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In recent years there has been an explosion of interest and research in the role of nonverbal behavior in communication involving a wide variety of behaviors.

Belief in the importance of nonverbal communication is nothing new. ‘Not to watch a person’s mouth but his fists’ was a celebrated aphorism of Martin Luther, the 16th century Protestant reformer. The term nonverbal communication was popularized in the 20th century, although it is not always clear exactly what it means [1].

Nonverbal Communication is the message or response not expressed or sent in words -hints, suggestions and indications.

Because the term nonverbal only excludes communication through words, the features it may include are virtually limitless. It can refer to communication through touch or smell, through various kinds of artefacts such as masks and clothes. In addition, it can refer to different forms of body movement – to facial expression, gaze, posture, gesture and interpersonal distance.

It’s important to understand that nonverbal communication is the language of relationships. It is in the way that we observe others, much more than in what we say to others, that lets them know whether they are liked or disliked, respected or disrespected, wanted or dismissed. And, there are different types of nonverbal messages and a grammar for understanding them that allows us to use and interpret nonverbal signals accordingly.

People have known about it and have used it since the beginning of time. Before people developed language as a communication tool, they used body language to make their needs and desires known to other people. Also known as kinesics, body language describes human interaction excluding the use of written and spoken words. This broad definition covers everything from the thinnest raising of an eyebrow to the exact movements of the difficult sign language used by the deaf.

Some nonverbal gestures are symbols understood by a great majority of the world. The chair at the head of the table has long been reserved for the leader of the group. More recently, this position of honor has also been extended to the host of the table. It is a custom that was honored as far back as the time of King Arthur, when the round table was developed as an attempt to administer democracy by eliminating the appearance of having one leader. Another universal gesture is raising the hands above the head, which has long symbolized surrender and submission.

Other well-known gestures are saluting, tipping one’s hat, shaking hands, shrugging shoulders, waving goodbye [2].

Body language, which is stimulated by a subconscious need to express inner feelings, is more reliable than verbal communication and may even contradict verbal expressions. Body language is an outlet for your feelings and can function as a lie detector to aid a watchful observer in interpreting your words. To the observant, our body language communicates our sincerity and commitment.

Communication experts tell us that in a thirty-minute talk, two people can send over eight hundred different nonverbal messages. If neither participant understands - or is even aware of - these messages, both people are communicating primarily on a subconscious level. No wonder so many talks have a negative outcome!

Research in communication suggests that as much as 90 percent of the meaning transmitted between two people in face-to-face communications is via nonverbal channels.

Learning the art of nonverbal communication is almost as difficult as acquiring fluency in a foreign language [3].

We’d like to present the components of Body Language or Kinesics: *face and head, eyes, lips, arms and legs, hands.*

1. Face and Head. The face and head truly provide a window into your counterpart’s soul. Professional cardplayers are noted for their “poker face,” or their ability to hide facial expressions that may tip off other players. Most of your partners won’t have a “poker face,” so with just a little practice, you will be able to interpret what their face and head reveal about their inner thoughts. Here are some signs to look for:

- Broken eye contact: Someone who is trying to hide something tends to avoid eye contact or break eye contact when speaking less than truthfully.
- Looking past you: A counterpart who is bored may gaze past you or glance around the room.
- Piercing eye contact: Someone who is angry with you or feels superior may maintain piercing eye contact.
- Smiling: Typically, someone who is confident and in agreement with you smiles at you.

2. The Eyes. The eyes, known as the windows of the soul, are excellent indicators of a person's feelings. The expressions "beady eyes", and "look of steel" demonstrate the awareness people have for this area of the body. People avoid eye contact with another person when an uncomfortable question is asked. The raising of one eyebrow shows disbelief, whereas two eyebrows raised shows surprise. Winking can be flirtatious or sometimes indicative of agreement, especially when accompanied by a nod or smile.

3. Lips. Lips, words of silence even when we don't talk, we let our mood and emotions out. We can distinguish all emotions by the shape and grimaces we made, moving or tightening the corners of our mouth. If we are afraid, outside corners of our mouth are tightened and lips appear tense. When we feel happy, our mouth is open and its corners are raised and slightly tense. If someone is disgusted, he pushes lower and upper lip toward up. We can notice a swelling under his lower lip. We can recognize if somebody is sad, because his lips are blank, like "emptied" and corners of the mouth are bent toward down. If he is going to cry, his lips have a trembling [4].

4. The Arms and Legs. Crossed arms tend to signal defensiveness. They act as a protective guard against an anticipated attack or a fixed position from which the other person would rather not move. Conversely, arms open and extended toward you generally indicate openness and acceptance. Crossed legs tend to signal disagreement. People who tightly cross their legs seem to be saying that they disagree with what you are saying or doing. If people have tightly crossed legs and tightly crossed arms, their inner attitude is usually one of extreme negativity toward what is going on around them. As long as they are in this position, it is unlikely you will get their full agreement to what you are saying or doing.

5. The Hands. Tightly clenched hands or wringing hands usually indicate that the person is experiencing undue pressure. "Steepling," joining the fingertips together and forming what might be described as a church steeple, indicates smugness and great self-confidence. Superiority and authority are usually indicated when you are standing and joining your hands together behind your back.

A number of attitudes and emotions can be conveyed by what a person does with his hands around the face or head. For example, rubbing gently behind or beside the ear with the index finger usually shows signs of doubt. Casually rubbing the eye with one finger also usually means the other person is uncertain about what you are saying. Rubbing the back of the head or palming the nape of the neck typically indicates frustration with the other person or the situation [3].

In conclusion, non-verbal communication is more prevalent than we realise. Reviewing all the data available to nonverbal communication, it should be clear to us that some means of non-verbal communication are already used by us, some means we can adapt and some we can develop, like the above mentioned brain wave experiments.

People will benefit from learning the range of nonverbal behaviors in order to clarify the often subtle dynamics of the situations they find themselves in. By making the nonverbal communication more clear, misunderstandings can be resolved.

Literature references

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