

LOUDER THAN WORDS

ALSO BY JOE NAVARRO

Phil Hellmuth Presents Read 'Em and Reap

What Every Body Is Saying

LOUDER THAN WORDS



TAKE YOUR CAREER FROM AVERAGE TO EXCEPTIONAL
WITH THE HIDDEN POWER OF NONVERBAL INTELLIGENCE

JOE NAVARRO
with **TONI SCIARRA POYNTER**



HARPER
BUSINESS

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To my wife, Thryth

—*J.N.*

For Dad

—*T.S.P.*



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SITUATIONAL NONVERBALS: BEST PRACTICES FOR BEST RESULTS

THE FOUR attorneys and two legal assistants representing the shipping company stood in the reception area—an impressive wall of navy blue suits, legal pads and, no doubt, billable hours. I was there assisting my friend, an attorney, who was representing the plaintiff, a man paralyzed after being hit by a truck from that same shipping company. The attorneys had come to my friend's offices to conduct a deposition that was expected to be fairly straightforward. They were also there to try to intimidate.

When my friend asked for my assessment, I said, "They are here to bully your client, and we'll have to act quickly. They never said they were bringing a phalanx of attorneys, and we are not going to fall for their ploy."

We immediately moved the office staff to the main conference room so it appeared that a large meeting was in progress. My friend, the plaintiff, and I then set ourselves up in the smallest of the conference rooms, which would comfortably seat five. After a few minutes, my friend went out and led the group in. As they entered the small meeting room and realized this was as good as

it was going to get, the silence was deafening. Eventually, after some discussion among themselves, they arrived at a decision: two attorneys and one assistant stayed; everyone else left.

As for our other tactics: We made sure opposing counsel was seated as close as possible to our paralyzed client. I saw to it that we gave the last chair to the legal assistant so my friend could remain standing throughout the meeting, exuding distance and dominance in that small space. Whatever intimidation strategy the other side had in mind, it withered before it began.

This case went on for months, but they never tried that stunt again. In fact, only one attorney was present during arbitration; they had learned a lesson. In the end, for all their blustering and delays, they paid the damages exactly as we had hoped. The plaintiff's injuries were permanent, he would never walk again, he would always be in pain, and they had a responsibility to take care of this man and his family for the rest of his life. Case precedent was very clear, and all the delays, brinkmanship, and attempts to intimidate amounted to nothing, but it could have gone the other way. My friend's law firm is a small operation, but he was not going to allow his client to be intimidated, and I admire him for that. Had we gone forward without taking countermeasures against the opposition's initial maneuver, the plaintiff might have felt overwhelmed, even dejected, as so often happens with accident victims facing powerful organizations. These are the kinds of things you don't learn in law school, and I suspect they're not covered in business school, but they are important to level the playing field.

After I've stressed in previous chapters the importance of establishing comfort when doing business, it may seem contradictory that I've just shared an example of doing just the opposite. I do so for good reasons: First, it's surprisingly easy to induce discomfort in others if you are nonverbally intelligent. Second, you should therefore exercise this power with restraint and use it only when others are attempting to intimidate or coerce you

or others. Third, you can use nonverbals to gain an advantage in situations where the odds seem stacked against you. Fourth, your nonverbal influence can and should begin the moment you say hello—or preferably, as you’ll learn, even earlier.

GREETINGS AND INTRODUCTIONS

The importance of greetings cannot be overestimated. It is the first time strangers come together in close proximity and experience other people with all of the senses: see them, hear them, speak to them, smell them, and (often) touch them, usually via a handshake. In these first few moments, we form our first and most important thin slice assessments of one another and forge our first social links and impressions. This is where our first bonds of trust are established, and so it is no small matter.

APPROACHING MEN VERSUS APPROACHING WOMEN

For greetings or initial meetings, men should try to approach each other at angles rather than head-on. If you find this is not possible, then immediately after greeting each other, move slightly to the side just a few degrees; doing so is more conducive to establishing a collegial environment. Even when greeting people you’ve known for a while, practice moving to the side, and you will find that this is a more comfortable position for interacting.

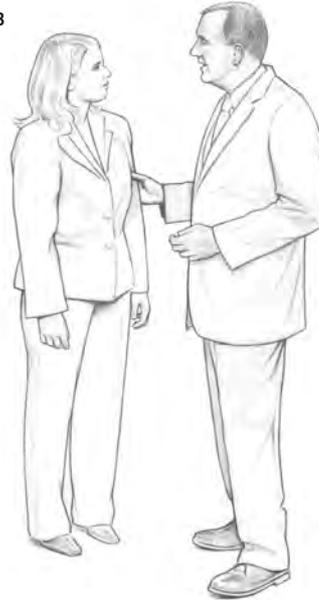
In contrast, women feel more vulnerable if approached at angles. It’s better to approach a woman directly, giving her a little more space, and to remain that way until she indicates otherwise nonverbally by rotating to angles as she begins to feel more comfortable (see figures 37 and 38). Women are particularly sensitive to space violations or to attempts to be too friendly too soon, so be aware and wait for her cues to move to a more comfortable angle.

fig. 37



A handshake is our first permissible touch; it should mirror the other person's handshake.

fig. 38



Standing at an angle is more conducive to conversation than standing directly in front of another person.

If you're joining two people already in conversation, note that when two individuals are talking face to face and their feet are pointed at each other, chances are they do not want to be interrupted. They may rotate at the hips to face you as they greet you (a social grace), but if their "honest feet" remain unchanged, they want to be left alone.

OUR FIRST TOUCH

The handshake, as mentioned, is the apex of the first-meeting experience, as it's one of the few times we allow someone to violate our space and touch us. Touch is so important that there are innumerable social and cultural codes as to precisely when touching is allowable and how we may use it in greeting. In some

places, people don't shake hands; they may kiss, hug, rub noses, touch chest to chest, or any number of other greeting behaviors. The handshake is nevertheless probably the most common form of greeting.

In New York, the handshake is fairly straightforward: two palms meet in a firm yet easy grip, lasting a few seconds, with a few light pumps. It should be accompanied by ventral fronting, a direct eye gaze, and a true smile. In Utah you can do it more firmly and for a longer period of time; in Los Angeles, it is brief; in the Midwest, a handshake may be replaced by a hand wave. In Bogotá, Colombia, as in many other countries (for example, Romania, Russia, France, Argentina), you shake hands with the men, while the women, if they feel comfortable, will offer their cheek for an air-kiss, considered customary in both business and social settings. As you can see, context, culture, and social norms strongly shape comfort levels for greetings and touching.

We've all had experiences where shaking somebody's hand left us with a negative impression—you know, the person who squeezes your hand too tightly, or pumps it too much, or torques your wrist so his hand is on top in a misguided effort to make you feel inferior, or probes your inner wrist with his index finger (uuuugh!), or shakes your hand with a weak, limp grip. Then there's the worst handshake of all, the one I'd better not ever catch anyone doing who has read this book: the "politician's handshake," in which one person engulfs the other person's hand in both of his or hers (figure 39). No one likes it, so don't do it. If you want to reinforce that you like somebody, don't do the politician's handshake; instead, touch the person's arm or elbow with the other hand (see figure 40).

Now that we know the bad handshakes, how do we ensure a good one? That depends on who you are and where you are—in other words, on context. The most important thing to remember is to try to mirror the behavior of the person you're greeting. Always sense the other handshake and apply just the same

amount of pressure—no more, no less. A good handshake should feel good. And if you should receive an awful handshake, whatever you do, don't grimace (many of us do this unconsciously, so be prepared). Accept it and move on, remembering that not all cultures place emphasis on a strong handshake.

fig. 39



The "politician's handshake," which entraps the hand, is an absolute no-no!

fig. 40



If you want to reinforce a handshake, do so by touching the upper arm or elbow. Don't cover the person's hand with yours.

THE GOLDEN TOUCH

One reason I place so much emphasis on this initial opportunity to touch is that we now know how powerful touch can be in establishing rapport and good relations. Scientific research has shown that physical touch actually enhances profits. Touch leads to the release of oxytocin, a brain chemical essential to

building relationships. In essence, it makes us more pliable to others. Consequently, the more we touch, the more trustworthy we are perceived to be and the better our chances of establishing a warm, collegial relationship. Waitresses have long known this intuitively: when customers are touched, they tip more. For us, a gentle touch to the forearm to emphasize a point or to guide someone where to sit will generate those positive feelings also. Having said this, I should note that some people don't like to be touched at all, and you will have to be sensitive to that, but for the most part, touching is a good thing.

OUR PERSONAL SPACE

This is a good time to talk about spatial needs, as issues of personal space often arise immediately after we shake hands. Your personal spatial needs—that is, the amount of space that you need around you in order to feel comfortable—are both a personal and a cultural matter. Where you grew up will often determine how much personal space you need. If you're from a Mediterranean country or from South America, you'll feel comfortable with people standing very close to you. If you're from North America, you may feel more comfortable if people stand at least at arm's length. The anthropologist Edward Hall has written about this subject extensively and coined the term “proxemics” to describe this intangible yet defined bubble of space each of us needs.

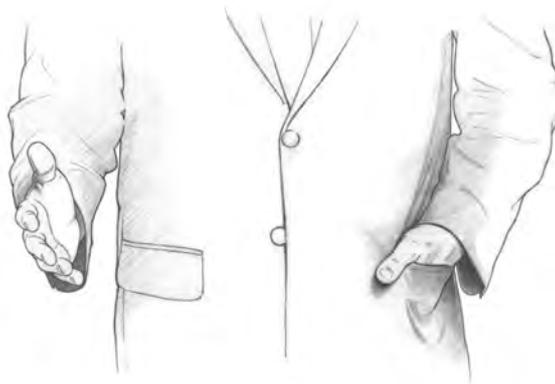
What Hall found, and what by now you recognize, is that we all have spatial preferences. In a crowded elevator, it's okay if someone stands just inches away, but it's not acceptable when you're getting money from an ATM. Such proxemic violations, even when unintentional, cause us to have negative limbic responses that put us on alert and make us tense—so tense, in fact, that they can disrupt our concentration.

We can avoid creating this discomfort in others quite simply by assessing for spatial needs during our first encounter with someone. After shaking hands, take a step back and see if the person moves closer, holds his or her ground, moves back, or turns slightly. These movements offer clues regarding spatial needs, as the person is self-adjusting to you. What often happens as two individuals grow more fond of each other is that they will incrementally move closer together during their conversation.

While it's important to honor spatial needs, you shouldn't draw too many inferences from them. Some people just prefer to be far apart, while others feel offended if you are not within breath length. Each culture is different, so get to know the people you will be meeting. In the Mediterranean and in Latin America, as well as in Arab countries, people stand closer together; in other countries, people prefer greater distances. The only way to know is to observe closely and try to mirror the local norm.

Rank and status also come into play. It is almost universal that people of higher status will expect you to not crowd them and to give them extra space. They may let you know by backing away

fig. 41



Thumbs protruding from pockets is a high-status display. It can signify "We are not equals."

or by turning sideways to you or by placing their hands behind their back (this gesture means, “Don’t touch me or draw near to me!”). They may also do it by a more discreet method often associated with high-status individuals. Note when someone, usually a superior or higher-status person, shakes your hand while keeping their other hand in their coat pocket with their thumb sticking out of their coat pocket, they are saying, “We are not equals; I am superior to you” (see figure 41). This behavior is often seen among college professors, attorneys, and doctors. Don’t let it get to you; just be aware of it and take delight in knowing what it means (they probably don’t).

MEETINGS BY DESIGN

When I lecture on nonverbals, I often say that there are two kinds of meetings, and two ways to describe them: the White House and Camp David. The White House is the official seat of the presidency, associated with protocol, power, privilege, and formality. Camp David is the president’s retreat, associated with privacy, intimacy, and repose. It’s no surprise that some of the great breakthroughs in policy and foreign relations have been forged at Camp David. Why? One reason is that in a comfortable, non-formal environment, people tend to feel more amiable. Environment affects mood; there is no question about this.

A relaxed, private, and beautiful setting such as that found at Camp David fosters a friendly social atmosphere; it enhances communication as well as face time (no need to rush) and a problem-solving attitude. The seating there is informal: guests sit side by side or at angles rather than opposite each other (the latter is really one of the worst ways to get anything done). Individuals can thus mirror one another with greater ease and have, quite literally, fewer obstacles between them. Attendees can go for walks (which, because of synchrony and mirroring, are conducive to

talking openly), can participate in recreational activities such as bicycling, and, importantly, can share a meal together rather than just a snack. Can you think of a better atmosphere for achieving a meeting of minds?

Somewhere between these two examples—the White House and Camp David—is how we should be thinking of our meeting, depending on what we want to achieve. Sometimes we need to get away so we can think “outside the box,” free of the pressures of time, phone calls, e-mails, urgent matters, or our usual environment. There are other times when a sterile, utilitarian setting can make for fast meetings and fast decision making. So be aware that environment, as the research tells us, does affect productivity, mood, and even creativity.

People like to complain about meetings, but a properly run meeting can foster harmony and rapport. We’re a social species and need to congregate. Often in my FBI work I wouldn’t gather with other agents for months. Every once in a while, it was good for us just to be together to talk about work as well as our personal lives. Isolation is different from independence. Americans are known for their ability to perform independently and to take initiative, but isolation is unhealthy and can even become pathological. People who work from home often tell me they miss the interaction, even if occasional, with their work mates. For the sake of teamwork, try to get together as a group every once in a while to let everyone know what’s going on and that you are all part of the same organization on the same trajectory.

Below are guidelines for preparing the underlying nonverbals that make for successful meetings.

SET YOUR GOALS AND THEN SET THE MOOD

What is the purpose of the meeting? Often this is assumed but not stated and even more rarely planned for. Everything should

flow from the meeting's purpose. If two individuals must come to terms, why put them in a conference room containing a dozen chairs? Perhaps a smaller, more intimate space with right-angle seating will encourage more open discussion.

Everything should be done with the convenience and comfort of your most important attendees in mind. If nothing else, be aware of your guests and their needs first and foremost.

Timing, for instance, is critical. What may be a good time for you may be terrible for someone facing a long commute or air travel. A simple phone call will assess what would be best for the other party and will enhance the mood of the meeting. With so much at stake in the discussions, everything should be geared to creating a setting conducive to openness, progress, and agreement.

Remember that issues of status, territory, and seniority are long-standing social norms that must always be attended to. What does "the royal treatment" entail in business? In the end, it need not entail that much. Some ideas include: a reserved parking space with the guest's name, a nameplate for a large meeting, having the guest's chosen beverage at hand or at least bottled water nearby, meeting your guest at the curb, taking care of the parking charges, providing a private space where he or she can make a phone call or have use of a computer. It doesn't take long to call ahead and ask what is needed, nor, usually, to provide it. And the comfort dividend you will reap is enormous. These small things go a long way. What you want to do is create an environment where people want to spend time with you.

SET THE STAGE

As I've noted, the environment where your meeting takes place is conducive to the happiness, energy, and productivity of the group. Make sure the space is clean, orderly, and prepared with any supplies, materials, or equipment needed. See the room as the client will see it: Does this space say that you are respon-

sible and trustworthy? One manager I know carefully checks the conference room about half an hour before visitors arrive to make sure the chairs are pushed in and the table is clean and empty of confidential handouts and refreshments from previous meetings.

Don't limit meetings to the conference room. I've had some of my most productive meetings in coffee shops, at outdoor cafés, or while walking in a park (the nonconfrontational, side-by-side, synchronous process of walking encourages communication). It depends on what's needed to accomplish the goal. At a minimum, a meeting should be in a place where there's quiet, little distraction, and access to what you need to accomplish your goal. Anything that expedites the process enhances the meeting.

Remember we have a survival instinct to orient toward movement, so beware of interruptions: others taking cell phone calls, checking e-mail, entering the room, or passing by. Many people put their smartphones on the table, not realizing that the sporadically flashing light is distracting. Even worse, as we saw during President Obama's February 24, 2009, State of the Union Address before Congress, people in the audience were actually using their smartphones; this is not only distracting, it is rude.

Beware, too, of activity outside windows. I recently passed a ground-floor office where the conference table was set against the windows. Passersby readily looked in, and I'm sure meeting attendees were distracted by the constant movement on the street.

Many modern open office plans place the conference room at the hub of the surrounding activity. It looks great but loses effectiveness from a nonverbal standpoint: ongoing activities are distracting, and the lack of privacy may inhibit sensitive discussions.

THE HASSLE TEST

Meeting planning is easy if you simply think of the comfort and convenience of your client. I call it the “hassle test.”

I’ve been asked many times by a certain university to lecture at their campus. Each time I’ve agreed, it’s been a hassle. First, it is a difficult place to find parking, for which we as guests have to pay. Parking also is so far from buildings that carrying all the instructional materials (handouts, lecture notes, and computer equipment) becomes a significant burden. The last time I was there, I walked for well over a quarter-mile in a sudden down-pour carrying all my materials, which got soaked. At that point I decided, “I don’t want to do this anymore. It’s a hassle.”

I’ve heard businesspeople talking about meeting with a new prospect, and someone will pipe up, “It’s not worth it. I was up there last year, it’s a hassle to get there, and what they have to offer isn’t that good.” And a potential transaction dies because of the hassle factor.

Compare this with Fidelity Investments. When I’ve lectured there, I’m impressed at how guests are treated. Someone is there at the curb to meet you, escort you into the building past security, take care of your luggage, and ask whether you’d like a drink. A small office is set aside where you can make phone calls, and a computer is made available. When you leave, you think, “I want to come back.” That attentiveness, which really amounts to making one person responsible for guests for about an hour, is really not too much to ask, and it contributes invaluablely to the client’s experience.

The question every businessperson should ask at end of the meeting is “Would the person I just met with be willing to come back to meet with me in this space?” If you review the experience and see that it was a hassle to locate the building, a hassle to

find parking, a hassle to get through security, a hassle because the guests had to be escorted to the bathroom, a hassle to get a copier to work, I guarantee you that this person will at a minimum debate whether or not to meet with you again.

TURN ON YOUR NONVERBAL RADAR

Nothing should be left to chance when meeting with others—that's why you must have your radar *on*. With the confidence of knowing you've planned well, once you're in the room, remember to relax and observe, with particular alertness to displays of discomfort—which can bring issues of concern to light—or pacifying behavior, which may betray points of vulnerability.

No nonverbals are too small to be considered beneath notice in such sessions, so watch for microgestures. I often look for subtle tension in the lower eyelids as people read contracts or other materials. It is a reliable blocking behavior indicating that the person is seeing something problematic.

The more important the meeting, the more important it is to return to the fundamentals of nonverbal intelligence. Relax your eyes, relax your mind, and look for the nonverbals of comfort and discomfort as well as intention cues that you know will be there, as the body reveals how we feel and what we favor and find unfavorable, with leaning in and leaning away; with ventral fronting and blading; with eye blocks and leg blocks; with territorial and other confidence displays; with shifting our feet to show our wish to leave, and so on. Watch the entire body, not just the face (this is where not being seated at a table can be useful). Figures 42–44 show a few examples of the nonverbals that appear frequently during meetings and while you are interacting with others.

Remember that nonverbal information will constantly be flowing, so use it to your advantage. The very presence of your guest becomes a key to your success, now that you are nonverbally intelligent.

fig. 42



A forward lean between two people signifies comfort and synchrony. It can be fleeting (during the taking of photos) or it can last for hours during courtship.

fig. 43



We lean away from things and people we don't like—even from colleagues when they say things with which we disagree.

fig. 44



Exhaling through puffed-out cheeks pacifies us. It's a behavior often seen when we are relieved (e.g., having just avoided an accident or a disagreeable task).

THE MICROGESTURES THAT SAVED MILLIONS

I remember attending a negotiation between two overseas shipping companies. When I met with the British team prior to the session, they said, in essence, “We’ll go in and listen to them, and they’ll listen to us, and you’ll watch. . . .”

“No,” I said. “You didn’t hire me to sit and watch you guys talk. We’re going to go through the contract, paragraph by paragraph.” They protested that it would “take forever.” I countered that if the goal was to close the deal, this was the way to do it. “We’re going to see which paragraphs they like, which paragraphs they don’t like, and we’ll take care of any issues here and now,” I said.

That’s just what we did. As we reviewed the contract, I kept passing notes under the table to the lead British negotiator next to me: There’s an issue here . . . and here . . . and here. I’m sure the lead French negotiator wondered how we somehow zeroed in on every point of contention. He didn’t realize

he was pursing his lips every time he saw language he didn't like. In the end, we avoided many costly modifications that my British cohorts had been prepared to offer in order to come to terms, saving my ecstatic client millions of dollars.

I call that a good day's work.

USE SEATING STRATEGICALLY

If you think seating isn't important, ask the White House protocol officer who triple-checks every detail of seating at state functions. Teachers know that where students sit in a classroom equates with whether or not they'll pay attention and contribute to discussions. Even mobsters work out not only where they will meet, but, more important, where they will sit.

Ultimately, seating depends on what you want to accomplish. In some ways it's quite simple: We get more done when people sit next to us or at right angles to us. For reasons that are unclear (although there are many hypotheses), research on seating behaviors shows that we get less done when seated opposite each other. Sitting on a couch side by side or in chairs side by side or at angles will do the trick effectively.

I'm often asked if visitors should be seated at the head of a rectangular conference table. It's certainly an option, but a visitor may expect you to sit there, as the meeting is taking place on your turf. One way to solve this conundrum is to invite your guest to choose: "Where would you like to sit?" They will either select their seat or defer to you. But if you have an agenda for the meeting—for instance, if you're an attorney negotiating with the other side—you want to tell them where to sit, as this subtly establishes boundaries and places you subconsciously in charge.

If you aim to impress, place the person you care about most to your right, seated close to you.

When meeting in someone's office, I like it (and I'm sure you

do, too) when I'm invited to sit not in a chair opposite the desk, but rather on the couch, if there is one off to the side. It makes me feel special and it is less formal. If you want to have bad or poor communications, seat someone on the other side of your desk; it creates not only a barrier, but also distance. No warm-and-fuzzy there. This point would seem obvious, yet how many offices have you seen with precisely this layout? It's not very prudent, unless distance is the message you want to convey.

USE TIME EFFICIENTLY AND CUE OTHERS TO DO THE SAME

I worked for a special agent in charge in Phoenix who was a terrific leader. He hated to waste time. He would come in, state how many minutes we had—usually no more than thirty—and lay his watch on the table. I assure you everyone's eyes were on that watch and on our own. Meetings that used to go on and on suddenly became short and focused.

In some situations, you might choose to do the same, but in general, always be respectful of the value of your guests' time. When planning the meeting, ask if there are time constraints (a plane or train to catch; another meeting). During the meeting, track the time or ask someone to do so and alert you prior to the end time. You may say, "I notice we have about fifteen minutes before you need to leave. Shall we schedule a time to continue the discussion?"

Be aware that in many cultures, time is very flexible, and you may be expected to extend the time of the meeting so that everyone is heard or so that employees may socialize as part of the meeting process. Or you are expected at the end of the meeting to go out for drinks, where the real work takes place. Be aware of what may be expected of you and prepare.

THOSE WHO ATTEND ALSO HAVE A ROLE

If you don't have a leading or speaking role in a meeting, you still have an important role as an intelligent and motivated employee. Pay absolute attention. Display the nonverbals of interest and confidence: lean forward, ventrally front your boss or whoever is speaking, and keep your hands quiet and visible. Avoid doodling, pen chewing, and other fidgeting that implies anxiety or boredom. Do not distract by using or even handling your PDA or cell phone (turn them off before you go in), or by surreptitious glances at others, and don't engage in side conversations. Remember, movements are distracting, so keep them to a minimum, especially when someone else is delivering a message.

Seeing two heads together in chitchat is instantly noticeable, as is covert e-mail activity. I've had CEOs tell me that nothing bothers them more than when they're sharing their pearls of wisdom and some employee decides at that moment that he has something absolutely critical that has to be whispered to somebody else. Whisperers and e-mail checkers think they're not being noticed, but from the head of the table or the podium, all is visible.

Also be aware that you can enhance the message of the main presenter by being in agreement nonverbally when appropriate. Merely by mirroring the lead speaker's body language, you can communicate that you are both on the same page and in harmony.

WHEN THINGS GET TENSE

Tension and acrimony achieve nothing. If you feel that tension is rising, take a moment to address it, because emotions will always override logic. Here are some nonverbal ways to deal with tension in order to "lower the temperature" in any discussion:

TEN WAYS TO DEFUSE TENSION (YOURS OR THEIRS)

Any business interaction can induce tension, but negotiations especially so. Here are some nonverbals you can engage to dispel stress:

1. Lean back; concede space.
2. Don't stare intently; break your gaze by focusing elsewhere on the body.
3. Don't stand with arms crossed or arms akimbo.
4. Angle slightly away from your opponent. By changing your angle, you will lower the tension.
5. Take a deep breath and exhale longer than you inhaled. Invariably, the people around you will mirror your calming action without your having to say, "Settle down."
6. Take a break from what you are doing: "I need a little time to think this over"; "Let's take a short break"; "I'll need twenty-four hours to review this."
7. Cross your legs while standing, as well as tilting your head, to help lessen tension between individuals.
8. Stand up and move slightly away. Distance has a dual power: it tends to reduce tension, and you garner greater authority by standing.
9. Take a walk together. It's tough to be acrimonious when you walk side by side.
10. Break bread or have a drink together. Sharing food engenders trust, fostering reciprocity and cooperation.

MAKING THE CONNECTION: PHONE NONVERBALS

Many think nonverbals can't be discerned on the phone, but that's a misperception. Phone nonverbals can be telling, since people know they can't be observed, so they think you can't read them.

If you doubt that phone nonverbals are reliable indicators of our emotional state, recall 911 calls that are periodically played on the news. Notice how stress significantly alters the callers' tone, pitch, speed, and volume. Let's hope your business calls don't resemble these, but these elements should be listened for. Also be alert to speech errors and hesitations ("uh," "um," and "ah,") and noises (throat clearing, "hmm," exhaling through pursed lips, whistling, or making noises with lips or tongue). All are pacifying behaviors: tongue and mouth noises are grown-up versions of the solace-seeking infant behavior of sucking.

When you hear vocal hesitations or pacifiers, you might circle back to the topic that was under discussion when the pacifiers began:

Your client: Oh, uh—sure, next week would be okay to receive the shipment . . .

You: Is there going to be a problem with that timing?

Your client: Well, actually, yes. We're back-ordered and getting a lot of heat from our accounts.

You: If we push, we could deliver three days earlier. Would that help?

Your client: That would be great. Thanks!

NONVERBAL RULES OF THUMB FOR PHONE CONVERSATIONS

- Answer your phone after one to two rings (this says you are efficient; your customers' needs are paramount).
- Avoid speech hesitations ("um," "like," "you know") or noises (tongue clicking, whistling). Removing such filler will make your speech deliberate and decisive.
- Engage in verbal mirroring. If your client says, "I'm angry," don't say, "I understand you're upset." Use people's own words to describe their situation.

- Limit background noise.
- Moderate your volume. When callers raise their voice, lower yours.
- Listen for long, deep exhalations. These are pacifiers, saying, “I am struggling with something here.”
- Deepen your vocal tone to convey confidence.
- Silence is golden. If someone says something objectionable, you can meet it with several long moments of silence. This powerful nonverbal rivets attention on you, just as rising from your chair in a meeting would do in person.
- Use long pauses to get the other person to do the talking. Most people dread silence, so they fill the void, often revealing things they did not intend.

PRINCIPLES FOR POWERFUL PRESENTATIONS

Presentations, properly conceived and executed, are dynamic settings for the transfer of ideas from one individual to the minds of many. All of the elements for successful meetings underpin successful presentations, with additional considerations depending on audience size and configuration. What follows are nonverbal strategies for making your messages memorable.

While for some giving a presentation is cause for nail biting, for others it seems to come easily. I’ve given thousands of presentations and always I feel the butterflies. That’s good, I think; it makes me want to prepare. A presentation is your opportunity to shine, to share what you know. All that is expected is that you do so effectively. No one wants you to fail; audiences are inclined to be very forgiving of unforeseen problems because they understand how these things happen, but they rightly expect the best you can give them, so here are some nonverbal ways to do that:

1. Prepare and rehearse. I have rehearsed speeches ten to fifteen times to ensure that I'm comfortable with what I'm saying and that I'm communicating what I know in an optimal way.
2. Pick a speaker you like and mirror what they do. You can't beat what works, so echo what someone else is doing that works.
3. Get to the event early so that you can meet a few people. Focus on them as they sit in the audience; this will help you relax.
4. Set up your audiovisual equipment well in advance. In six years I have had two projector bulbs go out and one complete computer crash, so be prepared.
5. If you're nervous, don't hesitate to tell the audience, especially if they are coworkers; then put it behind you. Even experienced speakers are blown away at times by a large audience.
6. Use the stage; move around. Don't hide behind the lectern; no one likes to see that.
7. Use your hands and gesture frequently. Emphasize important points with gravity-defying gestures or by lowering your voice; both garner attention.
8. Whatever you do, don't read your comments and don't say the same thing that appears in your visuals.
9. Try to use a blue background for visuals, as that is the best color to use, according to experts.
10. Pointing to the screen with your hands is more powerful than pointing with a laser beam.
11. Try to speak with a deeper voice or, if you are tense, at a minimum don't allow your voice to rise too high, as that will turn off your audience.
12. If you are a woman, you have great leeway in what you can wear, so use color in your clothing to attract attention. Move away from the podium whenever

possible and use your hands to broaden your territorial claim and emphasize your message. Many women tend to hide behind the podium and restrict their hands, which inhibits communication.

13. Lastly, leave your audience wanting to hear more. Speakers who exhaust their subject are never well received.

A FEW WORDS ON GROUP DYNAMICS

Be aware that there are pluses and minuses in talking to or dealing with large groups. If you have a friendly audience, it's a great place to deliver a powerful speech. If the audience is unfriendly, it is a poor place to deliver any message at all. This is why presidents often go to military bases to deliver policy speeches: The audience has to be friendly; the president is the commander in chief. Communication requires a transmitter (you) and a receiver (the audience). If they are hostile, they are not listening anyway; think of getting the message out another way (newspaper, news release, Internet, and so on) or perhaps in smaller groups.

Large unfriendly groups can turn into a dangerous mob that, fueled by emotions and simplistic slogans, quickly dispenses with careful deliberation. The emotions of a large group can marginalize or trample upon the dissenting views of a minority. This is what happened with Eastern Airlines: employees who wanted to be heard in union meetings were overwhelmed by the emotions of the majority. Many retirees and those who warned that they all might lose their jobs were drowned out by the shouts of the larger, more enthusiastic group. Had everyone had time to deliberate and perhaps vote in private, the outcome would have been different. Many of my neighbors in Puerto Rico were Eastern Airlines employees, and they told me that their opinions were drowned out by the very vocal majority who were emotionally aroused. In the end, loud voices pre-

vailed: The airline shut down, all the workers lost their jobs, and retirees lost their pension.

POTENTIATING YOUR MESSAGE

Messages can be unforgettably magnified by speakers choosing wisely where those messages are delivered. Ronald Reagan's "Mr. Gorbachev, tear down this wall!" speech resonated so powerfully because it was given in front of the Brandenburg Gate, just across from then-communist East Germany. When making his immortal "I Have a Dream" speech, Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. stood before the Lincoln Memorial in the "symbolic shadow," as he noted, of "a great American" who also stood for the dream of freedom for all. In both cases, these speakers combined the visual and the verbal to magnify their message and forever anchor their words in the hearts and minds of not only their audience that day, but of millions around the world thereafter. Had those speeches been given in the ballroom of a hotel in Washington, D.C., they would not have resonated as well.

When you have an important message to communicate, ask yourself where the best place is to give this message, and how you plan to communicate it. Which brings me full circle back to you. In the final analysis, the power of a person's messages is very much entwined with how the person is perceived. Make sure you cultivate the right image because if you don't, you will not be listened to or respected no matter what you say. Think of those CEOs from the Big Three automakers arriving in private jets to seek financial aid from Congress. No one wanted to listen to them; their message was wasted because their image was tarnished.

Much of what I've been talking about in this chapter can be used to create an aura around you that anticipates your arrival, augments your presence, and favorably lingers after your depart-

ture. It is powerful when your nonverbal message and your verbal message are unified and synchronous.

Personal image is not just for CEOs and public figures anymore. In this information- and visually driven world, managing our image in every context—from in person to online—is increasingly a necessity. If you don't manage it, it will be managed for you (as you may know if you've ever looked up yourself online).

Paradoxically, the very thing that makes image management so necessary—the ubiquity and speedy dissemination of information—is also what makes it possible. The Internet affords almost limitless opportunities for you to share the evolving story and record of your work and achievements.

GETTING THE NONVERBALS RIGHT IN JOB INTERVIEWS

Perhaps nowhere are we more concerned about our image than during a job interview. Once nonverbal intelligence becomes second nature, however, job interviews are no longer nerve-racking. You go in with confidence, knowing you're prepared and that you present well.

Employers must consider how their customers will perceive their employees. It's not a matter of passing judgment on you as a person, but rather a matter of assessing whether your skills and the way you present are the right fit with a company's business. If the fit is wrong, it's best that everyone move on. What we want to avoid is the inadvertent loss of potentially good fits. Here are some ways to make sure your nonverbals maximize your chances of making a positive impression:

1. Prepare to succeed. In addition to researching the company's financials, Web site, and press coverage, put your observational powers to use: if possible, visit the company and talk to the receptionist or drive by

when workers arrive to see how they dress, or find an unobtrusive place to observe employees as they arrive in the morning or leave at night. Is this a nine-to-five place, or do people arrive early and stay late? Do they appear contented or stressed? Are they dressed in suits, or less formally? If the dress is casual, dress a notch or so above that level for your interview.

2. Anticipate questions. Human resources personnel are now trained to detect when interviewees are struggling with an answer. You want your voice nonverbals to be fluid and unhesitating. Practice answers to questions you may be asked (about gaps in employment, or why your previous job ended). Also prepare some temporizing responses: “I don’t have the details right now, but I can quickly get that information for you.”
3. Look the part. If I hadn’t heard so many human resources managers tell me to the contrary, I wouldn’t think it necessary to say that the following are required at a minimum: clean clothes; shined shoes; clean, clipped nails; understated makeup; no perfume. If you have tattoos, be aware that you may be rejected outright on that basis alone (almost certainly in medicine, food, and banking). If possible, you should try to conceal them, but know that you will always have to conceal them. (For a discussion of how to manage the way you’re perceived, see chapter 4, “The Power of Your Behavior” and chapter 5, “The Power of How You Look.”)
4. Don’t forget to smile along the way; smiles sell you.
5. Accept nervousness and move on. It’s normal to feel nervous in interviews. If it helps, just mention it and then get past it. That way if you nonverbally display some anxiety, your interviewer will understand and overlook it.

6. If there are choices of where to sit, ask: “Where would you like me to sit?” This shows respect; you’re on their turf, invited to share their space.
7. If you’re offered a drink, accept it; drinking can help to pacify nervousness.
8. Display the nonverbals of attentiveness. You can’t go wrong if you sit up and lean forward, with feet flat on the floor. Keep your gaze relaxed yet focused on the interviewer (only the interviewer, as the higher-status individual, has the prerogative of letting his or her gaze wander).
9. Once rapport is established, you may move to a slight angle, as this position is more conducive to communication. If you cross your legs, continue to lean forward. Sitting back with legs crossed can appear arrogant. You may also subtly mirror the interviewer. As the interviewer relaxes and leans back, that’s your cue to do so slightly as well.
10. There should be absolutely no cell phone handling. Turn the phone off before you go in.
11. Beware of speech hesitations, mumbling, mannerisms, and slang.
12. In the end, the goal of all preparation is confidence. There’s no substitute for it. Go in there with the confidence of knowing that you’re well prepared. Then relax and do it.



AT THE beginning of this chapter, I told of a time when nonverbals were used successfully in a negotiation where a lot was at stake. Nonverbals can be employed to excellent effect when others are trying to intimidate you. They can and will empower you to stand your ground, make your case, assess how you are being received,

and enhance that reception. In the end, the best and highest uses of nonverbals are always to bring fair resolution to problems; to communicate more effectively; to elevate the game; to further your mission and goals not at others' expense, but through the engagement of mutual effort for equitable gain. Be it a meeting, a negotiation, a presentation small or large, or a job interview, consider: What will elevate what we do here? When you do so, you are accessing the hidden power of nonverbal intelligence.