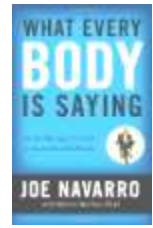


What Every Body Is Saying

An Ex-FBI Agent's Guide to Speed Reading People

by Joe Navarro
w/ Marvin Karlins, Ph.D. 2008



Below is information about the book and following are my notes about important 'tells' listed in his writing:

What Every BODY is Saying: An Ex-FBI Agent's Guide to Speed-Reading People by Joe Navarro and Marvin Karlins

Read this book and send your nonverbal intelligence soaring. Joe Navarro, a former FBI counterintelligence officer and a recognized expert on nonverbal behavior, explains how to "speed-read" people: decode sentiments and behaviors, avoid hidden pitfalls, and look for deceptive behaviors. You'll also learn how your body language can influence what your boss, family, friends, and strangers think of you. You will discover:

- * The ancient survival instincts that drive body language
- * Why the face is the least likely place to gauge a person's true feelings
- * What thumbs, feet, and eyelids reveal about moods and motives
- * The most powerful behaviors that reveal our confidence and true sentiments

10 Commandments of Observing/Decoding Non-Verbal Communication Successfully

1. **Be a competent observer of your environment.** Concerted observation is essential. Become aware of the world around you; with constant practice you can develop better skills.
2. **Observing in context is key to understanding nonverbal behavior.** (ex. In an accident you expect people to shake, be in shock, look dazed, etc)
3. **Learn to recognize and decode nonverbal behaviors that are universal.** (ex pursed lips= troubled, something is wrong; universal information)
4. **Learn to recognize and decode idiosyncratic nonverbal behaviors.** Notice behavioral patterns in people every day; notice more movements etc.
5. **When you interact with others, try to establish their baseline behaviors.** What is normal or stressed in their face, how they typically sit, where they place their hands/feet/posture/etc.
6. **Always try to watch people for multiple tells- behaviors that occur in clusters or in succession.** Your accuracy will be enhanced when you observe multiple tells/clusters of behavior body signals- like a jigsaw puzzle.
7. **It's important to look for changes in a person's behavior that can signal changes in thoughts, emotions, interest, or intent.** Sudden changes in behavior can help reveal how a person is processing info/adapting to emotional events (ex. If they got good/bad news)
8. **Learning to detect false or misleading nonverbal signals is also critical.** It takes practice/experience to differentiate between authentic and misleading cues.
9. **Knowing how to distinguish between comfort and discomfort will help you to focus on the most important behaviors for decoding nonverbal communications.** Ask yourself if it looks like comfort behavior (contentment, happiness, relaxation) or if it looks like discomfort (displeasure, unhappiness, stress, anxiety, tension).
10. **When observing others, be subtle about it.** Don't make yourself obvious.



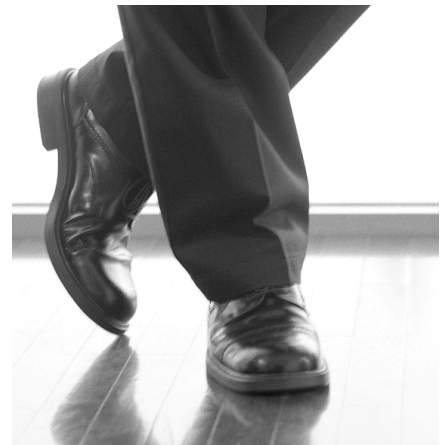
12 Things to do/keep in mind when reading profiling behaviors /non-verbals in interpersonal interacting:

1. Get a clear view – open space (not at a desk)
2. Expect pacifying behaviors- (hair twirling)
3. Expect initial nervousness (normal esp. Under stress)
4. Get person to relax first (calm down)
5. Establish a baseline (stabilize behavior= base for further behavior)
6. Look for increased use of pacifying behaviors (spike in frequency= a clue to troubling info.)
7. Ask, pause, observe (ask and wait to observe reactions)
8. Keep interviewee focused (pointed questions allow behaviors whereas telling them side/tale = fewer non-verbals)
9. Chatter is not the truth (may be prefabricated; verify facts)
10. Stress coming in and going out; the guilty will do 2 things- distance (foot withdrawal, leans away, tightens lips/jaw) and pacifying responses (neck touching, massage, nose stroking...)
11. Isolate the cause of the stress (above deceptive behaviors together are indicators of stress and stress relief – not necessarily dishonesty. It's nerves.
12. Pacifying says so much (pacifying behaviors help identify issues that need further focus/explanation)

Behaviors and their Meanings:

Feet and Legs (the MOST important body parts that give away secrets!) –the lower limbs provide the most accurate/uncensored info to alert the observer

- any time there is a shift from foot jiggling to foot kicking in a seated person –it's a very good indicator they have seen heard something negative and aren't happy about it
- Jiggling shows nervousness, kicking is subconscious way of combating the unpleasant
- a person who's constantly wiggling/bouncing feet/legs suddenly stops = take notice! They're experiencing stress, emotional change or feel threatened
- suddenly turns toes inward or interlocks feet = insecure, anxious or feels threatened. Esp. considered suspect for males
- lack of movement may mean nervous, lying, self-restraint, caution
- Foot lock behind legs and rubbing hands on legs = freeze response = person has been uncovered – fears something he's done will be forced out and he's stressed because of it
- feet withdraw from front to beneath chair = high stress?, distancing reaction, attempt to minimize exposed parts of body, discomfort



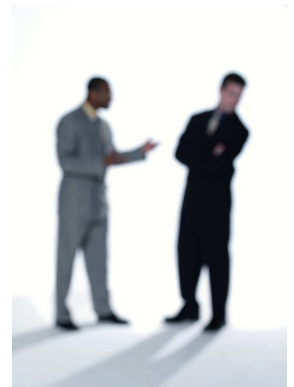
Torso (will react to perceived dangers by attempting to distance itself from anything stressful or unwanted)

- if you consciously try to remain off-balance you'll quickly tire
- naturally you'll hardly notice/feel it
- to blade (turn slightly) away by degree = dislike or unappealing, negative sentiment
- Vertical side (front – eyes/mouth/chest/breast/genitals) very sensitive to things we like and dislike. When things are good we expose ventral side to it, when bad we shift/turn away = ventral denial
- Ventral exposure/fronting = display to those we favor; ex. Hugging children, lovers at a café table, leaning inward, students lean toward professor
- Mirroring = like interests, lean way = disagreement
- Torso Shield- subconsciously cross arms/objects over chest as barrier vs. passing on things we dislike or to protect/comfort ourselves
- men shield torso - by playing with tie/watch/cufflinks/shirtsleeves = slightly insecure that moment.
- suddenly cross arms tightly, gripping = discomfort



Embellishments (*you are what you wear*) – 1st impressions; visual perceptions

- preening- lack of personal hygiene/grooming = sad/ill – state of mind/health
- Torso Splays- *example*: teenage boy splayed on chair/couch= dominating his environment; it's disrespectful; shows indifference to authority; territorial
 - Child's limbic response to your spatial invasions (sit/stand close) causes them to sit up = respect
- Puffing up chest = pre-fight response, territorial domain
- Baring Torso - removal of jacket, shirt/hat/etc = fight preparation
- Breathing- deep/panting = stress of potential problem (escape or fight)
- Shoulder Shrugs – *half shrug* = not committed to what they say (evasive/deceptive);
 - *strong/full shrug* = confident/comfortable with answer/honest
- Weak shoulder displays- slowly rising shoulders = hide/bury self (think turtle)- lacks confidence/uncomfortable



Arms (signs of comfort, discomfort, confidence, feelings) show gravity identifying motions = positive feelings, confidence

- “sinking feeling” = weight of the world on shoulders, negative event/reasons convey emotions of precise moment we are affected – contagious
 - Gravity identifying arm actions/raised skyward = response to joy/excitement, elation
 - Withdraw arms = upset/fearful
 - Arms at sides/across chest = injured, threatened, abused, worried
 - Arm withdrawal behavior- protective behavior, restraint = protects body, non-provocative position = holding themselves back
 - Arms withdrawn in comfort- to self-soothe/pacify ~ intestinal distress, pain, injury
 - Arm freeze = especially children = sinister implications (in presence of abusive parent, predators) = survival less movement = not attract attention/not get noticed

Shoplifter's Tell (action/movement/sign/signal)- lack of arm movements, try to hide themselves, not noticed, look around a lot

Arm Cues = Mood/Feelings – arm behaviors = feelings

- **Arms low at side**, shoulders drooping- needs comforted = after tough day at work or feeling dejected/sad
- reunited after long absence= open arms = come here, hold me
- **Arms near body**, elbows stretched out= doesn't like person going to hug
- **Arms placed behind back** = I'm of higher status, please don't come near me; I'm not to be touched, don't get close; I don't want to make contact with you = regal stance
- Dogs react negatively when your gaze/outstretched arms go away/to back

Touch = important for health, mood, mental development, longevity

-Stroking a pet lowers heart rate and calms us (their unconditional affection)

-**Holding a dirty diaper at arm's length** w/ as few fingers as possible = limbic brain limiting contact with disagreeable/unhealthy/dangerous objects

-Arms act as **barriers/blocking mechanisms** to protect/distance us from threats or negative things; around people we don't enjoy, block or protect

Territorial Displays of Arms

Territory = power, person uses elbows to dominate space of board meeting table, spreading out materials, as well. On airplane man takes over use of shared arm rest= therefore "winning" battle. loser feels bad.

Claiming territory =- very powerful/negative consequences. Short + long term = battle ranging small to great. Discomfort/anger/issues last long time.

• Our arms help assert our dominance to others with when we overlap our space
Persons' real or perceived status = **claiming a larger stake at table**, spread out, notebooks/items around = powerful/status

Weakness/lower confidence = **elbows against waist**, arms between legs

Arms Akimbo = (nonverbal; extends both arms out in a V position w/ hands on hips

Assert dominance and project image of authority

(police, military... effective ways to demonstrate standing ground, confident, unwilling to be bullied)

- Women should use it 1st in dealing with men (level the playing field)

Akimbo but thumbs forward = inquisitive, less authoritarian, concerned

Hooding effect – territorial display (lean back + interlock hands behind head) (like cobra hooding to alert of its dominance/power) makes us larger than life + tells others "I am in charge here"

-Supervisor may do at meeting- for higher authority/in charge

Dominance Pose- use arms simultaneously to emphasize point/ claim territory,

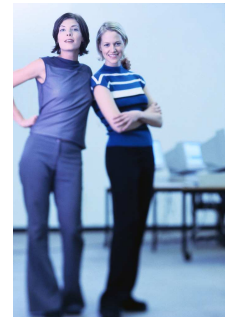
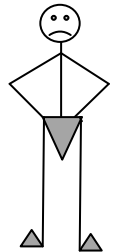
-Happens in disagreement over an issue

-**Arms spread** as conversation increasingly heated = more territory
(limbic response to establish dominance, emphasize point of view) = strong, powerful, indignant spread to claim more territory.

Meek = pull in arms

Business meetings -speaker takes/maintains large territorial footprint; is very confident about what is being discussed

-They withdraw quickly when questioned about something that makes them feel uncomfortable



Arm behaviors in courtship- male puts arms around girl esp. when other males might encroach on his woman

- Arms touching = sensuous pleasure/comfort
- Arms recede = things getting worse
- Arm movement can change quickly b/c of mood, confidence, thoughts
- confident = Spread out
- less confidence= w/draw, hands between legs

Adornments/Artifacts on Arms

- Men/women wear watches/bracelets = wealth, economic status
- Uniforms carry patches on upper arms= community status;
- tattoos (low status/class)



Arms as conduits of affection

- hugs transmit caring/affection
- relaxed arms; ventral side exposed, palms visible = I mean no harm
- Latin American businessmen do abrozo =-brief hug= I like you

Getting a Grip

- Hands / Fingers

- Delicate movements reflect subtle nuances within the brain
- Our movements influence how others perceive us



Credibility + persuasiveness – helps with ideas, persuades and

- Hiding hands= negative impression
- Other cultures hold hands, esp. men (Muslim, Vietnamese. Laos)- comfort
- Trust = more tactile activity
- Pointing= be careful. Use open palm up to point

Use caution when **preening**- don't engage when listening = dismissive

Nail biting= insecurity/nervousness

Sweaty hands= nervous, under stress, hot

- It does not mean person is lying (stress or genetics)

Quivering hands= stress, nervous or recalling negative situations or genuinely excited (won lottery)

Hand steeping = high confidence tell (of thought and/or position)

- Higher hands = more powerful
- Lower hands = less/timid

Ex: Witnesses in court steeple to show confidence in what they're saying = more powerful impact to jury

Hand wringing or fingers interlaced = stressed or concerned

Thumbs up = high confidence, or associated with high status

Thumbs sticking out of pocket= high status display (ex. Kennedy)

Hands disposed with thumbs up = positive thoughts

When thumbs disappear = negative

Thumbs carried high = thoughts of self highly or confident of circumstances

Thumbs hidden in pockets = low confidence, unsure of self (low status display)

Genital Faming (thumbs on waistband with fingers hanging in triangle below) = dominance display "I am a virile male"

Liars = move hands/feet less – freeze (not to be detected)

- **hand wringing** = Stress, low confidence (more- stronger)
- **rubbing palms** = Doubt or stress
- **fingers interlaced** = worse lie

Touch neck = lower confidence or relieving stress (something is objectionable, emotional unsettling)

Suprasternal touching – distress, problem, recounting deep emotion

Micro-gestures = true indicators of feelings (negatives- dislike, contempt, disdain)

-Sudden changes in hand motion = abrupt change in thoughts/feelings (lowers quickly move hands away – recent negative occurrence)

-Hands reflect our response to the world around us (ultra sensitive)

Nonverbals of the Face – shows how we feel, but can be faked

- Face/neck reflect genuine/unrestrained feelings of happiness
- Very little control over eyes (automatic responses)
- **Small pupils** = don't like what we see
- **Open/large pupils** = we like what we see or there's danger
- **High eyebrows** = confidence and positive feelings
- **Low eyebrows** = low confidence – negative feelings (heaviness/insecurity)



Eye Blocking = squint, concern, dislike, disagreement, potential threat

- **Cover eyes with hands** – don't like what I'm hearing, displeasure
- **Touch eyes** = negative perception of discussion
- **Close eyes** = block out negative news/events
- **Eye block with hearing/seeing negative things** = individual is troubled or it causes discomfort
- **Pupil dilation** = positive emotions
- **Eyebrows arched** = look larger
- When **brows raise in steps** = not emotionally attached to info; decreased interest; less committed



Gaze away during conversation = comfort display (not rudeness) -Detects no threat, clarity of thought

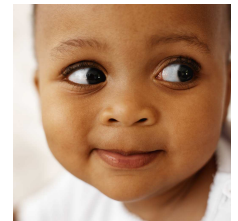
- **Roving eyes** = look disinterested/superior (leaves a bad impression)
- **Rapid eye blinks** = inner struggle, hearing something we dislike or having trouble expressing ourselves (befuddled) = obvious stress



Looking askance = suspicion, question info validity, not convinced yet

Lip pursing – reliable indicator that a person rejects what's being said

- **Thin lips** = stress (limbic response- shut down; don't allow anything in)
- **Purse lips while someone is talking** = negative sentiment; person is troubled, something is wrong
- Attorneys/judges purse lips as they watch/read/listen to disagreeable info
- Business situations- pursed lips = gathering info about situation



Sneer = act of contempt- lack of caring/empathy; disrespect t/or contempt for another person

- Both male/female partners sneer = good predictor of breakup = they think they know more than interviewer

Tongue display

-stressed= lick lips; rub tongue across lips to calm ourselves

- insecure- lip biting, mouth touching, lip licking, object biting
- Tongue jutting (flat- not touching between teeth) = think they're getting away with something or are caught doing something = got caught, gleeful excitement, got away with something, did something foolish, "I'm naughty"
- * Pay attention, they may be putting one over on you!

Furrowed forehead

Frowning (w/ forehead/brow furrow) = anxious, sad, concentrating, concerned, bewildered, angry

Nose flare – aroused (lowers- excitement/anticipation) pheromones

- = intentions cure- intent to do something physical (exaggerate- not necessarily sexual)
- Children should note- people are becoming dangerous!

Nail biting – stress, insecurity, discomfort (pacifies us; unsure of self) bargaining weakness

Facial blushing/blanching = deep emotional states

- When personal space is encountered
- when caught doing something you know is wrong
- secret crush (teens)



blanching (turning pale) = shock (accident/interview) = high stress

facial disapproval cues: **squinting eyes** + turn to face

- when being too loud/boisterous
- look at you with scorn – (to show no whistling in museum)
- stern glance towards children

* disgust registers on face clearly- bad food or smells

crinkle nose = dislike/disgust; pronounced in some cultures

Gravity-Defying Behaviors of the Face

Chin down= lacks confidence; stressed/upset, withdrawal/distancing, negative sentiment

Chin up= positive frame of mind; high confidence; snubbing someone; look down on lower class; higher status - "keep your chin up"

Mixed signals (intentions cues)

- looking at watch repeatedly- running late; has appt, would rather be elsewhere
- when confronted with mixed facial signals, always side with negative emotion as it's much more honest (ex: "Happy to see you." With tensed jaw – false)

Detecting deception - It's not easy for anyone to detect deceit in others. Nonverbals can be mistaken, taken out of context. Notes to detection:

- Liars begin at such an early age + become skillful at it
- When telling the truth, we have no worries= tend to be more comfortable than when lying or concerned about getting caught (harbor "guilty knowledge")
- Tend to display more emphatic behaviors when we're comfortable +truthful, when we're uncomfortable- we don't.
- Those lying/guilty + covering up find it difficult to achieve comfort + their tension + distress is readily observed.
- How you behave will affect others (now ask questions , sit *too close*, look at) will support or disrupt comfort level
- Your job is to observe (nonverbal intelligence) = your role should be neutral (not suspicious), keep asking for clarifying details. Remain calm + non judging

Other Support

“A quote from Dr. Birdwhistell, former professor of research in anthropology at Temple University (who initiated basic work in science of kinesics) warned that “no body position or movement, in and of itself, has a precise meaning.” In other words, we cannot always say that crossed arms mean, ‘**I will not let you in,**’ or that rubbing the nose with a finger means **disapproval or rejection**, that patting the hair means **approval** and steepling the fingers **superiority**. These are naive interpretations of kinesics, and tend to make parlor game out of a science. Sometimes they are only true in the context of the entire behavior pattern of a person.

Body language and spoken language, Dr. Birdwhistell believes, are dependent on each other. Spoken language alone will not give us the full meaning of what a person is saying, nor for that matter will body language alone give us the full meaning. If we listen only to the words when someone is talking, we may get as much of a distortion as we would if we listened only to the body language.


Dr. Paul Wachtel has studied nonverbal communication in psychiatric patients and published an article titled, “An approach to the Study of Body Language in Psychotherapy.” He regards body language as a conscious or unconscious attempt by the patient to communicate with the therapist. Viewing a patient’s gestures while describing something **unpleasant** and seeing them repeated when talking about her boyfriend revealed her true emotions/feeling about her boyfriend, of whom she wasn’t sure how she felt about him initially. Another patient would lean back and clasp her hands as the therapist reached certain troublesome areas; this is a common expression of **resistance**.”

“There are literally thousands of bits of information exchanged between human beings within moments. Our society programs us to handle these many bits of data, but on an unconscious level. If we bring them up to our consciousness we run the risk of *mishandling* them. If we have to think about what we are doing, it often becomes much more difficult to do it. *An aware mind is not necessarily as effective as an unaware one.*”

“Dr. Birdwhistell’s work in kinesics uncovered that American speakers move their head a number of time during a conversation, especially at the end of a statement, signaling the other speaker to start their answer. As a person’s voice pitch rises at the end of a question (How are you?), and their head also comes up, sometimes accompanied by the hand and the eyelid opening wider, too. They’re seemingly meaningless but are tied to pitch and meaning.

Because of the tremendous variation in individual movements it is often difficult to link a specific movement to a specific message.”

Fast, Julius. (2002) *Body Language*. New York. M. Evans and Co., Inc.

Dictionary: ki·ne·sics (kə-nē'sīks, -zīks, kī-) 

n. (used with a sing. verb)

The study of nonlinguistic bodily movements, such as gestures and facial expressions, as a systematic mode of **communication**.

<http://www.answers.com/topic/kinesics>