

# THE EXCHANGE

This issue's featured subject is "Reading Body Language."

## MIRROR, PACE, AND LEAD

Have you ever met someone that you immediately felt comfortable with? Contrast that with someone you met that just immediately seemed to make you feel uncomfortable. What's the difference? When you think about it, some major aspect of each person's behavior was either consistent with yours or very different. A wealth of research has confirmed that liking is influenced by similarity. The opposite is also true; we tend to have a difficult time establishing rapport with people whose behaviors are substantially different than our own.

If you easily establish rapport with others, you have a skill that will distinguish you from others and will give you many other advantages. Rapport-building is essential to establishing relationships and influencing others, and it can be learned. How can you do a better job of it?

We can intentionally modify our behaviors in certain situations to be more consistent with those of the people we are communicating with. Behaviors include what we do with our voices and body language, as well as which topics we discuss and the words we use. "Mirroring" is a term that describes this process.

The key is to generally approximate the other person's behaviors. For example, if you are a fast mover and talker, and the other person is not, slow down your body language and vocal rate. If they are sitting and you are standing, sit down. If they are leaning comfortably back, it might be a good idea for you to relax your posture, too. Approximate; don't copy. Watch their body language to see how open they are.

## What Our Clients Are Saying

The training was the most informative and useful workshop I have attended in years. I read the book that was handed out at the beginning of class. I gave it to a family member and she is reading it as well.

David Shambley, Seattle WA

It was one of the best talks I have ever heard. I bought the book "Talk Is Not Cheap" and finished my first reading during the flight to California!

Guru Rao, Avila Beach CA



Mirroring the other person's behaviors over a period of time is called "pacing." If you pace the other person long enough to establish rapport, you may be surprised to find that the other person is receptive to following your lead if you speed up or introduce new topics.

"Leading" is a word for the influence that comes after rapport has been established. If you try to lead before rapport has been established, you will not be able to influence the other person toward your point of view or get the decision that you want. You can't lead until you pace long enough to establish rapport, and this may span several interactions (especially for introverts).

There are many reasons to establish rapport by mirroring, pacing, and leading. Whether your desire is to make someone feel more comfortable, establish a good relationship, or to influence, others will be more willing to work and deal with you if you observe them and establish rapport first. What a wonderful thing it would be, instead of having people say things about you like, "He makes me feel uncomfortable", to have them say things like, "Even though he's different than I am, he's easy to talk to."



March 2004

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### LOOKING AHEAD:

- ♦ The April issue of The Exchange will focus on the Power of Laughter.

### LOOKING BACK:

- ♦ For previous editions of The Exchange, go to our [back issues](#).
- ♦ Re-read the [02/2003](#) edition: **Networking & Meeting New People**.



### Helpful Hints:

- Look for speed in body movements that may indicate stress.
- When people are feeling negative, habits increase (playing with a pen, etc.)

Human behavior flows from three main sources: desire, emotion, and knowledge.

Plato



To learn more about it, click here!

## IN THE SPLIT OF A SECOND

By Ben Cairns, M.A.

Last month, my wife and I were discussing the details of my travel arrangements to England to conduct four days of training. When I brought it up, my wife acknowledged the arrangements and agreed that she would be OK taking care of the kids alone during my absence. But, there was something else that led me to ask a few questions about how she felt about my travel.

That “something” was a microexpression, a fleeting facial expression that occurred immediately after I mentioned the flight arrangements. A microexpression lasts approximately one-fifth of a second, and is involuntary. It is an expression of true emotion that is displayed before the mind has time to “put on” a different expression. Since microexpressions are so fleeting, most people do not notice them. In many cases, people do not even see them because they are not looking at the other person. In this case, I saw concern that did not fit with the rest of her message.

I casually asked some questions about her feelings regarding my being away and my flight, and found that she was, in fact, concerned about the recent terrorist threats and the possibility that something might happen to me on the airplane. She had not wanted to mention it. We discussed the realistic chances that something might occur, and we both felt much better after a short while.

In this case, I was paying attention to her facial reactions to make sure we were in agreement about everything. I have been paying much more attention to microexpressions lately, and have found them to give me important information about how others are feeling. Almost all of the recent research on microexpressions has focused on facial expressions, although I find that sometimes people will also give off vocal cues, too.

So, what do you look for? Primarily, you look for the immediate response that does not match the rest of the message or subsequent body language. What do you do about it? If the voice, body language, and message are not congruent, it is time to observe more and ask questions. The flash of a microexpression may be the only contradictory indication that you get. Maintain a low key. Do not call attention to what has given you a clue that the



other person may be managing the impressions they are giving off. Simply ask questions to give them the opportunity to reveal their true feelings. Look and listen for other aspects of the communication that reinforce the message of the microexpression. It may or may not be significant.

In negotiation, microexpressions can make you money. When I bought a car a few years ago, I saw a microexpression of almost predatory aggression on the part of the car salesman when he mentioned a price that was acceptable to me and I seemed receptive. He wasn’t looking at me, but I was looking at him. I thought that his expression meant that he was going to make a bigger profit than he expected, so I countered for the third time. Even though I didn’t get as much off as I wanted, I made (saved) several hundred dollars just from that one “hunch.”

When delegating, you might see how “bought-in” a person is by how they initially respond. When giving directions, you can see if the person “sees” or understands the route. When dealing with a conflict, you might see how angry or upset the other person is at the moment, even when they are making an effort to mask their true feelings. In any of these situations, you have the opportunity to slow down and make things better.

Watch, listen, and learn. At TLC, we recommend that you do not act or make a decision based on one observed behavior. Ask questions and continue observing to see if microexpressions add up to information that is helpful. Look at the people you interact with, and you may learn more than you thought you could!

## SAY “CHEESE”

One Sunday afternoon, a grandfather was visiting with his family. As he lay sleeping during his afternoon nap, his grandson decided to place a little smelly Limburger cheese on Grandpa’s mustache. Soon, grandpa awoke with a snort. “This room stinks,” he said.

He walked through the house, realizing that every room smelled the same. “The whole house stinks.” Desperately, he ran outside, then cried out in despair, “The whole world stinks!”

That’s what happens when we fill our minds with negativism. Everything we experience and encounter carries the scent we hold in our mind.

What “cheese” have you been carrying around with you? Instead of carrying it, say “cheese” and it will make you smile.



## ANTS IN YOUR PANTS



This expression perfectly described a seven-year-old girl when she saw snow for the first time. Since the age of two, she had lived in Orlando, Florida. Last year, she

moved to Tennessee. She woke up very early on a Saturday morning, bounced on her parents' bed and shouted, "Daddy-Daddy, everything's white! Can I go play in it?" When asked to stop acting like she had ants in her pants, she replied, "If you'd let me go outside and play in the snow, I bet that would freeze 'em!"

The exact origin of the expression is unknown. We all know what it is like to have a creepy-crawly thing on our leg or arm, especially if we did not invite it. Or, how about inadvertently walking into a spider web? When these things happen, we fidget, jump, hop around and appear very excited! This expression paints a picture of how we act and appear at that moment.

The best selling author and motivational speaking guru, Tony Robbins, said, "Motion creates emotion!" In other words, physically moving your body can have an impact on your brain and attitude. Take note of how often people show their emotions. Approximately 46% will do this in an extroverted fashion. When they do, know they are excited and are ready to make a decision or take action. The other 54% may be subtle in expression. Their body language will be more controlled and their emotion about something may not be easy to read. Ask them questions beginning with "how" or "what" to determine their interest. Know that their voices and tones will also be low-key. Not everyone has ants in their pants.

If someone mentions that you have ants in your pants, hope they mean it figuratively and not literally!

## THE IMPORTANCE OF BODY TALK



Have you ever had a conversation with a person who was saying the right words, but the body was screaming the opposite? It may have left you feeling confused or distrustful of the person. Which one do you listen to: the words or how the words are spoken?

Words are stored in the left side of your brain. When a person is wide-awake, their left hemisphere is usually in control. Most people can be 'politically correct' if they know what is correct. It is when they do not agree with being politically correct that their body will send a different message.

Body language is controlled by the right side of your brain. Unlike the left hemisphere, most people have less conscious control over their right hemisphere. If the words that are being spoken do not match the person's true feelings, the body is placed under stress. While under stress, the body experiences numerous chemical changes.

One of these is an increase in adrenaline. This causes the body to jerk or move suddenly due to the extra energy suddenly available.

A particular posture, such as sitting with the arms crossed, is not as significant as how quickly the body changed to that position. Many people sit with arms crossed simply because it is comfortable. If they suddenly move to that posture then they may very well be experiencing some stress. If you are the person talking at this time, quickly get to the end of your message and pause or ask them a question so they will become the speaker.

The sequence that people unknowingly follow when their words do not match their feelings includes:

- The body will move suddenly or there could be an increase in habits or gestures.
- The voice will show the stress by increasing the volume, rate, and pitch.
- The person will select stronger words to express their stress.

By step three, the damage is done. Being alert to reading body language can actually intercept the miscommunication and repair it in time to avoid a disagreement. Listen with your eyes and realize the benefits of focusing on body talk.



### Remember to...

- Ask people questions that begin with "How" or "What" to get them to start talking.
- Smile. That will attract people to you.

**We carry our own weather with us wherever we are. Is your climate sunny and pleasant or gray and stormy?**

**Dr. Nell Mohney**



Mastering others is strength. Mastering yourself is true power.  
Tao Te Ching

A smile confuses an approaching frown.  
Author Unknown

You cannot shake hands with a clenched fist.  
Indira Gandhi

## HOW TO LOOK COOL, EVEN WHEN YOU'RE HOT

By Vincent Ivan Phipps, B.S.

**Question:** What is the fastest way to get a read on someone's emotions?

**Answer:** Watch them.

Sounds too simple, right? Fortunately, I have a wide range of friends and associates that include an attorney (who's also a great poker player), an insurance claims adjuster (who also is a jury consultant), and a police officer who teaches interrogation tactics. Because I am a professional speaker and communication coach, I asked their advice on reading people. Their answers were remarkably similar:

Attorney/poker player: "By watching the shifts in someone's eyes, you can tell if they are bending the truth, being totally honest, or flat-out lying."

Claims adjuster/jury selector: "People who stare at their shoes when talking to me have something to hide. I always take statements and do interviews in person. Words are sneaky, but the body doesn't lie."

Police Officer/Interrogator: "When people get nervous, even the best actors reveal elements of the truth. One head scratch, one leg twitch, even one wipe of sweat from your eyebrow can tell volumes. If you can catch it, you can catch them."

After analyzing the expertise of each one, I understood that each was paying close attention to body language. Aristotle said that knowledge is power. I disagree. Knowledge is just information. Applied knowledge is power. So, how can we apply the knowledge of these body-language experts to be more aware and in control of our own body language?

Know what people look for. You don't have to be an expert in body awareness to get a gut feel when someone is angry. So how do we keep ourselves looking calm even though we are boiling inside?

Keep your body in check with these three easy tips:

**1. Move slower.** The fastest red flag others perceive when we are angry is the speed of our movements. Moving faster comes across as excited. Moving slower comes across as more in control and calm. Even when you are mad, slow down and you'll calm down (remember, "motion changes emotion!")



**2. Talk softer.** If you are angry, deliberately lower your volume. If you are a loud talker like me, this will feel funny. Using a lower volume will let others know you are serious and you are in control.

**3. Use your mouth instead of your hands.** Gestures reveal true emotions, especially when they are excessive. When you are angry, hold an object like a cup, pencil, mug, or put your hands in your pockets. You can appear calmer by allowing your words to be the focus instead of your hands.

The tricky part of all of this is that the conscious hemisphere of the brain is the part that shuts down when we are angry. This means that the angrier we are, the more unaware we are about what we are doing and saying. The sobering thought is that others are more aware of our body language than we are!

Looking calm, even when we are not, can be an exceptional skill to have when playing poker, being on the witness stand, or being confronted by an intimidating figure. People are watching us all the time.

Integrity can be defined by how we act when we think no one is looking. What you don't do and don't say could save the day! I'm not saying it's easy, I'm saying it's worth it.

## IN THE NEWS: TLC and Primedia Healthcare Combine Creative Efforts to Develop Customer Service Videos



A development team from Primedia Healthcare in Dallas, TX came to TLC's offices in February to produce three customer service programs for healthcare professionals. These programs will air on the Health & Sciences Television Network (HSTN) and the Long Term Care Network (LTCN) as part of their continuing education and training for healthcare staff.

The programs include:

1. Customer Service: Telephone Etiquette & Skills – airing March 2004
2. Customer Service: Handling Family Expectations – airing April 2004
3. Customer Service: How to Treat a Guest – airing in May 2004 (to be videotaped in April at TLC's retreat.)

For more information, visit Primedia's website at [www.PRIMEDIAHealthcare.com](http://www.PRIMEDIAHealthcare.com).

## CEO CORNER: "Eyeing the Meeting"

By Beverly Inman-Ebel, MA CCC-SLP

I am addicted to watching people. When I am out and about and not engaged in an activity, I watch. I indulge myself in this pastime at airports, restaurants, malls, and other public places that may find me idle except for my passion for understanding people.



The purpose of my quest is to read the body language of people that I may never meet. While their words remain a mystery to me (I strive to not eavesdrop), I am reading how they are feeling. I witness the actions and reactions so frequently that I can predict how one person will respond to another.

Although this non-invasive scrutiny entertains and enlightens me, I have found a practical application for it during meetings. Most meetings are too long and have periods where the active mind will certainly wander. Sometimes the distractions of those in attendance are obvious to anyone who has even 20/200 vision, such as an individual juggling oranges during a staff meeting or a member reading the daily newspaper during a board meeting. Other times require a concentrated effort to truly observe the people in the meeting to understand where they are emotionally and mentally.

While speaking at a meeting, most people recognize the importance of looking at the participants. While listening at a meeting, most people unfortunately let their eyes wander unless they are intensely interested in the topic being discussed. Instead of allowing your eyes and attention to wander, purposefully watch the other people.

By watching, you will know who is interested and who is not. You will be able to catch minor disagreements or concerns that may not reach the discussion level unless noticed. Do this when you are a participant as well as the leader of the meeting. You may find that the meeting is more interesting

and you have more to contribute. Time is a precious commodity and we need to invest it wisely. Spend your meeting time watching and learning. By staying engaged with your eyes, you will be viewed as a contributor. Watch. Learn. Live your dreams!

(I'm working on a writing project regarding behaviors in meetings and would love to hear about the antics you have seen. Confidentiality is granted. Send your comments to me at [bie@talklisten.com](mailto:bie@talklisten.com).)

## ASK THE EXPERTS



**Dear TLC,**

I have a friend who reads too much into body language. She is constantly telling me how I feel and I find it quite irritating. How can my body language tell her to stop?  
Enough

**Dear Enough,**

Approach your friend before she "reads" you the next time. Tell her that you get uncomfortable when your bodily movements are so closely observed and mentioned by her. Request that she ask you how you are feeling rather than tell you. While having this discussion, do your best to lean back in a chair, open your posture and look as confident as you can to boost your courage and to send a positive body perception.

## FEATURED SERVICE: Keynote Speaker

Our CEO, Beverly Inman-Ebel, travels to provide presentations and keynote speeches throughout the country. We are happy to send a complimentary package containing a sample video of her speaking and a public relations kit to anyone interested in hiring her as a speaker for conventions or in-house special events. Just call 1-888-BECAUSE (888-232-2873) or send an email to [tlc@talklisten.com](mailto:tlc@talklisten.com) to request your package. Her travels this quarter include: Miami, FL; Atlanta, GA; Washington, D.C.; Chicago, IL; Charlotte, NC; and Columbia, SC. She would love to come to your city.

TLC establishes long-term relationships with our clients. If we have helped you or if you believe our approach to change would work for someone you know, please communicate with us by email [[tlc@talklisten.com](mailto:tlc@talklisten.com)] or phone [1-888-232-2873]. We work with individuals and groups on the following subject areas: attitude, listening, body language, voice, leadership, compliments and corrections, behavioral style, teamwork, effective meetings, public speaking, accent reduction and much more!

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**The eyes have one language everywhere.**

**George Herbert**

**The eyes are the window to the soul.**

**Author Unknown**

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