The Use of Nonverbals

Video Transcript

Everyone knows someone that seemingly only ever talks with their hands, or wouldn’t be able to hold a conversation if their arms were taped to their sides. This greatly exaggerated way of talking is a form of nonverbal communication.

Nonverbal communication is how we send messages that do not rely on words. Some of the things we do are automatic and unintentional. Some of them hold meaning only for certain people, while some are understood by everyone. Nonverbals can serve either to hammer home messages that we send or can undermine those messages.

Mastering nonverbal communication is an important step toward mastering effective communication. The first step toward mastering nonverbals is being able to identify them in others.

Take a look at this image.

What are some of the nonverbal cues you see here? What do they mean? How do you know?

Now that you are able to spot nonverbals in a still image, let’s move onto something a bit more challenging. Imagine a conversation you have recently had with a friend.

During that conversation what are some of the nonverbal signals you sent and received. Did one of you stand closer than the other at first? Were you louder than your friend? How much eye contact did you make? Did you touch them? Did the conversation last a long time or was it brief? Where did the conversation take place? All these factors are nonverbal communication, and all these factors can have subtle and unintended impacts on a message. Alternatively, they can also have large impacts, or can be done very intentionally. All this will be covered in the content to come.
As you read along, keep in mind the conversation you just imagined and try to figure out what kinds of nonverbals you used, and what effect they had on you now that you are aware of them existing. Even if you were aware of some nonverbals before this lesson, keep an open mind as you learn about what other kinds exist, and the uses they can have in conveying messages.

About this transcript:

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- Corresponding Lesson: Nonverbal Communication
- Author and curator: Alexander Amos and Elizabeth Amos for The TEL Library
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