicate her “essence” in order to communicate to others that you are conducting business with the Power Sponsor’s authority.

Theory to Practice

In tests published in the *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, looking at what can be called “the chameleon effect,” participants in an experiment who sat down to have a chat with an insider on the experiment were told to vary their mannerisms in systematic ways. Participants naturally copied the confederate—increasing some behaviors by an impressive 50 percent.

In the second experiment, the insider mirrored some of the participant’s body language and behaviors. Afterward, participants were asked how much they liked the confederate. When the body language was copied, “liking” for the confederate increased almost 20 percent.

Finally, the participants filled out a self-assessment questionnaire about their empathetic abilities. And it was found that regardless of their individual beliefs in how empathetic they were—the levels of empathetic behavior remained constant across the sample.

So it would seem that it does not matter how soft-skilled we think we are—we *are* naturally designed to copy others and like people more who are acting like us.

Given this, what could this mean to your business? And what can you do about it immediately?

A Body of Knowledge

Paul Nazareth is a charitable gift planning specialist with Canada's largest philanthropic advisory team in the Scotia Private Client Group (scotiaprivateclient.com/philanthropy). He has spent more than a decade working in charities big and small and is a master and a passionate advocate of networking. Here he talks about creating nonverbal affinity with major benefactors in a way that can serve the whole community.

Fund-Raising Isn't Always Asking

Much like sales, the world of nonprofit and charity fund-raising can look all about “asking.” Yet one of the key dangers to avoid is communicating with the body and tone of the “all the time ask.”

Too many fund-raisers who have climbed the ranks of the world of special events to mail and online fund-raising forget to “turn it off” when they get to the role of “major gift” service. Often these people are overexcited, their body language always slightly aggressive and hands constantly darting into what Mark Bowden calls it the “PassionPlane.” Which can be great when presenting to a large crowd, but not when sitting down for a casual lunch at a restaurant. Then, the questions became more like interrogations.

Instead, consider using those mirror neurons we are all born with. Meeting the donors where they are is a key to communicating for success in the leadership fund-raising business.

The best fund-raisers I have observed get into a state that is focused on listening and connecting. Their body language reflects this, leaning slightly forward but keeping hands in the TruthPlane, showing the donors that they are present and “with them.” And time and time again I have seen that gestures toward the body in the TruthPlane when speaking about connecting values builds trust and affinity.

People want to do business and commit with people like themselves.

Leah Morrigan is Canada’s first female men’s image specialist and is completely fascinated with men, their behavior, and their clothing. She is in the business of building confidence and inspiring professionals, politicos, and everyday Joes to be the best that they can be (transformyourself.ca). Here she talks about the three quick steps to making a great first impression at an executive level.

Top Drawer

As Mark Bowden noted in *Winning Body Language*, congruence between words and body language wins trust, and this includes grooming and wardrobe. When our visual attire is not in harmony with our words and body language, our credibility can be compromised.

Try to become objective about your appearance, and don’t be afraid to ask outside parties for their reading of you so you can get a sense of what you look like to others.

Tips for Sales Professionals

1. Before going on a sales call or meeting potential clients, research their corporate culture to understand their dress code and to

mirror them. When in doubt, remember that it's better to be overdressed than underdressed.

2. Spend as much as you can on quality wardrobe pieces and be sure to have each piece properly tailored to fit you so you feel at your best and most confident. It will show.
3. Wardrobe details that communicate professionalism:

- French cuffs and cuff links
- Polished shoes
- Pocket square/hankie

Remember, we have only one chance to make a first impression, and right or wrong, humans judge what they see.

9

Fire and Ice

Communication Technology and Collaboration

*It will be the same online as it is around the campfire:
if you can't tell a good story, nobody will listen.*

— Mark Burnett

In this chapter you'll learn:

- New technology challenges your trust and credibility scores
- Nonverbal communication skills necessary for success on screen
- Insights on new media to give you a competitive advantage
- Screen-based setups to benefit your body language
- The secret skills of the top TV sales presenters

It is always easy to spot people who are new to video calling: they look at themselves with a combination of fascination, discomfort, and sometimes naked curiosity. This is fine, but it is not helpful if you are a salesperson—you need to appear less involved with yourself and more involved with your potential customers or clients and their issues. Some will lament about how video takes away a convenient mask that they enjoyed behind the telephone or e-mail. But those of you who understand how opening up channels that suggest a greater “exposure” to the client may prove to be an advantage will already be experiencing the benefits of communicating with your customers via the computer screen.

The key drivers of sales success—credibility and trust—as influenced by your body language are ever present on screen too. Based on this understanding, it is obvious that the techniques already discussed throughout this book are just as applicable to a screen-based environment.

As with real face-to-face interactions, in virtual face-to-face meetings complexity increases as the amount of people involved in the communication increases. Yet in the face-to-face interactions talked about so far, we have kept proximity as a constant: always within public, social, personal, or intimate distances (anything from 25 feet to 6 inches). So now we are going to pull into focus the ever-increasing and more modern circumstance of communicating face-to-face but over distances that can be intercontinental, in many circumstances, within a global marketplace. This whole new layer of complexity that we need to deal with is both technical and psychological. Yet there are solutions to give you the competitive edge that are body based and powerful.

Increasingly, video broadcast is becoming available to salespeople, and it is a technology that really should be embraced. Why? Because like all good industrial tools, it offers significant opportunities to accelerate and increase the development of sales, and all for less cost. At the same time, video includes a number of risks that can potentially cause you more harm than good in achieving your goals; as with all technologies, there is a right way and wrong way to use it. This is great news because as video penetrates deeper and deeper into the communication practices of everyone, most salespeople who compete against you are never going to take the time (that you are taking now) to understand exactly how best to handle the tool. This means they will be making many of the technical and logistical mistakes (that you will avoid!) that impact the psychology of relationships, credibility, and trust negatively.

+ /Δ

You will most likely be familiar with company and product names such as Skype, Webex, Go-to-Meeting, Lync, Google Video Chat, and the videoconferencing offerings from Cisco and Polycom. All of these, in response to the inevitable penetration of video, have provided such communication wherever the Internet or other data connectivity dwells. If it has not arrived already, video is ultimately coming to your desktop soon, and in fact to all of your mobile devices as connection quality inevitably

improves and deployment costs decrease. As a result, more and more sales communication is already being done with video. So this is a great time to get yourself prepared to excel with this medium.

Technology is fantastic when it works, but as anyone who has beat up his computer keyboard when faced by the fifth crash of his PC that hour can tell you: when it doesn't work, it is painful and frustrating! In the case of video calls, technology not working is a big, big problem. Why? Because the goal of a video call, particularly in a sales situation, is to allow you to pick up and respond to the visual communication cues of the other participants. To do this requires that the technology be almost "invisible." Yet, unfortunately with video, if the quality is low, the technology becomes all you see. For example, we all know from watching a poorly synchronized broadcast of a film that if a voice is out of sync with the picture, you become very aware of it and this disrupts the flow of the story. Often, live video communication makes the claim that the higher the technical quality of the connection, the higher the social connection. And this is true, but only to an extent. An extent that may shock you.

Video So Sharp It's Like You're Somewhere Else

Many of the video services are advertising video as the way forward to creating the opportunity to be there—without being there. But in a business setting, this is not as important an advantage as we might intuitively think.

Distance collaboration (including how we are able to sell over distance) has been an area of research for many years as organizations steadily increase their use of technology to support sales efforts. And as we discussed in [Chapter 3](#)—on tribes, territory, and proxemics—the distances between people really do matter. So the questions are: what *exactly* matters about distance over screen-based communication, and how can you win an advantage from knowing this?

Well, recent tests looking at how computer-mediated communication technology affects collaborating partners in the three areas of *cooperation*, *persuasion*, and *deception*, as used over distance, *versus* communication within the same geographic location, indicate that over long geographic

distances parties are more likely to deceive, be less persuaded, and initially cooperate less with each other, as opposed to someone they believe to be in the same city. In other words, as a seller, the farther you are perceived to be from the buyer, the greater the disadvantage you have in a competitive sale. People like to buy local. It is an unconscious bias.

This is a daunting revelation, given that new technologies in communication are often in part designed and sold on the basis that they build engagement over distance. So it is important to understand as fully as possible exactly what is going on here.

Near and Far

The physical proximity of people influences collaboration: people located closer in a building are more likely to collaborate. Physical proximity increases not only the frequency but also the quality of communication among collaborators. It has been found in studies at MIT that in this respect, if you are farther than 30 meters from someone, you might as well be several miles apart. But does the amount of distance matter with computer-mediated interaction?

Of course, it is claimed that computer-mediated communication generates and regenerates community by bridging distances between people—and almost everybody who has a Facebook account would probably experience this as true. It has also been claimed that through computer-mediated communication, people can quickly find and develop commonalities between each other—and again anyone who has ever been part of an online user group or special interest forum will have personal experience that this is indeed true much of the time for many, many people. The benefits of social media are clear. But what the screen-based sales professional needs to understand is the negative effect on an interaction that distance has. As stated earlier, there are three ways that interaction might be affected by the distance between collaborative partners:

1. **Cooperation.** As the perceived geographical distance increases between collaborators, cooperation decreases and competitiveness increases.

2. **Persuasion.** As the perceived geographical distance increases between collaborators, their ability to persuade each other decreases.
3. **Deception.** As the perceived geographical distance increases between collaborators, their deception toward each other increases.

In short, the degree to which people bond with each other decreases as the perceived geographical distances separating them increases. Why is this?

Home Rules

Each of us partially constructs our self-image by associating with “our group,” our tribe. The borders and similarities that bind members of a tribe can change over time, but in general people who live and work within a mutually recognized geographic area will perceive similarity, and therefore ascribe more positive values to each other than to people who live *outside* those geographic boundaries. This does not necessarily mean they *are* similar, simply that we come to view our cohort in a more positive light, and superior to others, quite possibly because we desire to be viewed by those same people as superior too. The weird logic being: the brighter the other people are in my village, the brighter I must be too! And this is all part of what in social psychology is known as the “Propinquity Effect.”

Close to You

Propinquity (from the Latin *propinquitas*, “nearness”) is one of the main factors leading to interpersonal attraction and engagement. It refers to the physical or psychological proximity between people. So propinquity can mean either a physical proximity and/or a kinship between people, as well as a similarity in nature between things (“like attracts like”). Therefore, we see how two people living on the same floor of a building, for example, have a higher “propinquity” than those living on different floors, just as two

people with similar political beliefs possess a higher propinquity than those whose beliefs strongly differ.

Another propinquity effect is the tendency for people to form friendships, romantic relationships, or business alliances with those whom they encounter often. Occupational propinquity based on a person's career is also commonly seen as a factor in marriage selection. Workplace interactions are *frequent*, and this frequent interaction is often a key indicator as to why close relationships can readily form in this type of environment.

Now keep this idea of "frequency" in your back pocket because it is an important factor that we will use in order to counteract the negative effects of geographic distance in distance collaborations. Meanwhile, understand that propinquity can be about more than just physical closeness.

We're Always Bumping into Each Other!

Propinquity can also be about *access*: residents of apartment buildings who live near a stairway, for example, tend to have more friends from other floors than those living farther from the stairway. The more *exposed* you are to people, the more likable you become to them, possibly because your behavior becomes more predictable as more data is gathered about you than others, who are not so fully exposed. Remember that to the primitive brain that scans nonverbal behavior for threats and benefits, insufficient data causes a default to negative perceptions.

Daniel Kahneman, in his book *Thinking Fast and Slow*, supports this point too. He notes that familiarity breeds cognitive ease whether it is a person, idea, word, or object. "Good mood and cognitive ease are the human equivalents of assessments of safety and familiarity." Furthermore, it has been found in tests that through familiarity, the positive effects of propinquity can be increased significantly in as short a period as nine hours.

Yet one of the common assumptions around communicating over distance using an electronic medium is that once a communication channel is established, the immediacy of it (real time—just like face-to-face) gives

communicators in the “virtual meeting room” an equal advantage as if they were really face-to-face. No one would dispute that technology effectively bridges physical distance, but experiments fail to support that it instantly supports a connection of trust.

We Have the Best People Over Here

It would appear that we might generally evaluate the skills of those near to us to be superior to the skills of distant others. It would also appear that being in the same city as others promotes feelings of similarity. And if people intuitively know they are disadvantaged by distance—that is, ill-equipped to influence a “remote” person to form a favorable image of them—they may stretch the truth to compensate.

It is an assumption that video provides more opportunity for persuasion and should engender more cooperation and truthfulness simply because it affords more visual and verbal cues from a person than written text or audio alone. But there is a growing body of evidence that questions the behavioral effects of video interaction, and it would seem that perceived geographical distance has a profound effect on “likability.” However, the effects of distance can also change in proportion to the frequency of communication.

Stop by Any Time

The effects of distance are swiftly overcome through successive interactions over time. Although people initially cooperate less with someone they believe is far away, their willingness to cooperate increases quickly with multiple interactions. Let’s look at nonverbal methods for bridging social status issues that are inherent in communicating from a distant geographic location:

1. Raise the frequency of that communication over a day long period.
Instead of talking once, find reasons to sign off and then call back a little later to see each other and talk again, and again. The idea of being regularly interacted with, rather than a one-off now and then, will increase your familiarity, likability, and the sense that you are predictable.
2. Show in your environment an affiliation with the geographic area you are contacting. What can you show in the background behind you or during the conversation that is topographically similar to the client's location?
3. Show how your dress is aligned with the dress of the geographic location of the client and that it reflects the values of the tribe with whom you are talking.

Frequency, Fashion, and Fairness

If video communication could be as common an interaction as turning to someone in the same office (“swivel and talk”), then this could counter many of the negative consequences talked about so far. The opportunity of video is to build those everyday bonds; so if you are using video, maximize the effect by making the video a part of your everyday interaction with contacts and buyers. The more the buyer sees you, the more familiar you will become, and the more integrated the buyer will feel you are part of his world. This will create cognitive ease and help to build trust and credibility.

In the video, you also have the opportunity to dress as you would in your office, provided your office dress will not surprise your audience. If it is your home office, your pajamas are probably not the right choice. What we mean is that while you might dress in a suit and tie if you met face-to-face, this state of dress might look strange if you are video calling from your office. The simplest advice is to align your dress code with your audience, just as we talked about in [Chapter 4](#) on selling to the tribe.

Talk Good

In 2008, Joseph B. Walther (Michigan State) and Natalya N. Bazarova (Cornell), in their study “Validation and Application of Electronic Propinquity Theory to Computer-Mediated Communication in Groups,” established unequivocally that as communication skill increases, complexity of information decreases, bandwidth increases, and the perceived number of choices among channels decreases, the greater the amount of (1) psychological propinquity and (2) satisfaction.

Understand any of that? Well, this speaks to two issues in video communication about which you should be sensitive when planning how to use it to support your sales calls. The cited study above showed that the stronger your communication skills, the better you can do with any communication technology. The “bandwidth” speaks to the communication environment and the amount of information that can be shared through it. This moves through a scale from the best being face-to-face, through different video quality levels, past the audio of the telephone, and ends with text-based solutions like instant messaging and e-mail.

What the study proved was that there is a real risk in the propinquity and satisfaction of meeting participants who are using a lower bandwidth technology to join the meeting. This means that the experiences of people participating by video in a meeting that has other members of their tribe participating face-to-face are at risk. Those meeting face-to-face potentially may have an unfair advantage over those of equal status at a distant location. The same is true for audio participants in meetings where other participants are using video. For a salesperson this means, as the facilitator, that you need to take special care to bring those low bandwidth participants into the meeting interaction as much as is fair, possible, and practical.

Ford Goes to Sales School

On the first day of school in ninth grade I walked into my science teacher’s classroom and sat at a desk toward the back of the room. In walked what I remember as a middle-aged man, but he was probably

thirtysomething, and took a position at the front of the room behind a long platform. Behind him was a large blackboard the width of the classroom. After we pupils had settled in our seats, he turned quietly to the blackboard and drew freehand from where I sat what looked to be a perfect circle on the blackboard. The whole class was immediately transfixed; that teacher had our attention.

I am afraid that is all I remember, which is probably a partial explanation of how I ended up an arts major in college instead of a science major.

A friend of mine in the sales profession, one of the best salespeople I have ever known, would call this freehand circle a “parlor trick.” The thing about parlor tricks is that to be done to good effect, they need to look spontaneous and have a significant impact; but the reality is they are not spontaneous and the impact is planned by the “trickster” in order to get a preplanned result.

Back then it looked effortless, but now I realize that this teacher must have spent hours and hours in a classroom in *preparation*: practicing how to draw that perfect freehand circle.

If you are going to be successful with video in supporting your sale, you should similarly practice in this environment until it is so natural, it looks easy. Like an actor in the mirror practicing the subtleties of how to deliver to an audience, make sure you work with this technology so you are communicating with confidence and not allowing people to think you may be a novice. If you look unprepared and anxious, they are going to read your body language as untrustworthy, so don’t let newness to the technology impact your ability to connect and communicate.

Get the equipment up and running and prepare!

Lights, Action, Camera

Salespeople should pay special attention to the details of setting up the right environment for video communication. There is really no “in between” with these tools: they are either helping or hurting a lot. It does not matter the actual reasons why the tool fails or whose fault it is—the customer will always subtract from your credibility and that of your product and service around the communication breakdown—and it also does not matter what reason the salesperson tries to explain away the disruption. Take the time to test your systems in advance, and practice using them until you look comfortable, relaxed, and trustworthy, and you inspire confidence.

Set your camera up to show a full and comfortable view of your face. The obvious is to make sure it is not a half-screen; no one wants to talk to a “Kilroy Was Here” image. Try to make sure the camera is level with your eyes, since you want the buyers to be able to comfortably look *into* your eyes. Avoid having them looking down on you, or up at you. The first will lower your status, and the second will lower your customers’ status by giving you height advantage via the camera angle. Finally, set the camera to simulate a feeling of being within your personal space. You need to look comfortably close, rather than either “in your face” or distant.

With the end result in your sights of getting a feeling of comfortable intimacy with the prospects or clients, consider where you place their incoming video image. Try to line the image up close to where your camera will be focusing on you. This way, at the other end it will feel like you are looking into the camera when you are in fact focusing on their video picture. This speaks also to one of the most unique characteristics of working with video: the greatest challenge is to avoid distractions. It is easy when speaking over video to find yourself looking at other items on your desktop, or watching your own self-view in the video feed. Make a concerted effort to focus on the other party. Imagine you are looking directly in their eyes. Encourage that sense of intimacy, and encourage them to look at you the same way.

Practice in self-display like you would with a mirror. Call a family member or colleague and practice getting comfortable with video. Just have a friendly chat, or role play a business call. The goal is to get to the point where you are as visually aware using the video as you are face-to-face. Here are some other technical details to take into account in order to best capture your nonverbal performance and your trust-winning behavior:

- **Microphone.** Learn how to adjust your microphone on your PC with whatever video application you are using. Each technology is different, so it is worth becoming familiar with how to make adjustments before you are in the middle of an important call and scrambling to find the controls.
- **Speakers.** Identify where the volume controls are and determine how to make adjustments on the fly.
- **Headset.** A good compromise solution that tends to have fewer volume control issues is to use a headset. The headset is like a closed environment; there is less to go wrong.

And finally ...

- **Light.** If they can't see you, then you may as well just have a phone call!

What Your Face Discloses

Your audience needs to see your face to know exactly what you are saying! Audience members look at how the lips are moving in order to help them understand the exact words you're using and correlate this with the supposed meaning, getting a message that is congruent. If the message is incongruent, they will tend to go with what they see and use that to decipher what they heard, and they might well misunderstand or be confused.

Here's a lesson about head space for the sales communicator not only on camera but in real space and time:

Pants on Fire The mouth and jaw area of the head is the horizontal gesture plane of disclosure. If the audience members cannot see this area, they feel closed off, and therefore lack information. They can easily turn this feeling into the idea that the communicator is purposely withholding data, or, to put it bluntly, lying! Of course, it is not necessarily true that the sender of a message with his hands in this area is lying (to work that out would take far

more evidence), but that is often the feeling we get when someone speaks to us with his hands in this horizontal plane.

The lesson here is: keep your hands away from your mouth so that everyone can hear your meaning correctly. Conversely, you can use your hands up around your jaw and at mouth level to funnel the audience's vision toward your mouth and direct it to your speech. This would be a gesture of disclosure, seen as, "I am telling you everything." Try out this gesture for yourself: bring your hands up to your mouth level and use them to funnel an imagined audience into seeing the mouth area. Can you recognize how it quickly begins to feel as though you are imploring the audience to understand or believe you? You can also probably feel how quickly your energy (physical and mental) rises and becomes quite excited and frantic. Can you feel how your words might run away with you?

On the whole, gesturing around the lower face is to be avoided unless you wish to create a potential feeling of mistrusting the message. For example, try saying this with your hands in the DisclosurePlane: "I have given you our best price today." Remember that we believe what we see, so if you are covering the message, we are not as able to believe it. So now try the same sentence with your hands in the TruthPlane. You will instantly understand both the merits and the disadvantages of the DisclosurePlane from this exercise, and get a feeling for how using it—especially unknowingly—can create intense distrust in your customers or clients.

Read My Lips

To test just how much your audience relies on seeing your lips move to understand oral language, try this out on a colleague: chat with him and find ways to keep your hands over your mouth throughout. Notice how many misunderstandings occur and how frustrated your colleague gets because he cannot get the message since he cannot see the message. Now bring your hands down to the TruthPlane and note the relief in his face and body. He can now read your lips and see your intention in your face (as well as being assured by your gestures from the part of your body that engenders the most trust).

You may think that even the most naive sales communicator would not cover his face when he was speaking; however, you will notice, especially in long meetings at tables, that when the head gets tired (it weighs about 8 to 12 pounds, and the neck can get tired of carrying it), even a seasoned communicator's hands can easily creep up to the chin and the mouth to cup the head with elbows supported on the table to take stress off the neck, which is comfortable for the person holding her head up but very uncomfortable for the people who are trying to understand and communicate with her because they cannot see her words!

As ever, check out the performance of TV news anchors: when do they ever bring their hands up to cover their face when reading you the day's important news?

Chapter 9 Quick Study

The use of video in the sales function will continue to grow. Many people will assume, as with other technologies in the past, that they can take old habits into the new medium seamlessly, but achieving that will require dedication and practice. You will be able to differentiate yourself and your product or service from competitors in the market by working now at getting great with video.

There are risks and a variety of ways to get in trouble, so let these risks bite your competitors while you do your homework, so that not only do you avoid the same mistakes but that you use your communication skills to give your buyers an experience that separates you from everyone else by dealing intelligently with all the consequences of using this technology.

Just Do This Now

1. Work on building a stable video setup and environment and start practicing with it.
2. Make more video calls more often, especially to a new prospect.
3. Always appear via screen-based communication, just as you might if you were in the client's office visiting him. And just as you would do face-to-face, keep your hands away from your mouth.

Theory to Practice

Familiarity breeds ... engagement!

Think about all the reasons in an office environment you can “pop by and say hi!”

“Did you see the game?”

“Get that e-mail I sent?”

“You’ll never guess what I just heard?”

“Do you want to grab lunch?”

“I’ve got those details you needed and thought I’d just stop by with them. Got a moment?”

Now what is stopping you from doing this with your clients via video link?

Of course there may be some important cultural or logistical barriers, yet in some cases you could be acting more local even though you are in fact global, and winning more sales in the process.

Make a point today of acting local with one of your more distant prospects and see what happens.

A Body of Knowledge

James Lavers is the world's foremost expert in on-camera communication that gets the attention and action of your viewers. His Video Psychological Operations (vidpsyops.com) is the methodology of choice for celebrities, gurus, and corporations that sell on screen and want to be better believed and bought from via television or video. He has coached people like Anthony Robbins, Paul McKenna, and Wayne Dyer. Here he talks about making the first impression count on camera.

Video Psyops

With video and TV, your audience can click away in a cold second. So it's crucial you rivet your viewers' attention in the first few seconds. Here's how:

Mark Bowden's "symmetrical open gesture from the navel" is taught as standard operating procedure on my Video Psychological Operations course. Its trust-building power works when used in the opening seconds of any video, and for my \$5000 a day clientele, we add something extra.

It's called the "friendly predatory gaze."

Do this. Look directly into a mirror. Stand tall and upright. Now, remaining upright, drop your chin two inches toward your chest (about the length of your thumb) while maintaining a steady, even gaze. That's a predatory gaze, commonly used by mammals that organize themselves into hierarchies of dominance, such as wolves, lions, and some primates. Look at someone of the same sex like that for a while and they'll begin to get seriously freaked out. So to make it less threatening while retaining the "alpha" authority this expression bestows, we add three special ingredients.

1. First, turn your whole body at a 45 degree angle to the mirror, but keep the measured, predatory gaze. Okay, now you are not head-on—you pose less of a threat (hard for you to pounce at that angle!)
2. Next we add something really special. A smile. Feel it.

3. Finally. Breathe, for goodness' sake. This stuff doesn't work if you're uptight—and the quickest way for that to happen is if you don't regularly and rhythmically inflate your lungs!

Now put it all together. Open gesture from the navel with a smiling, offset, predatory gaze and just say: "Hi, my name's [insert your name here]." You're in! That's the first few seconds and most of the hard work done ... way to go!

Janine Harris (keyringmedia.com) is a producer, director, and editor with a passion for telling stories. With over 15 years' experience developing and producing for commercial, television series, and documentaries, she brings broadcast skill and technique along with web and new media strategies to telling the stories of business. Here she talks about how to rig your sound and lights to realize the best results from your screen-based relationships.

Son et Lumière

Most people tell me that when it comes to engaging in screen-based business communication, they can often overlook poor picture but if they can't hear it or understand what is being said, they'll tune out and check into something else.

When using a home video camera or computer, usually it's got a built-in microphone. To ensure that these cameras are effective for most uses, the microphones are designed to pick up as much of the sound around the camera as possible. Great if you are at your kid's soccer or a concert, or have the whole family around the PC Skyping with Grandma and Granddad. But if you are trying to make a video presentation and all your viewer hears is a big echoing room, or your neighbor's dog, or the hordes of people in the convention center, then that may not make the impression you'd hoped.

If you are shooting sales video with a home camera, or video conferencing with a laptop, here are a few ideas to get the very best from your setup:

- Pick a quiet space with lots of furniture and carpeting (to keep down the echo) but make sure the backdrop suits your presentation.
- In busier locations, keep the camera as close to you as possible. It may mean that you only see your face, but it will also keep your voice as the main focus.
- Whenever possible, try to use a separate microphone. I personally like a small lapel microphone that clips onto your shirt. It's designed to pick up audio all around (omnidirectional), but it works within a close proximity so you don't pick up all the noise in the room.

So if you are looking to purchase a camera for an upcoming video project or buy a new laptop for screen-based communication, pick one that allows you to connect an external microphone.

When it comes to lighting—less is more. Our instinct is to point every desk light at our faces so we will have the spotlight, but that isn't always the best solution, as it can cause harsh shadows. So before I look at adding any extra lighting, I first look at the environment. Where is the most light in a room, or where are the windows where there's lots of natural light? The easiest way to light yourself is to find one of those two scenarios. If you have lots of natural light by either being outside or with lots of windows, position yourself facing the window, then use a big piece of white cardboard to bounce light onto your face and erase any shadows that may be introduced.

Inside, we often deal with different types of lighting, like fluorescent or tungsten (regular bulbs). These two light sources actually change the color our eyes see on camera, so it's ideal to choose one or the other. Fluorescent is usually cooler (blue), and tungsten gives a warmer glow (red). Remember, always face your light source, and avoid light from behind, as that will inevitably make your face dark.

And while you are considering your environment, remember that viewers will always be looking at context, so while I discourage standing right against a plain wall (think mug shot), I also caution about too much stuff in the background—keep your viewers focused on what you have to say. Pick your environment to suit your subject matter, and if your only option is to shoot in your office, take a good look around at what's going on in the background—is your office clean, are you showing confidential client information, are there family photos in the shot, awards, your library, or pieces of art? Look at everything and make sure it matches the message you want to communicate.

10

Sales Intelligence

Managing the Technical Mind

Someone told me that each equation I included in the book would halve the sales.

— Stephen Hawking

In this chapter you'll learn:

- As the “technical resource,” how to reinforce the right message
- Ways to best interact with your technical resource in the sales call
- What to do if you are technically leading the meeting
- Body language for the professional “rainmaker”
- How to use the “YesState” to manage stressful sales situations

People are stubborn and we all get set in our ways, so it's no wonder we want to believe some of the popular business psychology that suggests our inclination toward either creativity or organized thinking is decided at birth. You will have no doubt heard time and time again about “right brain” versus “left brain” thinking, and the idea that “left-brained techies” are no good at the “soft skill” stuff. All they can do is fulfill a version of their genetic destiny by being introverted eggheads who either enjoy basements and *World of Warcraft* or write long and incomprehensible algorithms on the windows of universities while failing to form any kind of meaningful human relationship. Some commentators say we should accept as unchangeable our strengths and weaknesses.

Under this regime it is so easy to assume, dictate, and support the idea that technical people only want to be “correct” and tell the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth, and that those of us in sales need to be

“creative”—make up some “stories” with distorted and deleted data to persuade clients to buy. Assuming these two opposing views or value bases can lead a number of technical people to feel out of place in sales situations, causing some to communicate in an uncomfortable way. And it follows that many sales professionals can be led to fear, resist, or outright refuse taking technical experts into a sales call because they are convinced that a techie’s antisocial demeanor will “annoy the client and screw up my deal!”

It’s Like Comparing Desflurane with Propofol

It is easy to see the sales professional as inhabiting the realm of the smooth talking extrovert, being the life of the party; that work hard/play hard person with no fear of strangers, and the ability to make anyone feel comfortable. And while this stereotype may or may not be true, the world of sales is certainly dominated by people who appear socially comfortable and enjoy working with others, as in, “He’s a real people person!”

Meanwhile, technical experts who are so often essential (or in some people’s minds a “necessary evil”) to closing a complex sale are often seen as inhabiting a world dominated by loners and know-it-alls, either so inside their own heads that they can’t communicate at all—and bore you to bits, sending you to sleep—or so self-assured and full of their own gas that you wish they would please stop speaking. Unfortunately, many of these technical resources find themselves in aggressive sales situations, either as the “answer person” for tough questions or, in many smaller companies, as the lone salesperson themselves. (Indeed there are plenty of examples of successful technical experts building tech companies and initially handling every role that the business can throw at them. And plenty of examples of how these individuals failed ultimately to sell their innovations, causing the company to bomb.) However you look at it, it is easy to recognize how the pressure of a sale could quite easily cause the best of us to clam up or come out all-guns-blazing (flight or fight!).

Αερβαια Υδρα

The technical person in a sales situation takes many forms: the software developer presenting the application to the buyer for the salesperson; a technical entrepreneur who has invented a better mousetrap and now needs people to buy it; and a professional, like a lawyer, thrust into the role of rainmaker for her firm. And all of these professionals share one thing in common, the refrain, “I am not a salesperson” or “I don’t want to look or sound like a salesperson here.” And rather like the experts in hardware stores who, when you ask, “What tile would look the best for my kitchen?” say, “It is totally up to you,” this can be an annoyance. For many sales pros and clients, if you are not here to help, assist, or sell, what the heck are you here for!

Well, here is help. The goal of this chapter is to assist technical people in nonverbal communication techniques: how to survive, thrive, and become a trusted ally (rather than a misunderstood misanthrope) to the client. This will help you and your sales team as a whole in the sales situations you find yourselves in: Support, Presenter, Entrepreneur, and Rainmaker.

Support

The most common technical role in complex sales is the technical resource assigned to a salesperson to answer the detailed questions of the buyer. The technical resource should be primarily a proof resource; although, in some circumstances they are needed at the discovery phase too.

Discovery

The discovery call, also known as the “needs analysis call,” is the step after qualification. In these calls of the complex sale, the buyer and seller have agreed to review the requirements of the buyer in more detail in order to help her understand the situation and new possibilities. In these types of

calls the focus is on the buyer's current state, with an eye to identifying constraints in that state that are impediments to the business achieving its goals. A well-run discovery call will explore the current state in depth and then define a future state that will be made possible through the selection of the seller's solution and the collaborative implementation of that solution. Discovery calls are found in both the Choices and Evaluation stages of the buying process.

Discovery calls often include multiple parties from both sides of the buying decision, and here the technical resource is a second party on the sales side. In addition, as the sale moves forward there will often be multiple discovery meetings. Within this process the seller is not just trying to understand what the customer needs, but how the buying organization makes a decision. The latter calls for acute awareness of the people and their positions within the buying process. It also creates the opportunity for the seller to enter the tribe.

The discovery should be driving a deep sense of collaboration between buyer and seller. The more value the seller can add to helping the buyer see her situation and understand her opportunities, the more likely that seller can achieve the desired "Trusted Advisor" status. The goal of the technical resource is to substantiate the Trusted Advisor status of the salesperson. Imagine it this way: the buyer should walk away from a discovery event with a salesperson and technical resource thinking, "Of course that salesperson can guide us through these decisions; just look at the resource he brought for us today and how that resource validated us and our sales partner!"

The discovery call can easily be classified as the most critical event of the entire sales process. Done well, these events set the tone for everything that happens afterward. It is a great time to start collaborating because the focus is all about them, the buyers and client company as a whole. Get inside the tribe, gain status, be credible, add value, and build yourself into the trusted advisor here with a Power Sponsor, and it will be a lot easier to navigate the final stages of the buying process. If the sales team includes a technical resource, then the salesperson and technical resource should *synchronize their body language* to help both of them enter the customer's tribe. You know you have done this well when the buyer asks for the technical resource to manage the implementation.

Technical Resources in Discovery The goal of the discovery call, as described, is to explore deeply the buyer's current state. The technical resource can be a key participant in this discovery process. Often such resources are the best suited to have a deep discussion with the buyers about their current state. This is absolutely perfect, but there are some issues that can arise.

As a salesperson, it is important that you work with and rehearse your body language plan with the technical resource. This is to ensure that if you have two technical people in the room (your resource and that of the client company's) and one salesperson, the situation does not turn into two insiders and one outsider, which it can very quickly. While it is excellent that the technical resources from each company can be on the same page, if the salesperson becomes marginalized, this can potentially kill his status, and so severely hinder his ability to build and strengthen a relationship with the client company. The technical people are part of a tribe as well, and the technical selling resource needs to make sure to include the salesperson in his or her nonverbal communication.

This may feel like a tough demand for some technical people, especially if they do not think much of salespeople in general, and this salesperson in particular. Organizations would benefit from screening their sales supporting resources to ensure they can be inclusive of the salesperson, and vice versa.

The goal of the technical resource in the discovery phase is to raise not just their status, or their company's status, but the salesperson's status too. The idea is to help the salesperson attain the status of trusted advisor, and not have that status usurped by the technical resource. Imagine the following.

A salesperson and technical resource are presenting to a single buyer. The buyer is technically proficient, maybe it is a Chief Technical Officer (CTO) and this is a technology sale. The conversation quickly runs to questions and answers that only the technical people can answer. This creates a challenge because there is not a lot for the salesperson to say. But the technical resource should include the salesperson as much as possible. The technical resource should think of the conversation as a hot potato—she wants to end what they are saying and turn it back to the salesperson as soon as possible. And she can clearly signal this by turning as far as

possible toward her sales partner on the call, allowing the client or customer to understand unconsciously that the sales professional still has status in the room and is an important player in the conversation—even if technically he hasn't a clue about what exactly was said!

This helps create a call pattern in which the salesperson is still summarizing points and managing the segues in the call. Another way to accomplish this is to have a simple overarching context to the discussion: for example, your company might be *the* company for customer service, and you believe the key to customer service is based on fast turnarounds when answering questions, deep domain expertise to enhance the completeness of the answer, and consistent follow up to ensure that the answers ultimately solved the problem.

The way a salesperson can manage the segues is if one of these dimensions is the common jump-off point for the deeper discussion the technical resource is having. This way, when the technical resource finishes her point, she can turn the conversation back to the salesperson by connecting the point just made back to the high-level context. Now the salesperson can pick up the cue and reinforce the point that was made and why it matters in the decision the customer is making. With the next question, the salesperson can again turn to the technical resource and repeat the process.

This call pattern raises the status of the salesperson and keeps him engaged in the conversation. It has the added benefit that the salesperson is well positioned to manage the progress of the call toward the sales process objective of the meeting ... something that is almost impossible to do if the salesperson is sitting as a spectator to the conversation! And you know what that would look like: positioned outside the close phase of the social distance (more than seven feet) from the technical tribe, body too relaxed, body and head often turned away from the conversation, lack of eye contact with the customer and technical resource when they are speaking with each other; looks of anger, disgust, or contempt when the technical resource is speaking. Instead we need to see an engaged tension across the body, the body open and turned into the direction of the conversation, a light smile on the face when others are talking, along with a slight nodding of the head—remembering all the time, “My friend is amazing!”

Proof Presentations

The Proof Presentation refers to anything the sellers are presenting to the buyers to support that they are the right solution to enable the customer to achieve the vision created in the discovery process. This can take the form of demonstrations, customer reference visits, facility tours, and any other event that brings multiple people from the buying and selling organizations together.

These presentations can include multiple participants from the selling side and can include cooperative joint presentations with other participants, either vendor partners or even employees of the buying organization. In other words, they can look a lot like three-ring circuses. The more complex the situation, the more critical it is that you get all participants on the same page and orchestrate the event. This means you have to sit down for a clear conversation beforehand on the goals of this meeting, the parts you need to play individually, and how you are going to work as a team to achieve that result. And of course this means you are going to plan the physical operation of looking, acting, and behaving as a team—not only with each other but with the customer.

These events can be in a few different spaces: boardrooms, meeting rooms, occasionally theater/classrooms, and even be moving events in the case of tours and customer references. In some cases you could find yourself wearing overalls at an industrial facility, or even more robust protective wear at a secret desert test site! In all these cases there are many moving parts that the alert salesperson will be sure to choreograph to support all the principles discussed throughout this book.

Technical Resources in Proof

The different types of presentations discussed in [Chapter 7](#) are made during Proof, but the ones most likely to include technical resources are often boardroom presentations. In these scenarios, the technical resource will probably have to “drive” part of the presentation, particularly around the

details of how the solution would actually solve the customer's problems. This likely needs to be contextualized into the experience of the customer.

There are a few risks with a technical resource at the lead of a proof demonstration. Many organizations do not dedicate technical resources to full-time sales support; they are often a borrowed resource, taken from their regular duties of overcoming obstacles and troubleshooting problems inherent in the technicalities of the product or service being sold. This can lead to the "trainer" syndrome, where the technical resource presents to the buyer as a trainer, which is usually not a productive arrangement. It of course lowers the rank or status of buyers by placing them in a context of a "lack of knowledge." This is not training, and should not look like training. It should be a collaborative environment. How can you help?

Of course, if the technical resource is not accustomed to leading interactive discussions and is a "teller" by nature, then some intercession is required by the salesperson. Ideally, the salesperson and technical person would work together in advance to get the "drill" down; if there is no opportunity in advance for this type of preparation, the resource can be put in a position of being questioned by her own team leader and seeing her rank lowered in front of the new tribe (the client company). This risk is now fight-or-flight: the technical resource clams up or comes out all aggressive and arrogant.

In these situations, the better choice is to try to work with the physicality of the situation to make sure that you—the salesperson—can orchestrate the event from the sidelines with body language and nonverbal communication. Remember, the whole point of the training in this book is to help you control the environment in order to control the psychology and thus the outcome of the sale.

Consider this scenario:

The technical resource has had a lot of sales training, especially using *Winning Body Language for Sales Professionals*, and can easily use great nonverbal communication to support the feel of an interactive environment and move the meeting away from a lecture. In order to mitigate loss of status around a lack of technical knowledge on the part of the customer, the resource might take the meeting away from the boardroom tables and sit in a more casual interactive environment, perhaps like the U-shape (Presentation positioning) facilitative environment described in [Chapter 7](#).

The resources could have the body language of their “coach” persona—alert to the customers’ views, forward and interested when they speak, displaying open body language to the answers they give. They look to be listening more than telling—head to one side and nodding gently. The resources share technical materials with the client as they go through figures or diagrams, instead of a scenario where the client sits behind a desk with the “school books” being tested by the technical expert.

And now consider this one:

The technical resource does not do sales meetings often and has not had any training around *Winning Body Language for Sales Professionals*. As the salesperson, you will set up with the technical resource in advance on how you will handle the environment. As the technical person speaks during the meeting, you as the salesperson can insert yourself to the edge of the sightlines of the key decision makers. You are now in a position to intercept a question and shape it for the technical person, because many questions might have a deeper and more important relevance to the customer than the technical person will be able to see. For their part, technical people might have a tendency to accept a question at face value and start to answer. They can end up talking ad nauseum around fixing the presenting problem rather than addressing the real issue that provoked the question. Often, technical experts see themselves as part of a “doctor/patient” relationship and constantly try to save or heal the customer’s surface problems with their medicine. This can feel aggressive, arrogant.

If you want to know how that aggressive doctor behavior might appear, just think now on the most annoying doctor you ever visited and how he physically and vocally came across to you. Now think about the most helpful doctor you have ever visited. How did she greet you? What did she do with you? What was her rhythm of movement? What was her cadence or musicality of speech? And what was the impact of all of this on you? This is a clue as to how a technical expert can act to get the best out of someone who needs help making the right decision. And you can help your technical experts perform in this way too by getting them to think of this annoying doctor/helpful doctor imagery and getting them to physically (and vocally) perform their part as “helpful doctor” during meetings and presentations.

The great salesperson knows to be less of a doctor, more of a coach. The salesperson knows that many questions should be answered with a question that gets deeper to the roots of what is being asked. For this reason the salesperson should, as much as possible, be prepared to step in (calm and assertive) and expand the source of a question as needed. This means that the body language of the technical person should always show a strong direction toward the salesperson. Note that this is not out of some ego-driven demand for control, but because the role of the salesperson is to manage the process of getting the customer to decide to buy. The presentation is an important element in the process, but the salesperson must maintain the authority to move the customer forward after a successful presentation. If the presentation robs the salesperson of status, then it has not helped the process.

Smells Like Team Spirit

Technical resources are incredibly valuable in the complex sale. The trick, though, is for them to work together with the salesperson to choreograph their body language and the nonverbal environment to persuade and influence the buying process. The goal of these interactions is to raise the confidence of the buying organization in the selling organization. Buyers will judge the latter on how the salesperson and technical resource work together. Use the principles in this book to make sure your nonverbal communication does not contradict the words of unity and team spirit you are selling.

If possible, most organizations and sales teams should try to practice and rehearse their sales presentations together so that the interplay between them is seamless and helps inspire confidence. Like any tribe, they should spend time eating and playing together in order to unconsciously strengthen the bonds of trust. This *does* mean beer, pizza and bowling, paint-balling, Latin dancing, go-carting, pool parties, Twister, Buckaroo, and Jenga at the winter holiday party, or whatever you can think of that is *physical* and achievable by everyone once a quarter.

Trust is gained through groups monitoring each other's physical behavior over time, and especially in crisis. Games (ludic behavior, or "play") are one of the ways we achieve this drama theatrically or virtually, that is, without the risk of having to actually have a *real* crisis. It is essential for the members of any team to have times when they get to physically experience each other, as this will trump any intellectual experiences they have when the pressure is on. They will have fully sensed (seen, heard, smelled, and tasted) the strength of the team and will trust in the pleasure and security of being a part of this tribe. Equally so, you might immediately see the benefits of inviting a key client, or a prospect or two, to this kind of regular, casual team event, to bond them together with the whole crew.

Technical as Salesperson

Technical people end up in sales roles for generally two reasons:

1. They hit it out of the ball park as entrepreneurs with a great idea and suddenly find themselves in the new role of salesperson.
2. They have supported enough salespeople to feel they can do it too.

The instinct of technical salespeople is often to try to share everything they know. It is hard for them to resist the urge to speak from the product bias. This is especially true of technical entrepreneurs: it's all about the great new mousetrap!

So if you consider yourself a technical person in sales, you should consider using the knowledge and techniques in this book to slow yourself down a little bit. Stay in the TruthPlane and centered in the DoorPlane—calm and assertive. Do not overtalk the solution or your technical knowledge so you intimidate your audience. Your posture always needs to be inviting and engaging—open gestures, head tilted just a touch to one side, nodding gently now and again, and a light smile on your face. Practice listening. Learn to ask questions and listen for the answer. Use your body language to create patience in your listening. Think of the people you know

who you believe really listen well. Study their nonverbal communication and mirror that.

Clients need to trust your physical behavior as well as trust your words and knowledge: it is by presenting this total package of how you hold yourself that you will earn their trust, and not just with words and demonstrations of knowledge.

Bring in the Rainmaker

There is a changing of the guard in many of the old professions, like law firms and accounting practices. The old “rainmakers”—the partners in the business who traditionally generated new business by finding ways to connect with people in the market—are handing the reins to a next generation, and for many of these new partners the notion of selling and rain-making is a foreign concept. They see sales as something dark and beneath them and believe the customers feel the same way. But that does not change the need to generate clients.

The ubiquitous circumstance for a rainmaker is of course social engagements, like a cocktail party or industry networking event. For many professionals, these two circumstances can feel very awkward, and it shows. Here are some thoughts that can help.

At the “casual meeting,” not everyone is a natural extrovert, and it is all right if you are not one either, but you can still be successful by leaving the right impression to begin a relationship which will ultimately be a successful business relationship. The key is to understand the situation and then use the TruthPlane to manage the impression you make in that situation.

The situation is: the other participants feel the same as you do, a little cautious, feeling a bit out of their comfort zone. The reality is that almost all of them want to be in a conversation, at least in an interesting conversation. Yet sometimes they just don’t know how to start one. For many, a large casual meeting setting is a threatening environment. Our bodies want to freeze and then want to hide.

This reaction, as we've already seen, physically realized, puts you in the category of "indifferent" for others, and for some bullies makes you akin to "prey." It creates a posture that will inspire people to stay away, or for a very few to pick on you. Scan the floor of a trade show for displays of these natural instincts, and you'll see how often the people in a trade show booth and in the aisle want to talk, but their body language drives them apart. Or in some cases those perceived to be weak have been pounced upon in a conversation they do not want to be a part of, which will not lead to a sale of any sort. The predator has found easy prey rather than finding the bigger, healthier animal or pack that he really needs to track and befriend in order to get the resource out of them that his company needs in order to survive.

To be successful at a casual meeting, think back to [Chapter 6](#) and the retail sale. Success in these circumstances is about opening yourself up and being approachable and nonthreatening.

Imagine you are mingling for cocktails at the end of the first day of a three-day industry event. You do not know anyone. You are nursing your drink. (Not building up liquid courage, but rather you are now in the room ready to meet people.) Have your drink at belly height—in the TruthPlane. Have a gentle smile on your face and use this tool: accept everything.

How exactly do you "accept everything" with your body language, you might ask? Well, it is pretty simple, and the effects are astonishing. You must put yourself into what you can now call the YesState.

Remember, the human mind is naturally programmed to assign a negative perception to anything that is unknown: this is a primal survival mechanism. And this perception is reflected—it *shows*—in your body language when you come across an unknown entity; for example, somebody in business who is new to you, or even somebody whom you know but who has a new idea. Even somebody who is known to you and has a known idea that merely has some element of unpredictability about it will be met by our primitive brains with some element of negativity. Instantly your brain goes, "Uh-oh! Oh, no!" and alerts you to a potential problem within the interaction, and this alarm frames the whole communication.

When you respond to an idea or a person in a way that gives you pause, your audience can see the elements of resistance in your body without your

having to say anything. (Remember that potentially 55 percent of the feeling that people have about another person's intentions is based on what they see, and they can detect every nuance of movement, tension, and rhythm in the other person's face and body unconsciously.) When you are resistant to a new person or idea, that person can tell something is wrong, but he is left to wonder what the problem is: is it the way he looks, his ideas, what he said, or how he carries himself? It does not really matter, because your body language says that you don't accept him, and so for you, there is an instant drop in his status. And a perceived drop in status will most likely cause him to either withdraw or attack.

Either way, at a subliminal level you are no longer on ideal terms with your audience in the meeting, presentation, speech, or casual drink setting. You've lost your listeners, or even worse, if you are compelled to be aggressive toward them, they now mirror that, and feel aggressive right back toward you. That is a result of what you can call a "NoState"; this is our default state for most of the interactions we have. It's not a bad thing; indeed, it saves our lives on a daily basis. But it does not move us forward; it is simply trying to keep us stable. It does not allow us to take an opportunity by dealing with the risk in an intelligent manner.

The YesState™

In order to get into this nonverbal state of acceptance that can display a positive message to audiences of any size and help get a good conversation going at a cocktail reception, we are going to take on a mental attitude of acceptance and positivity. However, there is no great psychological preparation for this, only to review as much positive verbal vocabulary as you can think of. Here is some to get you started:

**Yes/okay/good/agreed/certainly/definitely/exactly/
sure/true/yeah/totally/always/by all means/tell me more/
you are right/of course/absolutely**

As you read through this vocabulary, can you feel the difference these words are making in your body? Can you feel how much more open you are becoming and the energy you are now emanating? Spin the words slowly through your head and enjoy what they do to the feeling of tension and rhythm in your body. Do you feel more open now?

The accepting attitude of the YesState projects out from the body by causing it to open up the belly and chest area to an audience, moving them full on to the audience to be seen. The belly tends to lengthen, creating a taller body figure, and so increases status, yet vulnerability, to the audience. This is a confident posture. The hands become more expressive and focus around the TruthPlane, and there is a gentle smile on the face and a gentle tilt to the head to show you are listening. The whole body is more compelled to move forward to an audience, gain greater proximity and so potentially a greater level of intimacy.

Walk the Self-Talk

Here's an exercise: take a walk around a public place with your vocabulary of pure positivity swimming around in your head. Make a decision to have these "yes" words as your inner monologue. Allow your internal voice to focus only on words that have positive associations of acceptance. Start with the word "yes" and then move on to as many others as you can; then just repeat the ones you like the most over and over in your head with no effort, because you need to also pay attention to how others react to what they see. Remember, you are reciting these words silently, but notice how others look at you more, notice how others seem more drawn to you, and don't be surprised if you get stopped and asked for help. Why? Because you now have the aura of someone who can deal with things! You look as if you are open and won't rebuff or judge other human beings. You are now someone people want to go to because you accept them—this is the YesState.

Reduce Your Threat

Why is this YesState so useful? Well, it can be surprisingly easy to threaten someone's sense of status accidentally. A status threat can occur through giving advice or instructions, or simply by suggesting that someone is ineffective at a task. Many everyday conversations devolve into arguments that are driven by a status threat (the desire not to be perceived as less than another). When threatened, people may defend a position that doesn't make sense, to avoid the perceived pain of a drop in status. For example, in most people's business lives, the question, "Can I offer you some feedback?" generates an emotional response similar to that evoked by hearing the footsteps of a potential attacker behind you at night.

And the opposite of this, and power of the YesState: one scientific study showed activation of the "reward" circuitry in the brain when people were simply given positive verbal input. This occurred when participants were told, "That's correct," by a repetitive computer voice. With the YesState, you don't have to verbalize the positive vocabulary, but only to let the internal positive vocabulary infect and be reflected by your nonverbal communication, which, as we've seen, is the communication that really counts when you are creating a feeling, positive or negative. And for those who fear that they will inadvertently give their workforce too much nonverbal praise, inspiring a parade of requests for promotions and increased pay, it is widely reported that because of the deeply rewarding nature of status in and of itself, giving positive feedback may in fact reduce the perceived need for a raise in salary.

Acceptance

The YesState will help you recognize that there is absolutely no downside to projecting a physicality of total acceptance to your audience in any

context. When your listeners first set eyes on you, their unconscious feeling should be, “I am wanted.” From the very day we are born, the thing we really need and even crave from others (once we have been fed) is the feeling of being accepted by them. To see in their faces and in their whole body that we have a positive place with them and that we are welcome is what we desire most.

If you can give people that feeling, then you are truly perceived as an attractive human to be around, along with all that you say and stand for. Watch the Hollywood stars on the red carpet: total YesState (the open body language, gentle smile, and tilt of the head as the paparazzi fire off a hundred flashes in their face and ask a thousand crazy questions). The most gracious and starlike of them accept us, their audience, even when we invade their space in a quite brutal fashion, and we love them right back for it.

So back to the networking session: keep in the YesState, open yourself up right into your vulnerable belly area—the TruthPlane. Nod your head and give a gentle smile, opening your eyes to all the information within that assault. Take your time and you will be awed by how others come over to you—nod their heads at your points and mirror your open body language back to you, quickly moving toward your side of things.

Chapter 10 Quick Study

There may be nothing more gratifying for those individuals who are in the engineering and technology profession than the recent massive growth of the importance of technology within businesses, and so sales. Yet a common characteristic among the technical crowd is often thought to be—apart from their strong technical background—that they do not have extensive exposure to the business, the process of sales or the people skills to bridge the gaps between technology and feelings around technology.

This may be true or not, but certainly it is a pervasive stereotype that always runs the risk of playing itself out regardless of the facts or the ability of people to change their point of view, choices, or behaviors. And this puts sales and business at risk. It is the job of a great sales professional

to lead the whole team in orchestrating the right sales experience for the buyer and client company. This means the sales professionals understanding their technical resources with an open mind and leading them by example in the behaviors of *Winning Body Language for Sales Professionals*, taking a coaching or mentoring role where helpful.

Just Do This Now

1. Review what you've learned so far from *Winning Body Language for Sales Professionals* and pick your number one principle, tip, or technique for winning trust with a client or customer. Now pass that tip on to the next technical resource you work with.
2. Lend your copy of this book to a technical resource you work with, pointing out the chapters you think have had the greatest effect on your performance in the sales environment.
3. Invite your technical resource out for some kind of physical activity, even if it is just for a short walk around the building to talk about strategy for the upcoming sales call. You will be surprised at the difference it makes to your relationship and trust to get physical with the people you work with.

Theory to Practice

It is easy to think of your “left-brained” technical colleagues as not wired for the “right-brained soft skills” needed to build the client relations to close sales.

But now think again. Your job is to rethink the behaviors you have seen in them and note the times when they have been soft-skilled and right-brained in a situation. Recognize the moments you have seen or heard them building relationships and building them well.

There are some functional asymmetries in the brain, and it is true that certain regions of both hemispheres are specialized for particular functions. But at the same time modern neuroscience tells us that all complex behaviors and cognitive functions require the integrated actions of multiple brain regions in both hemispheres of the brain. All types of information are likely processed in both the left and right hemispheres (perhaps in different ways, so that the processing carried out in one side of the brain complements, rather than substitutes, that being carried out in the other).

So even those technical folk who people may feel have no acumen for the right brain's relationships building in fact do have the ability *somewhere*. People just need to look for it more. And when they find it, capitalize on it.

A Body of Knowledge

Jeff Austin leads the Dynamics Services Group business unit of IndustryBuilt Software Corp. (industrybuilt.com). He comes from a long history of software implementation and excels in bridging the gap between business process and business software solutions. He believes software choice and implementation must always support the overall business and revenue goals first. Here he talks about how to build teamwork between the technical experts and sales pros.

Tech Team School

Teamwork is vital during client business meetings. As a business analyst tasked with demonstrating software to prospective clients, meetings were sometimes turned entirely over to me with only the shortest of introductions. Being left to feel my own way through the conversations often meant the clients had to repeat themselves and explain requirements that had been previously discussed. When the client began to feel comfortable with my technical ability and business knowledge, in many cases they began to address all questions to me, including those of a sales nature. Here, the sales

representative struggled to retain a strong part in the conversation, and certainly wasn't guiding the meeting to his desired outcome. In these instances, we didn't work well as a team, and weren't showing ourselves to be a cohesive and cooperative unit. The client was undoubtedly left feeling that they'd met good people, but what were their thoughts about our company and our methodologies?

To promote better cooperation and teamwork between our business analysts and our sales force during meetings and demonstrations with prospective clients, we created Demo School. The goal of our Demo School was to provide the sales team with better information about our software products, techniques for more successful demonstrations, and concrete examples and real-world business scenarios. While we weren't expecting the sales team to become technical experts themselves, we did find that subsequent presentations were more inclusive, and that the sales representatives remained continuously engaged with the prospect during demos and business discussions. Better cooperation and better engagement often led to better results.

Jeremy Miller is a keynote presenter and the president of Sticky Branding (stickybranding.com). He helps companies sell more, faster, by building remarkable brands. Here he talks from his experience in the world of the hiring of sales professionals about how you can stand out nonverbally when you are selling yourself.

Interviewing for the Lizard Brain

A manager makes a decision to hire you or not within the first few moments of your interview. The rest of the meeting is spent justifying that decision.

This isn't logical. A hiring manager can't possibly hear your full story, expertise, and talents in five minutes. But her lizard brain (the brain stem) has experienced enough of you to form an opinion and inform the rest of the brain how it will decide. The process may seem

rather unfair and prejudiced, but you have to deal with it and you have to prepare for it. Otherwise you're not going to get the job.

A great way to prepare for an interview is to get yourself into the “YesState.” Mark Bowden taught me the technique a few years ago to help me present better on television. When you present on TV you have to convey a lot of information quickly—often in less than 90 seconds. And the YesState helped me communicate beyond my words by presenting my emotions and personality.

Thirty minutes before you go into any interview, start pushing yourself into the YesState: breathe deeply into your belly, stand up tall and square your shoulders. Look people in the eyes and smile gently. As you do these, create positive “mind chatter” or “self-talk.” I often repeat the words, “Yes! Yes! Yes!” in my mind in an uplifting way. And I will tell myself that I’m here to help, I’m here to solve problems, and I’m here to listen.

I know I’ve achieved the right state when people come up to me and ask for directions, the time, or simply say “Hello” for no real reason. I am emoting positive energy, and my lizard brain is engaging other people’s lizard brains as a “friend.”

A hiring manager is taking in all that energy too at a subconscious level, and using it to determine if she likes you, wants to work with you, and thinks you’ll be a good member of the team.

11

Coaching a Racehorse

Leading the Sales Team

*The man who lets a leader prescribe his course is a wreck
being towed to the scrap heap.*

—Ayn Rand

In this chapter you'll learn:

- How to create a sales environment that breeds sales champions
- To connect with your salespeople to engage and inspire
- Different communication formats for sales teams
- The nonverbal behavior of a great coach
- Physical performance for top sales leaders

Sales champions are made, not born. Obviously they have to show up for their sales career with certain aptitudes and attitudes to create an opportunity for success, but they will be turned into champions through their experiences. All great salespeople have been at some point in time transformed through their training, experiences, peer influences, and impactful managers into bankable winners. If you want to be the kind of manager who stables, trains, and owns the allegiance of those winners, you need to connect deeply with the stars and potential stars on your team. You need to dig into their habits, behaviors, attitudes, and processes to help them refine each to the sharpness of great professionals: the professionalism of champions.

Many writers and sales professionals have used sports teams as a common metaphor for sales teams, and with good reason: it is a powerful metaphor. Just like a sports team, the total result of a sales team depends on

a series of individual performances by the salespeople in competition with other salespeople in the market. The quality of any individual's performance can have a major impact on whether an organization wins or loses in the market. So, while some managers may try, the reality is that the manager cannot do the work for the individual salespeople. To raise the company's odds of winning, the player has to play, and the manager has to lead and coach. The key to success is effort and resilience, but the players are judged on results, not on how hard they tried. Sales is a complete performance game, and the players and managers must find a way to win or face getting cut from the team.

Of course, you already know that the modern sales manager needs to be more like a coach than a general. You've read this from a number of sales leadership manuals already. But our guess is that you may not fully understand what that might physically mean and look like, or the positive effect on how you hit or exceed your targets that this style of leadership can have.

First, understand the nature of your players: salespeople are often independent beasts, and they have always been that way. It is a profession that demands self-reliance, self-awareness, and self-confidence. If they are any good, they are "self-starters," already revving their engines first thing in the morning (but perhaps not knowing when or where the race is really being held and how to win it)—and they're off! Often, you as the manager did not get a chance to communicate the game plan! In today's environment teams are dominated by Y-Gens—tomorrow's teams of Millennials may be even more fiercely independent! The days of the autocratic directive approach are numbered in the minuses. The *Coach* is a much stronger metaphor for the modern manager than the General of the post-World War sales demographics.

What Do You Mean, "Coach"?

Managing focuses on the completion of tasks related to work. *Coaching* is about the development of the individual to more effectively and efficiently perform those tasks. *Managers* give information and impose deadlines and

objectives. *Coaches* enable individuals to find the right information, manage their own deadlines, and define their own objectives. Coaching, at its best, is a selfless act. It is about the other person, not about *you*. The coach's role is to inspire others to acquire the skills and knowledge of their craft as well as understand their own abilities in order to enable them to succeed in performing their job and developing their career. Let's pause for a moment, however, and go back to the idea of the "selfless act."

Many organizations tend to promote their top salespeople into sales management roles. While you can never say, "That will never work," it is a habit that carries considerable risk, because the skills and personal traits of top salespeople can differ starkly from the skills and attitudes of top managers/coaches. And this skill base is hard to change if it goes unacknowledged and is not provided the proper coaching and training to enable a transformation. The "pure" salesperson (independent) can learn to collaborate and work within teams—actually, the best ones usually do. But at the core of great sales performance there is usually a driving personality intent on achieving his goals, occasionally through others, but it is always his goals that are front and center. The best managers are intent on achieving goals, but these goals are most often (and for the health of the company) team goals, and the reward is seeing others flourish and the *team win*.

In their book *Discover Your Sales Strength*, Benson Smith and Tony Rutigliano describe why great managers typically say they enjoy managing:

- They enjoy developing others.
- They enjoy building a team.
- They get a kick out of helping others succeed.
- They like encouraging others to reach their objectives.
- They like working with talented people.
- They like recognizing and building what is best in other people.

The authors are saying that great managers, like great coaches, find reward in observing their impact on others. The best coaches enable others to perform so smoothly that others ultimately forget the influence of the

coach. The best coaches enable members of their team to do it for themselves. This is quite different from the “reward” that might be the expected desire of a great salesperson: personal recognition and the satisfaction of winning. So when an organization promotes its star talent to management, this may not be the best move, because the behavior that created the star performer may not be the behavior needed to be a star manager/coach, and it is often rare to find individuals who have both sets of behaviors (those of star salesperson and star coach) existing simultaneously.

Organizations could pinpoint future managers in their team based on how they work with their peers and supporting resources, and not only on how much they sell. Yes, they need to be successful as salespeople, but they do not necessarily have to be the top performers. They need to be successful salespeople to understand the world of their team and share and teach sales skills to others; they just do not need to be stars.

Using Coaching to Maximize Performance

To create a great salesperson, you need to raise self-awareness and help people see their habits, behaviors, attitudes, and processes objectively. They then need to review these influences on how to manage their role on the sales team. As they go through this review, the coach and the “players” must collaborate to identify those things limiting their performance. To do this requires an open, interactive, trust-based environment, which must be built by the coach no matter what the salespeople bring to the experience.

As coach, if they are on your team, you must reach them; and if you cannot, then you either replace them or you will have to live with inconsistent progress and development. For those coaches intent on raising the bar of their team’s performance, these relationships must be built; and to be consistently good at this requires you to be expert at managing your nonverbal cues to align your expression with your intentions. Done effectively, you will be able to implement a culture of continuous improvement within your teams that will lead to greatness for them and for you.

Connecting to Your Sales Team

If you are going to be a great coach, you need to be great at connecting with others because at the heart of every great coaching relationship is an intimate human relationship. The coach and the coached must connect inside an open, honest dialogue. Now, we are not talking about therapy; that is not the point at all. If the coachee needs therapy or needs to create massive change in his life, then the manager should defer to a psychologist or independent life coach.

The dialogue in a management/coaching relationship is around *performance*. It is about helping the individual see his business and career goals; helping him define an inventory of current skills and habits vital to the execution of his work responsibilities, which the individual depends upon to achieve those business and career goals. It's about helping design development strategies to enhance those skills and change any habits, all of this in order to effect an improvement in the likelihood that the individual can achieve his goals. In this case we are talking about sales performance that leads to sales goals and sales careers. At the heart of a sales coaching relationship is an intimate and honest dialogue focused on improving this performance. Done well, the relationship can be the foundation of truly phenomenal results ... but it all starts with a *connection*.

To begin this dialogue demands that the coach invite the coachee into an open, honest environment. If this sounds like we are driving back to the recurring theme of trust and credibility ... well, you guessed right! We are back to the GesturePlanes, and specifically the TruthPlane. Everything depends on earning that trust and credibility, and once earned, holding onto it in good times and bad.

Coaching Formats

As a sales manager, you have multiple formats available to you through which you can apply your coaching input to the team and its individuals. It's important you develop a coaching style that is adaptable when using any of these:

- Formal sales meetings
- Formal one/one meetings
- Annual performance reviews
- Ad hoc one/one meetings
- Sales appointment planning sessions
- Sales appointment debriefing sessions
- Subsets of the team—account strategy sessions
- Customer service management meetings
- Walking the floor meetings
- Informal settings: lunches/dinners/company events
- Interviewing applicants

One of the first things for every manager to remember as you look at this list, or add other situations to the list, is that you are always “on” when you lead a team. Your team members are always watching you—always! They are always assessing you. Always judging you based on your behavior. Why? Because they use their view or perception of the behavior of the tribal leader (you) to judge themselves. They mirror the leader’s behavior in order to move closer to the rank or status of leader in the tribe. They mirror the leader’s behavior in order to theorize how the leader sees them. And they mirror in order to fit in with other tribe (team) members.

It is therefore impossible for you to spend more time watching them than they do watching you. This is natural, as you sit higher on the organizational chart and hold a lot of influence; you have a lot of control over their job satisfaction, self-image, and fate within the organization. It also means they will see the real you no matter how much you try to cover it up. Therefore, you need to learn how to hold yourself in a posture that supports openness, honesty, and trust; and you need to form the bonds that will support a coaching relationship and an open team. We are talking about managing your nonverbal cues to ensure that they align with your intentions and support your goals of a team that pulls toward a single objective.

Formal Sales Meetings

There are many things to accomplish in a sales meeting, such as: progress toward team goals, account strategies, and perhaps win/loss discussions. In addition, one of the key components of a sales meeting is joint learning and development. This is the manager's chance to create an environment of collaboration where best practices and powerful lessons learned can be shared. At best this environment should involve a "try, make mistakes, correct, try again, and practice" model! Ideally the team should feel open enough, and trust each other enough, to be self-correcting. The team should be comfortable trying in front of their peers in role plays, making mistakes, and having their peers provide the input for correction and improvement.

Ford's Fix Everything

For my first sales management job, I was promoted from "in the team" to "lead the team." This was not a totally unexpected transition, and my fellow team members were very supportive of me in the new role. This was particularly generous of them, especially when I fell into the habit of many young managers, which is a posture that says, "Okay, now I am going to fix this place!" Of course, it is never simple to be a change catalyst, and that becomes doubly tough when as a young manager you confuse telling with teaching. I could have used the TruthPlane in those early days!

The natural posture of a young sales manager is enthusiastic excitement for change. Early in my career, I certainly took the stance of telling people what I thought should happen. After a time I came to realize that talking at people while they are standing silently by does not mean they are listening, or more important, learning. Over time I came to understand that the best sales managers are coaches, as described above.

As coaches, the challenge is to ask the questions that get the people you are managing to give answers that provide insight for them into

their behavior. These questions need to be delivered in a nonjudgmental way. One of my regrets from my early sales management career is that I left the impression with some of my team members that I was judging them as wanting. Today, when coaching salespeople and sales managers, I try to focus on the person, what he is thinking, and now I ask questions that help him see how he is thinking. You cannot tell him to change; he has to be inspired to change. Once he's inspired, you can begin to collaborate with him on his development.

The techniques of Mark Bowden's *Winning Body Language* are simply wonderful tools to support these goals. They allow you to create an open, collaborative, and trust-filled environment to support a team culture of continuous improvement. Do this well and you will become a leader who people willingly follow, and the leader of a team that happily raises the bar every year.

Imagine your sales meeting: picture the room. Where does everyone sit? Do they all typically sit in the same places? What does this say to you about the hierarchy of the team, its subgroupings, and the angles and attitudes they are always taking? Is the seating distribution positive and helpful, or negative and disruptive? If it is the latter, then shake it up and put people in new places.

Now look at the seating setup. Is it a circle? Have you created a campfire? If not, think about the seating and consider how you can create that communal grouping. You might even think about changing the room setup so the team is seated in a U-shape, as a much better collaborative environment, with different team members taking the open end of the U to present from and transfer knowledge to the group.

If you feel that regular team meetings need an injection of energy, then try the "20 minute stand-up." This occurs first thing in the morning and lasts 20 minutes ONLY. No one sits. Any drinks or food cannot be put down anywhere. This leads to a dynamic that is fast-paced and energizing simply because of the environment it is set in.

To make this work, take all chairs and tables out of the meeting room that you wish to use and keep the morning refreshment outside too. As people arrive, they pick up drinks and food and enter the space. Then the meeting starts at the time designated, with the leader closing the door. The meeting finishes with the leader opening the door 20 minutes later (no matter what). Try it out and see the dynamic that unfolds when people are not sitting on some of the largest muscles in the body (the glutes), and in doing so cutting off blood circulation to some of the organs with which you are trying to communicate!

Formal One/One Meetings

The greatest opportunity for a manager to have a direct impact on the salesperson's development is inside an intimate one/one. This is a meeting that is all about helping the salesperson think through the habits, behaviors, attitudes, and processes impacting her ability to meet her goals. Done well, these meetings can form the fulcrum upon which you can raise the salesperson's performance to levels beyond anything she ever imagined before: to help her become a champion. However, none of this will happen if you cannot build an environment of trust, and that means you need to connect with her deeply, and you need to maintain that trust even when what you are learning is disquieting. It is the place where you must try not to judge, you must support.

Remember that "frequency" is an element of nonverbal communication that builds propinquity, and thus connectedness and trust. Sales managers would do well therefore to meet one-on-one with their team members at least twice a month. The foundation of this process is an organized review of their on-the-job progress. This progress follows two dimensions: the processes they are following in the performance of their work, and their project work. These are development meetings, not performance reviews, and so the key to a successful one-on-one is for the salesperson to do most of the talking and the manager most of the listening.

The salesperson should be talking about how she is doing her work, her successes and challenges, but more important, her decision making,

prioritizations, and progress. An effective one-on-one meeting is when the salesperson leaves with new ideas she can implement at work to improve efficiency, and the manager goes away with a clear understanding of where the salesperson stands in relation to their personal and business goals. This should all be done within a meeting that lasts as little as 30 minutes, and certainly not longer than an hour. This may sound like an ambitious goal, but if you have a framework for meetings you execute consistently, and you maintain the continuity of the bimonthly meetings, over time you will be surprised at how efficiently the meeting flows.

Before discussing how to create an efficient one-on-one meeting framework, let us first discuss what these meetings must not become.

They must not be interrogations: this is not a performance review meeting. They are not calls on the carpet: this is not your opportunity to wave the carrot and swing the stick. They cannot be all about results and what is or is not closing from the forecast. Finally, these meetings should not be regular attitude lectures or shaming events. It's not about what the salesperson is not doing, it is a meeting about *what she is* doing, *how* she is doing it, the decisions she's making that lead to these *hows*, and a discussion of changes that can lead to performing the work better and getting more out of the effort.

This is a meeting about her, and it is where the art of coaching truly comes to light. It is a meeting that should help raise the sales professional's self-awareness and self-confidence. It can have challenging conversations, in fact it should, but the focus should be the salesperson's thinking and decision making. The manager/coach should be pushing the salesperson to see inside her assumption, in order to bring gaps to light, or to find positives that inspire the salesperson to learn how to leverage those positives more effectively. The salesperson should leave the one-on-one, regardless of her current effectiveness, pumped, excited, and engaged to try new ideas. Done well, the salesperson should feel like the new idea was her idea; remember, coaching done well leaves the coachees thinking they did it all themselves. In other words, you do not coach for your glory, you coach for their glory.

Salesperson Operating Plans

Almost everyone talks about the value of goals and planning to salespeople, but it is often left up to them to figure out how to build their own plan. There are two immediate challenges to this approach: first, the salesperson may not have an effective framework within which to build the plan; second, every salesperson's framework and plan is unique. This uniqueness makes it opaque to the sales manager. If you are going to coach multiple salespeople at the same time, you need to have a common framework to support you looking in on their plans and providing intelligent input and support. This consistent framework creates the opportunity for efficiency and high value for both the salesperson and the manager in the one/one meetings.

Every salesperson should have his own operating plan for every year. This plan should include career goals and how he plans to move forward on those goals through this year's performance. The plan should then turn to business goals, which for a salesperson are his quota target and a variety of activity targets necessary to achieve that quota. With these objectives clearly stated, the salesperson needs to turn to the projects and tasks he needs to complete to achieve those activity and quota targets. Finally, he should then categorize the tasks, in order to allocate his daily, weekly, and monthly time appropriately. This last element is the time management principle of "Time Blocking."

Time Blocking

The most valuable asset a salesperson has is time, and the best salespeople know how to leverage this asset to increase the chances they have for success. Stephen Covey in his classic book *Seven Habits of Highly Effective People* draws up a two-by-two grid of urgency and importance. The grid places every task a person performs within a range from "Urgent and Important" to "Not Urgent and Not Important." When people then note their daily time allocations, they usually find that most of their time is in the urgent quadrants of Important or Not Important.

Urgent and Important	Not Urgent, Important
Urgent, Not Important	Not Urgent and Not Important

The challenge with this classification is that for most people the highest value and greatest long-term performance leverage comes from time in the “Not Urgent, Important” quadrant. The purpose of categorizing tasks is to be able to designate which are in this important but not urgent quadrant.

Now, as the salesperson looks at her weekly and monthly plan, she can assign time blocks, either two or four hours long, for each of these nonurgent but important high-leverage tasks that lead to the greatest future performance. It then becomes this information that is brought into the one-on-one meetings for the salesperson to review, and then have the manager/coach guide the salesperson’s decision making to ensure that these tasks get done too. In this way, the coaching will evolve into helping the salesperson see how the habits and behaviors in her priorities and in her work impact her performance. Then the two can collaborate around how to make changes to these habits and behaviors to improve how she does her work, and ultimately the results.

Using the salesperson’s operating plan, it becomes possible in the one-on-one meeting to review what is actually happening in the salesperson’s weeks versus the original time block plan. It is relatively easy to now see what is not being done according to the plan and to discuss what is creating the gap. What decisions is the salesperson making in the flow of her work related to priorities that create the gap? For example, is her e-mail always on? Does she treat every e-mail as urgent? Does she carry her mobile

phone with her and check it every two minutes? Did her plan call for this level of e-mail priority, or is it a convenient distraction from the real work she's trying to get done?

This is an easy and obvious example, but it is amazing how true it is. Other examples include the misappropriation of urgency around prospecting or cold calling.

Cold Calling/Prospecting: Important but Never Urgent

Ask yourself the following question: "What would make you cancel an appointment at the last minute with a prospect or customer?" The answer to this question usually relates to something pretty calamitous: death in the family, terrible accident, etc. In other words most salespeople will drag themselves over broken glass to make an appointment with a prospect or customer.

Now ask yourself: "What has to happen for you to cancel an appointment you made in your calendar to yourself to make your cold calls?" And your answer to this question is most likely driven by urgency and not importance. Some readers will be saying, "Well if a customer calls and needs something, or there is an emergency in my e-mail." Most will admit that virtually anything of even the most modest urgency is sufficient to get them out of that cold calling appointment.

For a moment let's look at this decision-making process that bumps prospecting so easily. Let's talk about the apparent legitimacy of the customer call.

On first blush this seems like a reasonable answer; however, let's look at it a little deeper. If you, as a salesperson, were on your way to an appointment with a customer and another customer called with a problem, would you cancel the first customer appointment? More significantly, if you were in the appointment with the customer or prospect and the customer with a problem called, what would happen? Well, the problem call would likely go to your voice mail, and it would sit there until you

finished the appointment. So, why is it different when you are making cold calls?

The difference is it feels more urgent, and maybe it is, but it is probably not more *important*—at least not in the context of your goals. Prospecting is probably just as important a step in achieving your sales goals as dealing with customer service issues, maybe even more important. The point is that whether it is an e-mail, last minute customer service issues, or any other distraction, the salesperson is letting the urgent overwhelm the important. And of course this is classic reptilian brain thinking: *now is always more important than the future*. But by using the operating plan and a regular review in a calm and social environment (not the interrogation-cell atmosphere of the “come to Jesus meeting”) of where time went, the manager/coach can engage the neocortex of the sales professional and help her see how the decision making around priorities is limiting her performance.

Loosening the Screws

Imagine your one-on-one environment, which is probably your office. Consider for a moment that most salespeople are nervous in a one-on-one. This nervousness often comes from a fear of being judged and found wanting. Remember we said that one-on-ones are developmental? The goal of a sales manager/coach is to relax the salesperson and to get her to look objectively at how she is working in relation to her plan. The goal is not to spark reptilian brains into fight-or-flight with you. This means you must create an environment of collaboration, and you must position yourself to focus on the salesperson in a nonconfrontational way.

If something is being done incorrectly, or if the salesperson is missing something in her habits, behaviors, attitude, or processes, then the goal is to get her to see it. In other words the posture has to always inspire her to do the talking, which means you ask questions that push the salesperson to the right realizations, ultimately forcing her to do most of the talking.

This is hard for many managers, and the natural inclination is to lean on the “tell” model of management. To resist this urge and keep the mood

right for open collaboration and an objective assessment of what is being done and what needs to be done, you should first think about all the TV shows, films, or documentaries you have seen where someone gets interrogated. Think about the way the room is set up—the furniture, lighting, and the orientation of the seating. How are the subjects for interrogation brought into the room? Even when the interrogator is being the “nice guy,” what is it about the situation that alerts you to the aggression and hostility?

Now think about the body language of the interrogator. How does he sit, stand, walk, question, and listen? Of course as a manager you are always a chief of intelligence. And to this end when gathering intelligence in a meeting, you must adopt an attitude that is expectant of that data in order to compliment the person opening up to you. But at the same time it is so easy when under pressure and stress to fall into the attitude and posturing of an interrogator or inquisitor—which often only causes your “subject” to make up data in order to please you and stop the aggression or shut down the channel of correct data in order to protect herself from any punishments that might arise from giving you “bad news.” Let’s look at some of the body language of a caricatured interrogator that you may have imagined yourself, in order to first know what we must *not* do.

Torment

Imagine your team member sitting in a low chair a short distance opposite you, across a table. He is “parked” entirely in hunched-up shoulders almost meeting his ears, hands protectively placed in the lap. His whole body is hunched over as you stand, looming above him from across your desk, your hands pressed down on it, your chest broad and puffed out, pushing its way into his personal space. Your chin is tucked in, your forehead down, and your eye contact is strong, yet he very rarely looks at you. Most of the time he looks down or away. In order to make your points clearly, you point at him and jab your finger toward his eyes in a staccato manner.

Advocate

Alternatively, we have the trustworthy body language of a coaching leader: you sit at a 90-degree angle to your team member at the end of a table and at the same height in your chair as him. You are relaxed yet alert—fully present. At the corner of the table between you there are perhaps snacks that you are sharing, and drinks. You sit at enough distance from the table to be more visible and open to him, yet not so far that you exit his personal space. You are being sure to allow your team member to do most of the talking, and you are doing most of the listening. Every now and then you ask a question with your hands open in the TruthPlane. As your team member responds with his experience and opinions, your head is tilted to one side and you gently smile and nod, especially when he opens up with more data for you.

You can obviously appreciate the difference in experience and openness here in contrast to the interrogation cell scenario. But sometimes you need to give your opinion and assert some authority. What then?

I Am the Law!

Sales appointment planning sessions, sales appointment debriefing sessions, account strategy sessions, and performance reviews are developmental, but they are also a time when it is appropriate to judge and assess the salesperson with an eye to directed focus toward the next year's improvements. The results of these sessions and reviews should then be incorporated into the candidate's operating plans for the next year. You are still guiding and collaborating, but you are the boss in this meeting more than the friend.

Think about bringing yourself a few inches in front of the DoorPlane to achieve the calm, assertive, nonverbal communication that comes with the gesturing in the TruthPlane that you should already be doing, but adding the extra edge of dominance to your body language that asserts you as an “alpha” character in the room.

As the sales manager, your team will look to you for guidance to support their sales success. The keyword is “guidance.” The developmental goal is to support the salesperson or team learning how to build successful sales strategies and tactics. As sales manager, early in your relationship you may be doing most of the designing, but your goal is to have the person or team develop so that they can contribute more and more of their plans and assessments.

To create this environment, again imagine a meeting setting in your office, let’s say it is a small meeting room. There are two of you, and you are looking at a whiteboard and have your laptops open for quick research. Both of you should sit initially, and then one of you goes to the whiteboard to take some notes. If possible, make this the salesperson. When she stands, she will feel like she is in control of the meeting. Now from your seated position, help her lead the discussion. Push back your chair and swivel to face her at the whiteboard. Show you are open to her ideas and opinions by having your hands in the TruthPlane. As she brings forward points, nod gently and smile and find opportunities to write down some of the ideas into your personal notes, clearly verbalizing that the suggestion is a good one. Then you add your suggestions on top.

Walking the Floor Meetings

When a sales manager walks into the sales bullpen, what happens? Does everyone sit up straighter; is everyone just a little on edge? If so, this says the sales manager is an intruder, not a member of the bullpen. Collaboration calls for the sales manager to be a part of the team, leading the team for sure, but more important, leading the team’s collaboration. The sales manager on the floor should be welcomed and engaging, and as such should manage his posture to be welcoming and engaging. Here are some ways to behave that display your openness to the team in a number of scenarios.

Informal Settings: Lunches, Dinners, Company Events

Let your hair down. In these environments the goal is to let the team relax and bond. It is an opportunity for the sales manager to facilitate the conversation, but not dominate it. This is the place to help the team get to know each other and build trust. The role in this instance is as patriarch/matriarch, but in an empowering way. There should be no question who the leader is, but the leader should be focused on creating an environment where team members feel comfortable sharing a little of themselves.

Imagine a dinner table, and you as manager and six of your team members sitting down to dinner. Naturally you will sit at the head of the table, and from that position you will orchestrate the event. What you want to do next is help the team members to do the talking and to express themselves. You also want to build up each speaker, give each your full attention, and help that person feel important to promote an atmosphere of shared respect and support.

A great practice is to arrange with a team member beforehand to swap places with you at dessert. The benefits: she gets the head of the table and a feeling of raise in rank, and you get closer proximity to any members who have had a greater distance from you for most of the meal. Everyone feels special, and status is evened out a little as you move toward the close of the event.

Sales Calls with Prospects and Customers

This is one of the hardest developmental environments for sales managers, because it feels like there is so much at stake, that is, a sales opportunity. Most managers struggle to let the salesperson run the sales call without interfering. They should resist this if they can. You see, the goal is to create independent salespeople who can go and sell to multiple customers without your assistance. This is how you expand your reach, increase your coverage, and grow your business. This goal is the higher goal, and not

stepping in, or over, your salesperson in a call because you would like to do it differently. As mentioned, this is very hard to do, and will really test your mettle as a sales manager. Can you sit by and watch someone do something differently from you and leave it alone?

If in the end you must step in, then you need to make sure you do not discredit the salesperson's authority completely when you do it. The goal is to have the salesperson continue to manage this opportunity after the meeting, so you cannot afford to make her look bad, as it will hamper her ability to lead the sale after you leave. To do this means using the techniques in *Winning Body Language* to manage yourself and remain calm and assertive throughout, making sure to keep everyone's status up in the room. This is the behavior of a great leader rather than an ego-starved tyrant.

Chapter 11 Quick Study

Top performers have great leaders to guide them to reaching their potential. And this is the same for top-performing teams too. Those great leaders, like any top-performing sales professional, are great listeners rather than "tellers" when it really counts. They are able to then understand where a potential sales star is in relation to his goals, and to guide that person by either imparting experience or training or telling simple stories to help him on his way, and, most important, to ask him what he is going to do today to reach those goals. This requires the body language of a coach: calm and assertive, and open when listening.

Do This Now

Having read this chapter,

1. What do you think you should do now in order to maximize your nonverbal performance as a sales manager in order to increase the

performance of your team overall?

2. What else should you do today?

3. And what else?

Theory to Practice

Who in your work life has bought out the best performance in you? When they were instructing, coaching, mentoring, or advising you, how did their body language help them get through to you? Remember what they were doing that made you feel recognized, appreciated, and able to take on the value they had to bring to developing you to a fuller potential.

Now how can you mirror their behavior for others and discover what it does for them too?

A Body of Knowledge

Karen Wright is an executive coach and the owner of Parachute Executive Coaching (parachuteexecutivecoaching.com). She and her team provide executive and leadership coaching services to support the development of current and emerging leaders in organizations. She is the author of *The Complete Executive—The 10-Step System*

for Powering Up Peak Executive Performance. Here she talks about what to physically dial up and dial down as a sales team leader.

Big in Sales

When I'm asked to work with a client, I get briefed on their situation —their strengths and their challenges. The typical sales team leader is often described as brilliant with customers but “rough around the edges” in their interactions with internal colleagues, direct reports, and support staff. When I probe for details, I usually hear “bull in a china shop” or “doesn’t listen” or “is in everyone’s face.”

Unfortunately, when very talented salespeople deliver consistently and get promoted, they’re put into a position of leading people but having very little direct contact with the customer, and their best tricks and tactics don’t work anymore—quite the opposite, in fact. Sales leaders tend to be “big” personalities. They’re extroverted and exuberant and the life of the party, perfect for magnetically attracting customers and creating a powerful network. When they become a leader of people, however, they need to dial down their need for the spotlight in favor of letting their team members shine.

Best suggestions for a sales superstar to make the transition to leader successfully are all about being more approachable and less dominant. Try adopting more open body language—eye contact, relaxed posture, measured pace of speaking. Use the listening skills that helped you so well with customers. Let silence be your teaching tool—don’t leap to fill space when coaching your team members. Spend time building relationships with service providers and support staff—pay attention to their stories and observe their work space to notice the things that are important to them. Trust that you don’t need to solve or deliver, at least not directly—and that by letting others fill the space, you’ll be creating the necessary capacity around you.

A Concluding Thought

Can't learn it in an office, gotta learn it in the street.

And you sure can't buy it, you gotta live it.

—Shelly, *Glengarry Glen Ross*, David Mamet

My first sales job was at the age of 16 in a gas station: fuel, oil, windshield wash, and automobile air fresheners—that stuff could sell itself.

In my time off I had another sales job going door-to-door hawking TV satellite dishes. At the time there were no broadcasts of the actual content as yet—just the hardware. It was a tricky sell, to say the least. I was not downhearted. The company collapsed within a month, which saved me from the dishonor of throwing in the towel.

So I got myself another sales job in a high-street men's clothing store where I was taught my first piece of really great sales technique, and which has stuck with me ever since:

The manager came up to me one day, after hearing me crash and burn trying to talk a customer into buying, and said, “Mark, let me give you some advice. *Get the jacket on their back.* Once you have the jacket on the gentleman's back, then the suit is as good as sold.”

And from that point on all I would do is watch customers to see which line of jackets they would touch. I would move gently alongside and pull out the jacket in their fit (you got an eye for sizing that up), deftly pull it from its hanger and hold it up and open it for them with a little flourish. “Try it on,” I'd say, firmly. They would. I would brush down on their shoulders and then move around to the front to button up the jacket and straighten the lapels—like a parent on the first day of “big school.” Then move out of their way so they could see themselves in the full-length mirror ahead of them, as I smiled proudly at how they now looked.

They would often leave with not one but sometimes two or even three suits.

There is no doubt in my mind to this day that selling is a physical thing. It is a *feeling* that sells the merchandise. So no matter what you are selling, “*Get the jacket on their back.*”

Mark Bowden
truthplane.com

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Appendix

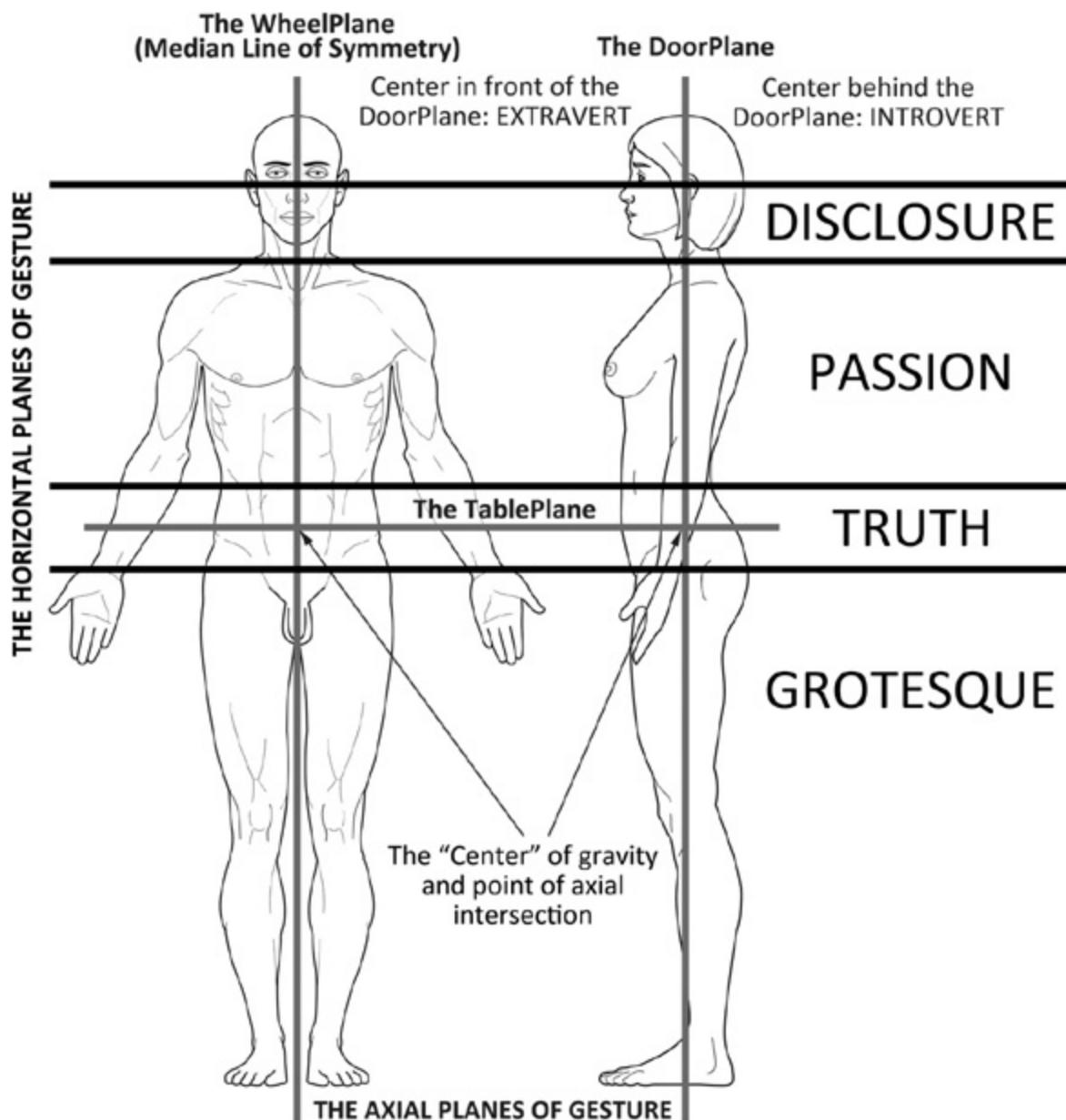


Figure A-1 GesturePlane System for Sales Professionals

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About the Authors

Mark Bowden received his university degree in performance in the United Kingdom and studied the gesture control methods of Jacques Lecoq's Laboratory of Movement in Paris. He worked with some of the world's groundbreaking theater companies, appearing in multi-award-winning stage and screen productions globally and training internationally recognized actors and directors. Mark went on to work with leading practitioners of movement psychology and built upon the influence techniques of Dr. Milton Erickson.

Mark is the creator of TruthPlane™, a communication training company and a unique methodology for anyone who has to communicate to an audience. His communication techniques, which he trains to individuals and groups worldwide, are used by top executives and political leaders around the globe who want to gain an advantage beyond words when they speak. Over his 20 years of experience, he has garnered a reputation for being one of the world's expert performance trainers and is highly sought after for his business presentation skills at such universities as international top 10 business school Schulich at York University, Rotman School of Business in Toronto, and McGill in Montreal. His client list of leading businesspeople, teams, and politicians currently includes presidents and CEOs of Fortune 500 companies and prime ministers of G8 countries.

He gives highly entertaining and informative keynote speeches on persuasive and influential verbal and nonverbal language and communication structures that help you stand out, win trust, and profit every time you speak. His bestselling body language book, *Winning Body Language*, has been translated into five languages.

Mark can be contacted via www.TruthPlane.com.

Andrew Ford is a sales performance management consultant, trainer, and coach. As founder of Sales CoPilot, with clients across North America, he has a proven track record of success at building high-performing sales teams with increased retention, improved efficiency, and better closing ratios. He specializes in three types of projects: sales model transformations, rapid sales team scaling to capture markets, and sales

performance improvement to smooth out lumpy sales results. His objective in all projects is to improve the efficiencies of every aspect of the sales organization to increase sales funnel through-put to help clients sell more and sell faster.

Andrew can be found via www.SalesCoPilot.com.

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