

Talking without opening your mouth!

Our eyes, our faces, our bodies, and our gestures can help or hinder effective communication. Did you ever create a non-verbal barrier? Perhaps you have acted like Fred:

Fred never looks directly at the person talking to him.

The person talking never knows whether Fred is listening, let alone, whether he agrees, disagrees, or is concerned. Many people assume that Fred just isn't interested.

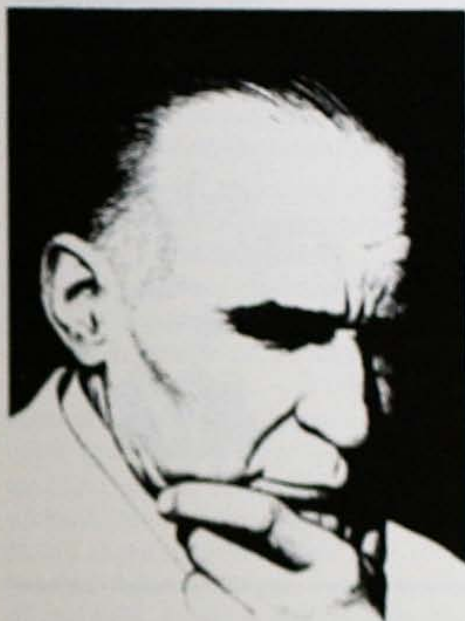
Did you ever say to anyone, "Look at me when I talk to you!" Why did you say it?

Turning your body away from the speaker may convey the message, "I am not interested in what you are saying."

If someone is responding to your question, pay attention. Failure to pay attention conveys lack of interest or disrespect.

WORDS AND BEHAVIOR DIFFER

Nonverbal actions apply to both listening and speaking. Suppose someone in a meeting says in a flat voice, "That's a good idea," while at



the same time looking away or doing something else. Other members of the group would have to assume that the speaker was insincere, that he really didn't care much for the idea or wouldn't support it if adopted.

You can measure the development of individual group members by their



alertness to others' nonverbal cues.

Understanding nonverbal cues improves interpretation of the following:

- gestures
- voice intonation
- posture
- body movements
- eye contact
- individual feelings.

TELLTALE SIGNS

Body language always speaks loudly. Certain movements or gestures relate to specific attitudes or feelings. The chart on this page illustrates some of these relationships.

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Some attitudes communicated through body language

FRUSTRATION

- short breaths
- "tsk" sound
- tightly clenched hands
- hand wringing
- pointing of index finger
- hand "combing" hair

EVALUATION

- hand-to-face gestures
- head tilted
- stroking of chin
- peering over glasses

DEFENSIVENESS

- arms crossed on chest
- legs crossed
- fistlike gestures
- pointing of index finger

NERVOUSNESS

- throat clearing
- "whew" sound
- whistling
- cigarette smoking
- fidgeting in chair
- perspiring

CONFIDENCE

- steeped hands
- hands behind back
- back stiffened
- hands on coat lapels

INSECURITY

- flesh pinching
- chewed pen, pencil
- thumb over thumb
- fingernail biting
- hands in pockets

SUSPICION

- sideways glance
- touching of nose
- movement away from speaker

COOPERATION

- upper body in sprinter's position
- open hands
- sitting on edge of chair
- hand-to-face gestures
- unbuttoning of coat

OPENNESS

- open hands
- unbuttoned coat