



THE NON-VERBAL DIMENSIONS OF PRESENTATION

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ABSTRACT

Actions Speak Louder than Words. Nonverbal communication is the process by which nonverbal behaviors are used, either single or in combination with verbal behaviors, in the exchange and interpretation of messages within a given situation or context. Philip Lewis, famous writer on Communication techniques says, "**Most of us speak at least one oral language, but everyone speaks a nonverbal language**". Communication analysts tend to agree that perhaps most of the expression of emotional and motivational states occur on nonverbal levels and are communicable by facial and paralinguistic cues." Probably more feelings and intentions are communicated nonverbally than through all the verbal methods combined. Although we use two different mediums to convey messages when we communicate, it is difficult to distinguish our words from our nonverbal cues. Both are intimately woven into our messages and act as complements to one another. However, nonverbal communication is so inextricably bound up with verbal aspects of the communication process that we can only separate artificially. "To leave the impression that you someone's voice, appearance, facial expression, other distance he stands from you, independently of one another, is to leave you with a distorted impression of the process." **Mehrabian** has identified three dimensions of human feelings and attitudes often communicated more effectively through nonverbal cues: **Like-Dislike; Potency or Status (Power); and Responsiveness**. Only by observing posture, facial expressions, and use of the space around them, an observer can develop a fairly accurate interpretation of how comfortable two people are with each other and which person has power over the other.

Non-verbal communication is the ancient and the modest means of communication for it developed, much before, oral communication and languages came into being. Gestures, postures and facial expressions were among the earliest means of communication used by the pre literate man.

Another significant dimension of non-verbal communication is its universal appeal. Words have boundaries, whereas non-verbal communication which doesn't use words transcends linguistic and cultural barriers and boundaries. Non-verbal communication can have an overwhelming impact. There are myriad ways in which body and its associated actions communicate messages, intended and unintended.

The dimensions that carry the non-verbal message are as under:

- Body language
- Postures
- Attire
- Appearance
- Hand shake
- Space
- Timing
- Behaviour
- Smile

Body Language:

Bodies do not lie and hence body language tells the truth. There are many ways in which a human body expresses itself. These expressions may be obvious or subtle, complementary or contradictory. The facial expressions, eyes and voice are the various facets of body language.

Facial Expressions: *Face is the index of mind.* The thoughts of the mind and the feelings of the heart often find expression on the face.

Eyes: *Eyes are the windows of mind.* They are highly expressive and hence considerable significance is attached to the presence and absence of eye contact.

Voice: Human voices through their variations convey different meanings. Voice modulation often makes the speech more effective.

Postures and Gestures:

The carriage, state and attitude of the body refer to the posture. The significant movement of the limb or body refers to gesture, nodding, shaking & shrugging, smiling, frowning, blinking, yawning and so are the gestures and postures that complement the spoken word.

Attire:

Attire pro claims a Person. The way a person dresses creates first impression. Dressing gives a scope to interpretation and hence the dress one wears should be in agreement with the occasion.

Appearance:

The physical appearance of a person plays a key role in the process of communication. People tend to prejudice a speaker through his attire and appearance even before he starts speaking. ***Good appearances create a positive impact.***

Hand Shake:

People greet each other and introduce themselves to one another with a hand shake. There are many ways in which handshakes are described and interpreted. A good communicator should be aware of a proper hand shake.

Personal Space:

Personal space or space between persons during their interaction with each other is another segment of non-verbal communication. Physical distance between persons indicate familiarity or closeness or otherwise. *Personal space depends on relationship.* Hence a proper spacing is to be maintained in communication.

Timing:

Timing is another important means through which non-verbal communication takes place. Timing also indicates hierarchy and protocol. For example who comes first, who sits first, who speaks first and who leaves first also communicates the primacy of the person and his attitude.

Behaviour:

Actions speak louder than words. The way in which one conducts oneself and behaves in the process in the process of communication is another very forceful facet of non-verbal communication. Preaching without practicing would sound hollow. Asking others to follow rules without setting an example dilutes the message. Only exemplary behaviour can motivate people towards action.

Smile:

A smile speaks all languages. You are never fully dressed unless you wear a smile. A smile is a potent form of facial expression which opens the door to communication. A natural and potent smile carries great significance in establishing and sustaining communication.

Good communication is hardly ever accidental. It calls for conceptual clarity, proper planning and language proficiency. Over and above the above

mentioned factors communication is rated on non-verbal skills displayed. A good sense of non-verbal dimensions will enrich the presentation.

What we say is not as important as how we say

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