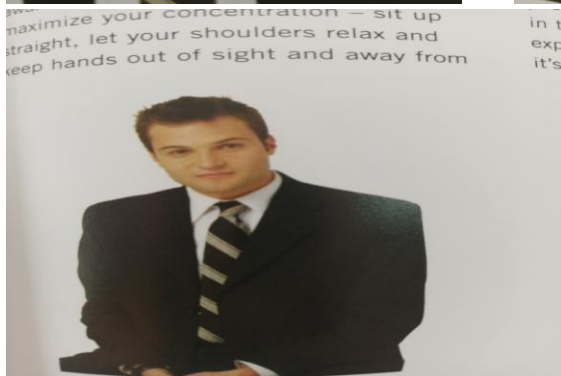


# COMMUNICATION THROUGH BODY LANGUAGE

## NON VERBAL COMMUNICATION



### Elements of non verbal communication :

- ★ NON-verbal communication refers to all ‘all external stimuli other than spoken or written words including body motion. Characteristics of appearance, characteristics of voice and use of space and distancing.’
- ★ All these non-verbal clues taken together are also known as body language. In day-to-day oral communication we keep on interpreting non-verbal clues without being aware of them.

## **Components of non-verbal communication**

### **\* Kinesics:**

- \* kinesics is an important component of non-verbal communication. The movement of the body conveys many specific meanings.**
- \* Their interpretation may be culture-bound. Since many of these movements may be unconscious or subconscious, kinesics movements carry a significant risk of being misinterpreted in intercultural communication situations.**
- \* Gestures like shaking a fist to show anger, nodding one's head in agreement etc. Denote a specific message. However, not all gestures have specific meanings.**
- \* Many gestures are abstract and may not carry any specific meanings. Postures reflect your body position. Straight erect posture conveys your confidence.**
- \* It is also important in the communication process how you stand, how you sit, and how you walk. Body language talks more than words. With a sad face, if someone who's his/her good results, we rely on their facial expression.**

### **\* Prosemics:**

- \* it means distance. The distance that we keep from others during the communication process shows the relationship we share with them and/or the subject we are discussing.**
- \* Intimate distance contact to 18 inches personal distance 18 inches to 5 feet social distance 5 feet to 12 feet public distance 12 feet to 25 feet**

## ★ Chronemics:

- ★ it deals with time, silence and pauses play a significant role in communication. Silence is considered as a language of many emotions.
- ★ **Paralanguage:** paralanguage deals with vocal qualities as volume, pitch, rate pronunciation, stress and intonation patterns.
- ★ The quality of the voice determines the effectiveness of message. Using a high pitch reflects helplessness, tension and nervousness.
- ★ **Appearance:** your appearance during the course of communication also reflects your personality.

## LEVELS OF COMMUNICATION

**Extra personal:** - this level of communication occurs between humans and other species. For example, your pet dog may bark and wag its tail when it sees you or when you rub its back. Such communications are examples of extra personal communication.

**Intrapersonal:** - intrapersonal communication takes place within the individual. While preparing for an examination, you motivate yourself, telling yourself “I can do it”. This self-motivation is an example of intrapersonal communication. Even at the time of interpersonal communication (communication with others), we try to judge or evaluate the other/s. That evaluation and judgement is at an intrapersonal level.

**Interpersonal:**- this communication takes place between human beings. Sharing information, exchanging ideas, negotiating are all examples of this type of communication. Here, the roles of sender and receiver change constantly.

**Organisational:** - this type of communication occurs within and across organisations. In this type, there are different networks and different directions in which communication may take place.

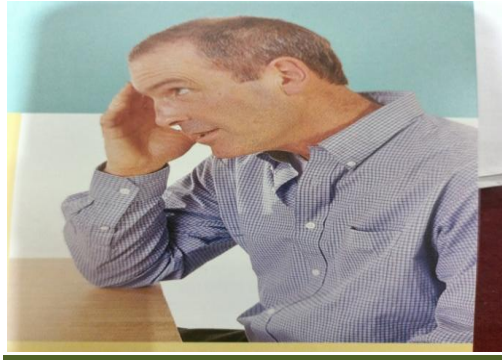
**Mass:-** when the sender has to reach out to a large mass of people, this type of communication is chosen. Examples are announcements or information provided through pamphlets, advertisements etc. The sender selects the appropriate medium (newspapers, books magazines, televisions etc.) to reach the masses.

- ★ **Sigmund Freud's observation may appear to be an exaggeration but it is the exaggeration of a vital truth: 'He that has eyes to see and ears to hear may convince himself that no mortal can keep a secret. It his lips are silent he chats with his fingertips; betrayal oozes out of him at every pore'.**
- ★ **It is believed that a charming person has a pleasant voice, a dynamic person has a vibrant voice and a confident person an assured voice.**
- ★ According to birdwhistell, 35 percent of the message is carried verbally, while 65 percent is conveyed non-verbally.
- ★ Mehrabian (1971) has analysed the impact of a message as follows: 7, percent verbal, 38 percent vocal and 55 percent non-verbal.



### PERSONAL APPEARANCE

- ✓ The first impact on the audience/listener is created by the personal appearance of the speaker.
- ✓ Even before the speaker utters the first syllable, we begin to form an opinion about him and visualise the way he is going to talk.
- ✓ One's appearance may put the audience into a resistant or even a hostile attitude or induce in them a receptive mood which is essential for the success of communication. It is partly because of this that uniforms have been prescribed by certain organisations as also the kind of dress that should be worn on certain specified occasions.
- ✓ A uniform may indicate the kind of work one does or instil a sense of oneness or be a marker of status.
- ✓ In fact, conventions have been established in regard to the use of dress and general physical appearance in respect of certain communication situations such as interviews, convocation, state banquets, etc.
- ✓ We are all accustomed to looking for clues about the personality of an individual in terms of his dress hairstyle, make-up, etc. Always remember that you are never fully dressed *unless you wear a smile.*



## POSTURE

- ✿ Posture also conveys a wealth of meaning in an economical way.
- ✿ It is an important part of body language and generally refers to the way one stands, sits and walks.
- ✿ The movement of the body, the position of hands and legs and other parts of the body reveal an individual's personality: whether he is vibrant, alive and dynamic, nervous and jittery, confident and self-assured, etc.
- ✿ A good speaker stands tall, feet together with the weight directly over the instep, keeping his chin on a line parallel to the floor or at right angles to the backbone.
- ✿ Standing in this posture before a group is, in fact, one of the first essentials for success in speaking.
- ✿ A drooping shoulder and a protruding stomach indicate that the speaker is discouraged, tired and worn out.

- ✱ The posture of sitting may exude an air of optimism, or despondency, or be indicative of a sense of failure or of inattentiveness.
- ✱ To some extent a speaker can gauge the measure of success of his communication by observing the posture of the listener.
- ✱ The communication situation and the specific purpose which one has to achieve determine the way one sits. For example, a subordinate while selling an idea to his boss or explaining an important point would not recline in his chair.
- ✱ In a group discussion the person who takes a turn to speak changes his posture when he starts communicating.
- ✱ A prospective speaker on the dais is watched by the audience that tries to guess the kind of man he is from the way he sits.
- ✱ While different situations will demand different sitting postures, one should keep ones back straight from the waist up, both the feet should be on the floor, one slightly in front of the other.
- ✱ The abdominal muscles should be pulled in. The chest should come out in line. The ability to walk across the stage with ease and grace contributes a great deal to the first impression the speaker makes upon his audience.
- ✱ The walking posture may convey whether a speaker is confident, energetic and vital or withdrawn, diffident and nervous.
- ✱ To walk graceful one should remember the following tips: move the legs freely from the hips; lift your feet from the floor: do not drag or shuffle them: walk in a straight line; avoid a stride or taking tiny steps.
- ✱ While speaking, naturally, there would be shifts in the posture. These have to be cultivated. One must learn where to place one's

hand and how to shift the weight of the body on the legs while speaking.

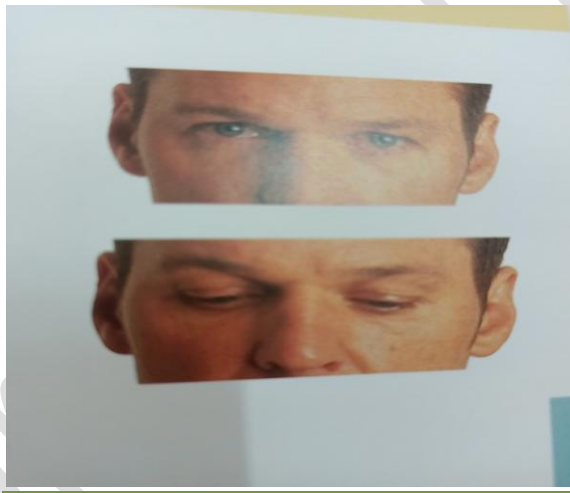


### GESTURES

- Gestures also play a significant role in making the communication effective. A well-timed gesture can drive a point home.
- Similarly, playing with a ring, twisting a key-chain, or clasp ing one's hand tightly robs a speaker of the effectiveness of his communication.
- Sometimes gestures do not accompany oral delivery and are used to communicate certain elementary and short messages such as 'yes', 'no', 'come here', 'go there', 'go there', 'keep sitting', 'be silent', etc.
- However, all oral communications are accompanied by gestures such as shrugging of the shoulders, flourish of the hands, movement of the head, etc.



- In fact, without the accompanying gestures it would be difficult to speak. These gestures enhance the impact and add a greater value to what is being said besides exercising a more powerful impact upon the listener.
- To learn and to make appropriate gestures it would be useful to practise before a mirror, seeking guidance from friends and colleagues who are considered effective communicators.
- Thus through a process of self-evaluation in the use of gesture one can certainly improve and achieve greater efficiency in the art of speaking.



### FACIAL EXPRESSION

- ❖ Of all the parts of the body the face is the most expressive.
- ❖ A smile (friendliness), a frown (discontent), raising the eyebrows (disbelief), or tightening the jaw muscles (antagonism) can add to the meaning being conveyed through verbal means.

- ❖ A wooden expression on the face may prejudice the listeners whereas brightness in the eyes may keep their interest sustained and also evoke an enthusiastic response.
- ❖ Exuding zeal when one is making a point or smiling while explaining an intricate problem makes the job of the speaker easy.
- ❖ We can recall occasions where what could have been effective communication turned out to be a failure because the speaker did not have proper facial expressions.
- ❖ Biting the lips, raising the eyebrows at regular intervals or blinking the eyes too often can certainly mar the smooth flow of communication.



### EYE CONTACT

- ❖ Eye contact with the listener is perhaps the most important aspect of body language.
- ❖ It has been rightly said that the eye is an extension of the brain and a window of the soul.

- ❖ Stress is laid on continuous eye contact between the speaker and the listener because it tells whether the speaker is sincere and also whether the listener is interested.
- ❖ Eye contact is a means of gaining feedback, enabling the communicator to alter, adjust and reframe his message while transmitting it.
- ❖ Very often this process is automatic and the interaction through the eyes of the speaker and the listener takes place unconsciously.
- ❖ Studies have shown that better eye-contact leads to more effective communication. A good speaker, therefore, looks at all sections of his audience and not on the ground, the ceiling or at the door.
- ❖ If a section of the audience is continuously ignored that section will lose interest in what is being communicated.



## SPACE DISTANCING

- Each communicator maintains a personal territory around himself. E normally does not allow it to be invaded at the time to communication unless the relationship between him and the listener is very friendly or intimate.
- In social intercourse, normally, a zone ranging from 4 to 12 feet is maintained, when the situation is formal. This is termed as social distance.
- The term also includes a reference to the standing -seated position. The person, who is in the superior or commanding position, usually stands and the others remain seated.
- For example, it may be difficult to control the class (in fact, any group) if the teacher does not communicate in a standing position.
- Thus, in a large group discussion one can prove more effective if one stands while speaking.
- In public gatherings the distance between the audience and the communicator is much greater it may range from 12 to 30feet depending upon many other considerations (e.g. security).
- Space distancing differs from culture to culture and it can cause embarrassment to a communicator in a foreign cultural setting. For example, in India two male adults may hug each other and walk hand in hand slimly because they are friends. Whereas in another country this same gesture may lead to a misconstruction of their
- relationship. An American may find an Indian too close (distance-wise) to him while talking and to avoid this he may lean back in his chair.

- However, in heightened emotional states of mind (e.g. anger, shock, danger), the normal distancing is ignored.
- To conclude, two things clearly emerge out of this discussion: one, the visible code is as important as the verbal code and training in the use of the former is as essential as in the use of the latter; two, the visible code differs from culture to culture and care should be taken to use the appropriate symbols in cross-cultural contexts. In India the situation is more complex in as much as a foreign verbal code has to be accompanied by a native visible code.

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