

The foremost barrier to oral communication is poor listening.

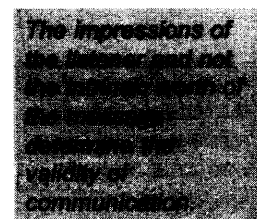
**Listening** Listening is a psychological act affected by several factors, such as —

- Status
- Halo effect
- Complexes
- Closed and all-knowing mind
- Poor retention
- Premature evaluation and hurried conclusions as distortions
- Abstracting
- Slant
- Cognitive dissonance
- Language barrier

**Status** In organisations, there are formal and informal status levels that affect the effectiveness of face-to-face oral communication. A subordinate would generally listen more and speak less while interacting with his/her superior. The exchange of ideas is blocked by diffidence in the subordinate because of superior position of the speaker (boss). The upward oral communication is not very frequent in organisations. The fear of superior status prevents free upward flow of information. It conditions free and fair exchange of ideas.

**Halo effect** The awe in which a speaker is held by the listener conditions the act of true listening. If the speaker is greatly trusted and held in high esteem as an honest person, his statements are readily taken as true. Oral communication is thus conditioned by the impressions of the listener about the moral eminence of the speaker. The impressions of the listener and not the intrinsic worth of the message determine the validity of communication. Under the halo effect in business, buyers tend to go by the trusted seller's view of a thing, rather than by their own judgement of the product's quality.

**Complexes** A lack of confidence or a sense of superiority may prevent proper oral interaction between persons differently positioned. Sometimes one suffers from a sense of being inferior and, therefore, fails to take initiative or involve himself/herself in conversation/dialogue or any other form of oral communication.



Similarly, some persons consider themselves too big to condescend to talk with others. Often, these are misplaced notions of self-worth, and they block oral communication.

**Closed and all-knowing mind** Listening, to a large extent, depends on one's curiosity to know things. Some persons believe that they know everything in a field or a subject. Their minds refuse to receive things from other sources. Besides, some persons in business or other work areas feel too satisfied with their ways of doing things to change or even discuss new ideas. The closed state of mind acts as a barrier to oral communication, which demands a readiness/willingness on the part of listener to enter into a dialogue.

**Poor retention** In dialogue, or two-way oral communication, the sequence of thought is essential for carrying on communication. To speak coherently one has to remember the sequence of ideas. The speech-sequence is also equally important for listening with comprehension. The structure of thought must be received and retained by the listener to understand arguments. The cues that signal the movement of thought from one set of ideas to another must be retained by the listener to be able to grasp the full sense of the message discussed. In case of poor retention, the listener fails to relate what he hears with what he had heard before. Moreover, if the listener fails to remember the previous discussion, the whole thing is likely to be lost in the absence of any written record.

**Premature evaluation and hurried conclusions as distortions** To listen patiently until the speaker completes his/her argument is necessary for correct interpretation of an oral message. The listener often distorts the real or intended meaning of communication by either pre-judging the intention of the speaker, or inferring the final purpose and meaning of the message or giving a different twist to the argument according to his/her own assumptions, or just picking out a few shreds of information, perhaps from his/her point of interest. These mental processes, during the act of listening, may at times act as a block, affecting the free and fair exchange of meaning.

**Abstracting** Abstracting is a mental process of evaluation of thought content in terms of relative importance of ideas in the context of the total message. This is possible only on listening to the whole message, and not during the process of discussion.

Abstracting acts as a barrier when a listener approaches a message

from a particular point of view focusing his/her attention on some aspects of the conversation or dialogue. The rest of the communication is missed.

Abstracting is partial and selective listening. Some parts of the discussion are lost or just partially received. This acts as a barrier to a full understanding of whatever is exchanged between two persons.

**Slant** is usually attributed to the biased presentation of a matter by speaker. Instead of straight talk, one speaks in an oblique manner that could be almost like telling a lie. When a matter is expressed with a particular slant, many other important aspects of the message are suppressed, left out or indirectly hinted. Well-informed listeners usually do suspect the cover up/slant. But uninformed listeners do accept the slanted message.

**Cognitive dissonance** At times the listener fails to accept or respond to assumptions underlying the new information communicated, as he/she is unprepared to change from the old basis of belief and knowledge. In such kinds of discrepancy between the existing assumptions and the actual position communicated, some listeners try to escape from the dissonance by interpreting, restructuring or mentally ignoring the oral interchange. Cognitive dissonance interferes with the acceptance of new information as it happens to be. It may lead to several interpretations of a new message or view. In case of absence of cognitive dissonance, a listener has the skill and ability and flexibility of rational thinking as a promoting factor in effective oral communication. In executives, the skill to move from one mental frame to another is an essential quality for oral exchange of ideas and beliefs and feelings.

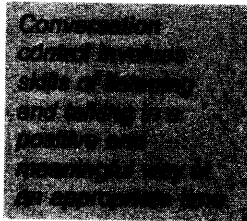
**Language barrier** The language of communication should be the medium shared by both speaker and listener. In business, English is most widely used in almost all parts of the world. The facility of conversing in English is essential for executives within a multilingual country like India. English is now the global medium for conducting business and establishing one-to-one contact. The lack of knowledge and practice of spoken English would act as a barrier to oral communication.

Further, the listener should be familiar with the accent of the language in use.

In India most of those who know how to speak English will need special training to work in call centres to be able to understand

what American callers say over the phone. Indian outsourced workers tend to overcome their initial language barrier.

The effect of most of these barriers that interfere with the proper response to oral messages can be reduced or even removed through skills of conversation control.



### **W**hat is Conversation Control?

The art of conversation consists in our ability to listen with concentration and reply well. Conversation control involves skills of listening and talking in a positive and meaningful way at an appropriate time. It includes —

- techniques of changing the direction of conversation smoothly.
- the ability to allow a discussion to develop along key issues in an uninterrupted way towards the desired end.

Broadly speaking, conversation control helps us carry on and conclude our conversation (dialogue/discussion) effectively on a note of satisfaction as a result of mutual understanding and agreement.

In business, the following situations require application of conversation control skills —

- How to sell or buy
- How to negotiate
- How to interview
- How to participate in a meeting
- How to disagree without being rude
- How to protest without offending
- How to compliment/praise
- How to respond to personal criticism

How we listen and talk in such situations shows how far we are able to exercise conversation control.

Charles J Margerison in *The Art of Effective Communication* points out, "Conversation control does not mean that you can control someone's conversation. What it does mean is that with practice you can control your own conversation, and in time be able to influence others, and encourage them to respond in a positive and relevant way."

The following skills will help your oral communication —

- Interacting with people in meetings in a convincing way
- Handling objections to a proposal made by you
- Being able to react to criticism in a confident manner
- Developing skills in interviewing
- Learning how to get correct information quickly

The benefits of conversation control can be felt from observing the results of personal interactions that involve discussions and meetings conducted in an orderly manner.

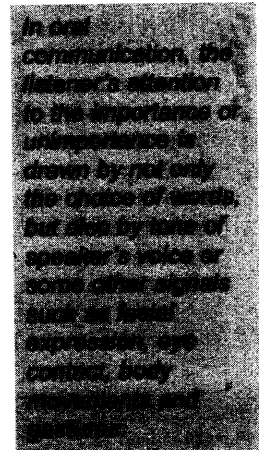
**Ability to notice cues and clues** Conversation consists of words as well as non-verbal signs, signals, cues, and clues. Dialogue or discussion is a live act that communicates both stated messages and implied messages. Words communicate the stated message. Cues and clues together with signs and signals point out what is important and what is not. Persons skilled in the art of conversation quickly recognise the cues and clues and know what is of importance to the speaker/listener that could be the direction and basis for furthering the conversation or discussion.

In written messages the writer can draw the reader's attention by highlighting important words, phrases and sentences by underlining, italicising or marking with a coloured highlighter, or by using some qualifiers or modifiers, words such as *very, too, essential*, and so on, indicative of importance. In oral communication, the listener's attention to the importance or unimportance is drawn by not only the choice of words, but also by the tone of speaker's voice or some other signals such as facial expression, eye contact, body movements and gestures. These signals constitute cues and clues to emphasise ideas.

A cue is a keyword or phrase a person uses when he/she wants to indicate that something is important to him/her.

Similarly, a clue is a word or a set of words that someone else gives to us.

These cues and clues flow out from speaker to listener consciously or unconsciously. They show the direction of emphasis that the speaker or the listener pay to the content of the message. In our conversation there are always some key words. These key words act as cue to other persons to draw their attention to what we consider important. For instance, if we say, "Let us discuss the



teaching-learning function of the case-study method in management studies". The key words are "teaching-learning function" and "case-study method." These words direct others to focus their discussion on the case-study method as a tool of teaching and learning.

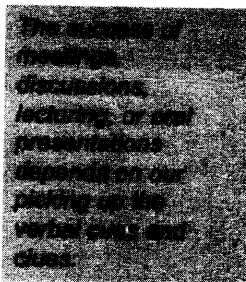
Thus, cues are what we give to others about our view of things and clues are what others give us about their views of things. Generally, people give most important clues unconsciously, through what is called "leakage", the body talk that involves a whole lot of non-verbal signals, comprising expressions, gestures, and postures.

The success of meetings, discussions, lecturing, or oral presentations depends on our picking up the verbal cues and clues.

However, so often, we find that we do give cues but others do not duly receive them.

**Here is an example from real life** The Director of a college went to his University Registrar to ask for permission to add one more teaching discipline (course) in his college. The Director spoke at length to highlight the overall achievements of the college in terms of infrastructure facilities and growing number of students and consistently excellent results. He said to the Registrar, "I want you to send a team to inspect our college for recommending the opening of the new course applied for by the college." The Registrar replied, "But the university wants all colleges to improve their facilities and results." The Director went on to defend the existing facilities and results of his college. But the meeting failed because the Registrar failed to pick up the cue that the Director was discussing the existing infrastructure and results to support his request to introduce one more course. And the Director received from the Registrar's keywords the clue to his (Registrar's) lack of interest in his (Director's) proposal for the new course. The Registrar did not pay attention to what was important in the Director's conversation. The conversation ended and the Director left the Registrar's office disappointed.

In this example, the key words used by the Director are "to inspect", "recommend", and "a new course". The Registrar did not pay attention to these cue words. The clue words in the Registrar's response are "but", "all colleges", "to improve". These words of the Registrar indicate his priority. What he implied was that the university was not interested in adding further courses and thereby increasing the number of students in any college. But he obliquely



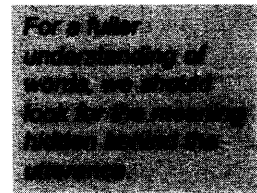
communicated this intention and priority. If we analyse the Director's cue words, we realise that his proposal for starting a new course was intended to increase his intake of students. But he did not state the purpose in a straight way.

In real life people usually do not express their thoughts directly and completely. It is for others to look for cues or clues to draw more information. Otherwise, the real thing may remain unstated.

For a fuller understanding of words, we should look for the meaning hidden behind the utterance. For example, in a welfare meeting with workers, a manager was told by a person, "I have been working under lot of tension." And the manager replied, "Yes, we all have to work under tension. Targets have to be met." Maybe the manager missed the clue underlying the word tension. The worker may not be talking about the tension at work. He may be facing some serious family problem, his wife's health or his child's education. The manager should have, therefore, asked the worker "What kind of tension." This would have encouraged the worker to talk further about the nature of his tension. Instead of the skillful controlled conversation, we have here a worker's general statement about his tension met with another general statement made by the manager regarding what is required. There is no attempt to draw out more information from the worker about his problem.

Let us see a case of skillful control of conversation. The octogenarian film actor Dev Anand, the recipient of Dada Saheb Phalke award, had a long TV interview. In one of the questions, the anchor said to Dev Anand, "It is said that as a film director you always insisted on working with new faces." Dev Anand at once shot back, "It is not the question of insisting. You should think deeply. It is a very different pleasure to encourage young talents to develop, to help them express themselves, to get established as celebrities. It is a creative joy. And I have always been creative in my choice of characters and my themes. I have always been experimenting, I have always enjoyed doing that." "You should think deeply." These words of Dev Anand are significant. The message of important words lies hidden behind them.

In this case, the word "insisted" was an important word. Dev Anand caught the clue. He unfolded the general statement's hidden meaning by bringing out the specifics of his pursuit of creative joy as a film director and actor by moulding young talents into accomplished actors.



*Cue is what we give out to others to point out what we hold as important part of our conversation.*

**Recognising cues and clues** As we have seen, cue is what we give out to others to point out what we hold as important part of our conversation. In turn, clues are what we receive from others on matters they regard as important. We can identify clues during our conversation by taking note of the following things.

- (i) We need to develop skills of listening carefully especially when the other person uses the following expressions —
  - When first person pronouns the words 'I', 'me', 'my'. At that time persons are talking about themselves, the person of greatest importance to them.
  - Strongly qualifying their statements about themselves with adjectives indicative of deep emotions or high-level enthusiasm. Watch out for words such as "pressurized", "concerned", "angry", "worried", "annoyed", "unhappy", "disappointed", or enthusiastic, keen, excited, inspired. For example, when a person says he is under pressure to finish the task, he is giving a strong personal clue about action that needs to be taken within the shortest possible time. We should listen carefully when people use words that indicate that they are under pressure to act in a certain way.
- (ii) Expressions of the following kind must be heard to carefully. Watch out for strong personal clues when people say —
  1. "The whole plan went wrong. Things were all confused. I think I failed in my responsibility to organise the event."
  2. "I must change my strategy and approach. The whole thing was a disaster."
  3. "I am determined not to let it happen again."
- (iii) Listen carefully when someone uses words that suggest doubt and concern. "Doubts" and "concerns" are clues to the speaker's personal problems. You can help the other person if you find out what exactly these issues are by asking him what he proposes to do or whom he was going to consult. This way you can find out different possible ways of helping him.
- (iv) Finally, listen and carefully notice the natural pauses that persons use after saying something that is important. It is at this point of time that you show to the speaker that you have understood the key issues raised by him by accurately and sympathetically talking on those issues. You can thus continue



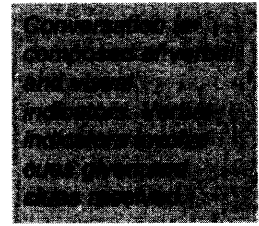
the conversation in a controlled way and convince the other person of your understanding of the real issues.

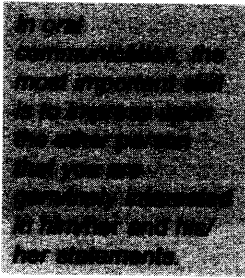
**Interpreting signs and signals** Conversation is composed of verbal and visual indicators. Verbal indicators involve cues given and clues received. Visual indicators consist of signs given and signals received. While speaking, we all unconsciously keep moving our hands, eyes, head, legs, and other parts of the body or engage in some other non-verbal behaviour, such as the frequent gulping of water during conversation or speaking. All these non-verbal acts reflect the state of our mind. These body movements, gestures, and actions communicate in a visible manner what lies concealed in our mind. And people trust the non-verbal message more than the verbal message. The non-verbal message flows through signs and signals.

Signs consist of visual indicators such as frown, smile, eye movements, and so on that we give to others. Signals are behavioural indicators others give us. For example, drinking of water after every 10 to 15 minutes during a speech is a sign of thirst given by the speaker to the audience. But to the audience it may act as a signal of the speaker's nervousness.

We will analyse most of the gestures and expressions as modes of non-verbal communication in the next chapter. Here, you should be able to identify from your own experience those signals that encourage or discourage you during the course of communication. And also try to know what are those signs which you habitually give to others when you are emphasising those parts of communication which are important or are not important for you.

**Parallel conversation** We engage in conversation to explore something. It may be to find out facts, or know the issues, or seek out solutions. This aim can be fulfilled when we take interest in what is initially stated by one of the persons. And the other person or persons seek further information on what is originally stated by asking questions and exploring the meaning of the messages indicated by clues and non-verbal signals. But if we do not do so, and just counter the original statement with another statement just parallel to it, we shall not take the conversation to a meeting point. The two parallel statements cannot meet and, therefore, cannot be linked together to resolve the issue or solve the problem or bring in more information on the original statement. In such a situation of a series of parallel statements, we have no dialogue. What we have





are statements shot at each other. There is no attempt to get to the meaning behind the words used by the other person.

Consider the following example of a meeting at a garment export company.

- X It is necessary that we increase our export.
- Y I think it is most important for us to reduce our manpower immediately.
- X By increasing our exports we can build our brand image.
- Y By reducing the number of workers we can cut down our costs.
- X I always look for building up our company in a positive way by promoting its sales abroad.
- Y Cost reduction is the only way we can manage our company. And that can be done only by reducing the number of workers.

Here X and Y are engaged in parallel conversation proving that one is right and the other is wrong. Neither is interested in exploring the true meaning of what is being said by the other person.

### **S**equential Conversation

When we converse in a skillfully controlled way, we make statements that are in sequence to what is said by the other person. There is a logical link between the statements made by the speaker and listener. The listener receives carefully what is being said and waits for his proper chance to join in to say clearly and forcefully what he has to say. But he carries forward the conversation in a connected and sequential form. In this way, within a short time, ideas and thoughts are developed in a structured pattern.

Sequential conversation between two persons is always fruitful. But this kind of sequential conversation is possible only when the other person attaches some value to what is said by the speaker. The listener can then reflect on what is said and would like to know more about the cue/important idea in the speaker's initial statement or contribute to further exploration of the issue.

### **R**eflection and Empathy

In oral communication, the most important skill is to impress upon the other person that you are genuinely interested in him/her and his/her statements. To do so, you should be able to pick up the cue words and reflect upon their meaning. For instance, A says to B, "I

am not sure if I am required here any longer." If B reflects on this initial statement, he would understand the underlying frustration and sense of rejection in A. And to give a chance to A to express himself further, B could say to A, "You feel your contribution is not being recognised". This would allow A to explore his/her own feeling with greater clarity and understanding.

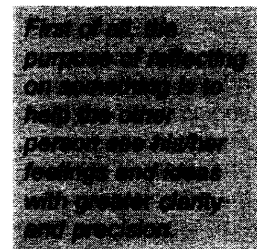
Reflecting on someone's statement needs to be done most carefully. You must first understand the underlying feeling exactly and accurately. Then speak in such a manner that the other person feels that you have indeed seen the issue from his/her point of view; this needs very skilful dramatisation of the initial statement. It involves the use of body language to support what words say.

First of all, the purpose of reflecting on something is to help the other person see his/her feelings and ideas with greater clarity and precision.

Therefore, you have to repeat the feelings expressed by the other person. You should just play them back objectively, without changing or adding or altering them in any way. To do so, you should not criticise or question or add to what someone says.

*Your body language should show your real interest in him/her. Make eye contact. Lean forward. And speak as a person with genuine feeling of concern for the other person.*

**Sense of time as a skill** In oral communication, the speaker should always keep in mind the time taken to communicate. The time limits announced in formal oral activities should be strictly observed. To be able to observe it, plan your time judiciously to reach a properly evolved end. The audience should not feel rushed through any part of your conversation or presentation. Your pace of conversation or presentation should not exceed 110-120 words per minute. You should not speak fast to reach the part that deals with solution. The discussion of problem is equally important. In our discussions, we always tend to skip or rush through the exposition of the problem. Perhaps, we believe that the problem is something everyone knows fully. We, therefore, focus on the solution. This bent of mind affects both the pace and direction of our discussion. The other persons involved in it feel uncomfortable and rushed. They begin to gradually lose interest and concentration. In different business situations, the speaker should remember his/her purpose of communicating with the listener. The audience/



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listener should never be made to feel to be a passive captive listener. Meetings should be conducted through lively interaction and controlled shift from issue to issue. In one-to-one conversations/discussions, the desire should not be to monopolise conversation. Passive listening generates disinterest and boredom.

In lectures/seminars/presentations the skill to break monotony is by introducing humorous anecdotes or illustrative cases.

**Summarising as an integral skill of oral communication** In oral communication, especially conversation, it is necessary to convey to the other person that you understand his/her point. You may agree or disagree, but the first requirement of skillful communication is that the other person has the assurance that you have understood the facts as presented.

Before you express your opinion or give your response to other's opinion, you should be able to recognise, analyse, and evaluate what the other person has said.

These steps will help you in comprehending facts in terms of their significance and importance for the other person. This understanding, in other words, is a critical summarising of all the ideas expressed by another person.

Summarising is the best form of comprehension of given facts. It is not just repetition of what someone has said. To summarise is to pick out the central thought, the main theme or the essential idea at the core of the whole argument. It is a most difficult exercise to do successfully. It is a skill to be able to summarise well and it needs lot of practice.

In written communication, we have the full text before us. And we summarise by carefully going through the text at least twice or thrice. First, we try to know what it is all about. And then we reread closely to understand the logical relationship between ideas. And then we finally see the central idea to which all other ideas are related as cause, or effect, or illustration. And the summary is the statement of our understanding of the central idea with its relationships with other ideas.

In the case of oral communication, summarising is the act of recognising the leading cues and clues during the course of communication, and making them the basis of your considered response after appreciating and understanding the underlying feelings and ideas. It is a process of mental abstraction of the most

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central and important idea in the entire argument presented by another person.

Summarising is, thus, of great value and is the skill most needed for negotiating or solving a problem.

We have frequent examples of crises faced by subordinates when they are ordered by the boss to complete the assigned task within too short a period of time.

The workers feel that it is impossible to complete the task within a given deadline. They all tell the boss in different ways that the deadline is unrealistic. They argue that nobody thinks about those who actually have to perform the work.

Suppose the boss too remained adamant and just kept telling that in business you have to respect orders and deadlines. The communication between the boss and his subordinates would have ended on a note of frustration. And the boss would have failed to exercise conversation control.

But, suppose the boss understands the workers' feeling of pressure and seeks to understand the problems and constraints of the workers, he would be able to motivate his subordinates by helping them express themselves, and may, in turn, also get a chance to state why he insists on getting the project completed within such a short time. Maybe he is being pressurized by his superiors to get it completed as a top priority. So by recognising, appreciating, and understanding the concerns of workers, the boss would be successful in resolving the initial problem of the workers and subordinates.

All the skills of oral communication, whether they relate to your ability to speak personally, face-to-face, or at meetings, depend basically on the key skill of conversation control which enables you to receive and understand the true meaning of words spoken by the other person.

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## **T**wo Sides of Effective Oral Communication — Listening and Presenting

Listening is an important component of conversation control. To be able to understand and appreciate the other person, you should allow him/her to express freely, without being interrupted, and listen carefully. Therefore, to improve your skills of conversation

control, you should know whether you are a poor or a good listener. The characteristics of poor listeners and good listeners are broadly given below for self-analysis. By knowing your own characteristics, you can improve your listening skills as an important element of effective oral communication.

**Table 7.2** Characteristics of Good Listeners and Poor Listeners

<i>Good listeners</i>	<i>Poor listeners</i>
Do not interrupt	Over-talkative
Remain patient	Inattentive
Make eye contact	Interrupt
Show interest	Impatient to talk
Look attentive	"Yes, but..." approach
Concentrate	Very critical
Ask open questions	Poor concentration
	Look away from the person

Poor listeners annoy and disturb the speaker. Therefore, cut out habits such as interrupting, or showing little interest in what is being discussed. If you find that you tend to disturb the other person constantly by putting in 'yes', 'but' and 'ifs'; it is advisable to practise avoiding this behaviour.

Try to encourage the other person by your body language and expression. Indicate that you feel interested and understand what is being discussed.

**Be an effective presenter** The other side of oral communication is your ability to present your viewpoint. In order to be an effective presenter try to present facts, not your opinions; keep to the point; keep the listener's interest in mind; support your argument with suitable examples; and ask for feedback and answer questions honestly. Make eye contact. Avoid being vague, unfocused, with little eye contact, discouraging questions, showing lack of confidence, and not getting to the point. By practising these basic skills of good listening and effective presentation you can gain conversation control and be successful in your role as manager, negotiator, or in any other situation involving conversation or discussion.

## APPLICATIONS OF CONVERSATION CONTROL

### Meetings

One often hears the remark from the chairperson at a meeting, "We are drifting away from the point" or "Let us keep to our agenda". Sometimes at the end of a meeting, we feel that nothing has been gained. The entire time spent in the meeting was just a waste of time. Such feelings arise when persons talk without exercising conversation control. According to Charles J. Margerison "Conversation control is concerned with ensuring that people communicate clearly to resolve problems and make the best of opportunities."<sup>1</sup>

### Agenda as a Control

For formal meetings, the first requirement is to prepare a complete agenda of the issues to be discussed in the order of their sequence of discussion. The agenda will indicate issues which will be taken up and how and in what time they will be covered.

**Advance circulation of agenda papers** To enable members of the meeting understand the issues and prepare them to present their viewpoint, it is desirable to circulate the necessary agenda papers in advance, so that members read the supporting papers beforehand.

Agenda items create the necessary framework for holding discussions in a guided sequence. They also act as cues to keep the discussion to the point.

A carefully prepared agenda is the first means of controlling the proceedings of a meeting. The Chairperson can always draw the attention of speakers who drift to the relevant point under discussion.

An agenda also helps in fixing, at the outset, the duration of the meeting by allotting appropriate time for discussing each item.

As a precaution, the agenda should include provision for raising/discussing any other matter with the permission of the Chair. The agenda is usually sent along with the notice/invitation for the meeting proposed to be held on a given date, place, and time.

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<sup>1</sup> Charles J Margerison, 1996, *The Art of Effective Communication*, New Delhi, Excel, p. 170.

### **The Chairperson**

A meeting is chaired by a person whose role is to direct and conduct the proceedings in an orderly manner. During the meeting, the ruling of the Chair is to be taken as the final word to be followed and respected by all the meeting members.

### **The Procedure**

The Chairperson is fully conversant with the rules of conducting meetings. He knows the rights, privileges of members, non-members, invitees, and observers attending the meeting. He knows the voting rights of members and also how voting is done, if required.

Above all, the Chairperson is a person who should be able to use his skills of controlling conversation by focusing on important issues and creating conditions for sequential, linked, and meaningful discussions for solutions and not confrontations.

The Chairperson begins the meeting on schedule and conducts the business by first reading out the complete agenda or in case of a long agenda, the first item on the agenda, which is invariably the confirmation of the minutes of the earlier meeting already circulated. And in case no objections to any of the issues are received, the minutes are taken as approved and signed by the Chairperson.

It is customary to take all papers as read, if they have been circulated among the members. And the meeting moves on smoothly to take up issues that call for discussion. It is at this point that communication skills are required to make the discussion meaningful and controlled.

**Discussion** During the meeting, members tend to enter into uncontrolled conversation in which all kinds of non-issues or off the point matters are raised. The discussion may degenerate into personal criticism too. Very often, instead of disagreeing with a point, we say we disagree with you. Sometimes, objectivity may be lost. And the meeting slips into confusion and unfruitful discussion. We can avoid this confusion by observing clues and cues and by exercising conversation control.

During the discussion, the Chairperson has a significant role of regulating it by repeatedly drawing the straying person's attention to the main issue being discussed. The speaker can summarise what is being said and then ask how all that relates to the point under

*Chairperson is a person who should be able to use his skills of controlling conversation by focusing on important issues and creating conditions for sequential, linked, and meaningful discussions for solutions and not confrontations.*



discussion. He can direct the persons to speak to the point. In a meeting each person should follow the cues indicating the important line of argument that should be followed and discussed.

The Chairperson can bring the discussion from the past to the present by asking for implications of all that has been said about the past in relation to the present situation. But he should know the skills of changing the direction of conversation by providing transitions of time and themes, from past to present and to future or from problem-centered to solution-centered themes. Above all, the skills of avoiding parallel conversation and ensuring linked sequential conversation and disagreeing without offending and asserting without being rude is basic for the smooth conduct of business in a meeting.

### **To be Assertive Without Being Aggressive**

At the work place, the hierarchical control tends to make you submissive. And many a time, if you want to assert your point of view, the risk is of being taken as rude. In such a situation, you have to use skill of assertive conversation.

To be assertive is to be confident. To be assertive, you should not say yes when you want to say no. Instead say no in a positive and firm manner.

To communicate with firmness, convey to the other person what you want and why. Indicate your response or opinion without hesitating in simple and clear words. That is the key to be assertive. Neither fumble nor be indirect in conveying what you are concerned about and why, and the likely consequences.

If you want to firmly express your position, you should be able to analyse the situation as you see it, and indicate your concern, draw the attention of your senior to the consequences as you visualise them.

If you use the technique of communicating firmly with your seniors, you will surely make them evaluate their assumptions even if there is to be no change in the line of action to be taken.

You have to be assertive, when you strongly believe that the other's assumptions involve risk and danger, and you are concerned about the possible consequences as you are responsible for them. In such situations, say what you must say.

*The skills of avoiding parallel conversation and ensuring linked sequential conversation and disagreeing without offending and asserting without being rude is basic for the smooth conduct of business in a meeting.*

*Negative thinking results from negative attitude or negative perception, which, at times, is a person's part of personality.*

Negative thinking results from negative attitude or negative perception, which, at times, is part of a person's personality. Some persons always focus only on the dark side of a thing. They come out with expressions such as, "It is impossible", "It is too difficult", "It is useless". They perceive only the negative possibilities and consequences.

When the negative consequences are foreseen as a result of expert critical thinking, its assertion is valuable to discussion. Sometimes, even the pointing out of loopholes in assumptions is necessary for asserting negative happenings.

For example, take the case of the Bhopal gas tragedy that took place on December 2, 1984.

The Union Carbide officials were aware of the growing safety and maintenance problems since 1982 when management cut staff at the MIC facility from twelve to six operators and reduced the number of maintenance workers. Faulty safety devices remained unattended for weeks. A 1982 report by a group of Carbide's US engineers listed the problems but the parent corporation made no effort to ask the Indian executives responsible for the running of the plant to correct them.

Obviously, the US engineers failed to be assertive in their report to the management. The Indian executives, also responsible for day-to-day operation of the plant, failed to see loopholes in the management's extensive cost cutting plans. The management was attempting to reduce loss by cutting down maintenance cost. The failure of engineers and executives to be assertive on the point of safety measures led to the worst disaster of the twentieth century.

### **C**onversational Attack and Controlled Response

When the other person speaking to you is charged with negative feelings, it is natural for him/her to attack and charge you with unpleasant words. In such a situation if the other person happens to be your client/customer or boss, you have to exercise skills of controlled response. You have to think of the larger business interest or keep in mind your personal career interest.

In such situations, answer emotion with cool facts only. Or try to change the direction of conversation; if possible, never use strong abusive language that will complicate the situation. One of the ways is to listen silently and then respond with complete self-control.

Speak in a level tone. Avoid harsh, strong or abusive words. Do not react emotionally. But draw the other person's attention to objective facts related to the situation under fire.

Remember, that in business, rudeness and discourtesy should never be allowed to creep into your communication.

Neither the client nor boss should use rude words whatever be the cause of provocation, nor should you respond without courtesy. Conversation control teaches us self-discipline. It trains us to convey to others that we really realise, understand and fully appreciate their feelings, views and grievance. Continue to listen with full attention to grievances so that the other person feels that you are genuinely interested in her/his feelings. The exercise of conversation control will help you manage situations of aggressive communication successfully.

*The entire verbal exercise of give and take to reach a win-win end is skillfully managed by conversation control.*

### **N**egotiations through Conversation Control

Negotiation, as an important activity in communication, will be discussed later. Effective negotiation requires the skills of managing and controlling the interaction between two sides. Both sides try to present a case tactfully and win. The strategy basically involves the skill of showing that you understand the other person's point/position without necessarily agreeing with it. The entire verbal exercise of give and take to reach a win-win end is skillfully managed by conversation control.

## Case Study

### **Outsourcing Backlash Gets Abusive, Ugly**

"I don't want to speak to you. Connect me to your boss in the US," hissed the American on the phone. The young girl at a Bangalore call centre tried to be as polite as she could.

At another call centre, another day, another young girl had a Londoner unleashing himself on her, "Young lady do you know that because of you Indians we are losing jobs."

The outsourcing backlash is getting ugly. Handling irate callers is the new brief for the young men and women taking calls at these outsourced job centres. Supervisors tell them to be "cool".

Avinash Vashista, managing partner of NEOIT, a leading US-based consultancy firm says, "Companies involved in outsourcing both in the US and India are already getting a lot of hate mail against outsourcing and it is

hardly surprising that some people should behave like this on the telephone." Vashistha says Indian call centres should train their operators how to handle such calls.

Indeed, the furor raised by the Western media over job losses because of outsourcing has made ordinary citizens there sensitive to the fact that their calls are being taken not from their midst but in countries, such as India and the Philippines.

The angry outbursts the operators face

border on the racist and sexist, says the manager of a call centre in Hyderabad. But operators and senior executives of call centres refuse to go on record for fear of kicking up a controversy that might result in their companies' losing clients overseas.

"It's happening often enough and so let's face it," says a senior executive of a Gurgaon call centre, adding, "This doesn't have any impact on business."

[Source-Hindustan Times, December 21, 2003, New Delhi]

### Questions to Answer

1. Assume you are working as an operator at a call centre in India and are receiving irate calls from Americans and Londoners. How would you handle such calls? Imagine a situation and state your response.
2. "Keep your cool." What does this mean in terms of conversation control?
3. Do you agree with the view that such abusive happenings on the telephone do not have any impact on business? Give reasons for your answer.

### Summary

- In this chapter, you have learnt the advantages of oral communication as compared to written communication. You have also, thereby, understood when to use the oral form to your advantage.
- The chapter discussed different forms of oral communication ranging from face-to-face to telephonic conversation.
- It analysed various barriers to oral communication and offered guidelines for developing some key skills for exercising conversation control to have a linked conversation.
- The chapter focused on the ability to recognise, appreciate and understand the underlying message of verbal and non-verbal cues, clues, signs, and signals.
- The chapter emphasised the need for comprehending and summarising the most important ideas before giving your response.
- The chapter offered you guidelines to use conversation control at meetings, presentations and negotiations.

## Review Questions

1. Give five reasons for choosing the oral mode of communication instead of the written form.
2. Does a speaker need any skills to be successful in communicating with others orally? Give an example of difficulty or failure.
3. Discuss some of the principles of effective oral communication.
4. Discuss poor listening as the chief barrier to oral communication.
5. What is abstracting?
6. Why is summarising necessary in dyadic oral communication between two persons?
7. Explain the purpose and process of skills of controlled conversation.
8. Why does conversation go wrong? Illustrate your answer with analysis of a case you may actually experience.
9. What do you mean by keywords?
10. What are the benefits of conversation control?

# Chapter

# 8

## *Non-Verbal Communication*

### LEARNING OBJECTIVES

- Know the nature of non-verbal communication.
- Understand the function of body talk in fully interpreting the underlying message of words.
- Recognise different cues and clues given by facial expressions, gestures, postures, body movements and eye contact.
- Interpret tone variations.
- Learn positive gestures, body movements, and facial expressions.
- Understand silence as a mode of communication.

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*Heard melodies are sweet, but those unheard  
Are sweeter; therefore, ye soft pipers, play on;  
Not to the sensual ear, but more endeared,  
Pipe to the spirit ditties of no tone.*

— John Keats

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## WHAT IS NON-VERBAL COMMUNICATION?

The word "non-verbal" means not involving words or speech. Thus, non-verbal communication is the wordless message received through the medium of gestures, signs, bodily movements, facial expressions, tone of voice, colour, time, space, style of writing, and choice of words.

Animals communicate their deepest feelings of love, anger, joy, hunger, and desire for mating through gestures, cries, whistling, cooing, bodily movements, and many other signals known to each other. Of course, the exact interpretation of such signs and gestures does vary but they are mutually understood within the group.

It is we human beings alone who have evolved the language of words to convey our thoughts in a structured manner. Still, in our moments of excitement, we tend to convey our feelings and emotions of joy, love, anger, and hatred by smiling, patting, shouting, frowning, or using other wordless clues. Such non-verbal expressions of feelings come spontaneously. However, at times, we deliberately lace our words with expressive tones, gestures, and facial expressions to heighten and modify the meaning of our words. Some non-verbal message usually accompanies the verbal message. The verbal and the non-verbal together form the total meaning of the message communicated.

There is something heard and something implied along with what is said. For a full understanding of the message, therefore, we should know what has been communicated through words and without them.

Unworded messages are transmitted by non-verbal clues and signs (bodily movements and gestures). They (the unworded messages) exist in the form of meta communications and kinesic communications (body talk). Our response to them influences our interpretation of message received through words.

### **M**etacommunication

A metacommunication is an implied meaning conveyed by the choice of words, tone of voice, fumbling, silence or omission. It is a message communicated not through words, but along with words. Metacommunication can be intentional or unintentional. For example, consider the following statement —

*Unworded messages are transmitted by non-verbal clues and signs (bodily movements and gestures).*

*A meta-communication is an implied meaning conveyed by the choice of words, tone of voice, fumbling, silence or omission. It is a message communicated not through words, but along with words.*

“Try to reach the airport, well on time.” The remark offers sound advice. But the sentence, without stating it, implies that the person concerned is not punctual or gets habitually late.

Again, when someone wishes the parting person ‘best of luck’, it conveys feelings of good wishes but it also implies a sense of anxiety or fear that everything may not turn out to be fine. Meta-communication also occurs through the use of paralanguage. Paralanguage includes pitch, loudness of voice, and speech breakers such as ‘er’, ‘ah’, ‘uh’, or hesitations. Prolonged gaps, pauses or silence are also forms of paralanguage. When a leader speaks slowly with sounds of ‘er’, ‘uh’, the leader is being very careful and circumspect.

**Kinesic communication** Kinesic communication is a message conveyed through non-verbal acts.

Non-verbal acts in the form of body movements, such as gestures, winking, smiling, postures, or style of dressing and grooming, send out a message that supports or contradicts the verbal message.

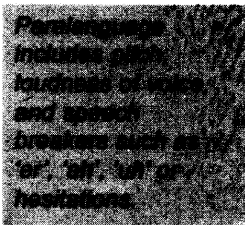
Kinesic communication is also known as body language or body talk. It includes the entire non-verbal behaviour of the communicator. A non-verbal act is usually unconscious. It transmits the unstated feelings, attitude and hidden intentions of the speaker. The receiver’s ability to perceive the non-verbal signs holds clues to the unworded messages. These non-verbal clues help you understand the total meaning of the message. In fact, as seen earlier, non-verbal clues influence our perception and understanding of the verbal message.

**Leakage** A non-verbal message conveyed through bodily movements is known as ‘leakage’. A successful receiver is able to observe and interpret the ‘leakage’. Though it is not possible to have an exhaustive account of all leakages and what they signify, a few examples to illustrate the modifying effect of bodily movements on verbal communication will be given later.

Let us first discuss some characteristics of non-verbal communications that all skillful communicators must know.

## CHARACTERISTICS OF NON-VERBAL COMMUNICATION

Verbal and non-verbal communications co-exist. Words literally





mean what they say. But those who are keen in observing how the words are written or spoken, find something additional in their meanings. A writer's style or a speaker's tone of voice or facial expressions or movements indicate the attitude and feelings in addition to what is being expressed through words.

<b>Non-verbal act</b>	<b>Possible unworded idea</b>
A senior looks at his/her watch while you are talking.	"Your time is over, go away."
A person winks after saying a thing.	"Do not believe what I just said."
An executive is always late for the meeting.	"I am always very busy." "I don't bother about your time."
A speaker prefers to speak from the floor, not the dais.	"I want to show my sense of equality with (you) audience."

**Instrumental body movements** When we move our hands to perform some work, such as wash our faces, it is an instrumental movement and not a symbolic clue. All body movements, with the exception of instrumental movements, are meaningful and communicative.

Communicative movements act as non-verbal clues. For example, wiping one's mouth when confronted by a superior person communicates nervousness. Or the movement of hand to signal goodbye communicates courtesy and friendship.

**Conscious or unconscious** Non-verbal clues reveal the state of mind, the inner feelings and emotions, which may be real or just affected. Trained actors and orators intentionally use gestures, facial expressions, bodily movements, and postures to create the intended impact on the listeners/audience. Effective writers use stylistic devices to convey hidden feelings and attitude.

But in real-life situations, generally, we betray our inner thoughts and feelings through unconscious signs. The speaker may not realise that he/she is conveying these feelings.

For example, consider this statement on the bilateral talks between two not very friendly countries. "The meeting has made history," means that the event has done something memorable. But, it may also suggest that all talks in the past were unimportant.

The dress or language used will reveal the communicator's status or education.

The interpretation of non-verbal clues differs from person to person. For example, if the listener keeps on listening to you with continuous eye-contact, you may take it as a sign of perfect attention and full acceptance, but to someone else it could be a sign of the listener's helplessness.

The visible is always more convincing than what is heard as it may support or contradict the verbal message. Non-verbal clues are often taken as indicators of reality. For example, the pale face of a person, when in danger, contradicts his/ her claim of fearlessness.

If the circumstances surrounding non-verbal communication change, the same gestures may be interpreted differently. For example, two colleagues are good friends. And one of them pats the other endearingly. The pat will be taken as a loving gesture.

Now, suppose A is the chairperson of a promotion committee and B a candidate is selected for promotion. To create misunderstanding between A and B someone tells her that A as chairperson opposed her promotion. On meeting her next evening, when A congratulates her and as usual pats her, she recoils.

Body movements and facial expressions often occur spontaneously. They can support or contradict the verbal message. For example, the trembling feet of a speaker indicates nervousness even though the speaker says, "I feel encouraged and inspired to stand before such a learned audience."

The dress or language used will reveal the communicator's status or education.

Similarly, pleasant words exchanged between two hostile parties would show their intention to put their differences aside.

## **CLASSIFICATION OF NON-VERBAL COMMUNICATION**

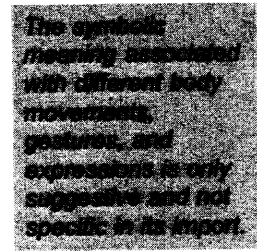
Exchange of messages without words (feelings and ideas), which take place between two parties fall within the category of non-verbal communication.

As discussed in the previous chapters, non-verbal forms of communication include the following modes — Paralanguage, Meta-communication, Kinesics, Grooming, Proxemics, Time Language, and Physical Surroundings.

**Symbols of body language** When you move different parts of your body such as hands, feet, head (nodding), shoulders

Body movements and facial expressions often occur spontaneously. They can support or contradict the verbal message.

(shrugging), eyes (blinking), or stand, sit, or walk (postures), you are expressing your feelings and emotions involuntarily along with words. All bodily movements act as symbols (signs), which contribute to the meaning of the message received and interpreted by the listener. The symbolic meaning associated with different body movements, gestures, and expressions is only suggestive and not specific in its import. Let us consider Ekman's classification of communicative movements into five types:



- **Emblems** When the movement of body parts represents ideas as icons or images, the communicative act is emblematic. It pictures the meaning non-verbally through a physical image. For instance, a circle made with the thumb and index finger, and the rest of the fingers stretched out straight acts as an emblem for the American sign for "OK". This OK sign is meaningful for those cultures that use the English alphabet. The circle is an image of the letter 'O'.

But in a different culture, the same circle 'O' can represent a coin, just as it does in Japan.

The emblem does indicate a clear meaning, but this meaning is based on culture. For instance, take an arbitrary gesture of holding up the thumb, which in Japan means "boss", and in India "perfect". Thus, the same gesture has different meanings in different cultures.

- **Illustrators** Illustrators are movements of hands and arms for representing size, shape, frequency or speed of something. For instance, widely stretched arms show the enormous size, say of a serpent.

According to Ekman, a speaker uses illustrators when he or she is enthusiastic or fully involved in the subject being discussed. In such a state, the speaker involuntarily dramatises ideas by using the movements of arms to focus on an idea or an event.

- **Body manipulators** These are acts of touching one's own body or an object for no reason. It involves fidgeting with jewellery or touching one's buttons. These are unintentional acts. However, some consider them as clues of nervousness, anxiety or boredom.

- **Facial expressions** The most expressive part of our body is our face. Our face reflects our thoughts and feelings. Smile, frown, blush, paleness, reveal our positive, and negative feelings. These are emotional expressions of the face. Our most fundamental emotions of happiness, sadness, anger, disgust, surprise, and fear are involuntarily marked on our face.
- **Regulators – Eye movements** The eye movements such as squinting, winking, staring are called regulators. Eye contact, a smile or a frown are strong messages of an interest, involvement, acceptance, rejection, or annoyance. They communicate visual messages about our subconscious thoughts. Other people notice them, and form impressions about us and discover the truth in our verbal communication. While communicating remember the popular saying, face reflects the mind; eyes reveal the heart. Facial expressions show our thoughts and the eyes betray our inner feelings and emotions. For example, eye contact shows attentiveness. Partly closed eyes indicate reflectiveness. Rolling eyes are associated with restlessness and looking for something. Staring eyes communicate threat. Wide open eyes show wonder or shock. A wink, following a statement, negates the seriousness of the statement made. Similarly, raised eyebrows or wrinkled forehead symbolizes objection and questioning. Avoiding eye contact shows nervousness.

Facial expressions, specially eyes, draw immediate attention to the unstated part of the message that goes with words to communicate the total meaning of what is being conveyed.

Develop the skill of creating a favourable impact on other people by using eye contact. Your facial expressions and eye movements should be natural. Your smile should not be artificial; rather it should be a natural reflection of the pleasant state of your mind.

**Face facts** In conversation, a smile shows that the interaction has been pleasant for both parties. Perhaps, it would not be wrong to say that in most face-to-face communications, the most positive impression is made by a smiling face. The situation may be an interview, negotiation, or a one-to-one meeting. Even in telephonic conversation, one is able to feel the impact of a smiling voice.

Unlike smiling, frowning is repulsive. It might suggest to other people that you want to be left alone.

By practising positive body language, one can gradually develop positive feelings. Your body language does induce a state of mind which can act as a shield against negative feelings. Learn to communicate sincerity and concern in your business dealings by using positive body language to support your words of greetings, courtesy, and customer care.

Make conscious efforts to create a positive image by positive body movements and gestures. Avoid negative 'leakage'. Learn to look confident, assertive, and positive. Avoid appearing nervous, aggressive, rude, pompous, indifferent or overbearing, and superior.

As discussed earlier, we are not often aware of our bodily message given out to others — the body leakage. Therefore, develop awareness about various bodily movements and gestures and their possible message to those who observe us. Practice them to create a favourable and positive attitude and a good relationship for successful exchange of ideas.

For your guidance, the associated messages of some significant bodily movements and gestures are given below —

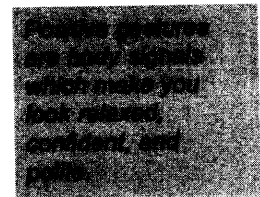
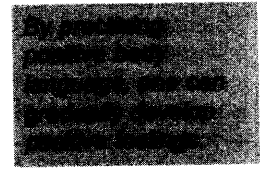
**Positive gestures** When we speak our hands move freely to indicate the meaning of our words. Such gestures are natural. They cannot be avoided. They give strength to our words. But our gestures should be seen by us in terms of their positive or negative message about us. Although gestures are spontaneous, we can learn to monitor and use the positive gestures and minimize, if not avoid negative ones.

Positive gestures are body signals which make you look relaxed, confident, and polite.

Positive listening gestures include leaning a little towards the speaker, tilting the head, eye contact, and gently nodding the head as the sign of agreement with what is said. Such gestures encourage the speaker to a great extent.

Good speaking gestures include keeping your hands open. Avoid clutching them or folding them across the chest.

Avoid putting both your hands in your pockets. If you put one hand in your pocket, it shows arrogance. If you put both, it shows nervousness.



*Gestures are adequate substitutes for words. We should develop the skills of using them effectively. Equally important is that we recognize our negative gestures and learn to hide them.*

However, if you want to thrust your hands in pockets, then keep the thumb out, so that you do not fully insert your hands inside the pockets.

- Impressive moving gestures include walking with your head upright. Hands should swing freely on your sides. Eyes should look straight in front. Steps should be well measured and steady.
- We usually carry books, files and documents clutching them against the chest. The proper way is to carry them on one side.
- We can use our gestures to politely communicate what we want, when we are unable to speak or interrupt someone for example, during a serious formal conversation, if you are offered water or tea, you may politely indicate by your palm to wait or to decline. You do not want to interrupt the conversation. Similarly, suppose you are talking to someone on the phone, and someone comes to see you or to ask you something, you can politely request him/her to wait a minute by showing up one finger or some other symbolic gesture of a moment instead of going on talking and thereby ignoring the visitor.

Again, you can politely ask others not to interrupt you when you are busy speaking to someone else, just by showing up your palm to remain quiet for a while.

Gestures are adequate substitutes for words. We should develop the skills of using them effectively. Equally important is that we recognize our negative gestures and learn to hide them.

### **N**egative Gestures

Negative gestures involve body movements, postures, gestures, or non-verbal activities, such as shaking, tapping, looking at the watch. You should take note of the following clues.

### **S**igns of Nervousness

- Hands in the pockets
- Covering the mouth with your hand while speaking
- Scratching
- Biting nails

- Glancing sideways
- Drumming fingers
- Clearing your throat too often
- Tapping your foot
- Wringing hands
- Crossing arms or legs
- A slumped posture
- Sitting on the edge of the chair
- Rocking our legs
- Looking at the ceiling
- Straightening the tie
- Setting the hair with hands
- Speaking too fast or too haltingly

The loudest gestures of your nervousness are when you are —

- Adjusting your glasses up the nose
- Blinking a lot
- Playing with jewellery, watches or cufflinks
- Clicking pens
- Frequently sipping/drinking water
- Playing with the paper weight
- Starting to smoke

*Impressive moving gestures include walking with your head upright*

### **G**estures Showing Aggressiveness

- Staring
- Pointing at someone
- Showing a fist
- Folding both arms
- Bending over someone

### **G**estures Showing Rudeness

Your behaviour becomes rude if you act in any of the following ways —

- Shake hands too hard
- Give a limp hand shake

- Stand too close
- Whisper at a social gathering
- Work while someone talks to you
- Yawn
- Smirk
- Look at your watch frequently or during the conversation
- Puff
- Tut-tut
- Groom, specially setting your hair when listening or speaking
- Start gathering and folding papers before the meeting is over

### **G**estures Showing Self-Importance

- Eyes closed while talking
- Head bent backwards while talking
- Looking at the tip of the nose while talking
- Pursed mouth
- Steeping the fingers
- Peering over the top of the glasses
- Waving glasses or key ring while talking.

Such acts, which signal our importance, should be carefully avoided in situations that demand solutions and negotiated settlements.

### **G**estures Showing Lack of Good Sense

- Banging the table instead of laughing at a joke
- Chewing pens
- Air quoting, when you want to say something or making air T, when you want to say tea
- Waving hands around you while talking
- Wringing hands
- Opening or closing buttons or setting your watch strap as you talk
- Wiping hands across face
- Touching nose time and again.

*Besides the non-verbal gestures that convey wordless messages through body language and facial expressions, there are other lateral wordless signs of power, position, taste, and culture such as decoration and size of the office, dress, grooming, and so on.*



## **G**estures Showing Superiority of Position

Some seniors, without saying anything, make you feel subordinate to them by behaving in the following ways. Creating such feelings of subordination adversely affects good working relationships. Others feel uncomfortable in your presence. Therefore, avoid such power - posturing acts.

- Not responding or acknowledging other's greeting
- Staring
- Shouting orders
- Standing too close, or leaning or sitting on someone's desk
- Standing behind someone's seat and watching over his/her shoulder as he/she keeps writing/working
- Smoking in someone's space
- Attending meetings with your cell phones on
- Any unwanted or unwarranted touch
- Continuing to work as others speak to you
- Crushing hand shake or keeping the hand held too long under your hand
- Reclining in the chair with your hands folded behind your head.

*Creating such feelings of subordination adversely affects good working relationships.*

## **L**ateral Gestures

Besides the above-mentioned non-verbal gestures that convey wordless messages through body language and facial expressions, there are other wordless signs of power, position, taste, and culture such as decoration and size of the office, dress, grooming, and so on. They are called lateral gestures. and include the following broad categories —

- Physical setting
- Dress—clothes and shoes
- Personal space

**Physical Setting** An executive's position of power is generally seen from the size of his office — room, the kind of furnishing of the room, the height of his/her chair, the size of the office table. The number of telephone sets and their quality add to the impression

Look impressive, not gorgeous. Never be over-dressed for the occasion. Do not go for high fashion and trendy designs and styles of suiting. Business executives look elegant in conventional styles. Your clothes should not distract attention from what you talk.

created by the size and setting of the room. The floor carpet tells us the status of the executive we are going to meet.

In an office the executive's table is usually placed a few steps away from the entry door. It is to make a visitor or a subordinate walk upto him/her and feel his/her presence. Space is one of the factors involved in indicating the proximity of relationship.

**Dress** clothes often proclaim a person. It is one of the first things others notice about you. Your clothes, their texture, colour, design, style, and stitching speak about your taste, and aesthetic sense. Pay attention to your clothes specially when you need to impress people at an interview or presentation.

Look impressive, not gorgeous. Never be over-dressed for the occasion. Do not go for high fashion and trendy designs and styles of suiting. Business executives look elegant in conventional styles. Your clothes should not distract attention from what you talk.

Wear neither too loose nor tight clothes. Select your clothes according to the nature of your job.

It is necessary that you feel comfortable in your clothes, particularly when you are to attend an interview or make a presentation. Never try a new set of clothes for such occasions. You may feel out of form, if you are putting on a brand new suit at the time of interview or making a public appearance. New clothes may not sit comfortably on you, and they may draw away your attention from time to time. So, the first rule of clothes is the principle of comfort. If you are getting your suit stitched, customise it according to your comfort. And try to wear the customised suit on special occasions.

Your shoes should be formal and in keeping with the colour of the suit.

Business bag, or briefcase or portfolio which you carry also indicates your status as a professional. An over-stuffed handbag is not as impressive as a sleek brief case or a smart handbag.

**Personal space** Space between two interacting persons indicates the level of formality, informality, intimacy, or distance between them. In business, you should observe the personal territory that each individual wishes to enjoy. If you break into the personal territory of an executive, you are likely to make him/her feel uncomfortable. When placed under such an intrusion of personal

territory, an important person is bound to show displeasure and signs of withdrawal from the interaction. You should understand the non-verbal message of displeasure, and correct your space-relationship with your superior to have a fruitful interaction.

### **D**emarcation of zones

The limits of different zones are set as the invisible space between the two parties. The nature of relationship between them determines the conventional distance between them. An important person such as a leader, a public speaker, a commander, or a celebrity would feel crowded without sufficient space around him/her.

According to the nature of relationships, there are four distinct zones —

- Public zone
- Social zone
- Friendly zone
- Intimate zone

A public zone is the widest territory between the speaker and audience. A public speaker addresses a large gathering of persons. He/she needs to speak from a raised platform at a distance of 10 to 15 feet from the audience. The distance and elevation of the speaker provide visibility and sense of security and elevation to the speaker. An example of public zone in armed services is the normal practice of army officers to order commands from a distance of 8 to 10 steps from troops.

A social zone is the space maintained between people who are known to each other in a formal way. All business transactions are to be treated as social interactions. And as an executive, you should keep a distance of 4 to 10 feet between you and your audience. This space will ensure the comfort of your listeners, especially if they happen to be your seniors or your customers or clients. At this distance, you can watch the body language and facial expressions of the other party closely. The social zone will be applicable to new colleagues at work, new acquaintances, and small groups training.

The friendly zone is the distance we observe at business parties, seminars, and other informal business gatherings and get-togethers. We remain close but not close enough to jostle against each other.

The limits of different zones are set as the invisible space between the two parties. The nature of relationship between them determines the conventional distance between them.

The gap we keep between us is nearly 1½ to 4 feet. We are able to comfortably chat, laugh and joke with each other in his/her own individual space.

The intimate zone or the closest zone is the distance or nearness between you and the person you love or your close relatives and family members. In this zone, persons tend to be together even at whispering distance. This nearness signals closeness among persons involved in communication. The gap is nearly of 6 inches to 18 inches. But this close distance is possible only when you are sure of your relationship. Because it is a zone in which you can happen to touch the other person, as well. In all other zones, including friendly zone, you should not risk touching the other person. Your touching can be strongly objected to by the other person concerned.

Within the intimate zone, there are, according to the level of our intimacy, further zones/bands of intimacy. They are —

- Near Intimate sphere — (upto 6 inches)
  - Lovers
  - Partners
  - Children
  - Family
- Distant intimate sphere — (6 inches to 18 inches)
  - Close friends
  - Close Colleagues
  - Relatives

Both these spheres are sensitive. Our difficulty is because we, often, do not know how close is too close.

When our intimate zone is intruded upon by someone, we feel embarrassed and, at times, threatened by the unwanted approach. And our response is that of “fight or flight”. If our friendly zone is violated, we hide our discomfort by smiling or raising questions.

There are times when the personal and intimate spaces are violated, such as when travelling in a crowded compartment or entering a packed lift. In such situations, we do not face resentment from others, because our body language indicates our helplessness. Moreover, to avoid discomfort to anyone, we usually avoid eye contact with anyone. We try to stand straight to avoid physical contact with anyone.

*When our intimate zone is intruded upon by someone, we feel embarrassed and, at times, threatened by the unwanted approach.*

## ADVANTAGES OF LEARNING NON-VERBAL COMMUNICATION SKILLS

Knowledge of non-verbal skills strengthens your communicative competence as a professional. But you do not get from these skills power to control others. If you understand the body language of other persons, it does not mean you control their response to you. It only means you understand them and their meaning better. By gaining a fuller understanding of the message, you are better equipped to fulfill your purpose. Therefore, in the first place you should look upon understanding of non-verbal skills of communication as a source of crucial knowledge of other's subconscious or unexpressed feelings and attitude.

*Knowledge of non-verbal skills strengthens your communicative competence as a professional. But you do not get from these skills power to control others.*

Body language is not the science of mind reading. The body language is a sudden flashing revelation from one subconscious mind to another subconscious mind. There is no deliberate attempt to give or receive non-verbal messages. It all happens spontaneously. Your skill is to be aware of such sudden and spontaneous expressions through bodily movements and gestures; develop the ability to support your verbal message with positive body expressions; minimize negative movements, expressions, and gestures; and interpret non-verbal clues received from other persons.

### **A**bility to Act as a Victim of Power Posturing

In the presence of power posturing superiors or colleagues, you must have felt a strange sense of being subordinated or over-dominated, suddenly. Suppose your boss, known for his arrogance and strictness, quietly enters into your room from his side office, and stands holding your chair behind you. He keeps watching what you are working on for a few minutes. There is silence. You feel deeply nervous and upset. And finally, he says, "So, what's on?" in a heavy voice.

In such a state of nervousness, you should learn to manage your body talk. Do not allow your nervousness to be leaked out. If you exhibit nervousness, that would mean you were doing something wrong. If you blurt out "Nothing, Sir" in a shaky voice, your boss could infer that you were wasting your time. You should reply with confidence by first standing up, then facing him, (if not already met then greeting him for the day) and say exactly what you have to say (what you have been doing).

*Body language is not the science of mind reading. The body language is a sudden flashing revelation from one subconscious mind to another subconscious mind.*

Power posturing is bound to make its victim feel shattered and completely nervous. It is a deliberate use of body language and behaviour to make you feel inferior. The superior person can hurt you by shouting, bullying, not responding, or pretending not even to notice your presence before him by continuing to dig his eyes in some file. Some interviewers choose to make you feel nervous by using some of these gestures and behaviour. For instance, you ask permission to enter the room, and you hear a yelling "Come!" And you enter, and just stand before him/her completely ignored. After a few minutes, he/she looks at you, asks your name. By this time you feel drained of your confidence.

**Reassuring actions and gestures** Do not feel hurt. The other person is trying to bully you into such a state of mind. Remember that the rude behaviour is directed at you not as a person but as an individual involved in a particular professional situation. Keep your cheer and cool. Do not begin questioning your worth. Remain calm and fully composed.

Avoid nervous gestures. Do not leak any signs of nervousness by wiping your mouth or biting your nails or looking lost in thoughts. Analyse and admire the technique used by the other person to browbeat you. Do not react to the planned rudeness of the other. Behave in your normal manner. It is difficult but possible to confront power posturing skillfully and allow yourself to act with comfort.

### **A**void the Double Cross

You are sitting when invaded by power posturing; do not sit at the edge of the seat. Sitting like that will make you look nervous and ready to run away. You may for comfort sake cross your legs but do not fold your arms at the same time. That will make you look very defensive.

### **U**se Comfort Gestures Skillfully

There are comforting body gestures such as touching earlobes or back of the neck or stroking hair. These acts restore confidence. But do them so passingly that others do not take them as leakage of your nervousness or anxiety.

### **R**eassuring Standing Postures

If you are invaded by power posturing when you are standing,

Power posturing is bound to make its victim feel shattered and completely nervous. It is a deliberate use of body language and behaviour to make you feel inferior.

try to keep nervousness away by standing up in an easy form, with your arms down by your sides, and your feet apart by 9 to 10 inches. This posture will give you firm balanced footing.

**Be assertive** We tend to respond to an adverse situation by either fighting or fleeing. Learn to develop an alternative way of responding to unpleasant behaviour or negative situations by being assertive.

Assertiveness should not be taken to mean imposing your own will on others. It means that you try to understand the point of view of others; and put your own viewpoint objectively. And then say what you think is right without permitting yourself to be influenced by emotional considerations.

In both responses of fight or flight, we get affected by emotions. In the case of assertiveness, we express facts as they are and say what should be said. The ultimate goal is to convince the other person with the rightness of what is being asserted.

Assertion is a positive way of saying what we want to say. It is a response and not a reaction to a situation. To be assertive, we have to learn the skills of discussing and negotiating. But negotiation is a time-consuming process. We have to have patience for resolving the problem through the assertive method of discussion and negotiation. Our impatience makes us react aggressively and fight or just run away (flight). Both these forms of reaction — aggression and passivity — have negative effects. Aggression negatively affects the other persons by hurting their feelings and provoking them to react with similar behaviour (anger), leaving them unconvinced even when they do, what they are forced to do. Passivity, on the other hand, is frustrating. You feel that you have lost what you had wanted. Others may take you for granted. You blame yourself.

Hence, the proper way to respond is to say what you want to say. And say it with firm conviction of being right.

## **GUIDELINES FOR DEVELOPING NON-VERBAL COMMUNICATION SKILLS**

### **W**atch and Read the Non-verbal Clues

- Interpret non-verbal clues in relation to the situation and culture accurately.

*Assertiveness should not be taken to mean imposing your own will on others.*

- Be careful about false non-verbal clues deliberately given to deceive you.
- Consider the non-verbal message, along with what the speaker's words say, to know the total message.
- Respond, but do not react to non-verbal signals with self-control.

### **K**now Your Body Language in Action

- Develop self-awareness by visualising yourself as others see you by interpreting your body movements and gestures.
- Try to develop positive gestures and expressions to present yourself as you wish to be seen by others — confident, pleasing, and a well meaning team worker.
- Do not give conflicting non-verbal cues.
- Convey sincerity through your tone of voice and facial expression.
- Use symbols, non-verbal cues (gestures, posture, and so on), intonation (for example, volume, pace of delivery, and enunciation), expressions and so on to reinforce and clarify the meaning of message.
- Maintain eye contact with your audience.
- Smile genuinely to reflect your feelings of delight.
- Avoid power posturing signals.
- Remember that the first impression is the last impression. If not the last, it is certainly a lasting impression. Hence, present yourself well to make a lasting good impression.

*Culture, like language, lays down rules for accepted social behaviour of people sharing a set of knowledge, beliefs, practices, and ideas.*

**Body language across cultures** Though body language is a universal phenomenon, its meaning differs culturally. Culture, like language, lays down rules for accepted social behaviour of people sharing a set of knowledge, beliefs, practices, and ideas. In present day multicultural workplaces, communicating between persons of different nations requires knowledge of the meaning of non-verbal acts such as eye contact, touch, and time sense in respective cultures. People attach great significance to what they get to know by noticing non-verbal clues apart from what they hear through words. Non-verbal clues are taken as true indicators of the speaker's subconscious mind. They are, therefore, considered more



reliable than words. Be careful not to use non-verbal clues that violate cultural norms of other countries. For persons who move and work abroad or work in multicultural environments, it is necessary that they realise that they should not use some of the gestures, or touch parts of the body for communicating as they did in their own country. There may be no continuity in the meaning of those non-verbal acts. Perhaps, some of those bodily acts might even be unwelcome or offensive. To help you out from such embarrassing situations, the meanings of a few non-verbal clues are given in relation to specific cultures.

### **T**ouching and Its Context

Touching has a limited communicative symbolism. It primarily conveys intimacy and closeness and also love. But the act of touching has its meaning in relation to its context. For instance, in cricket some players pat the bottom of their team mates to convey admiration. But they cannot do it with any one of their teammates out in the club. That would give wrong clues to their sexual drive.

It is the context in which touching is done which determines its implied sense. Take for instance, the case of a doctor. The doctor can touch his female patient's any part of the body. But the patient does not object to his touching. The patient's thoughts are influenced by her ailment. And the doctor's attention is directed by the investigations to be made or the surgery to be performed. In this context, his body movements, touching, and so on are instrumental acts, performing certain tasks. They are not communicative body movements reflecting the doctor's state of mind, emotions or attitude. The context characterises the nature of a body movement and determines it communicative or instrumental message.

Touch is the mode of communicating intimacy. But which part of the body can be touched by whom and when depends upon the culture of the people of a country or a particular region. As a broad gesture of patronising, a superior in position or age or status can touch by patting the back of a worker, both male or female, in western countries, but in Asian countries, like India, patting a lady on the back is not socially liked.

Among lovers, parents, family members, and very close friends, touching is a normal gesture, and goes unnoticed, but between strangers it is at once marked and may also be objected to. But even

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*Touch is the channel of communicating intimacy. But which part of the body can be touched by whom and when depends upon the culture of the people of a country or a particular region.*

*In the West, men and women can, in public, walk freely holding each other's hand. But in India, Pakistan, and other Asian countries men and women generally do not do so in public view.*

among those who share the zone of intimacy, only some parts of the body can be touched while communicating.

Different parts of the body are viewed as centres of intimate relationship, bordering sensuality. The forearm of a woman can be touched by a man while communicating, without offending the concerned lady, but not the upper part of the arm. The two parts represent two different zones of sensibility. Touching the upper part of woman's arm is indicative of sensuality.

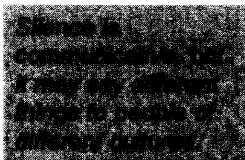
In the West, men and women can, in public, walk freely holding each other's hand. But in India, Pakistan, and other Asian countries men and women generally do not do so in public view.

Again, in Asian countries such as Nepal, Pakistan, and India, it is normal for two males to move around holding each other's hand, whereas in America, such males might be considered gay.

To identify himself as an individual while speaking to someone an American places one of his hands on his chest, whereas a Japanese places one of his fingers on his nose. But some western psychologists consider nose touching to be a Freudian symbol of sexuality.

Like all other emblematic body movements, eye contact is also decoded culturally, in different ways. Eye contact is an important clue of attentive listening. In most western countries, it is considered polite to speak one to one by maintaining eye contact. But in Japan and India subordinates do not make eye contact, when speaking and listening to their superiors. It is possible that an American may consider a Japanese to be impolite if he/she keeps the eyes lowered during their conversation. In India, this speaks of humility, not shame. A newly wed Indian bride with her eyes turned downwards, while talking, moving or sitting with others, acts as an emblem of humility and respect.

Similarly, silence is communicative, but it may say different things to people of different cultures. For instance, during discussions between an American and a Japanese, the Japanese may prefer to remain silent if he/she thinks he/she does not know much about the matter. An Indian in that situation may keep silent, if he/she agrees with what is being said. But an American would take silence both of the Japanese and the Indian as a sign of withdrawal and non-participation. An American looks for involvement and participation through raising questions or doubts.



For people in the East, silence is a sign of wisdom. But for westerners, it is indicative of lack of understanding.

No one can make an exhaustive study of all possible cultural variations to interpret body movements. However, an attempt has been to make you understand the influence of context of cultures on interpretation of body movements and gestures.

### **C**ommunication Breakdown

In life and business dealings many a time communication breaks down. It happens when we are too keen to talk about our own point of view. We go on, and do not consider whether the other person is understanding what is said. Sometimes, our discussions become heated and we reach no satisfactory end of our meeting. Sometimes, in a meeting you may feel bored because the same point is being repeated by the speaker without involving other members in the discussion. Such communication break downs do happen.

No one wants the discussion to fail. But, often, we fail to realise that it is going to fail. Communication often fails because of two reasons —

1. We do not keep our own natural pace of speaking
2. We do not consider the other person's body language

Both reasons can be avoided through the knowledge of skills of oral communication.

### **L**ack of Rapport

The purpose of all communication is to be useful and harmonious. Harmony is the key word in personal and business communication. Harmony between ideas of speaker and listener is the final aim of communication. The first step is the rapport between the non-verbal languages of the speaker and listener: the pacing. For fruitful discussion or dialogue, both speaker and listener should be on the same wavelength. What does this wavelength mean in our communication? It means that the two persons (speaker and the other person) should use similar body language, specially speed, tone of voice, pitch, words, gestures, eye contact, and time. The non-verbal language used by the speaker should reflect the body language of the other person. You may notice that the word listener is being avoided in this context of rapport. It is being replaced by the phrase 'the other person'. It is a significant substitution. Communication usually fails because the speaker treats the other person as a listener. Therefore, he/she keeps on using

*The purpose of all communication is to be useful and harmonious.*

most of the time for speaking. The other person is forced to just listen and have little opportunity to speak. A proper time sharing between speaking and listening should be —

Speaking — 30%

Listening — 70%

When we devote 70 per cent of conversation time to listening, during the moments of silence we can study the body language of the other person and observe his/her state of mind, feelings, and the true response to what we are saying, our point of view. And to make him/her know his/her response as perceived by us, our body language should hold a mirror to his non-verbal language. It does not mean our body language should be imitative. It means that our behaviour, verbal and non-verbal, should reflect the ideas and feelings of the other person. The two behaviours should be in unison.

Suppose two of us speak at different speeds, pitch, and volume, neither of us would be able to keep pace with the other. Conflicts arise, when expressions of our ideas and feelings differ.

Consider the following example —

Sonali, a senior HR executive, sat sunk in her chair, disappointed. She had come to office very happy. She had prepared a long document on how to reduce cost to the company without cutting down the present number of employees, working in core departments of the organisation. She had gone to the General Manager to discuss with him her proposed plan, before formally submitting it for the management's consideration.

Sonali entered the General Manager's office and from the door asked him, "Can I discuss something with you? I have a very exciting plan to show you. Hope you will like it. We can reduce cost without cutting down number of employees."

The General Manager did not look towards her. Instead, he kept on writing. After a few minutes of silence, without turning his gaze from the paper, he said, "I have to finish this report first. Maybe, later."

Communication in this case definitely breaks down. There is no rapport between Sonali and the General Manager. Sonali is frustrated.

Now, suppose the General Manager responds to Sonali as follows —

*Harmony is the key word in personal and business communication.*

The General Manager stops writing. Turns towards Sonali. Makes eye contact and exultingly says "Wonderful ! Let me first finish this report. We can meet in an hour. I will ring you as soon as I am free. Will that be fine?" Sonali would feel very happy.

The GM responds her enthusiasm with matching enthusiasm. This exchange satisfies both the parties. The GM gets time to complete his report, undisturbed, and Sonali's enthusiasm is kept up. What is significant in this communication is that the GM appreciates Sonali's enthusiasm and her keenness to discuss her plan with him. He therefore uses the word 'wonderful', to communicate his own excitement to know about Sonali's new plan. He fixes a time to discuss it. He also lets Sonali know that the plan should be discussed without any disturbance, when both are free.

This exchange is based on rapport between Sonali and the GM. There has been a pacing between the non-verbal languages of both Sonali and the GM.

The communication in the latter instance is fruitful, because the GM is able to make Sonali feel that he values her ideas and through his non-verbal language validates her worth as a colleague.

A simple non-verbal act in everyday life may make you feel unhappy. For instance, you may ring up your boss on his mobile twice. Both the times, he does not respond. You feel cut down. You feel small and unwanted. Because he knows your mobile number, but does not respond to your call. The lack of rapport frustrates you until he speaks to you next.

### **Some Steps to Establish Rapport**

- Develop the habit of talking less and listening and observing others more.
- Do not dominate the discussion.
- Keep your natural pace of conversation.
- Recognise the pace of others.
- Let your pace and the other's be nearly the same.
- Try to establish rapport between you and the other person during the first few minutes of your conversation.
- Do not introduce any controversial issue before you have been able to create rapport through pacing.

*A simple non-verbal act in everyday life may make you feel unhappy.*

- Avoid harsh criticism. Try to see reason for difference of opinion.
- Be tolerant of differences.
- Focus on similarities of ideas.

The above steps will gradually overcome differences. Conflicting opinions will find resolution in common understanding gained by both, you and the other person.

In life, as in business, it is necessary that you focus on those aspects of your communication, verbal and non-verbal that you share with others.

## Case Study

### Wave

#### (ATV: Advertising Radio FM Band)

A young, gorgeous woman is standing in front of her apartment window dancing to the 1970s tune, "All Right Now" by the one-hit band Free. Across the street a young man looks out of his apartment window and notices her. He moves closer to the window, taking interest. She cranks up the volume and continues dancing, looking out the window at the fellow, who smiles hopefully and waves meekly. He holds up a bottle of wine and waves it, apparently inviting her over for a drink. The lady waves back. He kisses the bottle and excitedly says, "Yesss." Then, he gazes around his apartment and realizes that it is a mess. "No!" he exclaims in a worried tone of voice. Frantically, he does his best to quickly clean up the place, stuffing papers under the sofa and putting old food back in the refrigerator. He slips on a black shirt, slicks

back his hair, sniffs his armpit, and lets out an excited, "Yeahhh!" in eager anticipation of entertaining the young lady. He goes back to the window and sees the woman still dancing away. He points to his watch, as if to say, "Come on. It's getting late." As she just continues dancing, he looks confused. Then, a look of sudden insight appears on his face. "Five," he says to himself. He turns on his radio, and it too is playing "All Right Now." The man goes to his window and starts dancing as he watches his lady friend continue stepping. "Five, yeah," he says as he makes the "okay" sign with his thumb and forefinger. He waves again. Everyone in the apartment building is dancing by their window to "All Right Now." A super appears on the screen: "Are you on the right wavelength?"

## Questions to Answer

1. What is non-verbal communication? Why do you suppose that this commercial relies primarily on non-verbal communication between a young man and a gorgeous woman? What types of non-verbal communication are being used in this case?
2. Would any of the non-verbal communications in this spot (ad) not work well in another culture?
3. What role does music play in this spot? Who is the target market?
4. Is the music at all distracting from the message?
5. How else are radio stations advertised on TV?

### Summary

- Non-verbal communication involves the sending of messages through bodily movements, gestures, facial expressions and other forms of wordless channels such as space, time and personal appearance along with the message communicated by words.
- Non-verbal communication basically includes two types of communication: (i) meta-communication and (ii) kinesic communication.
- Meta-communication is effected through changes in pitch, tone of voice and choice of words. The kinesic communication is done by movements of body parts in certain ways, not to perform certain tasks, but to involuntarily communicate the sub-conscious state of feelings along with whatever is expressed by the spoken words.
- The communicative movements symbolise meanings. To be successful in knowing what others mean when they say something, pay attention to the communicative meaning of the speaker's bodily movements, facial expressions, eye contact, space, and distance and other forms of non-verbal clues such as dress, hair style, and professional time keeping.
- To be able to act and respond correctly in inter-cultural context, you should know that different cultures interpret variables of body language differently. Finally, non-verbal communication is natural and spontaneous. You cannot control it. But you can have a good relationship with others if you pay attention to cues and clues that accompany words.
- Develop skills of mutual understanding by creating rapport between you and the other person.

## Review Questions

1. "When you lack confidence in a situation your body language will shout out to others that you are unsure of yourself!" Discuss some of the ways in which your body language will betray your lack of confidence.
2. What is a cue?
3. How does a cue differ from a clue?
4. Discuss the difference between communicative and instrumental body movements. Give some examples of communicative gestures.
5. What is "Leakage"?
6. Interpret the following postures. What do they signify?
  - Arms folded across chest
  - Staring
  - Pointing
  - Leaning over someone.
7. How would you act when a power-posturing superior confronts you?
8. Does our culture influence our interpretation of behaviour of persons from other culture groups? Give examples to support your answer.