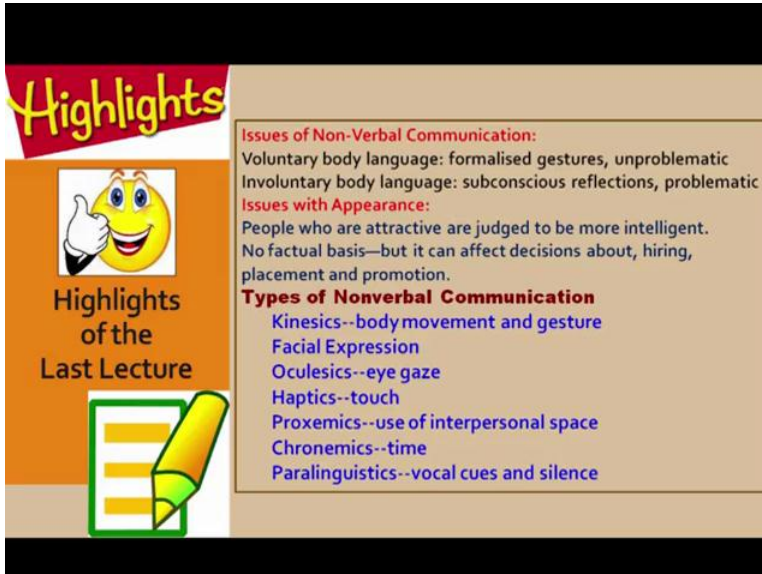


Developing Soft Skills and Personality
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Lecture – 39
Non-Verbal Communication-Basics and Universals

Hello! Hi! Welcome back to NPTEL MOOC course on developing soft skills and personality. This is seventh week, module number three and lecture number thirty nine. I have started the discussion on non-verbal communication, in this week. And, in this module, particularly I am going to talk about some basics and universals, in terms of non-verbal communication.

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Highlights

Highlights of the Last Lecture

Issues of Non-Verbal Communication:
Voluntary body language: formalised gestures, unproblematic
Involuntary body language: subconscious reflections, problematic

Issues with Appearance:
People who are attractive are judged to be more intelligent.
No factual basis—but it can affect decisions about, hiring, placement and promotion.

Types of Nonverbal Communication
Kinesics--body movement and gesture
Facial Expression
Oculistics--eye gaze
Haptics--touch
Proxemics--use of interpersonal space
Chronemics--time
Paralinguistics--vocal cues and silence

Before I start, let me give a brief quick review of what I did in the previous lecture. In the previous lecture, I highlighted some basic issues of non-verbal communication. Particularly, the issues related to use of verbal and non-verbal, in general. And then, more when we come and when we come to talk about non-verbal, I focused on voluntary body language and involuntary body language.

Voluntary body language are the formalized gestures like the Namaste, hand shake that we do and which we are very conscious about it. And that is why it is unproblematic. But, the involuntary body language; So, that is actually a sub-conscious reflection of our inner most thoughts; which means it is problematic because we actually do not know what we are telling others through our body language; are we afraid, are we over confident, are we nervous. So these things, even if you want to control it, we are using our own body to express and give clues to others.

The other interesting factor that I talked about in the previous lecture, in terms of issues is that with regard to appearance. So, I highlighted this in order to tell you as why you should really bother about your appearance; because in terms of non-verbal communication people, who are attractive or judged to be more intelligent, they are supposed to be more capable. People think that they are generally more intelligent and capable. So, they should be hired, they should be promoted faster. So, they should be given more money, in terms of increment.

Now, the interesting thing is there is no factual basis to corroborate this. But, it is the impact of non-verbal communication. About ninety-three percent impression that is created even before you speak. So, that is actually giving this appearance, the impact that whether it deserves or not. So, it is trying to do that. So, I just told you that you should be cautious about your appearance. So, it is not about looking good, in terms of the physiological aspects. But, looking good in terms of grooming yourself, taking care of your body language and all that.

Later, I talked about the types of non-verbal communication, and particularly about seven types, I focused. The kinesics is actually referring to body movement and gesture, in general. Facial expression is something that we talked about. And then, we looked at these six basic facial expressions. Oculistics is about eye-gaze. And then, here I talked about the dilation as well as contraction. And, how people can manipulate your interest to selling you something at a very high price, just by looking at your behavior, in terms of your eye-gaze. Haptics is to do with touch. And then, we know that it is the one that the infant is born with. And then, it something that continuous still one grows up. And then, touch or lack of touch can tell us the amount of intimacy, the amount of comfort a

person is receiving in interpersonal relations. Then, I talked about proxemics; that is, to do with use of interpersonal space. And then, how we need to use it, what is suggested when a person is coming close to somebody, what do we do when we like or when we do not like someone, why do we sit close with someone and why do we maintain distance with someone. So, these are the things we looked at.

And then, I spent quite some time on chronemics; that is, with regard to the monochronic as well as polychronic time perspectives people have. And then, I said that there are cultural differences. But, in terms of corporate culture, most of the times they go for monochronic time perception. So, time is important, time is budgeted, time is ration, time is money. So, your entire personality is measured, in terms of the way you use time. So, you have to use it very frugally, carefully, in a very planned consistent manner.

I concluded the lecture with reference to paralinguistics as also a type of non-verbal communication. It indicates vocal cues and silence. But, I also try to communicate with you that silence is perhaps the highest form of eloquent. And then, you need to use that very effectively. And, it is a kind of misconception that speaking more can get you the desired results. But, often you can use silence to get what you want in life also. So, with that I concluded the lecture.

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Body Language: Basics and Universals

- Some gestures have culturally different meaning.
- Yet, there are some universally acceptable expressions.
- Most of them have originated from the Western concepts.
- While applying them, especially, in an Indian context, we need to use our discretion!
- Example: Touching the feet of elders
- Western: Slavish, trying to flatter, not honest, uncultured
- Indian: Respectful, sincere, well-behaved, cultured

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In this one, when I am going to talk about body language, basics and universals, I just want to tell you first that some gestures have culturally different meaning. This, I mentioned it in the previous one also.

But, irrespective of that even if there are culturally differences, there are some universally acceptable expressions. In fact, there are many. Already listed. And, we are going to look at some common sets of universal expressions, which are going to help us. The other interesting thing that you should notice is most of them have originated from the western concepts; “The book on origin of spices” and then “Darwin’s theory”, linking man’s behavior with those of chimpanzees and then so many studies which followed. So, they have all actually started from the western one. So, the body language, expressions, which we generally consider as universals are all coming from the western books.

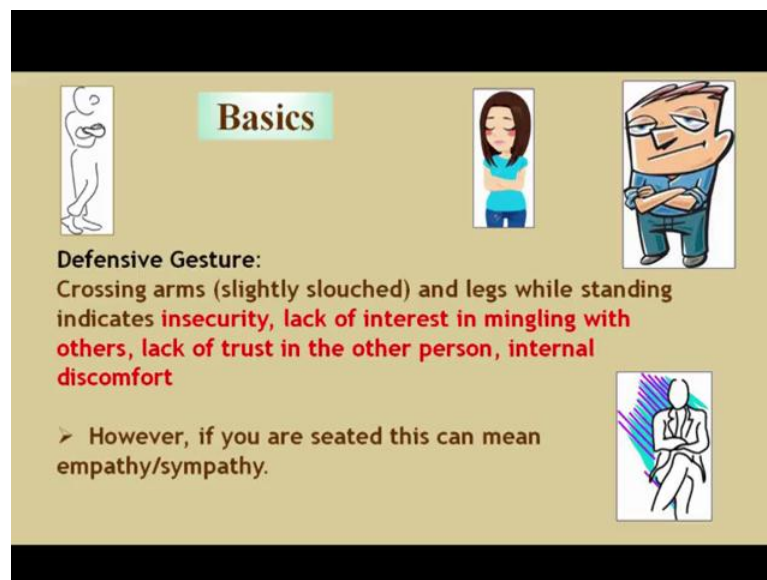
So, while applying them especially in Indian context, we need to use our discretion. We need to be very careful. We need to look at the context and we need to accept the deviations. Look at this simple example, which I will briefly mentioned in the previous lecture. That is, of touching the feet of elders.

Now, in western context if you go and touch not only elders, anybody’s feet, it is considered slavish. And if it is the boss, junior or subordinate relationship, it is considered as that you are trying to flatter. It is considered that you are not honest. And, in worst case that you are uncultured.

Now, in an Indian context, you know it is exactly the opposite. When somebody touches the feet, particularly of the elder person, the elder person looks at the one who touches her feet as somebody who is respectful, sincere, well behaved and cultured. In fact, they feel that the family has actually trained this person in a very nice and culturally acceptable manner.

Now, look at these deviations. But, at the same time today we are in a global scenario. So, we are living in this globalized culture, where uniqueness of cultures are actually getting fragmented and disintegrated. So the corporate culture, the multinational culture, is actually removing what is individualistic and introducing what is common to all. So, in this context again you need to know in a professional sense also; what are the universals, what are the basics, which you can follow and which you can try to create a good impression when you use them as expressions for your emotions. Look at some basics particularly in terms of defensive gesture.

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Now crossing arms; so crossing arms, but slightly slouched. So, slightly it slouches and the legs also is not straight. And then, it is also sometimes pull together. Now, this slightly slouched one; it is indicating in security, lack of interest in mingling with others, lack of trust in the other person and there is a kind of internal discomfort, when the person is trying to hold it in a slightly slouched manner.

However, if you are seated with someone and then you are holding it. So, it can mean that you are empathizing. You are sympathizing with the other person to whom you are talking to. You are suggesting that okay, I am not going to interfere, just keep going. So, I am just controlling all my body language, I am just sitting. I am all body to you, all

attentive to you. So, it can indicate empathy. Now, can it become even an offensive gesture? Look at the picture, I have put below.

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So, crossing arms very upright and tight and then legs in a firm open position; so, it can indicate self-confidence, it can indicate contentment. Especially, when you look at our own famous picture of swami Vivekananda. All the time you look at him, so he is shown that he is crossing his arms, but then he is not indicating as it could be seen in a western context that he is showing an offensive gesture, is also not showing a defensive one. But, then this kind of one, especially when the feet are open, so and then the arms are actually crossed. So, that can indicate self-confidence, it can also indicate contentment, I am satisfied with myself. It can indicate modesty; it can indicate humility. But, in the extreme case as I have put the other figure down, it can indicate arrogance, it can show that I am more powerful than you, let me see what you can do to me. So, it can indicate that kind of attitude also.

So, you have to be very careful. Normally, any kind of crossing gestures are considered to be defensive ones. So, people use that kind of a crossing gestures, even in terms of using handbag and all that.

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Basics



Attraction: Feet

➤ If you are standing or sitting and are attracted to someone (whether or not you are talking to them) your feet will be pointing in their direction!

Dislike: Feet

If you approach 2 people talking: If the feet of the people stay in place and they twist only their upper torsos in your direction, they dislike your joining.

Look at feet. Now, our feet can indicate attraction as well as dislike. So, if you are standing or sitting under attracted to someone, whether or not you are talking to them, your feet will be pointing in that direction. This is a spontaneous response they say. Generally, like your feet is opened and then it is pointing towards that person. So, you are welcoming a conversation with the person and then you are interested in the person. But, it can also mean dislike, the way the feet is used. If they are withdrawn, it can mean that you are not really in claim towards talking to the person.

Or, look at another situation. If you are approaching two people talking to each other, they are your classmates. Now, if the feet of the people stay in place and they twist only their torsos, they just look at you and then they talk to you. But, then they are not completely turning towards you and then leaving the feet open. So, it indicates that they do not want you to join the conversation. In fact, they dislike your joining. But, on the other hand if they want you to join, like I said before, so they will keep the feet open indicating that you are welcome to join. So, this feet, although we think that face is the index to mind and it gives everything about a person, feet also can give very important clues about what the person is thinking and what the person wants to do very spontaneously.

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Basics & Universals

Attraction

- **Men: Occasionally play with one of their ear lobes.**
Women: will play with a lock of hair or continually tuck their hair behind their ears.
- **Men digging ear wax from their ears; picking nose, especially while communicating with women, are filthy or perverted.**

Look at some more basics and universals, in terms of attraction. Men, occasionally play with one of their ear lobes, while talking. So, indicating thing they are attracted to the person to whom they are talking. In case of women, it is believed that they will play with the lock of hair or they just try to put the hair in the front or they continually tuck their hair behind their ears. So, these gestures they say that especially leaving it loose and putting it in front, they generally say that is showing that they are interested in, at least talking to the person in front. They like talking to the person, if not it is leading to very serious kind of attraction. But, at least they are not afraid; they are not inhibited in talking to this person.

Now, conversely men digging ear wax; especially, they may take the pen cover and then use it and then dig ear wax or picking nose, especially while communicating with women, they are supposed to be filthy or perverted. So, because there are some perverted thoughts are going, that is indicated by the nose picking or trying to dig ear wax, especially when they are communicating with someone. So, they are doing it unintentionally and they are not able to control it. But, the person who is sitting at the opposite can just understand that the thoughts are not very clear.

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Basics & Universals

- **Openness:** Open hands, unbuttoned coat.
- **Defensiveness:** Arms crossed, sideways glance, touching/rubbing nose, rubbing eyes, buttoned coat, drawing away.
- **Insecurity:** Pinching flesh, chewing pen, thumb over thumb, biting fingernail.
- **Cooperation:** Upper body in sprinter's position, open hands, sitting on edge of chair, hand to face gestures, unbuttoning coat.

More, in terms of basics and universals. Any gesture as I was trying to communicate before that is not crossed. As supposed to crossing, if it is open, so any kind of openness, open hands, open forms, even coat which is not covered fully, but unbuttoned. So, all these are indicating that I am open, I am honest, I am truthful, I am free to talk to you. The opposite is defensiveness; arms crossed and then while talking they look at the sideways, they are not maintaining eye contact, touching or even rubbing nose, rubbing eyes, buttoned coat, drawing away. So, when you talk, the other person keeps moving away. So, it is indicating that the other person is somewhat in the defensive mode.

Insecurity is indicated in so many simple ways. But, which most of the times we do it inadvertently. Pinching flesh; so, you yourself try to pinch and then chewing pen or chewing anything; some people chew the collar. So, what are is in their hand, they keep chewing. Even chewing gum while talking to somebody, people say that it is a kind of physiological insecurity. Thumb over thumb; so, like putting the thumb over thumb, biting finger nail, so these are all symptoms of insecurity.

But the opposite, cooperation. How do you understand that somebody is willing to cooperate with you? The upper body is in sprinters position; the sprinter is like the person, who is above to sprint. So, slightly inclined towards the other person. So, this

slight leaning shows that the other person is interested. As supposed to withdrawal. So, the more you leaned back, you are in different, your laid back, you are not interested in conversation. Sitting erect; you are somewhat in a neutral one. But, slight leaning towards the person in the front is indicating that you are actually interested in the conversation, interested in talking to the person.

Sitting on edge of chair; remember, when will you do this? Especially, when you watch a thriller, when you watch a suspense movie, when you watch any event that you are so engrossed. So, initially when the movie begins, you are at the back of the seat, relaxed. Slowly, as the movie unfolds and it is very thrilling for you, so you move towards. And, at the end, climax, you are literally on the edge of the seat and you want to see what is happening, who has done it. So, sitting on edge of chair; so, will show that you are cooperating, you are deeply interested in what is happening before you. Hand to face gestures and unbuttoning coat; so, all will indicate that you are actually trying to cooperate.

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Basics & Universals

- **Confidence:** Steepled hands, hands behind back, back stiffened, hands in coat pockets with thumb out, hands on lapels of coat.
- **Nervousness:** Clearing throat, whistling, smoking, pinching flesh, fidgeting, covering mouth, jiggling money or keys, tugging ears, wringing hands.
- **Frustration:** Short breaths, "tsk" sound, tightly clenched hands, wringing hands, fist-like gestures, rubbing hand through hair, rubbing back of neck.

Now, confidence; this is not something that comes to the person by pretension. But, usually when the person is confident, like the steepled hands, so, and then hands behind back. So, while sitting, for example, the person has kept like this. Back stiffened; so standing straight. Hands in coat pockets with thumb out, hands on lapels of coat. Now hands in coat pocket with thumbs out is showing confidence, but hands in coat pockets with the thumb in can show that the person is defensive. Hands on lapels of coat is indicating confidence, but hands trying to hide somewhere inside the coat will indicate insecurity.

How is nervousness indicated? Clearing throat frequently, especially in a talk. Again, this can indicate nervousness. But, then there are exceptions like if the room is too cold or the person is actually suffering from severe cold, the person can do that. So, you have to use discretion. I will talk about this in the next lecture. But, right now, the basics when somebody is trying to clear throat, normally the person is nervous, especially in a situation where the person is asked to deliver a speech.

Whistling in the dark, in particular, when the person is moving is afraid of the dark. So, whistling is a way to communicate that the person is not that afraid and trying to master of some courage. But actually inside, the person is nervous.

Smoking; especially before the interview, especially before meeting your boss, especially before you have to go and talk something very important, so that indicates nervousness. Pinching flesh, fidgeting; fidgeting is doing with your finger or with your leg. So, you do something, even you do not know why you are doing it, why your fingers are behaving like that. Covering mouth while talking; so, that again can mean you are trying to hide something, lie, but at the same time you are nervous because you do not want somebody to find out that you are actually lying. Jiggling money or keys from the pocket; so, you have kept some keys, but then you try to jiggle. Tugging ears, like trying to pull it or trying to fold it, put it inside and then wringing hands; so, all these things can indicate nervousness. Frustration; when the person is in frustration, usually he takes short breathes or it sounds like tightly clenched hands, wringing hands. So, wringing hands is indicating nervousness, but extreme form of wringing hands can indicate frustration.

Fist-like gestures, rubbing hand through hair, rubbing back of neck; so, all these ones can indicate that the person is frustrated.

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NONVERBAL BEHAVIOR	INTERPRETATION
Tilted head	Interest
Stroking chin	Trying to make a decision
Looking down, face turned away	Disbelief
Biting nails	Insecurity, nervousness
Rubbing hands	Anticipation
Pulling or tugging at ear	Indecision

Let us look at some very quick behavior and interpretation. Tilted head; slightly tilted head, it is indicating the person is interested in your talk. Stroking chin trying to make a decision. Looking down, face turned away; so, looking down, face turned away, so not believing in you. Biting nails; insecurity, nervousness. Rubbing hands; anticipation. So, you might have seen when you tell small kids, either as a parent or as a teacher, you say that this weekend let us go for a picnic. So, immediately the children do like this, “Oh! Wow! I am ready. Where are we going?” So, rubbing hands indicating anticipation. Pulling or tugging at ear, it can mean indecision. So, I am not able to decide on what you are telling.

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NONVERBAL BEHAVIOR	INTERPRETATION
Hand to cheek	Evaluation, thinking
Touching, slightly rubbing nose	Rejection, doubt, lying
Rubbing the eye	Doubt, disbelief
Hands clasped behind back	Anger, frustration, apprehension
Locked ankles	Apprehension
Inspecting fingernails or looking at a watch	Boredom, Vanity
Head resting in hand, eyes downcast	Boredom

Hand to cheek; so, hand to cheek; evaluation, thinking. Touching, slightly rubbing the nose; it can mean rejection, doubt, even lying. Rubbing the eye; again doubt, disbelief. Hands clasped behind back; I even showed a picture in the quiz. It is anger, frustration, apprehension. But, this is not on the back of the head. But, hand clasped behind back; so, and then you are just hiding that it is clasped, it can show that you are angry frustrated or apprehensive.

Locked ankles; again apprehension. Inspecting a nails or looking at a watch; so, while talking to somebody, the person is closely inspecting the finger nails or looking at the watch frequently, so it indicates that I am bored or it can show vanity. So, what kind of nonsense you are talking, so it is really boring. In fact, it is suggested that if you know that somebody is really boring you, looking at the finger nails will indicate to the person that the person is boring you or looking at the watch, either on your hand or on the clock that is fitted on the wall, looking at it frequently can indicate that you are boring, you are wasting my time. Head resting in hand, eyes down cast; again can mean boredom. I showed again a picture so in the quiz. So, it can indicate that it is boredom.

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NONVERBAL BEHAVIOR	INTERPRETATION
Brisk, erect walk	Confidence
Standing with hands on hips	Readiness, aggression
Sitting with legs crossed, foot kicking slightly	Boredom
Sitting, legs apart	Open, relaxed
Arms crossed on chest	Defensiveness
Walking with hands in pockets, shoulders hunched	Dejection

Brisk, erect walk; confidence. So, as opposite to that; so, if the walk is slouching and then head is low with, and then dejection. So, that I have put it at the end. Walking with hands in pockets, shoulders hunched is dejection. Standing with hands on hips; so, it can mean readiness. I am ready. But, it can also mean aggression. Sitting with legs crossed, foot kicking slightly can indicate boredom. Sitting with legs apart, open, relaxed. Arms crossed on chest; defensiveness. Sometimes people even use folder and then they put it there. So, indicating they are not comfortable with the person sitting before them. Walking with hands in pockets, shoulders hunched indicates dejection.

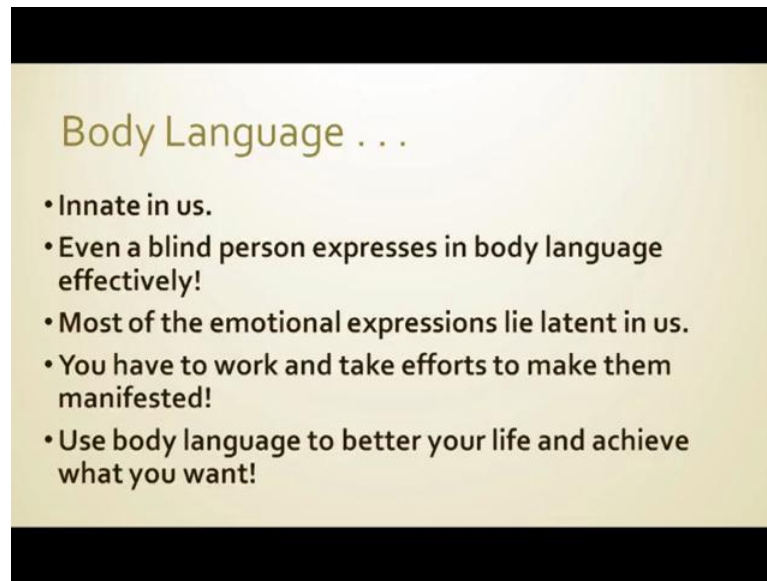
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NONVERBAL BEHAVIOR	INTERPRETATION
Sitting with hands clasped behind head, legs crossed	Confidence, superiority
Open palm	Sincerity, openness, innocence
Pinching bridge of nose, eyes closed	Negative evaluation
Tapping or drumming fingers	Impatience
Steepling fingers	Authoritative
Patting/fondling/rubbing hair	Lack of self-confidence; insecurity

Sitting with hands clasped behind head, legs crossed; so, there was a picture in the quiz. The boss sitting like this. And then, it shows confidence, superiority. Open palm; sincerity, openness, even innocence. So children, like you tell them, “Show me, what you have in hand?” They will just show like this. So, indicating that no, I do not have anything; innocence. Pinching bridge of nose, especially eyes closed; so, that is negative evaluation. Tapping or drumming fingers; that is impatience. Steepling fingers; authoritative. Patting or fondling or rubbing hair; lack of self-confidence, insecurity. So, you might see especially the subordinates when they want to talk to boss, especially in terms of increment or asking for some money, they will, they will try to scratch their hair while asking, “Sir, I want to ask you this thing”. So, that shows lack of confidence and insecurity.

Now, whatever I discussed are the basics universals. But, keep them with the pinch of salt that when you use it Indian context, you need to use it appropriately. We will look at how we can interpret and what are the real issues when we are trying to do that in the next lecture.

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Body Language . . .

- **Innate in us.**
- **Even a blind person expresses in body language effectively!**
- **Most of the emotional expressions lie latent in us.**
- **You have to work and take efforts to make them manifested!**
- **Use body language to better your life and achieve what you want!**

But before I conclude, some more thoughts on body language. And, just I want you to be motivated to use this body language appropriately. Understand that body language is innate in us; that is, it is in us, it is in our body, it is in our system, it is in our brain, it is in our behavior. So, you need not go and bring something from outside.

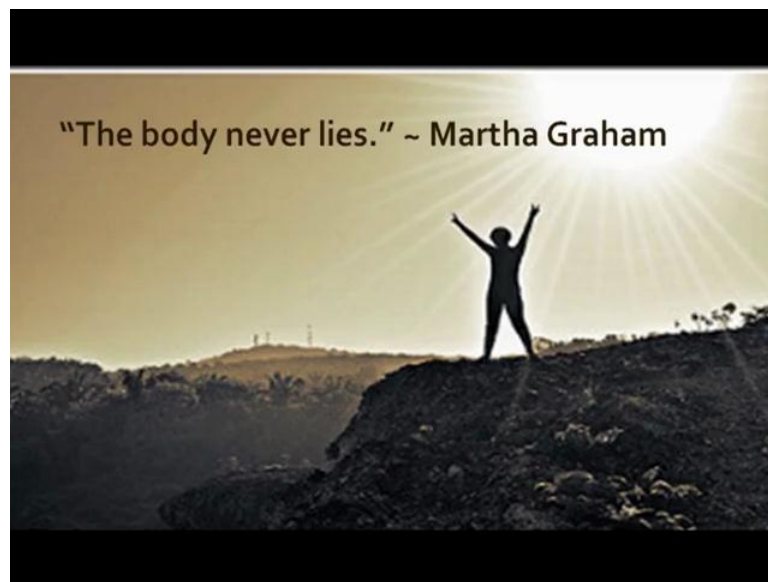
Studies have shown that even a blind person compared to the normal human being, both of them try to express body language in a similar manner. Example, when they are victorious, so both of them rise the hands. So, when they are sorrowful, the face was indicating the same kind of agony on both faces, whether the person is blind or whether the person is able to see normally. So, even a blind person expresses in body language effectively.

So, this is something that you should keep in mind. So, most of the emotional expressions, which you like in others, which you should (Refer Time: 29:45) in you, actually they all latent. So, they are hidden. They are concealed. So, you do not have to borrow it from someone. What we have to do is you have to pay attention, you have to control the bad ones. But, you have to work and take efforts to make the good ones manifested. You have to patent them. What is latent in you? You have to bring them out. It has to come out.

Now, the suggestions that I have given you need to introspect what kind of gestures I am using. Ideally speaking, you need to stand before a mirror when you are practicing something, look at your gestures. But, more than that they are interested in the involuntary gestures that you are making. Ask somebody to make videos, when you are in a group, when you are alone, without your knowledge. Ok. Without your knowledge. And then if the friend is close to you, you sit with the friend and then try to analyze your own behavior. Ask the friend, ask yourself which of your behaviors were acceptable and which expressions you could change.

And, you try to interpret when where you behaving in a defensive manner, when where you behaving in an offensive manner, what were the body language clues that were given to the others indicating that you are aggressive, you are afraid and indicating that you are confident, you are happy. So, what were the clues that were going from your body. So, over all try to use body language to better your life and achieve what you want.

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As a concluding thought, I just want you to leave you with one quotation from Martha Graham, which says the body never lies. As a good habit to be developed, if I tell you, you should speak the truth all the time, you are going to laugh at me and tell that "Oh! This world is full of lies and then how can I speak truth all the time, and then this world

is not for people like Mahatma Gandhi or Harish Chandra. So, we have to tell lies. And without telling lies, we cannot survive”. Now, if you have that kind of thinking, this quote tells you do whatever you want, you keep telling lies in your words, that is, seven percent of what you are telling other people. But, ninety three percent of your body which other people are actually watching, in terms of impact and hundred percent of your body expressions, they never tell a lie. What you are thinking, how you are feeling, what you think about the person in front of you; all these things are seen by the other person in a very transparent manner. Your body is telling the entire story; your body is actually the autobiography that others can read it very easily.

So, when you realize that your body never tells lies, should not you be careful? And do not you think that there is no point in thinking that you will tell lies all the time and try to convince people. People are not going to trust you. They are just going to see what the body tells you. And, even they do not tell you that they are looking at the body, it is what their mind is trying to get. And, they get an intuitive feeling. But, all our intuitive feelings are actually guided by the emotional expressions, the body language cues. So, the body never lies. Speak truth, in terms of verbal as well as non-verbal communication. So with this start, let me conclude this video.

Thank you. Thank you so much for watching this video. I will come back with more suggestions for improving your body language in the next lecture.

Thanks again.